

ACTS INTRODUCTION

compiled and written by Gary Kukis

Acts Introduction

Early Evangelism/The Nascent Church

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently.

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These exegetical studies are *not* designed for you to read each and every word. For instance, the Greek exegesis is put into light brownish tables, so that if you want to skip over them, that is fine. If you question a translation, you can always refer back to the appropriate Greek tables to sort it all out.

The intent is to make this particular study the most complete and most accurate examination of Acts Introduction which is available in writing. The idea is to make every phrase, verse and passage understandable; and to make application of all that is studied.

Besides teaching you the doctrinal principles related to this chapter, this commentary is also to help bring this narrative to life, so that you can understand the various characters, their motivations, and the choices that they make. Ideally, you will be able to visualize the peoples and armies as they move across the landscape of the Land of Promise and of the Roman Empire on all sides of the Mediterranean Sea.

Although much of this chapter is based upon narrative from the book of Acts, I will make every attempt possible to provide enough historical information so that you will have a sufficient background to understand what is going on.

Preface: The book of Acts describes the beginning of the Church Age, from the giving of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to the believers listening to Peter to the missionary tours of Paul (three of which are recorded in the book of Acts). The book ends abruptly with Paul in Rome, but with a fate unknown (at the ending of this book).

Quite frankly, this introduction is only barely started. There is some important information to be found here; but I still have a lot of work to do.

Much of what I need to do is edit out some superfluous material and organize this a bit.

Although I eventually standardized how I wanted each chapter to look for the typical book of the Bible (which took decades); I have not yet standardized the introduction format for the books of the Bible. For that reason, this introduction may not be as organized or standardized as it should be.

Quotations:

Time and Place Modern Literal Version 2020:

Events from 30-63 AD are recorded including all the examples of Christian conversions. Tiberius Caesar, Emperor, 14-37 AD. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea. Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee.

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines:

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Changes—additions and subtractions (for the book of Acts)

Basic Summaries of Acts

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Authorship

Title

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Chronology **Timeline for Acts**
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www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in Kings

Doctrines Covered or Alluded To			

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. In addition to this, I will use a number of other more traditional technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Definition of Terms

Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)

In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). The **Doctrine of Rebound** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

Some of these definitions are taken from

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1556
<http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml>
<http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf>
<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d>
<http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm>
<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html>
<http://www.theopedia.com/>

An Introduction to Acts

Introduction:

One of the most important statements concerning the book of Acts is this: Acts is the history of the early church and evangelism which took place immediately after the resurrection. We do not go to Acts in order to determine the doctrines and practices for our local churches today. We go to the epistles for doctrines and practices for the Church Age. The book of Acts is what actually happened, beginning with the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ (circa A.D. 30) up to Paul's first trip and first imprisonment in Rome, when he was under house arrest (circa A.D. 64).

Some preliminary remarks on the book of Acts: there is a balance which needs to be achieved between the book of Acts and the epistles. The book of Acts is a necessary history, without which, believers would be seriously confused. However, at the same time, we cannot look upon the book of Acts to provide us with the structure, design and doctrine of today's church. This confuses entire denominations today, who consider the book of Acts to be every bit as much the model for today's church as the epistles, which is a very wrong concept.

Such a history is absolutely necessary, but the believer has to understand that the epistles provide us the information for doctrine and practices, but the book of Acts gives us an accurate historical documentation of what happened right after Jesus ascended into heaven. We do not get our doctrines and practices straight out of the book of Acts.

Authorship and Time of Writing

Luke, the author of the third gospel, is said to have written Acts.

Authorship and Time of Writing

It is logical to assume that, since Paul went on a fourth missionary tour, the Luke complete writing Acts while Paul was in Rome receiving visitors, as the book of Acts ends. This places its writing between A.D. 62–63. This logically sets the book of Luke as having been completed prior to that.

Luke references a first book in Acts 1;1 (which would have been the gospel of Luke), where he freely speaks of himself in the first person.

Luke appears to come on board as a missionary associated with Paul in Acts 16, where we find the use of the pronouns *we*, *us* featuring prominently in that chapter (Acts 16:10–13, 16, 28). We have a re-emergence of these pronouns in Acts 20:6–8, 13–15 21:1–8, 10, 12 27:1–5 28:1, 10–14). This has Luke's association with Paul falling between A.D. 50–62. It is possible that Luke exploited this association to write both Luke and Acts. Luke would have had a considerable amount of time to meet and talk with other believers—those who were with Jesus at the beginning—putting the writing of those two books probably between A.D. 54–64.

Luke's name does not show up in either the book of Luke or the book of Acts. What shows up in both books is a dedication to Theophilus, who was the likely recipient of both books. Nevertheless, that he is the author of Luke-Acts is among the earliest of traditions of the church.

Wikipedia: *The view that Luke-Acts was written by the physician Luke was virtually unanimous in the early Christian church. The Papyrus Bodmer XIV, which is the oldest known manuscript containing the ending of the gospel (dating to around 200 AD), uses the subscription "The Gospel According to Luke". Nearly all ancient sources also shared this theory of authorship—Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and the Muratorian Canon all regarded Luke as the author of the Luke-Acts. Neither Eusebius of Caesarea nor any other ancient writer mentions another tradition about authorship.*¹ These early church fathers were much closer to the 1st century and they would have reasonably had additional writings from that period of time unavailable to us today.

To sum up, the view that Luke, the associate of Paul, wrote Luke–Acts, and that he wrote it during the conservative time frame is consistent with (1) the authority of the earliest church fathers; (2) the consistency of the manuscripts; (3) the consistency of this view and the events presented in the book of Acts; and (4) the consistency between this view and the actual writing found in the books of Luke and Acts (including Luke's use of the 1st person plural pronouns).

I think pound for pound, Luke (a gentile) is the primary writer of Scripture of the New Testament. John would have been a close second and Paul a more distant third.

¹ From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorship_of_Luke-Acts accessed July 15, 2023.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

When it comes to the Bible, there is always an opposing viewpoint.

Opposing Views to Lukian Authorship

Wikipedia also writes: *Most scholars date the composition of the combined work to around 80–90 AD, although some others suggest 90–110, and there is textual evidence (the conflicts between Western and Alexandrian manuscript families) that Luke–Acts was still being substantially revised well into the 2nd century.*¹

You cannot have Luke as the author and for *Luke–Acts* to be written A.D. 80–110; and for there to be substantial revisions taking place well into the 2nd century. Obviously, it would be impossible for Luke to be doing revisions in the 2nd century, as he is probably not alive at this time. Furthermore, how does one continue to work on the book of Acts, for instance, without talking about the deaths of Peter or Paul; or of the 4th missionary journey?

Opposing Views to Lukian Authorship

How is there no discussion of any event taking place after A.D. 62–63?

We currently have around 25,000 ancient partial and full New Testament manuscripts. If there were *substantial revisions* taking place *well into the 2nd century*, how is this not reflected in any of these manuscripts? How is there no discussion of this by the early church fathers.

What is very common, and something that we should always count on, there will be *scholars* who make wild claims about the authorship and time of authorship for virtually every book in the Bible. There are *scholars* who claim that the Mosaic books (Exodus–Deuteronomy) were written hundreds of years after Moses died. This opens up all kinds of problems and unanswered questions (which I will not deal with here).

Of conservative Biblical scholars, no doubt the overwhelming majority support the traditional authorship of Luke-Acts and the traditionally assigned dates (somewhere between A.D. 54–64).

Are there liberal New Testament scholars? I know there are some as I have a book by one of them (however, it is a book I have long ago stopped referring to; and I am unable to put my hands on it now). I cannot help but reason that the number of liberal scholars who are specifically Bible scholars would have to be in the minority, simply because the interest would not be there. I am interested in the Bible because I believe it to be the truth of God. That would give me great motivation to know it more. The liberal scholar would, at best, want to show that the Bible is not the Word of God. I would think that is a harder sell and would attract fewer people.

