



A Course

In

ACTS, STUDIES IN

PART I

Prepared by the
Committee on Religious Education
of the
American Bible College

Pineland, Florida 33945

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PREFACE

As you study the Scriptures you will find that it is of the greatest importance to approach the Bible in a reverent attitude of mind, looking upon it as the inspired Word of God, and not just an ordinary piece of literature. If the Bible is studied in the same manner as one studies Shakespeare, Milton or some historical work, it may be found interesting and profitable. But by this approach, the Bible student, persistent though he may be, will never find its rich treasures. The Apostle Paul says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14) For the profitable study of the Word of God, the right spiritual attitude is indispensable.

In this course, the compiler, with additional comments, is using quotes from various fundamental and evangelical Bible scholars. This is done to acquaint the student with present and past scholars who are true to Biblical inspiration and sound in theological interpretation.

In this study, it is our desire for you to appropriate an understanding of the Book of Acts as it was originally inspired of God, and that you will comprehend its historical significance and theological implications. Additional sections are inserted where major various interpretations are expounded and include justification for traditional interpretation.

There are various methods of Bible study, such as topical, survey, the biographical method, exegetical and expository. In this course we approach the text in the expository-exegetical method. In this way verses will be interpreted historically and semantically by explaining the major words and grammatical structure in their historical context in order to gain an over-all perspective as well as a contextual understanding.

Although the American Bible College believes the King James Version is the preserved Word of God, this method of study allows the writer to occasionally condense a passage in his own paraphrase. This should not be construed to imply that A. B. C. is correcting God's Word.

During this course the student is required to read through the entire Book of Acts ten times.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	2
CONTENTS.....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	4
OUTLINE TO THE BOOK OF ACTS.....	5
INTRODUCTION TO ACTS.....	6
HISTORICAL SETTING TO THE BOOK OF ACTS.....	10

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF ACTS, PART I

CHAPTER 1— <u>THE PREPARATION FOR THE CHURCH</u>	16
CHAPTER 2— <u>THE DAY OF PENTECOST</u>	19
CHAPTER 3— <u>THE FIRST CHURCH MIRACLE</u>	26
CHAPTER 4— <u>THE FIRST PERSECUTION</u>	28
CHAPTER 5— <u>THE FIRST CHURCH PERSECUTION</u>	31
CHAPTER 6— <u>THE FIRST DEACONS</u>	35
CHAPTER 7— <u>THE FIRST MARTYR</u>	36
CHAPTER 8— <u>THE EVANGELIZATION OF SAMARIA</u>	42
CHAPTER 9— <u>THE CONVERSION OF SAUL</u>	46
CHAPTER 10— <u>THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS</u>	49
CHAPTER 11— <u>THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL TO ANTIOCH</u>	54
CHAPTER 12— <u>THE HERODIAN PERSECUTION</u>	57

STUDIES IN ACTS, PART II WILL CONSIST OF:

CHAPTER 13—THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY: CYPRUS AND ANTIOCH; CHAPTER 14—FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY: ICONIUM, LYSTRA, DERBE, AND RETURN; CHAPTER 15—THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL; CHAPTER 16—THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY: PHILIP; CHAPTER 17—THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY: THESSALONICA, BEREIA, ATHENS; CHAPTER 18—THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY: CORINTH AND RETURN; CHAPTER 19—THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: EPHESUS; CHAPTER 20—THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: MACEDONIA, TROAS, MILETUS; CHAPTER 21—PAUL'S FINAL RETURN TO JERUSALEM; CHAPTER 22—PAUL'S DEFENSE ON THE CASTLE STAIRS; CHAPTER 23—PAUL'S REMOVAL TO CAESAREA; CHAPTER 24—PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE FELIX; CHAPTER 25—PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE FESTUS; CHAPTER 26—PAUL'S APPEARANCE BEFORE AGRIPPA; CHAPTER 27—PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME; CHAPTER 28—PAUL'S ARRIVAL IN ROME...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The compiler of this course study will use primarily as a basis class notes and outline from Dr. Homer A Kent Jr. of Grace Theological Seminary located in Winona Lake, Indiana. Dr. Kent is not only an outstanding, practical Greek scholar, but more importantly a godly example to be emulated. We wish to thank Dr. Kent for his permission to use his material. The student is encouraged to purchase books by Dr. Kent.

