Book of Acts – 4/14/20 Bible Study Outline

**Authorship**

It is not clearly revealed but most theologians place Luke as the author or Acts because of the introduction to Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3)

* The author would have been a traveling companion to the apostle Paul – the narrative changes from third person, “they” to first person “we” indicating that the author had joined Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-37; 28:1-16).
* Paul acknowledges they physician Luke was one of his companions (Col. 4:14; Phlm 24:2; Timothy 4:11)
* Beginning in the second century, early Christian writers affirm that Luke was the author of Acts

**Historical Background**

Acts is the second volume of a two-book series. The first narrative described “all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up (1:1-2). The narrative continues in Acts with the Holy Spirit coming to empower the disciples in proclaiming Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles.

Theophilus – more than likely Luke’s patron, one who funded the research and writing of his two books, not the title most “excellent” (NIV, KJV, NKJV)

**Message and Purpose**

Acts is unique because it links the Gospels with the Epistles by recording the birth and early history of the church, the expression of God’s kingdom for that age. When the disciples asked Jesus if the kingdom was coming at that moment, he told them it was not for them to know but they would see a manifestation of the kingdom’s power in the work of the church through the power of the Holy Spirit (1:6-8).

The rest of Acts demonstrates what happens when the power of the Holy Spirit was infused into the church. It become a critical asset for understanding the blueprint of the church today. It shows what happens when a church isn’t filled with Holy Spirit and what happens when the Spirit fills the church so that it grows with power and kingdom authority.

Outline

1. The Holy Spirit’s empowerment of the Church for Kingdom Witnesses (1:1-2:47)
2. Kingdom Witnesses in Jerusalem (3:1-7:60)
3. Kingdom Witness beyond Jerusalem (8:1-20:38)
   1. Kingdom Witness in Judea and Samaria, and the Conversion of Paul (8:1-9:43)
   2. Peter’s Kingdom Witness to the Gentiles and Escape from Prison (10:1-12:25)
   3. Paul’s First Missionary Journey (13:1-14:28)
   4. The Jerusalem Council (15:1-35)
   5. Paul’s Second Missionary Journey (15:36-18:21)
   6. Paul’s Third Missionary Journey (18:22-20:38)
4. Paul’s Arrest, Trial and Kingdom Witness in Rome (21:1-28:31)

Luke borrowed from Mark the use of “narrative summaries.” Luke used three major summaries which give us a glimpse of the inner life of the community. 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16.

2:42-47 The Fellowship of the Believers

**42**They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43**Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44**All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45**They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46**Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47**praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### 4:32-35 The Believers Share Their Possessions

**32**All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. **33**With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all **34**that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales **35**and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

### 5: 12-16 The Apostles Heal Many

**12**The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. **13**No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. **14**Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. **15**As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. **16**Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.