The point I am trying to make is, when someone writes the words *most scholars* (as we have in Wikipedia), it often means that they referred fewer than a half-dozen scholars from that field. On my e-sword, I have over 90 commentaries on the Bible (I have never tried counting up the number of commentaries available for e-sword, but there must be well over 100 and perhaps up to 200 or more). I would be hard-pressed to find a single one who agrees with the quote from Wikipedia above, even though they reassure us that this is the view of *most scholars*. If you search hard enough, you can find some scholars who agree with the Wikipedia quote. However, in any search, you are more like to come across Biblical commentators who do not.

¹ From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorship_of_Luke-Acts accessed July 15, 2023.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Too often, people go to the book of Acts for inspiration and to try to develop a local church which matches the early church.

The Local Church, Then and Now

Book of Acts	The Epistles
<p>In many instances in Acts, the receiving of the Holy Spirit occurs separately from faith in Christ.</p>	<p>Believers receive the Holy Spirit at salvation. Even the most carnal church of the epistles—the one at Corinth—all believers had received the Holy Spirit. 1Corinthians 12:11?? (Baptized into Christ/baptized by the Spirit). We also know this because of what is lacking in the epistles—a call from Paul or one of the other Apostles for a church to encourage the believers of that church to seek out the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>The local church in Jerusalem held all goods and monies in common. Acts 2:44–45 4:32–35</p>	<p>This is not the common financial arrangement for today’s church and their congregation, nor should it be. Paul describes the proper financial arrangement between believers and their local church in 2Corinthians.</p>

The Local Church, Then and Now

Book of Acts	The Epistles
Signs, wonders, healings and the casting out of demons took place—particularly when believers were being evangelized and a local church was beginning.	Signs and wonders are in great abundance when God establishes a new program (or new dispensation). These signs and wonders gain a hearing for the person performing them. Today, the pastor has the attention of the congregation based upon the Word of God.
Evangelism began to take place in and around the Temple; and it was commonplace for Peter or Paul to enter a new city and walk right into the nearest synagogue and present the gospel there on the Sabbath.	Ideally speaking, evangelism occurs in three ways: (1) you, the individual believer, tell a friend, relative or coworkers about the Person of Christ; (2) a person with the gift of evangelism presents the gospel to a group (which may be done in dozens of different ways today and may involve technology today); (3) a person wanders into a church or goes to a local church with a friend or relative and they hear the gospel there and believe. The primary function of the local church is not evangelism but the stimulation of growth for the members of the congregation today. The pastor-teacher <i>feeds</i> his congregation today, that they might grow.
When the Apostles and their associates entered into a new city, it was common to go to the local synagogue and teach from there.	Believers who have the gift of teaching or evangelism today do not seek out local synagogues and teach there.
The book which is taught in the early church we call the Old Testament today. Much of what was taught was all about the OT and how it related to the Christ. As epistles began to be written, they were read and explained in the early church. Soon thereafter, they were copies and taken to other local churches.	The pastor-teacher today has the entire Word of God to teach from at his disposal. Entire chapters and entire books should be regularly taught in the local church, with frequent references being made to (1) the historical context of what is being taught; (2) the Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic which is used in any passage; (3) pertinent doctrines which are found in any passage which is being covered.
The Apostles and other early teachers established their authority with signs, wonders and healings.	The pastor-teacher of today establishes his authority by the teaching of the Word of God.
When people seek out doctrine and practices from the book of Acts, they rarely try to pattern their church after everything found in the book of Acts. Most of the time, people use the book of Acts to justify the use of <i>tongues</i> in their church. However, <i>speaking in tongues</i> is an unfortunate translation. Some believers in Acts spoke in known, foreign languages.	

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We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Book of Acts

Characters	Biographical Material
The 11 disciples	I do not recall any of the disciples standing out in the book of Acts, apart from Peter, who plays a big part; and James (not the Lord's half-brother) who is the first disciple in the Church Age who is martyred. Also John appears to act in conjunction with Peter.

The Principals of Book of Acts	
Characters	Biographical Material
Simon Peter	Peter plays an important part in the first third of Acts. He seems to be the Apostle who is teaching, evangelizing and getting arrested.
Stephen	Early on, the disciples chose seven men to do the grunt work, one of them being Stephen. Stephen gives a wonderful message, delving deep into the history of Israel, but when he spoke of Jesus at the end, he is martyred.
James	James, the half-brother of Jesus, is not an original disciple. He becomes the head of the Jerusalem church, but his decisions and regulations tend to favor traditional Judaism over the freedom of the Christian life.
Paul (Saul)	Saul is first presented in the book of Acts as a persecutor of Christians. On his way to Damascus, where he was leading a small group intent on disrupting the lives of several believers, Jesus knocks him off his horse (or whatever he is riding) and blinds him. Saul believes in Jesus, and, at some point begins to play a major part in the establishment of the Church Age, actually having deeper doctrinal understanding than Peter does (this comes out in the epistles; but not necessarily in the book of Acts).

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It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel to the Book of Acts
Luke is the logical prequel to the book of Acts, as it was written by the same person. Jesus is still on earth at the beginning of Acts in His resurrection body. Obviously, the Lord has been crucified, put into a tomb, and risen from the dead. He will ascend into heaven in bodily form in the first chapter.

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I came across this article when searching for a map.

The Geopolitical World of First-century Palestine (by Justin Taylor/R. T. France)
<p>Modern readers of the NT often know little about the geopolitical world of first-century Palestine. It is commonly assumed that “the Jews” were an undifferentiated community living amicably in the part of the world we now call “the Holy Land” united in their resentment of the political imposition of Roman rule to which all were equally subject.</p> <p>But, he says, “this is a gross distortion of the historical and cultural reality.”</p> <p>The northern province of Galilee was decisively distinct—in history, political status, and culture—from the southern province of Judea which contained the holy city of Jerusalem.</p> <p>Admitting that the following is a drastic oversimplification but hoping that it’s not a complete caricature, Professor France summarizes seven differences:</p>

The Geopolitical World of First-century Palestine (by Justin Taylor/R. T. France)

1. **Racially** the area of the former Northern Kingdom of Israel had had, ever since the Assyrian conquest in the eighth century B.C., a more mixed population, within which more conservative Jewish areas (like Nazareth and Capernaum) stood in close proximity to largely pagan cities, of which in the first century the new Hellenistic centers of Tiberias and Sepphoris were the chief examples
2. **Geographically** Galilee was separated from Judea by the non-Jewish territory of Samaria, and from Perea in the southeast by the Hellenistic settlements of Decapolis
3. **Politically** Galilee had been under separate administration from Judea during almost all its history since the tenth century B.C. (apart from a period of “reunification” under the Maccabees), and in the time of Jesus it was under a (supposedly) native Herodian prince, while Judea and Samaria had since A.D. 6 been under the direct rule of a Roman prefect
4. **Economically** Galilee offered better agricultural and fishing resources than the more mountainous territory of Judea, making the wealth of some Galileans the envy of their southern neighbors
5. **Culturally** Judeans despised their northern neighbors as country cousins, their lack of Jewish sophistication being compounded by their greater openness to Hellenistic influence
6. **Linguistically** Galileans spoke a distinctive form of Aramaic whose slovenly consonants (they dropped their aitches!) were the butt of Judean humor
7. **Religiously** the Judean opinion was that Galileans were lax in their observance of proper ritual, and the problem was exacerbated by the distance of Galilee from the temple and the theological leadership, which was focused in Jerusalem.

The result, he says, is that

even an impeccably Jewish Galilean in first-century Jerusalem was not among his own people; he was as much a foreigner as an Irishman in London or a Texan in New York. His accent would immediately mark him out as “not one of us,” and all the communal prejudice of the supposedly superior culture of the capital city would stand against his claim to be heard even as a prophet, let alone as the “Messiah,” a title which, as everyone knew, belonged to Judea (cf. John 7:40-42).

This may at first blush sound like interesting background material that is not especially helpful for reading and interpreting the gospels. But Mark and Matthew have structured their narratives around a geographical framework dividing the north and the south, culminating in the confrontation of this prophet from Galilee and the religious establishment of Jerusalem.

Professor France writes: “To read Matthew in blissful ignorance of first-century Palestinian sociopolitics is to miss his point. This is the story of Jesus of Nazareth.”

