

# THE PASTOR'S ESSENTIALS<sup>©</sup>

## OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

<sup>13</sup> "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. <sup>14</sup> BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.  
MATTHEW 7:13-14

**es-sen-tials** (i-sĕn'shĕlz) – *noun* – those things that are necessary and basic to life. In biochemistry essentials are substances that are required for normal functioning but cannot be synthesized by the body and therefore must be included in the diet. Essentials are those things that are fundamental to the spiritual health of the professing Christian.

## *Acts of the Apostles* A BIBLE STUDY

### *Setting the Agenda:*

The purpose of *Acts of the Apostles: A Bible Study* is

1. to aid us in developing a clearer understanding of *Acts of the Apostles* (clear, accurate exegesis of the scriptural passages),
2. to help us experience the true nature and meaning of the writing of *Acts of the Apostles* (God's truth),
3. to explain to us how *Acts of the Apostles* speaks to us as individual Christian believers and as Christ's body, the church (contemporary relevance and significance to life's issues), and
4. to illustrate to us how *Acts of the Apostles* shapes our lives and faith as twenty-first century Christians (to make the truth of God and the issues of life collide violently at the intersections of the consciousness)<sup>1</sup>.

The structure of the course will be *interactive* and *participatory*. Weekly assignments will include the students' answers to questions on prepared handouts. Students' answers will be based on the selected reading assignments for the week.

Students will use a good study Bible with references and notes. The leader will be using multiple translations, from *word-for-word* to *thought-for-thought*,

- the *NIV (New International Version 1978, 1984)* thought-for-thought/balanced,
- the *NKJV (New King James Version)*, word-for-word/more literal,
- the *ESV (English Standard Version)*, word-for-word/essentially literal,
- the *NASB (New American Standard Bible)*, word-for-word/literal, or
- other contemporary study versions are acceptable for this course (p. 9).

To honor the time of the students participating in this course, we will make every effort to limit our class time to between *sixty* and *seventy-five* minutes.

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Andrews, Senior Pastor, Retired – Lake Bible Church – Lake Oswego, Oregon. 1991 - 2024  
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### Outline of the Major Divisions

#### SESSION ONE

##### Introduction to *Acts*

- A. *Acts*' Place in Biblical Studies
- B. Probable Authorship of *Acts of the Apostles*
- C. Origin, Audience, and Date of Composition
- D. Theology and Purpose of *Acts*

##### Introduction: The Constitutive Events of the Christian Mission (1:1-2:41)

- A. A Resumptive Preface (1:1-5)
- B. The Mandate to Witness (1:6-8)
- C. The Ascension (1:9-11)
- D. The Full Complement of Apostles (1:12-26)
  - 1. In the Upper Room (1:12-14)
  - 2. Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas Iscariot (1:15-26)

#### SESSION TWO

- E. The Coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1-41)
  - 1. The Miracle of Pentecost (2:1-13)
  - 2. Peter's Sermon at Pentecost (2:14-41)
    - a. *Apologia* Section (2:14-21)
    - b. *Kerygma* Section (2:22-36)
    - c. A Call to Repentance and a Promise of Blessing (2:37-41)

#### SESSION THREE

##### Part 1: The Christian Mission to the Jewish World (2:42-12:24)

- I. The Earliest Days of the Church at Jerusalem (2:42-6:7)
  - A. A Thesis Paragraph on the State of the Early Church (2:42-47)
  - B. A Crippled Beggar Healed (3:1-26)
    - 1. The Healing (3:1-10)
    - 2. Peter's Sermon in Solomon's Colonnade (3:11-26)

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### **C. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (4:1-31)**

1. The Arrest of Peter and John (4:1-7)
2. Peter's Defense and Witness (4:8-12)
3. The Apostles Warned and Released (4:13-22)
4. The Church's Praise and Petition (4:23-31)

### **SESSION FOUR**

### **D. Christian Concern Expressed in Sharing (4:32-5:11)**

1. Believers Share Their Possessions (4:32-35)
2. The Generosity of Barnabas (4:36-37)
3. The Deceit of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)

