



BIBLICAL TRAINING CENTER

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Book of Acts - (Part 2)

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- 1. Authorship - Who wrote the Book of Acts?**
- 2. Date - When was it written?**
- 3. Purpose - Why was it written?**
- 4. Distinctives - What is it about?**
- 5. Excerpts from the Book of Acts**
- 6. Apologetics - Responding to critic's questions**

EXCERPTS FROM ACTS

1. Pentecost (Acts 2)
2. Ministry in Samaria and Gaza (Acts 8)
3. Conversion of Saul (Acts 9)
4. Conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10)
5. First Sermon of Paul (Acts 13)
6. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)
7. Paul message in Athens (Acts 17)
8. Journey to Rome (27-28)

1. Pentecost (Acts 2)

- The significance of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (50 days after ascension)
- Christ's **promise** fulfilled (Luke 24:49, John 14:16-17)
 - [Luk 24:49 NIV] 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."
 - [Jhn 14:16-17 NIV] 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever-- 17

the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

- The inception of the Church (Acts 2:4; 1 Cor 12:13)
 - [Act 2:4 NIV] 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
 - [1Co 12:13 NIV] 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body--whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
- The spiritual & **miraculous nature** of the Church (Acts 2:2-4)
 - [Act 2:2-4 NIV] 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
- Validation of Christ as Messiah (Acts 2:24)
 - [Act 2:24 NIV] 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.
- Christ's **ascension** means He was accepted by God (Acts 2:33-36)
 - [Act 2:33-36 NIV] 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, " 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ' 36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."
- The finished work of Redemption (Acts 2:38-39)
 - [Act 2:38-39 NIV] 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

2. Ministry in Samaria (Acts 8)

Acts 8 records a major step in **progress** of gospel going from Jerusalem to Rome.

- Three results from Stephen's Death (8:1-4)
 - The beginning of more intense persecution of the church
 - The scattering of the church and its attempt to go underground
 - The spread of the gospel outside of Jerusalem
- God used **persecution** to spread the Gospel, North and South
- Significance of the entrance of the gospel into Samaria (North)
 - It signaled that the gospel was moving out according to Acts 1:8.
 - The Samaritans were half-Jews, hated by the Jews (Luke 9:51-56, 10:33; John 4:4, 7)
 - So the gospel was breaking through these barriers!
- Philip brings the gospel to the Ethiopian in the South (Acts 8:26-38)
- The **first** conversion - Of Noah's three sons, he was the son of **Ham**
- Philip's job was to simply explain what the Scripture means. Many people don't need application, they just need the explanation.
- [Act 8:26-38 NKJV] 26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. 27 So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 33 In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." 34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, [here is] water. What hinders me from being baptized?" 37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your

heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

3. Conversion of Saul (Acts 9)

- Paul's conversion reported 3 times in book of Acts. Major step of movement of gospel to **gentiles**.
- The **second** conversion - Of Noah's three sons, Paul was the son of **Shem**
- Why was Paul, church planter & apostle to the Gentiles, such a unique person? From a human perspective.
 - Hebrew of Hebrews. Knew the law, able to refute Jews
 - Grew up in Tarsus, knew Greek culture and language
 - A Roman citizen
 - Theologically trained under Gamaliel (22:3)
 - Knew a secular trade (18:3)
 - Personality fitted for leadership: Zealous, with great theological insight
- The road to Damascus

Damascus was 150 miles north Jerusalem. Saul got letters from court allowing to go. Going to **synagogues because that's where Christians first met.**

Acts 9

1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

He knows it's God but doesn't know who the Lord is. Perhaps at that moment God was revealing to him that Saul didn't know God. No record of any repentance. Just the question.

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. 8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they **led him by the hand** and brought him into Damascus.

Perhaps evidence of an eye problem.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. 10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. 12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." 13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

One of God's purpose for Paul was suffering. Part of his call. 2 Cor. 6:4-5, 8-10, 11:23-28

Paul's sufferings

2 Corinthians 6:4–5 (NKJV)

4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

2 Corinthians 6:8–10 (NKJV)

8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

2 Corinthians 11:23–28 (NKJV)

23 Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

Ananias thinks Paul was already a believer. Just not filled with HS.

19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. 20 **Immediately** he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. 21 Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?” 22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

v.21 Says immediately began preaching. Result is people are dumbfounded. v.22 shows **period of growth. Was able to see Jesus in OT.**

4. Cornelius (Acts 10)

The **third** conversion - Of Noah's three sons, Cornelius, an Italian, was the son of **Japheth**

Acts 10 (NKJV)

1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, 2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

You can give, do good, fear God, but not be **saved!**

3 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, ... 5 Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. 6 He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."

Peter would give Cornelius words by which he would be saved.

