

I. THE TIME OF THE BOOK

- A. Jesus Christ has ended His Earthly Ministry
 - 1. And He specifically tells them that He will NOT leave them comfortless
 - a. JOHN 16:7 – “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”
 - b. His Plan to pay for our sin at Calvary, limited Himself to one place
 - c. We don’t live in Jerusalem – we would rarely if ever “SEE” Him
 - d. But now we have the Holy Spirit – WITH US EVERYDAY!
 - 2. The book BEGINS with the FACT of the Resurrection (vs. 3)
 - a. There is no question in the mind of Luke
 - b. So many liberals attack the physical Resurrection of Jesus
 - c. They RIGHTLY judge that it is the lynchpin of the New Testament
 - d. This book says it proven INFALLIBLY (without failure)
 - 3. He SHOWED Himself Alive after His Death
 - a. He was REALLY Dead and now is REALLY Alive
 - b. Look at 1 COR. 15:1-12
 - c. He goes on to say that if Jesus is not alive then we are vain fools
 - d. And we could not be saved from our sins
- B. The Period of the book is about 30 years
 - 1. From the Ascent of Christ into Heaven to Paul’s Imprisonment at Rome
 - 2. It serves a narrative map onto which we may place each Epistle
 - 3. The letters written to New Testament churches
 - a. God allows us to travel along with Paul and others
 - b. We see these churches from their beginnings
 - c. We see evangelism up close from a biblical perspective
- C. This book has some transitional elements, but most apply to our church today
 - 1. I’ve seen a few that discount the book as purely interstitial
 - a. Many groups today that hold the book HIGHER than the rest
 - b. Some go to the extreme (foot washing, snake handling, etc.)
 - 2. The truth is that Acts shows us MANY patterns that remain true today
 - a. While specifically telling us about a few things that will cease
 - b. Tongues, for instance, was never permanent
 - c. 1 COR. 13:10 – “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”
 - 3. Therefore, we will take an ACCURATE and Biblical “look” at Acts
 - a. And see the Author, the Three Principal Characters
 - b. The Key Words, but must important the LESSONS of the Book

II. THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK

- A. Naturally – GOD ALONE is the Divine Author of the book of Acts
 - 1. 2 PETER 1:21 – “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
 - 2. YES, this is a THOROUGHLY accurate historical document
 - 3. AND YES, this is a book written by God Himself to teach us doctrine
 - 4. In regard to history, it is stunningly accurate, in fact! (RAMSAY)
- B. Luke is believed to be the human writer (but doesn’t “identify” himself)
 - 1. Compare vs. 1-2 with LUKE 1:1-4
 - a. Same tone and style
 - b. Importantly, Luke got SAVED during Paul’s Missionary Journeys
 - c. ACTS 16:6-10 - Note change of “they” to “we” (joined at Troas)
 - 2. Other mentions:
 - a. COL. 4:14 – “Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.”
 - b. 2 TIM. 4:11 – “Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”
 - c. PHILEMON. 1:24 – “Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.”
 - 3. Notices that Luke was called a physician
 - 4. The Gospel of Luke and The Book of Acts work together well
- C. Luke was an eyewitness and constant companion of Paul
 - 1. He was with Paul to the very last!
 - 2. A true friend
 - 3. In fact, that is the name he calls US – Theophilus (friend of God)

III. THE THREE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS OF THE BOOK

- A. Peter
 - 1. Very prominent in the first part of the book
 - a. As the account begins in Jerusalem with the ONLY church
 - b. And Peter would be the pastor
 - 2. Peter’s work was mainly to the Jews
- B. Philip
 - 1. One of the seven – He became an “evangelist”
 - 2. ACTS 21:8 – “And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.”
 - 3. “Evangelist” is actually the Bible term for “missionary” (not in Bible)
 - a. He was one of the original deacons chosen to serve “tables”
 - b. Later we see him preaching wherever the Lord leads
 - c. He FOLLOWED the call of God!
 - d. And ends up as a longtime pastor of a church at Caesarea
 - e. Where Peter preached and many souls were saved

