



**A PASSAGE THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT  
PART THREE**

# **The Acts of the Apostles**

**Chapters 13-28**

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7. (28:1-10) On what island were they shipwrecked?
8. How could Paul survive a snake bite like this (cf. Mark 16:17-18)?
9. How was Paul received by Publius and the rest of the islanders?
10. (28:11-22) Where did Paul and his companions find brethren? How were they received by them?
11. How did the Romans Jews receive Paul?
12. (28:23-29) What did Paul preach to them?
13. How did Paul characterize his audience?
14. (28:30-31) How did Paul spend the next two years?

## The Acts of the Apostles

Authorship: Luke, A.D. 63

The book is addressed to Theophilus, as Luke had also addressed his gospel account. Theophilus means “lover of God” in Greek and may, therefore, refer to an anonymous individual or someone who actually bore that good name. Effectively, the book is addressed to all of every age who love Jehovah and seek to understand the scheme of redemption and the pattern for the New Testament church.

The author is determined to be the beloved physician, Luke, one of Paul’s traveling companions (Acts 16:10, Second Timothy 4:11). Luke’s scientific and analytical nature and education bring to bear a detailed study of every aspect of this history.

The purpose of this epistle is to complete a two volume historical set on the life of Christ and the church he built. Luke’s gospel closes with an emphasis on Christ’s ascension; Acts opens with an account of this event and its effect on the apostles.

At a loss as to what they should do now, two heavenly men and the Holy Spirit map out their first steps. The apostles replenish their number and then begin taking the urgent gospel message to a dying world, beginning on Pentecost in Jerusalem.

This book is actually some of the acts of some of the apostles. The greater number of them was not with Luke and so their work is more obscure to us. Peter is the main character in the first twelve chapters, but the remarkable conversion of former persecutor Saul of Tarsus makes him the leading man thereafter.

Acts shows us the scheme of redemption at work as the preached gospel converts men to Jesus. Numerous conversion accounts are recorded, creating a pattern for preaching and obedience that has lasted ever since.

The book is also valuable in that explains the nature, organization, work and worship of the church to which we claim to be a part.

The Acts of the Apostles appears to be a sequel to Luke’s gospel account and picks up at the point of Christ’s ascension back into heaven as the apostles and disciples wait for guidance concerning what to do next.

As promised, the Holy Spirit arrives to remind them of Christ’s doctrine and to lead them into further truth. Immediately, redemption through the

blood of the savior becomes the overriding theme of the book and the church's mission. Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, audiences as small as one and as large as many thousands are instructed to believe the truth about Jesus, turn from their sins, confess their faith publicly and courageously, and then be baptized for the remission of sins. The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs just twice, once upon Jews (the apostles in Acts 2) and then upon Gentiles (Cornelius's household in Acts 10), fulfilling Joel's prophecy and making the gift of the Holy Spirit (his presence and grace) possible for all of mankind.

The word "witness" is used at least 30 times in the book, showing that the early church used the eyewitness testimony of the apostles and others to assert that this same Jesus was resurrected from the dead and is the savior of the world. Eschewing a social or recreational gospel, the various congregations appointed their own overseers and attended to a spiritual mission centered around the forgiveness of sins.

Our English word "martyr" comes from the same root as witness and the Acts shows how often professing Christ could bring about persecution and even martyrdom. Yet this willingness to die for one's beliefs is surely also good reason for heathen and Jewish audiences to consider the faith more seriously – if some are willing to give their lives for it, there must be something to it. If we are failing to take risks for our faith, we should not be surprised if the lost understand that our beliefs really don't mean that much to us.

The governing and practice of the early church becomes an obvious pattern. Outside of Jerusalem where the apostles were, local congregations appointed overseers (known variously as elders, pastors, bishops and presbyters) and deacons (or servants) and labored with evangelists and other teachers. Worship consisted of prayers, singing, the Lord's Supper and a monetary contribution for needy saints. No pope was selected and no denomination was established; they were simply churches of Christ.