21 Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?" 22 And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." 23 Then he invited them in and lodged them. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

This job wasn't for Philip (who was said to be in Caesarea previously). Job was for Peter.

Peter preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ and Cornelius and his household receive the HS

[Act 10:34-44 NKJV] 34 Then Peter opened [his] mouth and said: ...39 "And we are **witnesses** of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom **they killed** by hanging on a tree. 40 "Him God **raised up on the third day**, and showed Him openly, 41 "not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, [even] to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42 "And He **commanded us** to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God [to be] Judge of the living and the dead. 43 "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, **whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.**" 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the **Holy Spirit** fell upon all those who heard the word.

5. Paul's First Sermon (Acts 13) ... to the Jews in Antioch

[Act 13:16 NKJV] 16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with [his] hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

Major points:

- God prepared for the coming of the Messiah throughout Israel's history (13:16-25)
- Jesus, the Messiah was rejected and crucified, but God raised him from the dead (13:26-27)
- Faith in the Messiah provides forgiveness and justification, but rejection of Messiah will lead to **judgment** (13:38-41)

Paul's use of the OT to support his message

- In v. 33 he quotes Psalm 2:7 to support the resurrection
- In v. 34 he quotes Isaiah 55:3 to support the resurrection
- In v. 35 he quotes Psalm 16:10 to support the resurrection
- In v. 41 he quotes Hab. 1:5 to warn of judgment

He used OT because no NT

Response to Paul's message

- The Word **spread**, v. 49.
- The Jews incited persecution, v. 50.
- The Apostles moved on to new territory, v. 51.

- There was great **joy** for those who were saved, v. 52

6. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

Paul's 1st missionary journey: The first missionary journey took about 1 yr. They traveled about 1100 km. by land and 800 km. by sea. They had established a church that had both Jews and Gentiles in it. The events of the first missionary journey supported Luke's argument that a **transition** was taking place.

[Act 15:2 NKJV] 2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them **should go up to Jerusalem**, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

The Jerusalem Council

Conflict over circumcision (15:1-5)

Discussion about circumcision (15:6-21)

Decision of Apostles and elders (15:22-29)

Informing the churches (15:30-35)

Acts 15 (NKJV)

1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

Summary of Threefold argument

- Peter v7-11
 - God told Peter he would preach to Gentiles
 - He gave the Gentiles the HS
 - Neither Jews or Gentiles were able to keep the law
- Barnabas/Paul v12
 - Miracles confirm that God had accepted the Gentiles
- James
 - Bases his arg on Amos 9:11-12
 - Only after this age of God saving **Gentiles** will he restore his promise to the Jews.

- So should **not hinder** those who were presently reaching Gentile with the Gospel
- 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 16 '**After this** (after church age) I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; 17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, **Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name**, Says the LORD WHO DOES ALL THESE THINGS.'
- i.e., they are not going to reestablish Judaism.

The decision - four prohibitions of Acts 15:20, 29

1. Abstain from things contaminated by idols or sacrificed to idols.
2. Abstain from fornication.
3. Abstain from things of strangled (meat of animals in which the blood is not drained).
4. Abstain from blood, i.e. drinking blood.

Point of Jerusalem Council:

- Be very careful about putting **stumbling blocks** before people coming to faith. i.e., not adding to the Gospel.
- Great joy of the Gospel.

7. Paul message in Athens (Acts 17) “A-Paul-ogetics”

17 Therefore he **reasoned in the synagogue** with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. 18 Then certain **Epicurean and Stoic philosophers** encountered him. And some said, “What does this babblers want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

Epicurean Philosophers

Originally believed that the highest good in life was **happiness**. However, by Paul’s time it had degenerated into a pursuit of sensuality. They also believed that things happened by chance.

Stoic Philosophers

The Stoic belief was the attempt to live in harmony with creation, and recognized self-sufficiency, characteristics that were not necessarily bad, but it also had degenerated into a philosophy of **human pride**.

19 And they took him and brought him to the **Areopagus**, saying, “**May we know** what this new doctrine is of which you speak? 20 For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore **we want to know** what these things mean.” 21 For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.



They were **asking**, they wanted to know.

[1Pe 3:15 NKJV] 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always [be] ready to [give] a defense **to everyone who asks you a reason** for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

Paul's apology (defense, reason):

1. He **complemented** them v. 22

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;

2. He **built a bridge** between their religious beliefs and the gospel v. 23

23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:

3. He **quotes secular poets** v.28,
Epimenides, Cretan poet, 600 BC "In Him we live and have our being"
Aratus, Cilician poet, 315-240 BC "We are his offspring"

28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'

3. He first **taught them** pre-gospel basics v 24-27.

24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

4. But **calls for repentance** v 29-31

29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to **repent**, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the

Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

8. Journey to Rome (27-28)

Why would Luke spend so much time chronicling the ship ride?