This course study will consist largely of his class notes with the inclusion of additional comments from other sources, unless otherwise noted. The scripture texts are altered to conform with the King James Version except where the authors are using their own rendering. It is our desire that this study will be mentally enlightening and spiritually rewarding as you understand the Book of Acts—the doctrines and practices of the Early Church.

Respectfully your servant in Christ Jesus,

Dr. Marvin W. Royse

AN OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS¹

I. The Witness in Jerusalem (1:1-6:7)

A. The expectation of the chosen (chaps. 1-2)

1. The introduction (1:1-5)
2. The internment at Jerusalem (1:6-26)
3. The inception of the church (chap. 2)

Progress report no. 1: "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (2:47).

B. The expansion of the church at Jerusalem (3:1-6:7)

1. Opposition to the church (3:1-4:31)
2. Correction in the church (4:32-5:11)
3. Progression in the church (5:12-42)
4. Administration in the church (6:1-7)

Progress report no. 2: "So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly" (6:7).

II. The Witness in all Judea and Samaria (6:8-9:31)

A. The martyrdom of Stephen (6:8-8:1a)

1. The arrest of Stephen (6:8-7:1)
2. The address of Stephen (7:2-53)
3. The attack on Stephen (7:54-8:1a)

B. The ministry of Philip (8:1b-40)

1. In Samaria (8:1b-25)
2. To the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40)

C. The message of Saul (9:1-31)

1. The conversion of Saul (9:1-19a)
2. The conflicts of Saul (9:19b-31)

Progress report no. 3: "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria ...was strengthened; and [it was] encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord" (9:31).

III. The Witness to the Extremity of the Earth (9:32-28:31)

A. The extension of the church to Antioch (9:32-12:24)

1. The preparation of Peter for a universal gospel (9:32-10:48)

2. The preparation of the apostles for a universal gospel (11:1-18)

3. The preparation of the church at Antioch for a universal gospel (11:19-30)

4. The persecution of the church at Jerusalem (12:1-24)

Progress report no. 4: "But the Word of God continued to increase and spread" (12:24).

B. The extension of the church in Asia Minor (12:25-16:5)

1. The call and dedication of Barnabas and Saul (12:25-13:3)

[First missionary journey, chaps. 13-14]

2. The circuit in Asia Minor (13:4-14:28)

3. The conference at Jerusalem (15:1-35)

4. The confirmation of the churches in Asia Minor (15:36-16:5)

[Second missionary journey, 15:36-18:22]

Progress report no. 5: "So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers" (16:5).

C. The extension of the church in the Aegean area (16:6-19:20)

1. The call to Macedonia (16:6-10)

2. The conflicts in Macedonia (16:11-17:15)

3. The crusade in Achaia (17:16-18:18)

4. The conclusion of the second missionary journey (18:19-22)

5. The conquest of Ephesus (18:23-19:20)

[Third missionary journey, 18:23-21:16]

Progress report no. 6: "In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" (19:20).

D. The extension of the church to Rome (19:21-28:31)

1. The completion of the third journey (19:21-21:16)

2. The captivity at Jerusalem (21:17-23:32)

3. The captivity at Caesarea (23:33-26:32)

4. The captivity at Rome (chaps. 27-28)

Progress report no. 7: "Paul. ..welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he "preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (28:30-31).

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

This course will be based upon the outline and class-notes of Dr. Homer A. Kent Jr. of Grace Theological Seminary. We wish to thank him for his gracious consent. Dr. Kent's basic outline consists of:

I. The Birth of the Church. Chps. 1-2

II. The Growth of the Church in Palestine. Chps. 3-12 (Peter is the prominent figure).

¹ Taken from ACTS, by Stanley D. Toussaint, *THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY, NEW TESTAMENT* edition, (Chariot Victor Pub., Colorado Springs, CO., 1983), pp. 352-353. Hereafter referred to as [TOUSSAINT].

- 1A. At Jerusalem. Chps. 3-7
- 2A. Throughout the land. Chps. 8-12

III. The Growth of the Church among the Gentiles.
Chs. 13-28 (Paul is the prominent figure).

- 1A. Journey to Asia Minor. Chps 13-15
- 2A. Journey to Greece. Chps. 16-22
- 3A. Journey to Rome. Chps 23-28

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS²

(Taken from B.H. Carroll's *Interpretation of the English Bible*, Vol 1, pp. 4-9. Hereafter referred to as [CARROLL].)