Out of this book springs forth a seminal character in church history. Paul emerges from among the fiercest persecutors of the church to become its most tireless proponent, abandoning his influence and prosperity within Judaism to embrace Christ and risk his life preaching him. His efforts take him around the known world and put him in extremely dangerous predicaments, but as the book concludes he is still going strong. His dedication is an example for all those who wear the same blessed name of Christ.

## Lesson 13: Paul's Roman Sojourn

Acts of the Apostles 27:1-28:31

1. (27:1-12) How did the commander, Julius, treat prisoner Paul?
2. What was Paul's prediction regarding the fate of the voyage? Whose advice did the centurion value more?
3. (27:13-26) How did Luke feel when sight of the sun and stars was lost for many days?
4. What did the angel tell Paul?
5. (27:27-38) How did Paul stop the crew from sneaking away from the ship?
6. (27:39-44) What was the plan of the soldiers when their ship was wrecked? What did the centurion advise instead?

8. (26:1-3) Why was Paul glad to stand before Agrippa?

9. (26:4-11) To what sect of Judaism did Paul belong before obeying Christ? How would you characterize this sect?

10. How does Paul characterize his profession before he obeyed the gospel?

11. (26:12-23) When Jesus appeared to Paul on that road, to what group of people did the Lord intend to send the man? Why?

12. Paul's gospel preaching consisted of three important elements. List them.

13. (26:24-32) How did Festus interrupt Paul's defense? How did Agrippa respond to Paul's defense?

## Lesson 1: Paul's First Evangelistic Tour

Acts of the Apostles 13:1-14:28

1. (13:1-12) Name the two evangelists whose work this part of Acts describes. Who is their assistant?

2. How do Luke and Paul describe Elymas Bar-Jesus?

3. What helped convince Sergius Paulus that Paul was honest?

4. (13:13-25) What happened to John?

5. (13:26-35) What does Paul claim the rulers of Jerusalem ignored in killing Jesus?

6. How did God beget Jesus, according to verse 33?

7. (13:36-43) What benefit was received by those who believed in the identity and resurrection of Jesus?

8. What warning did Paul give to the scoffers?

9. (13:44-51) Who judged the scoffers to be unworthy of eternal life?

10. (14:1-7) What did the unbelieving Jews do?

11. (14:8-20) How many months or years did Paul's healing require? Should we expect the same from today's "faith healers"?

12. How did the people of Lystra react to Paul's miraculous healing of the lame man?

13. What did these people do at the Jews' influence?

14. (14:21-28) How did they establish the autonomy of each local congregation?

15. What did they do upon returning to Antioch?

## Lesson 12: Defense Before Agrippa

Acts of the Apostles 25:1-26:32

1. (25:1-12) What was the plot of the Jewish high priest and the chief men? Is this proper behavior for men in their position?

2. In what three areas did Paul claim innocence to Festus?

3. Why did Festus ask him about facing these charges in Jerusalem?

4. What were Paul's opinions of the death penalty?

5. How did Paul escape the ill-fated return to Jerusalem?

6. (25:13-22) Festus tells Agrippa what is truly the heart of the Jews' problems with Paul. What is it?

7. (25:23-27) Festus reveals his concerns about sending Paul on to Caesar. What are they?

7. For what reason did Paul always strive to be inoffensive in conscience toward God and men?

8. (24:17-21) What charge did he make against the Asian Jews who brought all this trouble on him?

9. What one statement did he recognize could have bothered his accusers?

10. (24:22-23) For whom did Felix now adjourn the proceedings? How was Paul to be treated in the interim?

11. (24:24-26) What is peculiar about Drusilla?

12. What three things did Paul preach about to them?

13. (24:27) What happened when Felix left office?

## Lesson 2: Conflict Over Circumcision

Acts of the Apostles 15:1-35

1. (15:1-5) What doctrine were the Judean teachers bringing to Antioch? Of what Jewish sect were the Judean teachers? Why was this teaching particularly unwelcome in Antioch (11:19-21)?