From [The Gospel Coalition](#); accessed September 28, 2023.

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I have decided to place this in the Introduction, so that it is near the beginning of the book and easy to find.

A Summary of the Book of Acts

Jesus ascends into heaven in the first chapter of Acts, telling His disciples to wait for the Day of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples are filled with the Spirit. They speak in foreign languages, evangelizing the people who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. They also heal the sick and do miracles.

Although Peter acts as the leader of the Apostles, a young Stephen is brought into the fold (as a deacon), but he clearly had the gift of evangelism. He evangelizes a group of Jews; but is killed by some of them in the end.

A Summary of the Book of Acts

Although Peter continues to act as a leader for the disciples, he is, about a third of the way through the book of Acts, eclipsed by Paul. Paul is first introduced as Saul, a persecutor of believers. He is converted by being directly confronted by Jesus. He is also blinded.

After a period of time, Paul, who discards his previous name, takes center stage in the book of Acts going on three evangelistic tours. However, in the third missionary journey, Paul chooses to go to Jerusalem, when he should have stayed in Ephesus; and possibly have gone to Rome.

Although Paul is warned not to go to Jerusalem, he goes anyway, and faces harsh punishment by the hand of God, who uses unbelieving Jewish leaders to administer the punishment. Finally, having been transported to Caesarea, it is suggested to Paul to go back to Jerusalem and complete his trial there, and he appeals to Cæsar, who is in Rome.

The last few chapters of Acts follow Paul on his trip to Rome, which trip includes a shipwreck, an amazing experience on the island of Malta, and being placed on house arrest in Rome. Although the book of Acts ends there, Paul apparently goes on a 4th missionary journey; and he is also arrested again and eventually executed by the state of Rome. Those things are not in the book of Acts.

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I have decided to place this in the Introduction, so that it is near the beginning of the book and easy to find.

Chapter by Chapter Descriptions for the Book of Acts

Chapter	Brief Description
1	Introduction by Luke, ascension of the Lord before the disciples; election of Matthias to replace Judas.
2	The Day of Pentecost; the gift of the Holy Spirit; the disciples speak in foreign languages; Peter's first sermon (primarily focused on Jesus); about 3000 souls added to the church; the nascent church in Jerusalem.
3	Peter heals the lame man by the Temple; Peter uses the sign of the healed man to speak to the people (again, the sermon is focused on Jesus).
4	Peter and John are arrested and appear before the council; Peter speaks to them of Jesus; they are not punished because the council fears the people; Peter and John are released; the nascent church holds all things in common.
5	Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Holy Spirit; the Apostles do many signs before the people (mostly while on the Temple grounds); the Apostles are put into prison but an Angel of the Lord frees them; they speak before the council again and refuse to be silent about Jesus; Gamaliel's sage advice to the council; the Apostles are beaten and released.
6	The disciples choose deacons to handle incidental work; Stephen, a standout of those chosen, is filled with the Holy Spirit, he does signs and wonders, and the council brings him in and parades in a number of false witnesses against him.
7	The council hearing is continued and Stephen gives a very long answer/sermon (which includes a history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Joseph; then Moses and the Egyptians; then Joshua, David and Solomon; and concluding with Jesus as well as an indictment against the stiff-necked Jewish people). Stephen is stoned to death and received into heaven.

Chapter by Chapter Descriptions for the Book of Acts

Chapter	Brief Description
8	Saul ravages the church; Philip brings the good news to Samaria (with signs, healings and the casting out of demons). The Apostles Peter and John show up, lay their hands on the new believers, and they receive the Holy Spirit. Simon the magician, who has believed, offered them money if he could learn how to do that. Philip speaks to the Ethiopian eunuch.
9	Saul, intending great harm against believers in this new movement, is struck down by Jesus on the road to Damascus. Saul is first put in touch with (a different) Ananias in Damascus; but soon, Saul is proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues. A plot develops to kill Saul, so he leaves Damascus and goes to Jerusalem. Due to other threats, Paul is taken first to Caesarea and then to Tarsus. Peter heals a man in Lydda—a man who had been bedridden for 8 years. Then Peter raises Dorcas from the dead in Joppa.
10	God sends Peter to the gentiles in Caesarea. Peter evangelizes many gentiles in the house of Cornelius and they receive the Holy Spirit.
11	Peter tells the legalists in Jerusalem that gentiles received him and the message of Jesus Christ with joy. Although some scattered Jewish believers spoke only to other Jews in gentile cities, there began to be a small number of them who began to speak to gentiles about Jesus. Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem to investigate this in Antioch, and he goes looking for Saul in Tarsus. After a prophecy is given about a famine to come, a relief package is gathered by Saul and Barnabas for those in Judæa.
12	Herod Agrippa (= Herod II or Agrippa I) begins to persecute Christians with a vengeance. He kills James and throws Peter in jail. An angel from the Lord guides Peter out of prison. Peter goes to the house of Mary (John's mother) and even though they are all praying for his release, they cannot believe that is him at the door knocking. Herod Agrippa gives a rousing speech in Caesarea, but is struck down by God there. After Paul and Barnabas take the offering to Jerusalem, John Mark joins them.
13	Barnabas, Simeon Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, and Saul begin the first missionary journey traveling from church in Antioch (which appears to have been a home base) to Cyprus and then to Antioch of Pisidia. Beginning with v. 9, Saul will be called Paul. When in Pamphylia, John Mark deserted them, returning to Jerusalem.
14	Paul and Barnabas continue the missionary journey in Iconium, then Lystra. Paul is stoned in Lystra and thought to be dead. They travel back to Antioch (of Syria), having appointed elders at the local churches which they had established.
15	The believers in Jerusalem began to dispute the things happening outside of Jerusalem. They believed that believers needed to be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses. Although Peter stood up against them, still a legalistic compromise document is put together and sent up north to Antioch to Saul, Barnabas and the church there. Paul and Barnabas then discuss a second missionary tour, but Barnabas wants to bring John Mark, and Paul absolutely refuses. As a result, Paul and Barnabas will go their separate ways. The second missionary tour begins in the final few verses of this chapter. Paul and Silas travel to Syria and Cilicia.
16	The second missionary tour goes through Lystra, Macedonia and Philippi. Timothy joins the team, Paul has a vision of Macedonia, Paul and Silas arrested in Philippi, conversion of their jailer.

Chapter by Chapter Descriptions for the Book of Acts

Chapter	Brief Description
17	<p>The second missionary tour continues through Thessalonica, Berea and Athens. Paul went three times to the local synagogue in Thessalonica, and is finally repudiated by the Jewish leaders there, who worry that these “have turned the world upside down.” The people were more receptive in Berea, checking Paul’s references in the night after he spoke. In Athens, Paul addresses the Areopagus and gives a talk on the unknown god.</p>
18	<p>Paul completes the 2nd missionary journey, going next to Corinth and then returning to Antioch. Paul meets Priscilla and Aquila, who had come there from Rome, since Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome at that time. Jewish leaders bring Paul before Gallio, but Gallio refused to rule on religious matters. It appears that Paul should have remained longer in Ephesus, but did not. However, he left Priscilla and Aquila there. A Jewish teacher named Apollos also taught the eager Ephesians.</p> <p>At the end of this chapter, Paul begins the 3rd missionary tour.</p>
19	<p>Paul spends this chapter teaching in Ephesus. He speaks to disciples of John the baptizer and they receive the Holy Spirit at his hand. God allows Paul to work many miracles, including casting out an evil spirit that an exorcism business was unable to cast out. There is a riot in Ephesus of those concerned that their goddess, Artemis (Diana), was not receiving much credence after Paul had been teaching there. Law and order in that city prevailed.</p>
20	<p>Paul continues the 3rd missionary journey, going to Macedonia, Greece and the coast of Asia Minor, to Troas, Miletus. Paul raises a young man from the dead, meets with the elders of Ephesus (who badly want Paul to come to Ephesus and teach for a year or two). However, at this point, Paul believes that he is being moved by the Spirit to Jerusalem, when, in truth, he is being moved by his own emotions.</p>
21	<p>By boat, Paul goes to Tyre, then to Caesarea and finally to Jerusalem. Paul is warned several times along the way not to go to Jerusalem, but he does anyway. His fellow travelers go along with him, even though they also believe that he should not go to Jerusalem. Paul encounters James, the half brother of Jesus, who continues to be swayed by legalism. Paul is arrested in the Temple and there is a large crowd there who would like to kill him. He is rescued by the tribune there and taken to the barracks.</p>
22	<p>Paul convinces the tribune to allow him to speak to the Jewish people. Paul gives his conversion testimony. When he gets to the part where he speaks with Jesus, the Jews object and call for his death. Paul is taken back to the barracks and about to be beaten, he points out that he is a Roman citizen and therefore is not subject to a beating interrogation.</p> <p>In the final verse, Paul is brought before the Jewish council (the Sanhedrin), which is continued in the next chapter.</p>

