

A Course

*In*

**ACTS, STUDIES IN**

**PART II**

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.

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# 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.

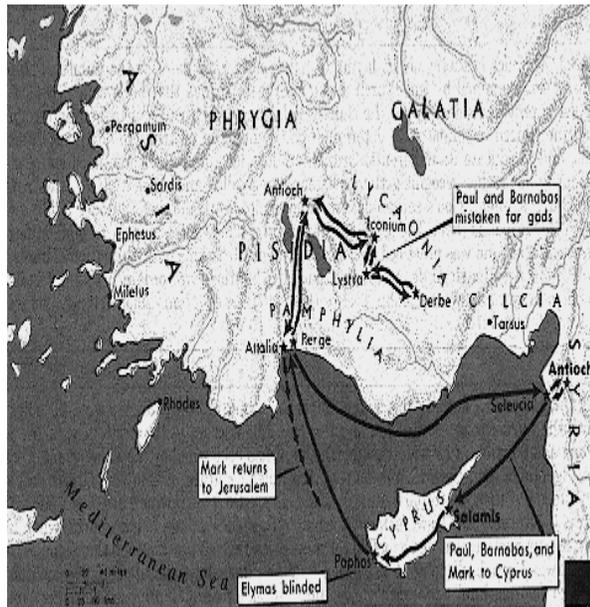
This course study will consist largely of his class notes with the inclusion of additional comments from other sources, unless otherwise noted. The scripture texts are altered to conform with the King James Version except where the authors are using their own rendering. It is our desire that this study 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

### III. THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH AMONG THE GENTILES. Chs. 13-28 (Paul is the prominent figure).

#### CHAPTER 13—THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY: CYPRUS AND ANTIOCH.



#### PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY<sup>1</sup>

##### Vss. 1-3 The Departure from Antioch (Syrian).

Vss. 1–3. The first official gentile mission was carried by Paul and Barnabas, who were sent by the **church at Antioch** to Cyprus and the cities in the southern part of the Roman province of **Galatia**. This church was characterized by many outstanding Christians and **prophets and teachers**. **Simeon** [the Hebrew meaning “God hears“]... **called Niger**, the Latin word meaning “black,” was apparently a nickname for his dark complexion and suggests that he was perhaps of African origin.

[Cyrene, a coastal city of North Africa, had a large Jewish population due to the diaspora. Symeon (also, spelled Simeon, Simon, etc.) was the Jewish name; Niger his Latin name, which he used when among foreigners. Contrary to some writers, Symeon was a Jewish pilgrim who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover feast (Mk. 15:21). Apparently, he was converted at this time and became a Christian leader in the Church. Acts 2 records Jewish sojourners on the Day of Pentecost from Cyrene (A. 2:10).]

<sup>1</sup> Map from [FALWELL'S] Commentary.

Some have suggested that he may have been Simon of Cyrene (cf. Mk 15:21) who carried Jesus' cross. The designation for **Manaen ... brought up with Herod** means that he was a “foster brother.” This term was generally used of children who were brought up in the royal court, and later the phrase was retained as an actual title. **Herod** is Herod Antipas who ruled Galilee and Peraea between 4 B.C. and A.D. 39. The relationship between them is one of the remarkable apologetic notices of the book of Acts. Ladd (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 427) suggests that the **prophets** gave or were given direct revelation from God by the Holy Spirit and the **teachers** were gifted in the interpretation of that revelation. Thus, the utterance of the **Holy Ghost** probably came through a prophet. During a time of fasting and prayer, which was always especially significant for the early church, the Holy Spirit designated the two most eminent and gifted leaders among the entire group to become the first missionaries. While it is true that every Christian was to carry on the mission of the church (cf. Mt 28:20, notes), these men became the first actual “sent-ones.” It should be noted that **they ... laid their hands on them** refers to the church at Antioch as the sending agency. Thus in its purest form, the New Testament local church sent forth missionary representatives from the midst of its own congregation. In the book of Acts we find no reference to Mission boards or organizations as such. Nor do we find single individuals seedling forth missionaries apart from the commission of the church. In other words, as the Great Commission was given to the apostles who were to become the foundation of the church, it was, therefore, given to the church, not to individuals. The laying on of hands did not impart any special power nor qualification to the missionaries, but “expressed its fellowship with Barnabas and Paul and recognized them as its delegates or ‘apostles’” (F. F. Bruce, p. 261). [LIBERTY, pp. 251-252].