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS

That Luke is the author of this book appears from its first sentence (Acts 1:1), making it a continuation of his Gospel, and from the use of the personal pronoun, first person, in some chapters, showing that he was a companion of Paul, as in Acts 16:10-16; 20:5; 28:16. The book was probably written at Rome, during Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30), Luke being then with him (Acts 28:16), and as we also see from the references in Philemon 1:24 and Colossians 4:14. Its date was about A.D. 63. The person addressed was Theophilus (Acts 1:1), to whom his Gospel was dedicated (Luke 1:1).

There are several New Testament references to the author. We learn from Colossians 4:14 that he was: **(1)** a physician; **(2)** a Gentile Christian, probably one of Paul's converts; **(3)** the author of two New Testament books (see Luke 1:1; Acts 1:1); **(4)** a companion and fellow worker with Paul from whom he received many of the facts, given both in his Gospel and in Acts; **(5)** he first appears in the story at Troas (Acts 16:10-11) and again at Philippi (Acts 20:5) and so continues with him to the end of the book, and **(6)** he was with Paul in both of his Roman imprisonments. In the first imprisonment we have the testimony of Philemon 1:23; Colossians 4:14; Acts 28:16; and in the second Roman imprisonment we have the testimony of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:11.

The title of the book is, as the manuscripts say, "Acts of the Apostles" or, without the article, simply, Acts. Two of the general limits of the book are: **(1)** the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem, the Jewish

capital, to Rome, the capital of the world; **(2)** the time period, AD. 33 to A.D. 63, i.e., thirty years.

Many commentaries contest the propriety of its title, "Acts of the Apostles", but that propriety is supported by the following considerations: **(1)** It does give some of the acts of all the apostles, i.e., it recites the names of eleven of the original twelve, and of their place of meeting in an upper chamber (Acts 1:13); **(2)** it gives the history of the filling of the place of Judas by Matthias (Acts 1:15-26); **(3)** it gives an account of the baptism of all of them in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4); and subsequently of the teaching of all of them (Acts 2:42); **(4)** it gives an account of their great prayer meeting (Acts 4:23-31); **(5)** it teaches us that they all wrought miracles (Acts 5:12), and were all imprisoned in the Sadducean persecution (Acts 5:18), and were all delivered by an angel of the Lord (Acts 5:19), and were all beaten with stripes (Acts 5:40), and that they continued their teaching (Acts 5:42); **(6)** it shows that they all participated in the ordination of the deacons (Acts 6:2-6); **(7)** they all remained in Jerusalem when the disciples were scattered abroad by the Pharisee persecution led by Saul (Acts 8:1); **(8)** it shows that they all participated in sending Peter and John to confer the power of the Spirit on Philip's converts in Samaria (Acts 8:14); **(9)** it shows that some of them received Paul when he was introduced by Barnabas (Acts 9:27); **(10)** they all received and justified Peter's account of the conversion of the Gentile, Cornelius (Acts 11:1-18); **(11)** it shows that they all participated in sending Barabbas to Antioch to look into the preaching unto the Greeks there (Acts 11:20-22); **(12)** they were all suffering under the Herodian persecution, one of them, James, the brother of John, being killed (Acts 12:9-24), and Peter imprisoned; **(13)** they all participated, including Paul, in the decision of the great question – the greatest of the apostolic times – whether Gentiles must become Jews in order to be saved (Acts 15:1-21), and joined in the decree to the churches officially settling this great question (Acts 15:22-30; 16:4); **(14)** there was also full and official recognition of Paul's independent apostleship and of the division of labor – Paul and Barnabas to go to the Gentiles, and the others to the circumcision (this we learn from Galatians 2:1-10); **(15)** from chapter 13 to the end of the book we have the acts of the Apostle to the Gentiles. From these fifteen particulars, the propriety of the title is sufficiently evident. It must be observed that the title in the manuscripts is without the article, and hence makes no claim to record all the acts of all the apostles. Indeed, its first beginnings at Jerusalem, then in

² B.H. Carroll's *Interpretation of the English Bible*, Vol 1, pp. 4-9. Hereafter referred to as [CARROLL].

Samaria, then among the Romans at Caesarea, then the Greeks at Antioch and various Greek cities of Asia Minor and in Europe, and finally at Rome.