### **E. The Apostles Again Before the Sanhedrin (5:12-42)**

1. Miraculous Signs and Wonders (5:12-16)
2. The Arrest and Trial of the Apostles (5:17-33)
3. Gamaliel's Wise Counsel of Moderation (5:34-40)
4. The Apostles' Rejoicing and Continued Ministry (5:41-42)

### **F. The Hellenists' Presence and Problem in the Church (6:1-6)**

### **G. A Summary Statement (6:7)**

### **SESSION FIVE**

### **II. Critical Events in the Lives of Three Pivotal Figures (6:8-9:31)**

#### **A. The Martyrdom of Stephen (6:8-8:3)**

1. Opposition to Stephen's Ministry (6:8-7:1)
2. Stephen's Defense Before the Sanhedrin (7:2-53)
  - a. On the Land (7:2-36)
  - b. On the Law (7:37-43)
  - c. On the Temple (7:44-50)
  - d. The Indictment (7:51-53)
3. The Stoning of Stephen (7:54-8:1a)
4. The Immediate Aftermath (8:1b-3)

### **SESSION SIX**

#### **B. The Early Ministries of Philip (8:4-40)**

1. The Evangelization of Samaria (8:4-25)
2. An Ethiopian Eunuch Converted (8:26-40)

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### SESSION SEVEN

- C. The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (9:1-30)
  - 1. The Christ Encounter on the Damascus Road (9:1-9)
  - 2. Ananias's Ministry to Saul (9:10-19a)
  - 3. Saul's Conversion Evidenced in Damascus (9:19b-25)
  - 4. Saul's Reception at Jerusalem (9:26-30)
- D. A Summary Statement (9:31)

### SESSION EIGHT

- III. Advances of the Gospel in Palestine-Syria (9:32-12:24)
  - A. The Ministry of Peter in the Maritime Plain of Palestine (9:32-43)
    - 1. Aeneas Healed at Lydda (9:32-35)
    - 2. Dorcas Raised at Joppa (9:36-43)
  - B. The Conversion of Cornelius at Caesarea (10:1-11:18)
    - 1. Cornelius's Vision (10:1-8)
    - 2. Peter's Vision (10:9-16)
    - 3. Messengers from Cornelius Arrive at Joppa (10:17-23a)
    - 4. Peter's Reception by Cornelius (10:23b-33)
    - 5. Peter's Sermon in Cornelius's House (10:34-43)
    - 6. Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit (10:44-48)
    - 7. The Response of the Jerusalem Church (11:1-18)

### SESSION NINE

- C. The Church at Antioch of Syria (11:19-30)
  - 1. The Founding of the Church (11:19-26)
  - 2. The Famine Relief for Jerusalem (11:27-30)
- D. Divine Intervention on Behalf of the Jerusalem Church (12:1-23)
  - 1. The Deliverance of Peter (12:1-19a)
  - 2. The Death of Herod Agrippa I (12:19b-23)
- E. A Summary Statement (12:24)

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### SESSION TEN

Part 2: The Christian Mission to the Gentile World (12:25-28:31)

IV. The First Missionary Journey and the Jerusalem Council (12:25-16:5)

- A. The Missioners Sent Out (12:25-13:3)
- B. The Mission on Cyprus and John Mark's Departure (13:4-13)
- C. At Antioch of Pisidia (13:14-52)
  - 1. A Welcome Extended at Antioch (13:14-15)
  - 2. Paul's Synagogue Sermon at Antioch (13:16-41)
  - 3. Varying Responses to the Sermon (13:42-45)
  - 4. To the Jews First, but also to the Gentiles (13:46-52)

### SESSION ELEVEN

D. At Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe and the Return to Antioch (14:1-28)

- 1. The Ministry at Iconium (14:1-7)
- 2. The Ministry at Lystra (14:8-20)
- 3. The Ministry at Derbe and the Return to Antioch (14:21-28)