Chapter by Chapter Descriptions for the Book of Acts

Chapter	Brief Description
23	<p>Paul, when placed before the Sanhedrin, the High Priest calls for him to be hit. Paul objects and insults the High Priest (not knowing who he is). Paul then, speaks of himself as a die-hard pharisee, which starts an argument (as he expected) between the sadducees and the pharisees.</p> <p>Jesus speaks to Paul that night, telling him that he will give his witness in Rome.</p> <p>While this is taking place, 40+ men vow to kill Paul before they eat again. This plot is discovered by Paul's nephew, who first tells Paul and then the tribune.</p> <p>The tribune sends Paul to Caesarea under heavy guard (to protect Paul). Paul arrives there at the end of the chapter.</p>
24	<p>Paul puts his case before Felix, the governor (or procurator) of Palestine. First the charges are brought against Paul, and then he is given the chance to defend himself. Paul explains where their testimony is faulty.</p> <p>Paul remains in a minimum security prison for two more years, interacting on several occasions directly with Felix (in part, because Felix is waiting on Paul to bribe him to be let go).</p> <p>Festus replaces Felix as governor (in the final verse of this chapter).</p>
25	<p>Although Festus has a good reputation, he allows himself to be wined and dined by the Jewish elders in Jerusalem before trying Paul. He returns, suggests to Paul that he be returned to Jerusalem and be tried there, Paul objected and appealed to Cæsar.</p> <p>Herod Agrippa and his sister arrive, ostensibly to welcome Festus into the fold as the newest leader. Festus appeals to Agrippa to help him with his "Paul problem." He does not even know what charge to include on Paul's appeal paperwork.</p> <p>Festus spends a great deal of time speaking in this chapter; and the final few verses are Agrippa agreeing to hear Paul's case (which verses logically go with the next chapter).</p>
26	<p>Agrippa hears Paul, and agrees that he has not violated any laws. However, he then says that his hands are tied, as Paul has begun the appeal process.</p>
27	<p>Acts 27 chronicles Paul's trip to Rome, including a shipwreck at the end.</p>
28	<p>The ship transporting Paul crash-lands at Malta, but the native people there treat everyone well, providing a fire and meals for them.</p> <p>They are all welcomed by the island governor. When it turns out that his father is ill, Paul heals him, and, apparently, everyone else on the island.</p> <p>When in Rome, Paul is placed on house arrest and given a great deal of freedom. His only constrain is, he is guarded by a centurion.</p> <p>Jewish leaders asked to hear Paul speak and to give them information about this new sect. Some of them believed and some of them remained steadfast in the Jewish faith.</p> <p>Paul remained in Rome for 2 years. He was allowed to teach and evangelize during that time. People could come and go from his rented place as they pleased.</p>

You may have noticed that, on 3 or 4 occasions, the final verse (or final few verses) would be more logically placed with the next chapter. More than any other book, I would like to rearrange the chapter divisions to Acts.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Changes—additions and subtractions (for the book of Acts): Very often, when I begin a new chapter, I have either discovered a new translations, a new commentary; or have decided to leave out a particular translation or commentary. Sometimes, I make a minor formatting change. I have always placed such comments before the beginning of the first verse. So one formatting change is, *the addition of this more formal approach to changes, giving it a section of its own*. Many times, if I like a change a lot, I will occasionally go back and make that change in previous chapters.

Summary Charts:

The Book of Acts written by Luke										
	2 years A.D. 33–35		14 years A.D. 35–48		17–19 years A.D. 48–65 (or 67)					
	Foundation of the Church				Founder of Churches					
Sections	Spirit of the Church	Growth of the Church	Persecution of the Church	Expansion of the Church	First Journey of Paul	Second Journey of Paul	Third Journey of Paul	Arrest of Paul	Trials of Paul	Imprisonment of Paul
Chapters	1–4	5–7	8–9	10–12	13–15	16–18	10–20	21–23	24–26	27–28
Person	Peter		Peter and Philip		Paul (with Barnabas, Apollos, Timothy, Luke)					
Recipients	The Jews		Gentiles in Palestine		Gentiles outside of Palestine					
Places	Jerusalem		Judæa and Samaria		To gentile majority regions outside of Judæa and Samaria					

Chart reproduced from [Conforming to Jesus](#) accessed June 29, 2022.

One of the reasons why I chose this chart is, there are three important questions to be ask for each section: (1) Who is the key evangelist or doctrinal teacher? (2) Where is this chapter taking place? (3) Who is hearing the message presented?

There are quite a number of charts made up for the book of Acts, many of them quite similar to this one. I believed this to be one of the best that I came across.

Authorship of Acts



The Author of Acts (various sources)

There is very little doubt or disputation that Luke is the author of Acts, continuing where he left off from the gospel of Luke. Interestingly enough, the Updated Bible Version (a translation) actually casts doubt on the authorship of Acts and does not translate this book, not believing it to be a part of the Word of God. They are quite the outlier in this regard.

Barnes:¹

All antiquity is unanimous in ascribing this book to Luke as its author. It is repeatedly mentioned and quoted by the early Christian writers, and is mentioned as his work without a dissenting voice. The same thing is clear from the book itself. It professes to have been written by the same person who wrote a "former treatise," addressed to the same person, Theophilus (compare Acts 1:1 with Luke 1:3), and it bears manifest marks of being from the same pen. It is designed evidently as a continuation of that Gospel, since, in this book, the author has taken up the history at the very time where he left it in the Gospel Acts 1:1-2.

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Title of Acts

The Title for the Book of Acts (various sources)

Barnes:²

There is no evidence that the title, "The Acts of the Apostles," affixed to this book, was given by divine authority or by the writer himself. It is a title, however, which, with a little variation, has been given to it by the Christian church at all times. The term "Acts" is not used, as it is sometimes with us, to denote decrees or laws, but it denotes the doings of the apostles. It is a record of what the apostles did in founding and establishing the Christian church. It is worthy of remark, however, that it contains chiefly a record of the actions of Peter and Paul.

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¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Acts Book Comments.

² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Acts Book Comments.

When the Book of Acts Was Written (various sources)

Given the incredible detail found in Acts 27, which is all about the shipwreck, it seems logical that chapter was written very soon after it took place. Luke takes Acts 28 about two years further, but provides very few details concerning those two years. This would suggest that Luke completed Acts A.D. 62–64.

Barnes:³

Where, or at what time, this book was written, is not known with certainty. However, since the history is continued to the second year of the residence of Paul at Rome Acts 28:31, Acts was evidently written about as late as the year 62 A.D. And, since it makes no mention of the subsequent facts in the life of Paul, or of any other event of history, it seems clear that it was not written much after that time. It has been common, therefore, to fix the date of the book at about 63 A.D. It is also probable that it was written at Rome. In Acts 28:16 Luke mentions his own arrival at Rome with Paul. Since Luke does not mention his departure from that city, it is to be presumed that Acts was written there. Some have supposed that it was written at Alexandria in Egypt, but of that there is no sufficient evidence.

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Limitations of the History Found in Acts (various sources)

Luke put together most of the book of Acts based upon interviews which he conducted. At the end of this book, Luke is actually with Paul, so most of what Luke writes at that point is based upon what he saw with his own eyes.