The propriety of the title further appears from these great matters touching the kingdom settled, not by one apostle, but by the body of the apostles: (1) The selection of Matthias; (2) the ordination of deacons; (3) the justification of giving the gospel to the Samaritans, also (4) to the Gentiles, in the case of Cornelius; (5) that Gentile Christians were not to be brought under bondage to the Mosaic ritual.

In other words, that the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down, and in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female. It is of intense importance that these great questions were not settled by just one man, but by the entire apostolic body.

Another important matter is settled by the book, viz.: that the apostles, though inspired, illumined, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, were “set in the church.” We find the church, the whole 120, participating in the selection of Matthias; we find the church participating in the baptism of the Spirit, in the institution of the office of deacon, and in every detail of the worldwide character of the gospel. For example, the action of the church in the case of the Samaritans receiving the gospel, the action of the church in the case of the Greeks getting it, and in the great judicial decision of Acts 15, as set forth in Acts 15:2, 6-7, 11-12, 15. This is a very important matter – to know that even inspired, illumined and Spirit-empowered apostles were set in the church and worked through the churches...

The human heroes of the book are Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul.

We do well to trace on the map the missionary journeys of the book:

I. The Journeys of Philip: (1) From Jerusalem to Samaria; (2) From Samaria to the desert land between Jerusalem and Gaza; (3) Thence to Azotus, and thence to Caesarea.

II. The Journeys of Peter: (1) He first goes (with John) from Jerusalem to Samaria, and then returns; (2) he goes to Lydda; (3) to Joppa; (4) from Joppa to Caesarea; (5) thence to Jerusalem; (6) from Jerusalem he goes back to Caesarea, where he is left, so far as this history goes.

III. At the dispersion caused by Saul’s persecution we have the journeys of some unnamed brethren who: (1) carried the gospel from Jerusalem to Phoenicia; (2)

others to the island of Cyprus; (3) yet others to Antioch of Syria.

IV. The Journeys of Barnabas: (1) From Jerusalem to Antioch; (2) from Antioch to Tarsus after Paul; (3) from Tarsus back to Antioch with Paul; (4) from Antioch back to Jerusalem with Paul; (5) from Jerusalem back to Antioch with Paul; (6) from Antioch with Paul and Mark, on a long missionary tour and return; (7) from Antioch, with Paul, to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15); (8) back to Antioch; (9) from Antioch to Cyprus, with Mark, after the separation from Paul.

V. The Journeys of Paul: (1) As a persecutor from Jerusalem to Damascus; (2) after his conversion, from Damascus to Arabia and back to Damascus, three years; (3) from Damascus to Jerusalem to see Peter; (4) from Jerusalem to Tarsus, several years; (5) from Tarsus to Antioch, with Barnabas; (6) from Antioch with Barnabas to Jerusalem, carrying alms, about the time James was killed and Peter imprisoned by Herod (Acts 12); (7) from Jerusalem back to Antioch; (8) then follow his three great missionary tours, ending at Jerusalem (Acts 13:1 to 21:19); (9) being arrested at Jerusalem, he, with many vicissitudes, by land and sea, is carried to Rome (Acts 21:20 to 28:31).

We should note the contemporaneous history in the thirty years covered by Acts:

I. Roman Emperors: (1) Tiberius, under whom Christ was crucified; (2) Caligula, A.D. 37; (3) Claudius, A.D. 41, mentioned in Acts 18:2; (4) Nero, A.D. 54.

II. Civil Rulers in Judea: (1) Pontius Pilate, Roman procurator until A.D. 36; (2) Herod Agrippa I, the Herod of Acts 12. Under Caligula, the Roman Emperor, he obtains, first, Gaulonitis, then Galilee and Perea. Under Claudius he gets Samaria and Judea, and so rules all Palestine until his death, A.D. 44; (3) Cuspus Fadus, at the death of Herod, becomes Roman procurator; (4) Herod Agrippa II, the King Agrippa of Acts 26, was king, but not of Judea; (5) Felix was made procurator by the Emperor Claudius. He is the Felix who trembled under Paul’s preaching, but left him a prisoner (Acts 23:24); (6) Festus was made procurator by the Emperor Nero. He is the Festus before whom Paul appeared (Acts 25).

III. The High Priesthood, which underwent many changes: (1) Caiaphas, before whom Christ appeared; (2) Jonathan, son of Annas, A.D. 37; (3) Theophilus, son of Annas, A.D. 38; (4) Simon Cantherus, A.D. 41; (5) Matthias, son of Annas, A.D. 42; (6) Elionacus, son

of Cantherus, A.D. 45; (7) Ananias, A.D. 47; (8) Ishmael, son of Phabi, A.D. 59.