##### Vss. 4-12. The Evangelization of Cyprus.

**Vs. 4.** Seleucia. This was the seaport used by the city of Antioch...

**Vs. 5.** Salamis. The group sailed to the island of Cyprus (the home of Barnabas, 4:36), and landed at the city of Salamis on the eastern side...

John Mark had been taken along in a subordinate capacity. The fact that he was not mentioned in verses 2-3 shows the secondary importance of Mark in the group. He was not essential to the expedition, and his return to Jerusalem later was thus not disastrous...

A synagogue ministry was undertaken at Salamis. Probably this policy was followed as they made their way across the island. Luke does not mention further synagogue preaching on the island because his purpose in this section is to show how the gospel was extended to gentiles...

**Vs. 6.** Paphos. Paphos was the capital, and it had an evil reputation for its temple and worship of Aphrodite (Venus), the most popular deity of the Cypriotes. Their mission must have caused some stir, for at Paphos they attracted the notice of two typical personalities. (1) The first was a Jew. Barjesus, known to the Greeks as Elymas (Sorcerer is probably the translation of Elymas, a Semitic word.). ... For he was one of that class of religious professors or impostors of whom Simon Magus is the typical representative. S. Luke describes Barjesus as (a) a magus or 'wise man,' i.e. versed in oriental lore, astrology etc.: and (b) a false Prophet, i.e. he made some claims to divine inspiration. In this character we may trace the influence of his Jewish origin; and certainly the Jews contributed their full share of these false professors...

**Vs. 7** Cyprus was in the suite of Felix. Our magus Elymas was likewise with (2) the proconsul Sergius Paulus: and he is the second type. In the division of the provinces between Augustus and the senate, Cyprus had fallen to the former, and was therefore governed by a legate or *propraetor*. Subsequently Augustus effected an exchange and Cyprus became one of the senatorial provinces which were ruled by *proconsuls*. This is the very word used by S. Luke, and his accuracy is further confirmed by the discovery in recent times of an inscription dated in the *proconsulship of...Paulus*. Pliny mentions a Sergius Paulus who had a scientific turn of mind and was interested in natural history. The characteristic which S. Luke noted in this Paulus was also *insight* or *understanding*, but in human affairs. This would account for his patronage of Barjesus. Among the Roman aristocracy were many who, wearied with scepticism, were asking in all seriousness Pilate's question *What is truth?* Again, it was the fashion for a nobleman to have a philosopher attached to his household, like a domestic chaplain. And so it is not surprising that on coming to Cyprus Sergius Paulus should have been impressed by the supernatural claims of Elymas and have given him a place in his household or court, that is the body of friends, officials, and subordinates, who accompanied a governor to his province and formed his suite...

In the Greek world it was the custom for philosophers, rhetoricians, or religious propagandists,

to travel about from city to city and give public orations. By this means they often secured permanent professorships. So when Sergius Paulus heard of Barnabas and Saul, he took them for similar professors, and having an interest in these matters he *summoned* them to give a declamation before his court. He was curious to learn their, 'philosophy.' The apostles complied; and soon they began to arrest the serious attention of Paulus, who had never heard doctrine like this...

**Vs. 8.** Elymas saw at once the incompatibility of his own *word* and that of the apostles; and fearing lest his influence over the proconsul should be undermined, began to dispute. [RACKHAM, pp. 199-200].

Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, believed Paul's preaching concerning Christ [and was born-again]. His influence must have greatly assisted the spread of the gospel. The mention of a "Lucius Sergius Paulus" has been found on a Greek inscription, and may have been the same man... [KENT, p. 57].

**Vs. 9.** Saul—Paul.

*But Saul, who is also called Paul (Saulos de, ho kai Paulos).* By this remarkably brief phrase Luke presents this epoch in the life of Saul—Paul. The "also" (*kai*) does not mean that the name Paul was given now for the first time, rather than he had always had it. As a Jew and a Roman citizen, he undoubtedly had both names all the time (cf. John Mark, Symeon Niger, Barsabbas Justus). ... Among the Jews the name Saul was naturally used up to this point, but from now on Luke employs Paul save when there is a reference to his previous life (Acts 22:7; 26:14). His real career is work among the Gentiles and Paul is the name used by them. There is a striking similarity in sound between the Hebrew Saul and the Roman Paul. Paul was proud of his tribe of Benjamin and so of King Saul (Phil. 3:5)...

*Filled with the Holy Spirit (plestheis pneumatou hagiou).* First aorist (ingressive) passive participle of *pimplemi* with the genitive case. A special influx of power to meet this emergency. Here was a cultured heathen, typical of the best in Roman life, who called forth all the powers of Paul plus the special help of the Holy Spirit to expose the wickedness of Elymas Barjesus. If one wonders why the Holy Spirit filled Paul for this emergency rather than Barnabas, when Barnabas was named first in 13:2, he can recall the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in his choice of agents (1 Cor. 12:4-11) and also the special call of Paul by Christ (Acts 9:15; 26:17f.). [ROBERTSON, pp. 181-182].

Here we see again there are many fillings of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. The re-filling takes place for special tasks. In this case, Paul was refilled in order to refute Elymas.

**Vss. 11-12.** In judgment Paul inflicted a temporary blindness on Elymas. This is the first of Paul's recorded miracles and it was performed in conflict with a Jew over giving the gospel to a Gentile.

Seeing this miracle, Sergius Paulus' interest in the Word of God (v. 7) blossomed into genuine faith in Christ. Interestingly the Greek names of this proconsul and of the apostle were the same: Paulus.

This incident is significant for three reasons: (1) It marks the beginning of Paul's leadership in this journey; verse 13 refers to "Paul and his companions." (2) From this point on the ministry took on an even more decidedly Gentile slant. (3) It is filled with figurative nuances. A Gentile with the name Paul accepted the message while a Jew opposed it. The Jew's blindness pictured the judicial blinding of Israel (cf. 28:26-27). Luke by this means emphasized the transitional nature of the Book of Acts. On one hand Gentiles became the primary object of the gospel, and on the other God temporarily turned from the Jews and thus judged them. [TOUSSAINT, p. 388].

### **Vss. 13-52. The Evangelization of Antioch (Pisidian).**

**Vss. 13-15.** Their Arrival.

After the incident at Paphos, Paul definitely took the lead. The expedition is now called "Paul and his company," By boat they crossed to the mainland and journeyed inland to Perga, the principal city of the small province of Pamphylia. At that point, John Mark deserted the expedition and returned to Jerusalem. It has been guessed that he disliked seeing his cousin Barnabas replaced by Paul as the leader, or that he disapproved of the conversion of Gentiles, or that he was simply homesick. Whatever his reason may have been, Paul felt that it was insufficient (see 15:38)...

The remaining members of the party soon left the lowlands of Pamphylia, and climbing the Taurus Mountains reached high plateau some thirty-six hundred feet above sea level. They had entered the extensive Roman province of Galatia. On the basis of Galatians 4:13 it has been suggested that Paul sought this high country because his health suffered in the lowlands...

Their first stop in Galatia was a city called Pisidian Antioch. It was not actually in the ancient kingdom of Pisidia but was near its border. This Antioch was a

Roman colony, settled by retired soldiers. It is not to be confused with Antioch in Syria, the great city from which the missionaries had come. As was customary, the visitors to the synagogue were given an opportunity to speak, if they desired. [WINN, pp. 80-81].