### SESSION TWELVE

E. The Jerusalem Council (15:1-29)

- 1. The Delegation from Syrian Antioch (15:1-4)
- 2. The Nature and Course of the Debate (15:5-12)
- 3. The Summing Up by James (15:13-21)
- 4. The Decision and Letter of the Council (15:22-29)

F. The Reception of the Council's Decision and of the Letter (15:30-16:4)

- 1. At Antioch of Syria (15:30-35)
- 2. Disagreement and Two Missionary Teams (15:36-41)
- 3. Paul Adds Timothy to the Team in Galatia (16:1-4)

G. A Summary Statement (16:5)

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### SESSION THIRTEEN

#### V. Wide Outreach Through Two Missionary Journeys (16:6-19:20)

- A. Providential Direction for the Mission (16:6-10)
- B. At Philippi (16:11-40)
  - 1. Arrival in the City (16:11-12)
  - 2. The Conversion of Lydia (16:13-15)
  - 3. The Demon-Possessed Girl (16:16-18)
  - 4. Paul and Silas in Prison (16:19-34)
  - 5. Paul and Silas Leave the City (16:35-40)
- C. At Thessalonica (17:1-9)
- D. At Berea (17:10-15)
- E. At Athens (17:16-34)
  - 1. Inauguration of a Ministry (17:16-21)
  - 2. Paul's Address Before the Council of Ares (17:22-31)
  - 3. The Response to Paul's Address (17:32-34)
- F. At Corinth (18:1-17)
  - 1. Arrival at Corinth (18:1-4)
  - 2. An Eighteen-Month Ministry (18:5-11)
  - 3. Before the Proconsul Gallio (18:12-17)
- G. An Interlude (18:18-28)
  - 1. Paul's Return to Palestine-Syria (18:18-23)
  - 2. Apollos at Ephesus and Corinth (18:24-28)
- H. At Ephesus (19:1-19)
  - 1. Twelve Men Without the Spirit (19:1-7)
  - 2. A Summary of the Apostle's Ministry (19:8-12)
  - 3. The Seven Sons of Sceva (19:13-19)
- I. A Summary Statement (19:20)

### SESSION FOURTEEN

#### VI. To Jerusalem and Thence to Rome (19:21-28:31)

- A. A Programmatic Statement (19:21-22)
- B. The Journey to Jerusalem (19:23-21:16)
  - 1. The Riot at Ephesus (19:23-41)
  - 2. A Return Visit to Macedonia and Achaia (20:1-6)
  - 3. The Raising of Eutychus (20:7-12)
  - 4. From Troas to Miletus (20:13-16)
  - 5. Paul's Farewell Address to the Ephesian Elders (20:17-38)
  - 6. On to Jerusalem (21:1-16)

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### SESSION FIFTEEN

#### C. Various Events and Paul's Defenses at Jerusalem (21:17-23:22)

1. Arrival at Jerusalem (21:17-26)
2. Arrest in the Temple (21:27-36)
3. Paul's Defense Before the People (21:37-22:22)
4. Paul Claims His Roman Citizenship (22:23-29)
5. Paul's Defense Before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:11)
6. A Plot to Kill Paul (23:12-22)

### SESSION SIXTEEN

#### D. Imprisonment and Defenses at Caesarea (23:23-26:32)

1. Imprisonment at Caesarea (23:23-35)
2. Paul's Defense Before Felix (24:1-27)
3. Paul's Defense Before Festus (25:1-12)
4. Festus Consults with Herod Agrippa II (25:13-22)
5. Paul's Defense Before Herod Agrippa II (25:23-26:32)

### SESSION SEVENTEEN

#### E. The Journey to Rome (27:1-28:15)

1. From Palestine to Crete (27:1-12)
2. Storm and Shipwreck (27:13-44)
3. Ashore at Malta (28:1-10)
4. Arrival at Rome (28:11-16)

#### F. Rome at Last (28:17-30)

1. Meetings with the Jewish Leaders (28:17-28)
2. Continued Ministry for Two Years (28:30)

### SESSION EIGHTEEN

#### G. A Summary Statement (28:31)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richard N. Longenecker. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Volume 9: John, Acts.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 244-247.