I have two questions for Luke. Although Acts 27 is filled with details as to the nature of their shipwreck; Luke is missing some details of their time on Malta; and there are two years where Paul is under house arrest, and very little detail is given to that as well. I don't know why some of those details are so thin.

Barnes:⁴

This book has commonly been regarded as a history of the Christian church, and of course the first ecclesiastical history that was written. But it cannot have been designed as a general history of the church. Many important transactions have been omitted. It gives no account of the church at Jerusalem after the conversion of Paul; it omits his journey into Arabia Gal. 1:17; it gives no account of the propagation of the gospel in Egypt or in Babylon 1Peter 5:13, or of the foundation of the church at Rome, or of many of Paul's voyages and shipwrecks 2Cor. 11:25; and, it omits the labors of most of the apostles, and confines the narrative chiefly to the transactions of Peter and Paul.

³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Acts Book Comments.

⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Acts Book Comments.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

From Daniel Whedon: *Thirty-five years after the death of St. John, Justin Martyr says: "On the day called Sunday there is a meeting of all those residing in cities and the country, and then are read the memoirs απομνηματα, reminiscences, records) of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, as long as suitable. Then, when the reader has finished his part, the president (προεστως) delivers all exhortation to encourage the audience in imitation of these noble examples."*⁵

Although we do not know this to be the book of Acts, that would seem most likely to me. This would be supported by Paul's command that the first book of Thessalonians be read to the congregation as a whole (1Thessalonians 5:27); and that the letters written by Paul to be circulated among the early churches (see Colossians 4:16). This would suggest that, what was being read in the Sunday services at Justin Martyr's church would have been considered authoritative.

The Canonicity of the Book of Acts (various sources)

Acts was accepted as authoritative from at least A.D. 200 and on. Some believers quoted from it and cited it prior to that time (bear in mind that we do not possess all early Christian writings). There is very little difference between the acceptance of the four gospels and the acceptance of the book of Acts as authoritative.

See <http://kukis.org/Charts/ntcanon1.jpg> and <http://kukis.org/Charts/ntcanon2.jpg> (these are charts from Geisler and Nix's *Introduction to the Bible*, a reference book every believer ought to have).

Barnes:⁶

The canonical authority of this book rests upon the same foundation as that of the Gospel by the same author. Its authenticity has not been called in question at any time in the church.

Tertullian (c. 150–220 A.D.): *Run through the apostolic Churches, in which the chairs of the apostles still preside, in which the authentic letters of the apostles are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each. Is Achaia nearest you? you have Corinth; if you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi, you have Thessalonica; if in Asia, you have Ephesus; if in Italy, Rome.*⁷

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

stopped Whedon "THIRD"

Basic Summaries of Acts

Outlines and Synopses

⁵ Whedon's *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Acts, Book commentary.

⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Acts Book Comments.

⁷ Whedon's *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Acts, Book commentary.

Check New American Bible (2011) for an outline

General Outline of Acts (a chart); from [Slide Player](#); accessed June 29, 2022.

General Outline of Acts

- **Acts 1-12**

- Main Character: Peter
- Main City: Jerusalem
- Main People: Jews

- **Acts 13-28**

- Main Character: Paul
- Main City: Antioch
- Main People: Gentiles



Timeline for the Book of Acts

Date
Book
Chapters

Chart from http://preceptaustin.org/1_kings_commentaries.htm accessed March 12, 2016.

A Synopsis of the Book of Acts

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Outline of Acts (Easy English Bible)

- The apostles took God's message about Jesus to places near Jerusalem (Acts 1:1-8:3).
- The apostles took God's message about Jesus to other places in Israel (Acts 8:4-12:25).
- Paul's first big journey, to teach people in other countries about Jesus (Acts 13:1-15:35).
- Paul's second big journey (Acts 15:36-18:22).
- Paul's third big journey (Acts 18:23-21:16).
- Paul's last big journey, when he went to Rome (Acts 21:17-28:31).

From <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible/easy/acts/0/> accessed July 15, 2023.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Section Headings for the Book of Acts (Easy English Bible)

Incident	Passage
Jesus speaks to his apostles and he goes up to heaven	Acts 1:1–11
The apostles choose Matthias	Acts 1:12–16

Section Headings for the Book of Acts (Easy English Bible)

Incident	Passage
The Holy Spirit comes	Acts 2:1–13
Peter speaks to the crowd	Acts 2:14–41
How the believers lived	Acts 2:42–47
A man walks again!	Acts 3:1–10
Peter speaks to the crowd in the temple	Acts 3:1–26
The priests put Peter and John in prison	Acts 4:1–4
The Jewish leaders ask Peter and John questions	Acts 4:5–22
The group of believers pray to God	Acts 4:23–31
The believers help each other	Acts 4:32–37
Ananias and Sapphira	Acts 5:1–11
The apostles do some powerful things for the people to see	Acts 5:12–16
The most important priest puts the apostles in prison	Acts 5:17–42
The believers choose seven men	Acts 6:1–7
The important Jews take hold of Stephen	Acts 6:8–17
Stephen speaks to the Jewish leaders	Acts 7:1–53
The Jewish leaders kill Stephen	Acts 7:54–8:1
Saul puts many believers in prison	Acts 8:2–3
People in Samaria hear God's good news	Acts 8:4–25
Philip meets a man from Ethiopia	Acts 8:26–40
Jesus meets with Saul	Acts 9:1–19
Saul teaches people about Jesus	Acts 9:20–25
Saul returns to Jerusalem	Acts 9:26–31
Peter travels to Lydda and Joppa	Acts 9:32–43
Cornelius asks Peter to come to him	Acts 10:1–23
Peter at Cornelius's house	Acts 10:24–33
Peter speaks to Cornelius and to his family and friends	Acts 10:34–43
Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit	Acts 10:44–48
Peter returns to Jerusalem	Acts 11:1–18
The believers go to Antioch	Acts 11:19–30
King Herod puts Peter in prison	Acts 12:1–5

Section Headings for the Book of Acts (Easy English Bible)

Incident	Passage
Peter walks out of the prison	Acts 12:6–19
King Herod dies	Acts 12:20–23
Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch	Acts 12:24–25
The believers in Antioch send Saul and Barnabas to Cyprus	Acts 13:1–3
What happened in Cyprus	Acts 13:4–12
Paul and Barnabas go to Antioch in Pisidia	Acts 13:13–52
This is what happened in Iconium	Acts 14:1–7
This is what happened in Lystra	Acts 14:8–20
Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch in Syria	Acts 14:21–28
Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem	Acts 15:1–21
The leaders in Jerusalem write a letter to the Gentile believers	Acts 15:22–41
Timothy travels with Paul and Silas	Acts 16:1–5
Paul has a vision	Acts 16:6–10
Lydia becomes a believer	Acts 16:11–15
The Roman rulers put Paul and Silas in prison	Acts 16:16–40
What happened in Thessalonica	Acts 17:1–9
Many people in Berea believe Paul's message	Acts 17:10–15
Paul visits Athens	Acts 17:16–34
Paul visits Corinth	Acts 18:1–17
Paul travels from Corinth to Antioch	Acts 18:18–23
These are some of the things that Apollos did	Acts 18:24–28
Paul speaks in Ephesus about Jesus	Acts 19:1–10
The sons of Sceva tell bad spirits to leave people	Acts 19:11–20
Bad troubles happen in Ephesus	Acts 19:21–41
Paul visits Macedonia and Greece again	Acts 20:1–6
Paul visits the believers in Troas for the last time	Acts 20:7–12
Paul travels from Troas to Miletus	Acts 20:13–16
Paul meets with the leaders of the believers	Acts 20:17–38
Paul goes to Jerusalem	Acts 21:1–16
Paul visits James in Jerusalem	Acts 21:17–40

Section Headings for the Book of Acts (Easy English Bible)

Incident	Passage
Paul speaks to the crowd in Jerusalem	Acts 22:1–5
Paul tells the crowd how he began to believe in Jesus	Acts 22:6–21
The people in the crowd become very angry with Paul	Acts 22:22–30
Paul speaks to the meeting of Jewish leaders	Acts 23:1–11
The Jews in Jerusalem decide to kill Paul	Acts 23:12–22
The soldiers' leader sends Paul to Felix	Acts 23:23–35
The Jews say bad things about Paul	Acts 24:1–9
Paul tells Felix his own story	Acts 24:10–23
Felix and Drusilla listen to Paul	Acts 24:24–27
Festus travels to Jerusalem to speak to the leaders of the Jews	Acts 25:1–12
King Agrippa and Bernice visit Festus	Acts 25:13–27
Paul speaks to Agrippa	Acts 26:1–18
Paul tells Agrippa and Bernice about his work for God	Acts 26:19–32
Soldiers take Paul to Rome	Acts 27:1–12
The ship is in a storm	Acts 27:13–38
The sea completely destroys the ship	Acts 27:39–44
Paul on the island of Malta	Acts 28:1–10
Paul sailing to Rome	Acts 28:11–14
Paul in Rome	Acts 28:15–31

I often trust my source material too much. Paul is only on the island of Malta in vv. 1–10. I added two more headings missing from the Easy English Bible (for whatever reason, they have *Paul on the island of Malta* in vv. 1–31, which is simply wrong). If the EEB was that far off on the final chapter, how many other times did they not quite make the grade?