The divine purpose of the book appears in its relation to the Gospel by the same author, and the relation of both to the glorious person of our Lord.

This book must be considered primarily as a continuation of Luke's Gospel concerning the one glorious person, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His saving relation to the whole human race – the Gospel telling us what Jesus began to do and teach until His ascension and exaltation to His mediatorial throne; Acts telling us what this glorious King continued to do and teach until His kingdom had extended from Jerusalem, the center of Judaism, to imperial Rome, the capital and center of the heathen world. The Gospel gives an account of the earth life of Jesus, while Acts gives an account of His heaven life.

The stress in both books is on the humanity of our Lord in His relation to the whole race of man, the Gospel, unlike Matthew, tracing His genealogy beyond Abraham, and even Noah, back to Adam; and unlike John, stressing less His antecedent deity, while Acts shows the risen, ascended man made both Lord and Christ, and reigning in heaven to carry out on earth and for all nations the purposes of His sacrificial death in Jerusalem, beginning, indeed, at Jerusalem, but extending to all nations.

We miss the mark in interpreting the book if we do not see this aim of the two books, set forth so plainly in Luke 24:44-48. "And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things."

It is reaffirmed in Acts 1:6-8. "They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." It is repeated in Peter's Pentecostal sermon: "For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as

many as the Lord our God shall call unto him" (Acts 2:39), and abundantly evidenced in the freer preaching of Stephen, the wider work of Philip, and the startling commission to Paul at his conversion (Acts 9:15; 22:14-21; 26:1618), and in the vision of the ark to Peter, followed by the reception of Cornelius, and in the preaching to the Greeks at Antioch: "But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:20-21); in the sending out of Barnabas and Saul to the Gentile world (Acts 13:1-4); in the decision of the great question of salvation in Acts 15, preceded by the solemn giving of the hand of fellowship to the Gentile workers (Galatians 2:1-10); in the side-light settlement of an involved social question just after (Galatians 2:11-21); and in the devotion of the greater part of the book to the labors of the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

The divine superintendence in all the transactions recorded in the book appears from the evident reluctance of the human agents to follow the broader lines of salvation, on equal terms for all men. Every forward step was questioned, investigated, contested, and reluctantly taken. The Jewish prejudice fought hard and long. If Philip preaches to Samaritans, as our Lord did, that matter must be investigated (Acts 8:14). To even our Lord himself, urging the open door to Gentiles, Peter characteristically replied, "Not so, Lord" (Acts 10); and when Peter was convinced himself, he had to explain to a questioning church (Acts 11); and so long as the disciples, scattered abroad by Saul's persecution, preached to Jews only, it was all right, but when some of them preached to Greeks, a deputation was sent to look into the matter (Acts 11:19-23).

What a solemn time they had over the great question decided in the council at Jerusalem! How strange that Peter, who so successfully justified himself when believers of the circumcision arraigned him for "going in to men uncircumcised and eating with them" (Acts 11:2-4), in the case of Cornelius, should allow himself to be browbeaten into dissimulation by the same men on precisely the same point, but a little while after, at Antioch (Galatians 2:11-21). How fiercely the same narrow-minded element obstructed every step of Paul's advance toward a worldwide gospel! And how stubbornly even Paul himself insisted on being a home missionary to the Jews, instead of going far hence to the Gentiles! (Acts 22:17-21.)

The marked difference between this book and the Gospel by the same author appears from two facts:

(1) While the purpose of Acts is to show a continuation of the Gospel account of what Jesus “began to do and teach,” in the Gospel, Jesus acts immediately in His own person, but in Acts He works mediately through the Holy Spirit. Hence Acts has been aptly styled “The Gospel of the Spirit.”

When in His lifetime he had said, “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you,” and when in the great church commission He says, “Lo, I am with you all the days,” the meaning is this: “I will come by the Holy Spirit; I will be present by the Holy Spirit.” This omnipresence by the Spirit was far more expedient and profitable to them than a limited presence in the flesh.

(2) While Acts is a continuation of Luke’s Gospel account of what Jesus began to do and teach, the Gospel tells of what He did and taught on earth – Acts, what he did and taught from His throne in Heaven. In both, the stress is on the humanity of our Lord in His saving relation to the whole race. This purpose overrides the prejudices of all the Jewish subagents.

END OF SAMPLE