2. What position on this doctrine did Paul and Barnabas take? How did they propose to handle the dispute?

3. (15:6-12) What evidence did Peter present to prove that circumcision was not necessary for Gentiles to gain God's approval?

4. Were Peter, Paul and Barnabas teaching that men should not be circumcised?

5. (15:13-21) To what prophet did James appeal in his reasoning? What did this prophet add to dispel the controversy?

6. James did feel that four prohibitions should be observed by Gentile converts. List them.

7. The conclusions of this study are very far-reaching. What place did circumcision now hold in the law of the kingdom of Christ (cf. Gal. 5:1-6, Col. 2:11-12)?

8. Were Jews forbidden by this study to circumcise their sons?

9. (15:22-29) Did James and the leaders of the Jerusalem congregation take responsibility for instigating the doctrine that Gentiles must be circumcised to be saved?

10. (15:30-35) How was the letter received back in Antioch?

11. Denominational people will contend that this passage authorizes annual denominational conventions to create and enforce creeds and decide other denominational matters. Why is that erroneous?

## Lesson II: Paul's Defense Before Felix

Acts of the Apostles 23:23-24:27

1. (23:23-35) Why did Claudius Lysias call for so many people to accompany Paul to Caesarea?

2. With what violation of Roman law was Paul charged? Why was he in custody?

3. What reason did Felix give for delaying Paul's hearing?

4. (24:1-9) Who were Paul's accusers that came down from Jerusalem for his hearing? What charge did they levy?

5. (24:10-16) Why did Paul express gratitude that Felix was judging him?

6. Did Paul confess all the charges against him? What did he confess and what did he deny?

6. (23:12-21) What oath did some of the Jews take the next day?

7. Who foiled their plot? How?

## Lesson 3: The Macedonian Call

Acts of the Apostles 15:36-16:40

1. (15:36-41) What was Paul's next trip? What caused friction between him and Barnabas?

2. What is the composition of the two preaching pairs?

3. (16:1-5) Whom did they meet in Derbe? Describe him.

4. (16:6-10) What kept them from entering Bithynia? What beckoned them to Macedonia instead?

5. (16:11-15) What did they do upon arriving first in Philippi?

6. How was Lydia converted?

7. (16:16-24) Describe the slave girl Paul encounters next. How did her owners react when Paul exorcised the spirit?

9. What sentence did the magistrates issue?

10. (16:25-34) What were the preachers doing at midnight?

11. How were they released from their bonds?

12. How did the jailer react to this scene? What stopped him?

13. How did the jailer show his penitence? Why didn't they wait until an official church assembly to baptize him? Why didn't they take a vote on his "experience"?

14. (16:35-40) Why did Paul object to being released in the morning by the magistrates?

## Lesson 10: Sanhedrin Defense

Acts of the Apostles 23:1-35

1. (22:30-23:11) Before whom is Paul now being interrogated?

2. What claim does Paul make as his speech begins? How can this be reconciled with his record as a zealous persecutor of saints?

3. How did the chief priest respond? What did Paul say? Why did he then apologize?

4. What realization shaped Paul's strategy in dealing with this crowd?

5. What prophecy does Paul receive once back in his barracks?

5. (22:22-29) What made the crowd cease listening to Paul and demand his death?

6. What claim did Paul make that troubled the Roman soldiers?

## Lesson 4: Greece

Acts of the Apostles 17:1-34

1. (17:1-9) Where did Paul find an audience upon arriving in Thessalonica? What was his lesson about?

2. Some people today claim this passage shows that Christians should continue to keep the Sabbath according to the law of Moses. What do the following passages indicate about the Sabbath?

- Exodus 31:12-17:
- Numbers 15:32-36:
- Numbers 28:1-2, 9-10:
- Second Corinthians 3:4-8:

3. Who opposed Paul in Thessalonica? Why? What did they do?

4. (17:10-15) What does Luke say about the Bereans?

5. (17:16-34) What provoked Paul's spirit in Athens? What did he do about it?