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Zondervan NIV Study Bible: *The Holy Bible - New International Version*, edited by the International Bible Society. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995.

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### SESSION ONE

#### *Introduction to Acts of the Apostles – General Statements*

Many biblical scholars refer to *Acts* coverage of the first thirty years of church history as the *fifth gospel* because it “is the sequel in time and history to the preceding four gospels.”<sup>3</sup>

“Beginning with the Ascension of Christ and the historical foundation of the Church and ending with the imprisonment of Paul, about A.D. 60, *The Acts* witnesses to the Gospel having been planted in all the great capitals of the then known world.”<sup>4</sup>

“In one sense, *Acts* is the most important book in the New Testament. It is the simple truth that, if we did not possess *Acts*, we would have no information whatever about the early Church apart from what we could deduce from the letters of Paul.”<sup>5</sup>

“There are two ways of writing history. There is the way which attempts to trace the course of events from week to week and from day to day; and there is the way which, as it were, opens a series of windows and gives us vivid glimpses of the great moments and personalities of any period. The second way is the way of *Acts*.”<sup>6</sup>

“The design and importance of this history (of the early church) may be learned from the following particulars:

1) It contains *a record of the promised descent and operations of the Holy Spirit*. The Lord Jesus promised that after he had departed to heaven, he would send the Holy Ghost to carry forward the great work of redemption, Jn. xiv. 16,17; xv. 26; xvi. 7-14.

2) This book is *an inspired account of the character of true revivals of religion*. It records the first revivals that occurred in the Christian church.

3) This book shows that *revivals of religion are to be expected in the church*. If they existed in the best and purest days of Christianity, they are to be expected now.

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *All the Books and Chapters of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 246.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> William Barclay, *The New Daily Study Bible: The Acts of the Apostles* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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4) The Acts of the Apostles contains a record of the organization of the Christian church. That church was founded simply by the preaching of the truth, and chiefly by a simple statement of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

5) In this book we have many striking and impressive illustrations of what the gospel is fitted to produce, to make men self-denying and benevolent. The apostles engaged in the great enterprise of converting the world. To secure that they cheerfully forsook all.

6) This book throws important light on the *Epistles*. It is a connecting link between the Gospels and the other parts of the New Testament.

7) This book contains unanswerable evidence of the truth of Christianity. It is a record of its early triumphs."<sup>7</sup>

"We usually speak of *the Acts of the Apostles*. But the book neither gives nor claims to give an exhaustive account of *the acts of the apostles*. Apart from Paul, only three apostles are mentioned in it. In Acts 12:2, we are told in one brief sentence that James, the brother of John, was executed by Herod. John appears in the narrative, but never speaks. It is only about Peter that the book gives any real information – and very soon, as a leading player, he passes from the scene."<sup>8</sup>

"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."<sup>9</sup>

"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 their founding and establishing the Christian church.

"It is worthy of remark, however, that it contains chiefly a record of the *doings* of Peter and Paul. Peter was commissioned to open the doors of the Christian church to both Jews and Gentiles (see Note on Mat. xvi. 18,19); and Paul was chosen to bear the gospel especially to the pagan world."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament – Acts* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2005), iii-vii.

<sup>8</sup> William Barclay, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Barnes, iii.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>13</sup> "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. <sup>14</sup> BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.  
MATTHEW 7:13-14

"In the Greek, there is no 'The' before Acts; the correct title is *Acts of Apostolic Men*; and what *Acts* aims to do is to give us a series of typical exploits of the heroic figures of the early Church."<sup>11</sup>

"The canonical authority of this book rests on 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."<sup>12</sup>

### *Acts' Place in Biblical Studies*

"Luke, the historian, covers the first thirty years of church history, and tells us in his book of witness that the things Jesus 'began to do and teach' in the *gospels* is here, through the Holy Spirit, continued in *The Acts*, which is 'the *sequel* to the *gospels*, and the *basis* of the *epistles*'."<sup>13</sup>

"The door of Faith is opened successively to Hebrew, Roman, and Greek, as in the order of the *gospels*. Pentecost links Old Testament *prophecy* to New Testament *history*.' With its abrupt conclusion, *The Acts* is the only unfinished book in the Bible, and can be divided in this three-fold way –

- 1) The Lord is at work in Jerusalem, 1-7
- 2) The Lord is at work in Judea and Samaria, 8,9
- 3) The Lord is at work even unto the uttermost parts of the Earth, 10-28.