From <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible/easy/acts/0/> accessed July 15, 2023.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Brief Outline (from the New American Bible—2011)

- I. The Preparation for the Christian Mission (1:1–2:13)
- II. The Mission in Jerusalem (2:14–8:3)
- III. The Mission in Judea and Samaria (8:4–9:43)
- IV. The Inauguration of the Gentile Mission (10:1–15:35)
- V. The Mission of Paul to the Ends of the Earth (15:36–28:31)

From <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/acts/0> accessed July 15, 2023.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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The ESV (capitalized) will be used below.

Jesus Did Not Place the New Church on Peter's Shoulders

Although I have praised the many Catholic translations and have rarely criticized their added notes, this is a topic which should be dispensed with prior to the study of Acts.

The Christian Community Bible: *Jesus set down the foundations of the Church:...He put Peter in charge of the community (Mt 16:18) and made him the guardian of the faith (Lk 22:31) within the new People of God. He made the twelve apostles and the disciples a community of witnesses (Jn 15:16).*¹

Wrong, wrong and wrong.

Matthew 16:15 He [Jesus] said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ [= *Messiah*], the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:17–19 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter [= *Petros = a piece of rock*], and on this rock [= *Petra = a large stone*] I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever [this also means, *whomever*] you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever [this also means, *whomever*] you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

In the Greek, Jesus is not building His church on Peter (Petros) for He said He is building His church upon *Petra*, which is a *large rock*. We might understand this as a reference to Jesus (as the Revealed God is often referred to as the Rock of God in the Old Testament); or we can allow that rock to be Peter's testimony. That is, the New Testament church is based upon the testimony of believers, who say, "You, Jesus, are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!" This is the door through which every person walks to become a part of the church. The church is made up of believers with that same testimony.

Jesus clearly did not say, "Upon you, Peter (Petros), I will build My church." It is Peter's testimony which is key; it is what Peter said that was important. The keys to the kingdom is the testimony of Peter. What is the church built of? It is built of people, all of whom have the same testimony as Peter.

Now, when it comes to rule and regulation for the Church Age, one way of reading this passage is that Peter is in charge of developing Church Age doctrine. However, at that stage in the game—when Jesus said this—He was simply identifying the church, which was future from that time. No one there, apart from Jesus, would have had any idea that Jesus was speaking of more than simply an assembly of Jewish believers.

When it comes to specific Church Age doctrine, this is going to be developed by Paul. The peculiarities of the believers in the Church Age all go back to Paul, not to Peter and not even to Jesus. God placed a great deal on the shoulders of Paul—far more than He placed on the shoulders of Peter. On several occasions, Paul had to straighten Peter out, for he kept trying to follow the traditional practices of Judaism, and Paul explained to him, in various ways, "We are no longer under that system of beliefs." For instance, as Paul would later write, "There is no Jew or Greek," meaning, there is no difference between Jewish believers and Greek believers. They are all one in Christ. This statement seems rather tame to us; but this was earth-shattering when Paul wrote it (at least to Jewish believers).

Regarding the second false assertion, that Peter is somehow the guardian of the faith (whatever the heck that means), the passage cited is Luke 22:31–32 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he

Jesus Did Not Place the New Church on Peter's Shoulders

might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." In other words, "Satan wants to get his hands on you that he might crush you like wheat; yet I have prayed for your faith to be strong." And then Jesus will tell Peter how he is going to fail in the near future by denying Jesus thrice (hardly the context of God making someone the guardian of the faith).

The actual guardian of the faith (which is a phrase not found in the cited passage) is the actual Bible—specifically the New Testament. This is where our faith and practices are found.

The third wrong statement may not be so wrong. If we understand the community of witnesses to apply to the twelve Apostles and to all of the disciples of Jesus (those who have believed in Him), then the statement is true and accurate. If we confine it to the twelve (the eleven + Paul), then we are leaving out most of the witnesses.

¹ The Christian Community Bible; Acts of the Apostles; Introductory Material.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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Like the previous short essay, this was inspired from the introduction found in The Christian Community Bible. Again, I am not simply re-writing what they wrote, but covering the same topics more accurately.

Peter, Stephen and Paul in the Book of Acts

Peter provides continuity from the Age of the Hypostatic Union, which becomes the Church Age on the Day of Pentecost. Or, if you would rather, the Age of Israel ends and the Church Age begins.

First of all, God is not through with Israel and Israel is not rejected for good because of her failures. Almost the entire church begins with only Jewish believers. What changes is, God is no longer going to work through nation Israel, but God will work through the body of believers, which are called the church universal. The individual believers are built up in the faith at a local church. The first teachers were Apostles and men whom they recognized; but this eventually became men with the gift of pastor-teacher.

Peter, in the book of Acts, is primarily an evangelist and the doctrinal content of his letters is limited (but it is there). Stephen is representative of the great tradition of evangelists who present Jesus to the unbeliever, and lets them decide what they will do with Jesus. Although Paul appears to simply be another evangelist, there are two differences: (1) he will primarily go to the gentiles (as per God's plan); and (2) he will write most of the Church Age doctrines. Our faith and practices for this dispensation comes from Paul more than from anyone else.

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I may have to review this for accuracy. In the main, these points seem to be accurate.

Some Accurate Points from the The Christian Community Bible Introduction

From the geographical point of view, one can notice that the Acts bring us from Jerusalem, through Judea and Samaria, to Rome, thus following the mission to which Jesus appointed his apostles on ascension day (Acts 1:8). In the first seven chapters we are in Jerusalem, then in chapter 8 and those following, we see—of course, with some exceptions—the Church taking root in Judea, in Samaria and along the coastal plain; from chapter 13 onwards, we accompany Paul to Asia Minor and to Greece and finally, in chapter 28, to Rome, to the Palace of the Emperor, that is to say, to the heart of the pagan world.

Some Accurate Points from the The Christian Community Bible Introduction

There, the Book of the Acts ends abruptly, as if Luke, like the runner whose job is to accompany the Good News of salvation as it is spreading out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, has achieved his goal and thus fulfilled his contract. This in itself is sufficient to remind us that the Acts, no more than the gospels, do not pretend to be a biography of Peter and Paul, or a detailed history of the early Church, but a testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, the Holy Spirit is the veritable actor in the birth of the Church: this is the reason why many commentators, ever since the first Christian centuries, have not hesitated to call this book “The Gospel of the Holy Spirit.” With only slight modification we could use here the words of John in Jn 20:3: “The Spirit has accomplished many other signs which have not been written of in this book. These have been recorded so that you may believe that the Spirit is at work in the Church of Jesus Christ.”

Continuing in this same line of inquiry, Jerusalem constantly flows from the pen of Luke, (58 times). As he has done in his gospel, where the Holy City is mentioned 30 times, Luke points to Jerusalem as the place where salvation is accomplished and from where the Good News is to be taken to all nations.

Whereas The Christian Community Bible is an excellent translation, their notes tend to be sometimes wrong and sometimes very average.

From the Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles; The Christian Community Bible.

