# RESOURCES

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Calvary Chapel Lynchburg presents

# THROUGH THE BIBLE

with Pastor Troy Warner

# MY NOTES

# ACTS

With the book of Acts, Luke followed up his Gospel, written to Theophilus. In it he continues the story of the Church, beginning with the Ascension of Jesus. In it we see the Church baptized with the Holy Spirit and sent out proclaim the Good News of Jesus. The sweet early days are soon broken up by persecution and martyrdom, but the miraculous works of God continue. Through Peter God opens the door of salvation to the Gentiles, and then we see the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, later Paul the apostle. He takes the Gospel throughout the Roman empire, preaching to Jews and Gentiles alike, establishing churches everywhere he goes. The book ends with Paul awaiting trial in Rome, but the story of the Church is not over! Until Christ returns, we continue to write this story by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

## May 30, 2018

# About Acts

**Author:** Luke

**Date:** ca. 62 AD

**Genre:** History

**Purpose:** To tell the story of the expansion of the Church through the apostles by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Characteristics:** Stories that focus on the first days of the Church, the ministries of Peter and later Paul, with emphasis on the Gentiles and the Holy Spirit.

# Outline

**I.** Introduction **(1)**

**II.** Gospel to Jerusalem **(2-7)**

- **A.** Pentecost **(2)**
- **B.** Lame Man Healed **(3)**
- **C.** Persecution Begins **(4)**
- **D.** The Growth of the Church **(5)**
- **E.** First Christian Martyr **(6-7)**

**III.** Gospel to Judea and Samaria **(8-12)**

- **A.** Philip in Samaria **(8)**
- **B.** Conversion of Saul **(9a)**
- **C.** Gospel to the Gentiles **(9b-11a)**
- **D.** The Church at Antioch **(11b-12)**

**IV.** Gospel to the Ends of the Earth **(13-28)**

- **A.** Three Missionary Journeys **(13-20)**
  - **1.** Asia Minor to Jerusalem **(13-14)**
  - **2.** Jerusalem Council **(15)**
  - **3.** Asia Minor to Greece **(16-18a)**
  - **4.** Asia Minor and Greece **(18b-20)**
- **B.** Gospel to Rome **(21-28)**
  - **1.** Paul Arrested **(21-22)**
  - **2.** Paul on Trial **(23-26)**
  - **3.** Paul to Rome **(27-28)**

# Paul or Matthias?

In Acts 1, there are only 11 apostles after Judas's betrayal. So they pray to the Lord and cast lots, and Matthias is chosen to replace him: "And [Matthias] was numbered with the eleven apostles." (Acts 1:26) But some believe that it really was Paul who should have been the twelfth apostle. In his writings, Paul asserts himself as an apostle numerous times, calling himself "one born out of due time." (1 Corinthians 15:8) And the impact of Paul's ministry is unmistakable. Did they get it wrong in the Upper Room? Was their decision invalid since the Holy Spirit had not come yet?

The problem is that the Bible never indicates that Paul should have replaced Judas. Paul is called an apostle, yes, but so is Barnabas, so is James, and perhaps even a few others. The title apostle ("sent one") is distinct from being a member of the Twelve. Paul himself refers to the Twelve in 1 Corinthians 15:5, affirming Matthias's authority. And the Twelve were primarily to minister to the Jews, while Paul was sent to the Gentiles. So, without minimizing Paul's ministry, it is Matthias who is the true twelfth apostle.

# The Council of Jerusalem

In Acts 15, the first Church council settled once and for all that Gentiles would be admitted to the Church, without needing to become Jews or keep the Old Testament Law.

"God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith...We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

**– Peter**

# Questions to Think About

**1.)** The book of Acts spends a lot of time describing the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the Gospel. How significant was this acceptance? Do you take it for granted sometimes?

**2.)** The early Church turned the world upside down by the power of the Holy Spirit. Are you full of the Holy Spirit? How does God want to use you?