**Vss. 16-41. Paul's Sermon.**

This was Paul's first recorded address. The audience to whom he spoke was composed of Jews and God-fearing gentiles...

Paul's speech strongly suggests Stephen's. Since Paul heard Stephen, he no doubt had been profoundly affected by it. Both speeches employed historical retrospect...

**Vss. 17-23.** Jesus is the Messiah, from the Davidic line.

Paul's emphasis is the Messianic promise and its fulfillment. Stephen had emphasized the disobedience of Israel. [KENT, p. 58].

**Vs. 20.** "All this took about four hundred and fifty years." Paul ventures to give a round number for the period that began with Jacob and his children entering Egypt and ended with the Israelites receiving their inheritance in Canaan. God told Abraham that his descendants would be oppressed in a foreign country for 400 years (Gen. 15: 13). Add to this number the 40 years the Israelites spent in the desert and allow 10 years for the conquest of Canaan; the total comes to 450 years. [KISTEMAKER, p. 470].

**Vss. 24-37.** Jesus is the Savior as foretold by the prophets.

**Vss. 24-26.** John's testimony to Jesus.

**Vss. 27-29.** Jesus' rejection was a fulfillment of prophecy.

**Vss. 30-37.** Jesus' resurrection was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Here Paul refers to Psalms 2 and 16, just as Peter did at Pentecost. Some have criticized the genuineness of this message, therefore, saying it is Petrine and not Pauline. However, the basic content of Paul's gospel preaching as named by him in I Cor. 15:3-4 is seen here: 1. "Christ died" —Acts 13:28; 2. "He was buried" —Acts 13:29; 3. "He rose again" —Acts 13:30...

**Vss. 38-41.** The Appeal and Warning.

Their choice was either acceptance or rejection. The word "justify" appears here (v. 39) for the first time in church history. Justification (the declaring of the sinner as righteous by God) is offered to Jew and gentile alike on the basis of faith (not by keeping the Mosaic Law)...

Verse 39 has been called "Romans and Galatians in a nutshell." Since Christ at Calvary paid

the penalty for man's breaking of God's law. God can now declare sinners righteous if they appropriate by faith the effects of that death...

**Vss. 42-52.** The Results.

**Vss. 42-43.** Interest.

A favorable impression had been made by the missionaries, and arrangements were made for them to speak on the next Sabbath. Many followed Paul and Barnabas (presumably to their lodging place) to hear more...

**Vss. 44-46.** Rejection.

On the next sabbath a great crowd congregated to hear the Word. The "multitudes" (v. 45) must have been gentiles who were not even proselytes, since this stirred up the Jews...

The Jewish leaders were on hand to protect the traditional faith, and they "blasphemed," i. e. spoke untruths about Christ. They no doubt argued that all who hang on a tree are accursed (Deut. 21:23), and used this to curse Christ...

The statement "Lo, we turn to the gentiles" (v. 46), marks a definite break from the usual evangelizing through the synagogue. Scripture was on the side of Paul and Barnabas (Isa. 49:6), and Paul had been definitely commissioned to preach to gentiles (Acts 9:15)...

**Vss. 47-49.** Acceptance.

Though the bulk of the Jews rejected the message, the pagan gentiles responded with faith. A true church of gentiles was established at Antioch...

**Vss. 50-52.** Persecution.

The Jews could not bear to see others admitted to the same religious privileges as themselves. Because of this jealousy (v. 45), and also because of the loss of adherents, the Jews persuaded the gentile women proselytes (of the gate) who were also influential in the city and other leading citizens to have Paul and Barnabas expelled from Antioch. As Jews, Paul and Barnabas would be subject to the jurisdiction of the synagogue, at least to some extent. [KENT, pp. 59-60].

***END OF SAMPLE***