These widening circles of witness are the extension of the Master's commission (1:8)."<sup>14</sup>

"While earlier generations fixed their attention first upon the Pauline letters and then upon the Johannine corpus, the focus of scholarly attention today is more on the Lukan materials – the third Gospel and the Book of Acts. And prominent among the issues being discussed today is that regarding the relation of kerygma [proclamation in Greek] and history in Acts."<sup>15</sup> Therefore "Acts is really Christian proclamation and not just a simple reproduction of what happened apart from any interpretation or bias."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> William Barclay, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Albert Barnes, iv.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert Lockyer, 246.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, 214.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

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## *Probable Authorship of Acts of the Apostles*

"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 without a dissenting voice is mentioned as his work. 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 (comp. ver. 1 with Lu. i. 3), and it bears manifest marks of being from the same pen. It is designed evidently as a continuation of that Gospel, as in this book the author has taken up the history at the very time where he left it in the Gospel (ver. 1,2)." <sup>17</sup>

"Although the book never says so, from the earliest time Luke has been held to be its writer. About Luke, we really know very little; there are only three references to him in the New Testament – Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, and 2 Timothy 4:11. From these, we can say two things with certainty. First, Luke was a doctor (physician); second, he was one of Paul's most valued helpers and most loyal friends, for he was a companion of Paul in his last imprisonment." <sup>18</sup>

"We can deduce the fact that he (Luke) was a Gentile. Colossians 4:11 concludes a list of mentions and greetings from those who are 'of the circumcision,' that is, from the Jews; v. 12 begins a new list, and we naturally conclude that the new list is of Gentiles. So, we have the very interesting fact that Luke is the only Gentile author in the New Testament." <sup>19</sup>

## *Origin, Audience, and Date of Composition*

"Luke wrote both his gospel and Acts to a man called Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). We can only guess who Theophilus was. Luke 1:3 calls him 'most excellent Theophilus'. The phrase really means 'Your Excellency' and indicates a man high up in the service of the Roman government. There are three possibilities.

1) Just possibly, Theophilus is not a real name at all. In those days, it might well have been dangerous to be a Christian. *Theophilus* comes from two Greek words – *theos*, which means *God*, and *philein*, which means *to love*. It may be that Luke wrote to someone who loved God, whose real name he did not mention for safety's sake.

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<sup>17</sup> Albert Barnes, iii.

<sup>18</sup> William Barclay, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

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2) If Theophilus was a real person, he must have been a high government official. Perhaps Luke wrote to show him that Christianity was a lovely thing, and that Christians were good people. Maybe his writing was an attempt to persuade a government official not to persecute Christians.

3) There is a more romantic theory than either of these, based on the facts that Luke was a doctor and that doctors in the ancient days were often slaves. It has been suggested that Luke was the doctor of Theophilus, that Theophilus had been gravely ill, that by Luke's skill and devotion he was brought back to health, and that in gratitude he gave Luke his freedom. Then, it may be, Luke wanted to show how grateful he was for this gift; and, since the most precious thing he had was the story of Jesus, he wrote it down and sent it to his benefactor.”<sup>20</sup>

Albert Barnes states in his published notes in 1847, “Where, or at what time, this book was written, is not certainly known. As the history, however, is continued to the second year of the residence of Paul at Rome (Ac. xxviii.31), it was evidently written about as late as the year 62; and as 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 A.D. 63. It is also probable that it was written at Rome.”<sup>21</sup>