**3.)** What about the example of the early Church do you think we need to recover today? What can you do as a Christian to live it out today?

# Through the Bible – Acts

## *The Impact of Pentecost*

### *Introduction*

After Jesus rose from the dead, He spent 40 days appearing to His followers and speaking about the Kingdom. Before He ascended to Heaven He charged them not to begin the ministry of the Church until they had been empowered by the Holy Spirit. For 10 days the first Christians prayed together in an upper room, waiting for the Promise of the Father. Then, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them with wind and fire, and everything changed. We often associate Pentecost with the beginning of the Church and the outpouring of the Spirit, and that is correct. But that Day was so much more, even than that. Let's look at the various parts of the manifold impact of Pentecost.

### *The Inauguration of the New Covenant*

The Day of Pentecost was the first day of the New Covenant. "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah…I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people…I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-33). God promised through Jeremiah that He would make a covenant that was more than just external pressure, but would change the very hearts of people, forgiving their sins and making Himself known to them. This is what happened at Pentecost. The sacrifice of Jesus had been accepted ("This is My blood of the new covenant" (Mark 14:24)), and now God initiated this new way of relating to Him. Individuals no longer had to come to God through the priesthood and the sacrifices, but God Himself came down. Everyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ is forgiven and filled with the Holy Spirit, who changes their hearts. God has made His dwelling with men. As Peter said on that day, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

### *The Birth of the Church*

On an individual level, forgiveness has come to many. And on the corporate level, Pentecost represents the birth of the Church. The New Covenant was first for the Jews, but as Paul points out, just being an ethnic Jew is not enough to secure salvation. "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter" (Romans 2:29). There has always been a remnant of God's people in the nation of Israel (Romans 11:5), and at Pentecost, that remnant was made manifest through the birth of the Church. The Church is the body of God's true believers, those who are spiritually of the New Covenant, not merely physical children of Abraham. And as the book of Acts goes on to demonstrate, the Church is not limited to Jews, but is open to Samaritans and even Gentiles

as well. "He…has broken down the middle wall of separation…so as to create in Himself one new man from the two" (Ephesians 2:14-15). As promised in the Old Testament, God has opened up the family of faith to those who are outside the ethnic bounds of Israel. The coming of the Spirit demonstrated that birth was insignificant to salvation, that it was the Spirit who gives life, and since the Spirit came upon people from all nations, salvation is open to all. Peter said, "For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (Acts 2:39).

## *The Outpouring of the Spirit*

The most obvious element of Pentecost was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had promised that, "John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5), and that is exactly what happened. To be full of the Holy Spirit, in the Old Testament context, was to be full of power for God's purposes. Think of Bezalel, Samson, David and Elijah. It was especially connected with prophecy. This is why Peter said, "This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below'" (Acts 2:16-19). And the power was real! The newly-empowered Church spoke in tongues, prophesied, healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out devils and did all manner of signs and wonders. Most importantly, they preached the Gospel to a dying world. The powerful work of the Spirit demonstrated that Christ was indeed the Messiah and His Kingdom had come. God gave the Church power so that there could be a great harvest of souls brought into the New Covenant Church. "And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

## *The Beginning of the Last Days*

How long was this to last? Peter tells us: "In the last days it shall be…before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day" (Acts 2:17, 20). Pentecost was not just a special event for the early Church**,** but the beginning of the Last Days. Joel prophesied and Peter confirmed that these days would continue until Christ's return, with "Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood" (Acts 2:19-20). This is of course language of the end of the world. What began at Pentecost was the end of time. We are now on a collision course with the return of Christ and His violent judgment of the world. Until that day, however, individuals will be saved, the Church will carry the presence of God, and the Spirit will empower them to do great works to testify to the Gospel. Christ's people will be victorious and reap a great harvest of souls by the Spirit until the work begun at Pentecost ends with the return of the Lord.