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Jesus is a fulfillment of the Old Testament; the church is not.

Not all Catholic approved translations have terrible notes.

Introduction to the Book of Acts (New American Bible—2011)

The Acts of the Apostles, the second volume of Luke’s two-volume work, continues Luke’s presentation of biblical history, describing how the salvation promised to Israel in the Old Testament and accomplished by Jesus has now under the guidance of the holy Spirit been extended to the Gentiles. This was accomplished through the divinely chosen representatives (Acts 10:41) whom Jesus prepared during his historical ministry (Acts 1:21–22) and commissioned after his resurrection as witnesses to all that he taught (Acts 1:8; 10:37–43; Lk 24:48). Luke’s preoccupation with the Christian community as the Spirit-guided bearer of the word of salvation rules out of his book detailed histories of the activity of most of the preachers. Only the main lines of the roles of Peter and Paul serve Luke’s interest.

Peter was the leading member of the Twelve (Acts 1:13, 15), a miracle worker like Jesus in the gospel (Acts 3:1–10; 5:1–11, 15; 9:32–35, 36–42), the object of divine care (Acts 5:17–21; 12:6–11), and the spokesman for the Christian community (Acts 2:14–36; 3:12–26; 4:8–12; 5:29–32; 10:34–43; 15:7–11), who, according to Luke, was largely responsible for the growth of the community in the early days (Acts 2:4; 4:4). Paul eventually joined the community at Antioch (Acts 11:25–26), which subsequently commissioned him and Barnabas to undertake the spread of the gospel to Asia Minor. This missionary venture generally failed to win the Jews of the diaspora to the gospel but enjoyed success among the Gentiles (Acts 13:14–14:27).

Paul’s refusal to impose the Mosaic law upon his Gentile converts provoked very strong objection among the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1), but both Peter and James supported his position (Acts 15:6–21). Paul’s second and third missionary journeys (Acts 16:36–21:16) resulted in the same pattern of failure among the Jews generally but of some success among the Gentiles. Paul, like Peter, is presented as a miracle worker (Acts 14:8–18; 19:12; 20:7–12; 28:7–10) and the object of divine care (Acts 16:25–31).

Introduction to the Book of Acts (New American Bible—2011)

In Acts, Luke has provided a broad survey of the church's development from the resurrection of Jesus to Paul's first Roman imprisonment, the point at which the book ends. In telling this story, Luke describes the emergence of Christianity from its origins in Judaism to its position as a religion of worldwide status and appeal. Originally a Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem, the church was placed in circumstances impelling it to include within its membership people of other cultures: the Samaritans (Acts 8:4–25), at first an occasional Gentile (Acts 8:26–30; 10:1–48), and finally the Gentiles on principle (Acts 11:20–21). Fear on the part of the Jewish people that Christianity, particularly as preached to the Gentiles, threatened their own cultural heritage caused them to be suspicious of Paul's gospel (Acts 13:42–45; 15:1–5; 28:17–24). The inability of Christian missionaries to allay this apprehension inevitably created a situation in which the gospel was preached more and more to the Gentiles. Toward the end of Paul's career, the Christian communities, with the exception of those in Palestine itself (Acts 9:31), were mainly of Gentile membership. In tracing the emergence of Christianity from Judaism, Luke is insistent upon the prominence of Israel in the divine plan of salvation (see note on Acts 1:26; see also Acts 2:5–6; 3:13–15; 10:36; 13:16–41; 24:14–15) and that the extension of salvation to the Gentiles has been a part of the divine plan from the beginning (see Acts 15:13–18; 26:22–23).

In the development of the church from a Jewish Christian origin in Jerusalem, with its roots in Jewish religious tradition, to a series of Christian communities among the Gentiles of the Roman empire, Luke perceives the action of God in history laying open the heart of all humanity to the divine message of salvation. His approach to the history of the church is motivated by his theological interests. His history of the apostolic church is the story of a Spirit-guided community and a Spirit-guided spread of the Word of God (Acts 1:8). The travels of Peter and Paul are in reality the travels of the Word of God as it spreads from Jerusalem, the city of destiny for Jesus, to Rome, the capital of the civilized world of Luke's day. Nonetheless, the historical data he utilizes are of value for the understanding of the church's early life and development and as general background to the Pauline epistles. In the interpretation of Acts, care must be exercised to determine Luke's theological aims and interests and to evaluate his historical data without either exaggerating their literal accuracy or underestimating their factual worth.

Finally, an apologetic concern is evident throughout Acts. By stressing the continuity between Judaism and Christianity (Acts 13:16–41; 23:6–9; 24:10–21; 26:2–23), Luke argues that Christianity is deserving of the same toleration accorded Judaism by Rome. Part of Paul's defense before Roman authorities is to show that Christianity is not a disturber of the peace of the Roman Empire (Acts 24:5, 12–13; 25:7–8). Moreover, when he stands before Roman authorities, he is declared innocent of any crime against the empire (Acts 18:13–15; 23:29; 25:25–27; 26:31–32). Luke tells his story with the hope that Christianity will be treated as fairly.

Concerning the date of Acts, see the Introduction to the Gospel according to Luke.

You can call Peter a leader in the establishment of the church at Pentecost and of the Apostles in general, without adding in that nonsense about the church being founded upon him.

From <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/acts/0> accessed July 15, 2023.

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Brief Introduction to Acts (2001 Translation)

About this book

A letter to TheoPhilus, containing the history of Christianity after the death of Jesus, primarily focusing on Paul. It seems to be a follow-up to the previous letter, now known as the Gospel of Luke.

Brief Introduction to Acts (2001 Translation)

It was probably written by Paul's traveling companion Luke the Physician about 64 CE, likely in Koine Greek.

Please notice the hyperlinks on the names, places, and events mentioned. These demonstrate the accuracy and authenticity of the account, as history records much of what's written about.

And although some modern critics claim that he got his dates wrong, it would seem that the person who wrote about the events shortly after they happened should be trusted more than those who dispute his numbers more than two millennia later.

From https://2001.bible/read/acts#_1 accessed July 15, 2023.

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Addendum

When I study a chapter of the Bible, one of the questions which I nearly always have is, *why is this chapter in the Word of God?*

Why Acts Introduction is in the Word of God

- 1.
- 2.

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What We Learn from Acts Introduction

- 1.

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The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time Period

Antiquities of the Jews - Book VII

CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF FORTY YEARS.
FROM THE DEATH OF SAUL TO THE DEATH OF DAVID.

CONCERNING ABIMELECH; AND CONCERNING ISMAEL THE SON OF ABRAHAM; AND
CONCERNING THE ARABIANS, WHO WERE HIS POSTERITY.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-7.htm> accessed . Josephus *Antiquities*; Book VII, Chapter 12.

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Edersheim's commentary on this chapter, with some slight updating and editing.

Edersheim Summarizes Acts Introduction

PREFACE

THE period of Israel's history treated in this Volume has a twofold special interest: political and religious. Beginning with the later years of David's reign, when the consciousness and the consequences of the great sin of his life had, so to speak, paralyzed the strong hand which held the reins of government, we are, first, led to see how in the Providence of God, the possibility of a great military world - monarchy in Israel (comp. Psalm 18:43 - 45) - such as those of heathen antiquity - was forever frustrated. Another era began with Solomon: that of peaceful development of the internal resources of the country; of rapid increase of prosperity; of spread of culture; and through friendly intercourse with other nations of introduction of foreign ideas and foreign civilization. When it is remembered that the building of the Temple preceded the legislation of Lycurgus in Sparta by about one hundred and twenty years; that of Solomon in Athens by more than four hundred years; and the building of Rome by about two hundred and fifty years, it will be perceived that the kingdom of Solomon presented the dim possibility of the intellectual, if not the political Empire of the world. What Jerusalem was in the high - day of Solomon's glory is described in a chapter of this history. But, in the Providence of God, any such prospect passed away, when, after only eighty years duration, the Davidic kingdom was rent into two rival and hostile states. Yet, although this catastrophe was intimated by prophecy - as Divine judgment upon Solomon's unfaithfulness - there was nothing either abrupt or out of the order of rational causation in its accomplishment. On the contrary, the causes of this separation lay far back in the tribal relations of Israel; they manifested themselves once and again in the history of the Judges and of Saul; made themselves felt in the time of David; appeared in that of Solomon; and only reached their final issue, when the difficult task of meeting them devolved upon the youthful inexperience and misguided folly of a Rehoboam. All this is fully explained in the course of this history. After their separation, the two kingdoms passed, in their relations, through three stages, the first one of hostility; the second one of alliance, which commenced with the reign of Jehoshaphat and of Ahab, and ended with the slaughter of the kings of Judah and Israel by Jehu; and the third again one of estrangement and of hostility. Of these three periods the first is fully traced, and the beginning of the second marked in the present Volume.