6. What was the hobby of the Athenians?

7. Whom did Paul proclaim to them?

8. What comment does Paul make about God's accessibility?

9. How will a plea of ignorance in the judgment day affect one's eternal fate? Why?

## Lesson 9: Paul's Defense

Acts of the Apostles 22:1-29

1. (22:1-5) How does Paul describe his life before obeying Jesus?

2. (22:6-11) What affect did this light and the message Paul heard have on him?

3. (22:12-16) What did Ananias tell Paul in Damascus?

4. (22:17-21) Why did Jesus send Paul out of Jerusalem?

7. What did the Jerusalem elders suggest Paul do to assuage the concerns of the Hebrew saints?

8. Did this suggestion indicate that the Jerusalem elders had changed their minds about the relationship between Gentiles and the law of Moses?

9. (21:26-29) Of what did the Asian Jews accuse Paul?

10. (21:30-36) What prevented them from killing Paul right then?

11. Did the riotous Jews immediately respect the authority of the Roman soldiers and cease afflicting Paul?

12. (21:37-40) Who did the commander think Paul was?

13. What request did Paul then make of the commander?

## Lesson 5: Corinth

Acts of the Apostles 18:1-28

1. (18:1-11) Whom did Paul meet upon arriving in Corinth?

2. How did Paul support himself? When did he stop doing that?

3. Whom did Paul blame for the Jews' rejection of his teaching?

4. What did God mean when he told Paul that he had many people in Corinth and not to be afraid?

5. (18:12-17) Why did Gallio refuse to hear the Jews' case against Paul?

6. Was Paul really persuading people to worship God contrary to the law?

7. What do we learn about Gallio's character by comparing verses 14-15 with what happens in verse 17?

8. (18:18-23) Who became Paul's new traveling companions? What did they do as they traveled from church to church?

## Lesson 8: Jewish Danger

Acts of the Apostles 21:1-40

1. (21:1-6) Where was Paul going and why was he in such a hurry (20:13-16)? Why did Paul's ship land at Tyre?

2. What discovery led Paul to remain at Tyre for a week? What was the attitude in his departure from there?

3. (21:7-14) Whom did Paul and his companions meet again in Caesarea? Why is this man noteworthy?

4. What was the prophecy of Agabus? How are Paul's words here somewhat like those of Christ before the crucifixion (John 12:27-28)?

5. (21:15-25) How did the Jerusalem elders react to news that many Gentiles were becoming God's elect?

6. Why then did they express concern to Paul about his work among the Gentiles?

6. What awaited Paul in Jerusalem?

7. (20:25-27) How could Paul claim that he was innocent of the blood of all men? What has this to do with his former life as a persecutor?

8. (20:28-35) What word does Paul use that is evidently interchangeable with elders? How does he compare their work to an occupation involving animals?

9. What warning did he give these men?

10. (20:36-38) What made these men weep?

## Lesson 6: Ephesus Work

Acts of the Apostles 18:24-19:41

1. (18:24-28) How does Luke describe Apollos?

2. How did Priscilla and Aquila handle his deficiency?

3. How did Apollos handle the Jews in Achaia?

4. (19:1-10) Did these disciples receive the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit when they obeyed the baptism of John? When they obeyed the baptism of Jesus? When?

5. (19:11-20) How did an evil spirit respond to the exorcism attempts of the seven sons of Sceva?

6. How did the magicians bear fruits worthy of repentance?

7. (19:21-27) What was the complaint leveled against the Way by Demetrius? How did the people respond to his speech?

8. (19:35-41) Who put an end to the riot? How?

## Lesson 7: The Ephesian Elders

Acts of the Apostles 20:1-38

1. (20:1-6) What did Paul do both for the disciples in Corinth and those in Macedonia? Explain.

2. (20:7-12) What did the disciples do on the first day of the week? Why is this significant?

3. What happened to Eutychus?

4. (20:13-16) Why was Paul opposed to spending time in Asia?

5. (20:17-24) Who met Paul in Miletus? For what purpose?