- C. Paul
 - 1. The MAIN (human) character of the book (Chapters 9-28)
 - a. His work was mainly to the Gentiles (uncircumcised)
 - b. He went where no other Jew would think
 - c. Because God had CALLED him to preach to the regions beyond
 - 2. ACTS 13:2 – “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”
 - a. There is a call on ALL men’s lives to serve God
 - b. There is a call on some men’s lives to serve God SPECIFICALLY
 - c. There is sometimes a further call to the mission field
 - 3. Paul was used MIGHTLY by God to record much of the New Testament
 - 4. Even though he started out as an enemy
- D. There are 11 recorded sermons by these three preachers in the book!

IV. THE KEY WORDS OF THE BOOK

- A. Holy Spirit – 55 Times
 - 1. In fact, like the Book of the Revelation
 - 2. This book is OFTEN mistitled by Bible Printers today
 - 3. This is not the “Acts of the Apostles”
 - 4. It is the ACTS of the Holy Spirit!
- B. Believe, Believeth, Faith, etc. used 58 times
- C. Repentance – 11 TIMES! Always BEFORE faith
 - 1. ACTS 20:21 – “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - 2. Many people throw away repentance
 - 3. But one cannot accept a Savior without first seeing the NEED for one!
- D. Baptism – 31 times – on average one time per chapter!
- E. Prayer – 35 times – Why? “Pray without ceasing” 1 THESS. 5:17
 - 1. The early Christians prayed MUCH
 - 2. And they turned the world UPSIDE DOWN!
- F. Resurrection – 28 times
- G. The word “Church” 21 times (14 different churches mentioned in the book)
 - 1. Guess what? Each time, they will be at a specific geographical location
 - 2. And it’s used MORE to talk about non-Christian assemblies
 - a. Like Israel in the wilderness
 - b. And a town council at Ephesus

V. THE LESSONS OF THE BOOK

- A. Doctrine (Teaching) – it is filled with it!
 - 1. Practically every fundamental doctrine of Christianity is found here!
 - a. And many of the biblical METHODS of church work

- b. Church planting, Missions work, Preaching
 - 2. When conflict arose, it was often because they didn't have the Bible
 - 3. This book is not the property of the Pentecostal movement
 - 4. This is a BAPTIST book, filled with BAPTIST doctrine!
 - 5. It is filled with BAPTISTS that we would recognize today
 - 6. Doing BAPTIST work
- B. Christians are to ACT not SIT
 - 1. It also tells us that we were not saved to sit, but saved to serve
 - 2. The name of the book itself instructs us to ACT
 - 3. Get on the mission field! Go forth!
- C. The Gospel must go FORTH!
 - 1. People will not hear any other way
 - a. ROM. 10:14 – “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”
 - b. What does a preacher say? Only what the Bible tells!
 - c. 1 COR. 15:3-4 – “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; (4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”
 - 2. And that IS the Gospel
 - a. It turned the WORLD upside down
 - b. It can turn YOUR world upside down too
 - i. Why live miserable and away from God?
 - ii. Why take the broad path that leads to destruction?
 - iii. They say up is down and down is up
 - iv. They don't KNOW!
 - c. JOHN 14:6 – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - d. ACTS 4:12 – “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 - 3. Be Saved today!

SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY

Sir William Ramsay (1851-1939) was an archaeologist and biblical skeptic. He taught at the University of Edinburgh and believed that Bible writers made facts and stories up. The book of Acts, he declared, was full of errors, and to prove this contention, he traveled to Asia Minor to demonstrate Luke's unreliability.

He understood he could not prove or disprove miracle accounts, but if he could show Luke to be a sloppy historian on facts that could be verified (geographical and historical), he felt he could discredit Luke's unverifiable stories.

Ramsay the skeptic returned to Great Britain a believer. Every one of Luke's facts checked out. He found Luke to use specific and accurate terminology that reflected a careful chronicle of events. There were proconsuls in senatorial provinces, asiarchs in Ephesus, politarchs in Thessalonica. His conclusion was that Luke was a highly reliable historian, rendering the story of the early churches in the book of Acts a remarkably clear one.