From the political we turn to the religious aspect of this history. It was indeed true that the empire of the world was to be connected with the Davidic kingdom (Psalm 2.) - but not in the sense of founding a great military monarchy, nor in that of attaining universal intellectual supremacy, least of all by conformity to the ways and practices of heathen worship, magic, and theurgy. The exaltation of Zion above the hills and the flowing of all

Edersheim Summarizes Acts Introduction

nations unto it, was to be brought about by the going forth of the Law out of Zion, and of the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2, 3). This - to confine ourselves to the present period of our history - had been distinctly implied in the great promise to David (2 Samuel 7.); it was first typically realized in the choice of Jerusalem as the City of God (Psalm 46; 48; 87.); and further presented in its aspect of peace, prosperity, and happiness in the reign of Solomon (Psalm 72.) to which the prophets ever afterwards pointed as the emblem of the higher blessings in the Kingdom of God (Micah 4:4; Zec hariah 3:10, comp. with 1 Kings 4:25). But the great work of that reign, alike in its national and typical importance, was the building of the Temple at Jerusalem. This also has been fully described in the following pages.

But already other elements were at work. The introduction of heathen worship commenced with the decline of Solomon's spiritual life. After his death, the apostasy from God attained fearful proportions, partially and temporarily in Judah, but permanently in Israel. In the latter, from the commencement of its separate national existence under Jeroboam, the God - chosen Sanctuary at Jerusalem, and the God - appointed priesthood were discarded; the worship of Jehovah transformed; and by its side spurious rites and heathen idolatry introduced, until, under the reign of Ahab, the religion of Baal became that of the State. This marks the high - point of apostasy in Israel. The evolving of principles of contrariety to the Divine Covenant slowly but surely led up to the final destruction of the Jewish Commonwealth. But, side by side with it, God in great mercy placed an agency, the origin, character, and object of which have already been indicated in a previous Volume. The Prophetic Order may be regarded as an extraordinary agency, by the side of the ordinary economy of the Old Testament; and as intended, on the one hand, to complement its provisions and, on the other, to supplement them, either in times of religious declension or when, as in Israel, the people were withdrawn from their influences. Hence the great extension of the Prophetic Order in such periods, and especially in the kingdom of the ten tribes. But when, during the reign of Ahab, the religion of Jehovah was, so to speak, repudiated, and the worship of Baal and Astarte substituted in its place, something more than even the ordinary exercise of the Prophetic Office was required. For the prophet was no longer acknowledged, and the authority of the God, whose Messenger he was, disowned. Both these had therefore to be vindicated, before the prophetic agency could serve its purpose. This was achieved through what must be regarded, not so much as a new phase, but as a further development of the agency already at work. We mark this chiefly in the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, which was contemporary with the first open manifestation of Israel's national apostasy.

Even a superficial reader will observe in the ministry of these two prophets, as features distinguishing it from that of all other prophets, indeed, we might say, from the whole history of the Old Testament - the frequency and the peculiar character of their miracles. Three points here stand out prominently, their unwonted accumulation; their seeming characteristic of mere assertion of power; and their apparent purpose of vindicating the authority of the prophet. The reason and object of these peculiarities have already been indicated in our foregoing remarks. But in reference to the characteristic of power as connected with these miracles, it may be remarked that its exhibition was not only necessary for the vindication of the authority of the prophet, or rather of Him in Whose Name he spake, but that they also do not present a mere display of power. For it was always associated with an ultimate moral purpose in regard to the Gentiles or to Israel - the believing or the unbelieving among them; and in all the leading instances (which must rule the rest) it was brought about not only in the Name of Jehovah, but by calling upon Him as the direct Agent in it (comp. for the present Volume I Kings 17:4, 9, 14, 20 - 22). Thus viewed, this extraordinary display of the miraculous appears, like that in the first proclamation of Christianity among the heathen, "for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" (1 Corinthians 14:22) - as Bengel explains, in order that, drawn and held thereby, they might be made to listen.

But even so, some further remarks may here be allowed; not, indeed, in the way of attempted disquisition on what must always be a prime postulate in our faith, but as helps in our thinking. It seems to me, that miracles require for their (objective) possibility - that is, subjectively viewed for their credibility 1 - only one postulate: that of the True and the Living God. It is often asserted, that miracles are not the traversing of the established, but the outcome of a higher order of things.

Given, that there is a God (be the seeming hypothetication forgiven!), and in living connection with His rational

Edersheim Summarizes Acts Introduction

creatures - and it seems to follow that He must teach and train them. It equally follows, that such teaching must be adapted to their stage and capacity (power of receptiveness). Now in this respect all times may be arranged into two periods that of outward, and that of inward spiritual communication (of Law and Persuasion). During the former, the miraculous could scarcely be called an extraordinary mode of Divine communication, since men generally, Jews and Gentiles alike, expected miracles. Outside this general circle (among deeper thinkers) there was only a "feeling after God," which in no case led up to firm conviction. But in the second stage personal determination is the great characteristic. Reason has taken the place of sense; the child has grown to the man. The ancient world as much expected an argument from the miraculous as we do from the purely rational or the logically evidential. That was their mode of apprehension, this is ours. To them, in one sense, the miraculous was really not the miraculous, but the expected; to us it is and would be interference with our laws and habits of thinking. It was adapted to the first period; it is not to the second.

It would lead beyond our present limits to inquire into the connection of this change with the appearance of the God - man and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church. As we have shown in a previous Volume, under the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was chiefly known and felt as a power. The "still small voice" marks the period of transition. "Prophetism" was, so to speak, the introduction of the "still small voice" into the world - first in a preparatory manner; in the fullness of time, as in all fullness, in the Christ; and finally as indwelling in the Church of God. These remarks will show what kind of questions are incidentally raised in the course of this history. Even in this respect the reader will have noticed progression in the successive Volumes of this Bible History. Otherwise also, it is hoped, he will mark it in these pages and in the notes, in the fuller and more critical treatment of all questions. A new feature here is the introduction of a few Jewish and Rabbinical notices, which may prove interesting and useful. In general, while I have endeavored to make my investigations thoroughly independent, and, so far as I could, original, it will, I trust, be also found that I have not neglected any sources of information within my reach. But above all, I would ever seek to keep steadily in view, as my main object, the practical and spiritual interest of this history. It all leads up to the Person of Christ, the Miracle of Miracles - the Miracle which gives meaning and unity to all others, and which is the truest evidence of them all. Thank God, we have sufficient and most firm historical ground for our faith in Him, as well as the inward teaching and the assurance of the Holy Ghost; sufficient, not indeed to supersede the necessity of faith, but to make that "blessed faith," so well grounded, so glorious, so joyous, and so transforming in its power, not only reasonable to us, but of obligatory duty to all men.

ALFRED EDERSHEIM. LODERS VICARAGE, BRIDPORT Easter, 1880

From <http://www.lewendwater.org/books/v5bhot.pdf> accessed . Footnotes were interspersed in the text and bracketed.

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It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Acts Introduction

A Reasonably Literal Translation

A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

A Complete Translation of Acts Introduction	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

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The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time:

R. B. Thieme, Jr. covered this chapter in lessons # of his **1972 David series**.

Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Acts Introduction

Word Cloud from Exegesis of Acts Introduction⁸

These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Acts Introduction has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

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Definition of Terms	Introduction	Addendum
www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in Kings

⁸ Some words have been left out of this graphic; including *Strong*, *BDB*, and *pronounced*.