Account of voyage showed God’s control over threatening events. God wanted to bring Gospel to Rome.

Paul’s **authority and authentication as a messenger of God** was demonstrated in several ways:

1. he predicted the shipwreck (27:10)
2. he predicted deliverance from the storm (27:22, 31, 34)
3. he admonished those on the ship (27:9-11)
4. the soldiers and centurion obeyed Paul (27:31-32)
5. he suffered **no harm** when bitten by a poisonous snake (28:3-5) - Note: Paul being bit by snake could be fulfillment of strange ending of Mark. **[Mark 16:18 NIV] 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."**
6. he performed many miraculous **healings** on Malta (28:8-9)

Ultimate message is the Gospel goes to Rome!

Acts 19:21 -- “I must visit Rome”

Acts 23:11 -- “You must testify in Rome”

Acts 25:12 -- “To Caesar you will go”

Acts 25:24 -- “I decided to send him to Rome”

Acts 27:24 -- “You must stand before Caesar”

Acts 28:14 -- “And so we came to Rome”

Acts 28:16 -- “We got to Rome”

Paul spends two years in Rome before his trial in Caesar's court.. v28-31

28 "Therefore let it be known to you that **the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles**, and they will hear it!" 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves. 30 Then Paul **dwelt two whole years in his own rented house**, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, **no one forbidding him**.

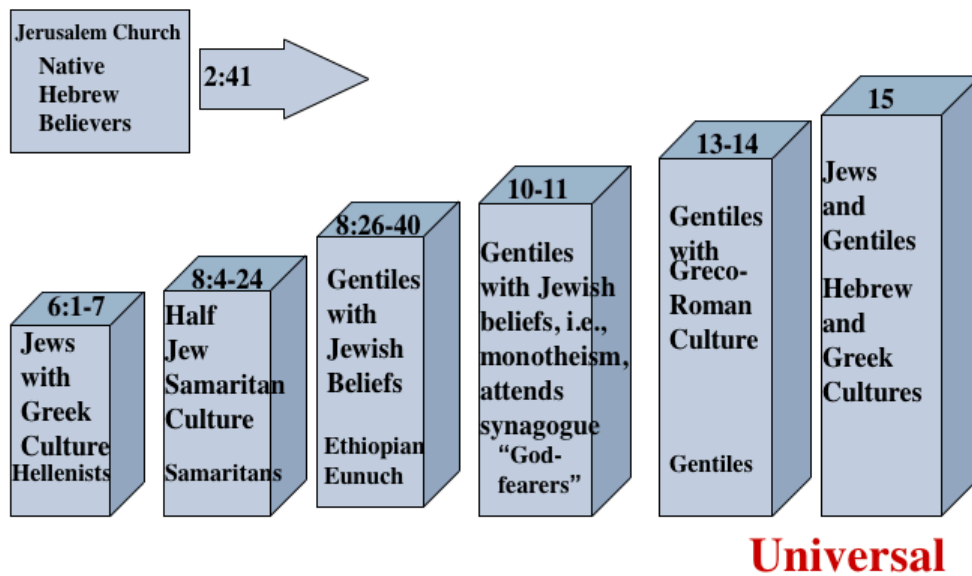
- Though Paul could not travel, he could teach and preach to all who came to him – and this he did.
- He also wrote letters; we have these two years of Roman custody to thank for the letters to the **Ephesians**, the **Philippians**, and the **Colossians**.
- Paul eventually had his appearance before Caesar Nero. It's entirely reasonable to believe that he boldly and powerfully proclaimed the gospel to him – as God had promised he would (Acts 9:15 and 23:11).
- It seems likely that Paul was acquitted of these charges, and by most estimates was free for another four or five years until he was arrested again, imprisoned, condemned, and executed in Rome at the command of Nero in a.d. 66 or 67 – as the historical **traditions** of the early church state.
- Probably, Luke did not record Paul's appearance before Caesar because one purpose of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts was to give the Roman court the **background and facts** of Paul's case in his trial before Caesar.

Summary: The Gospel becomes Universal

DYNAMIC REFLECTIONS

5. Gospel becomes universal

Time : ca. 19 years
Process: Six Steps



Apologetics - Responding to Critics:

Acts 2:16-21 Did Peter make a mistake in quoting Joel?

Acts 2:38 Did Peter declare that baptism was necessary for salvation?

Acts 4:12 Is Christ the only way of salvation?

Acts 9:7 Did Paul's companions hear the voice?

Acts 16:1-3 Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised when he spoke so strongly against it?

Acts 23:5 Did Paul lie when he said he did not know the high priest?

(see Norm Geisler; A Popular Survey of The New Testament 2007)