Raymond E. Brown has surmised from more recent scholarship that the dates of both Luke and Acts are nearer A.D. “85, give or take five to ten years.”<sup>22</sup>

“Broadly speaking, scholars today are divided into three camps respecting the dating of Acts: those who argue for the composition of the book somewhere around A.D. 115-30, those who hold to a date somewhere between A.D. 80 and 95, and those who hold to a date prior to A.D. 70.”<sup>23</sup>

“Most scholars today date Acts somewhere between A.D. 80 and 95. They reason like this: Acts cannot have been written before the Fall of Jerusalem because the third Gospel cannot have been written before that date, and the third Gospel is earlier than Acts. On the other hand, Acts cannot have been written after A.D. 95 because the case for a member of Paul’s missionary team having written the ‘we’ sections is strong.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> William Barclay, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Albert Barnes, iii-iv.

<sup>22</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York, New York: Doubleday, 1997), 226.

<sup>23</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, 235-236.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 236.

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### *Theology and Purpose of Acts*

For what reason or reasons did Luke write Acts? At this juncture it is important for us to consider the purpose and/or purposes of his writing.

"1) One of his reasons was to commend Christianity to the Roman government. Again and again, he goes out of his way to show how courteous Roman magistrates were to Paul.

2) One of Luke's aims was to show that Christianity was for all people of every country. This was one of the things the Jews found it hard to grasp. They had the idea that they were God's chosen people, and that God had no use for any other nation. Luke sets out to prove otherwise.

3) But these were secondary aims. Luke's chief purpose is to set out in the words of the risen Christ in 1:8: 'You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' It was to show the expansion of Christianity – to show how that religion, which began in a little corner of Palestine, had in not much more than thirty years reached Rome."<sup>25</sup>

Longenecker pushes us a little further in our understanding the purpose for Luke's writing when he says, "Primary among the reasons for its composition was undoubtedly a *kerygmatic purpose*. It (Acts) proclaims the continued confrontation of men and women by the Word of God through the church." He continues that there is also an "*apologetic purpose*. Its author seeks to demonstrate that Christianity is not a political threat to the (Roman) empire, as its Jewish opponents asserted, but rather that it is the culmination of Israel's hope. Longenecker contends that the author's third purpose seems to have been for a *conciliatory purpose*."<sup>26</sup>

Our reading of "Paul's own letters, in fact, indicate quite clearly that at Jerusalem some were pitting Peter and the Jerusalem apostles against him because they preferred Peter to him."<sup>27</sup>

"Finally, Luke may well have written Acts with a *catechetical purpose* in mind, ... (so that) it could also be used within various churches for instructional purposes."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> William Barclay, 4-5.

<sup>26</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, 217-220.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 221.

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### SESSION ONE

*Acts 1:1-1:26*

#### *Questions for Session One*

1. What name do many biblical scholars give to *Acts*, and what time frame does it cover?  
This time period runs from approximately what year to approximately what year?
2. Generally speaking, what two things does *Acts* cover from a historical perspective?  
Who are the primary apostles mentioned in *Acts*? The term “acts” denotes what?
3. What was Peter commissioned to do? What was Paul’s chief responsibility according to the introductory material?
4. According to one source, *Acts* can be divided into three ever widening circles.  
Describe each of these circles geographically.
5. Two important purposes of *Acts* are to promote both *kerygma* and *history*. Explain these two terms as they relate to each other in their respective purposes in *Acts*.

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6. Regarding the authorship of *Acts*, on what name do most biblical scholars agree? When do we think *Acts* was written? Explain.

7. Who are the three possibilities for the person of Theophilus? To whom do you think *Acts* was written, and why was it written?

8. Jesus appeared to many people after the Resurrection. How long did Jesus continue to appear to people here on earth? How do you suppose he chose them, and why did he appear to them?

9. Describe the Ascension. In your description of the Ascension include something about the two men dressed in white. Who might they have been?

10. How was Judas Iscariot replaced? Name the two followers being considered. Who became the twelfth disciple to replace Judas?

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