

BIBLE READING FOR 2023

WEEK #19

ACTS

05-07-23

Monday - Acts 1-6

Wednesday - Acts 12-17

Friday - Acts 24-28

Tuesday - Acts 7-11

Thursday - Acts 18-23

Acts is considered to be a book of history of the New Testament church. It deals with the establishment and growth of the church that Christ had promised to build. The Acts of the Apostles is an appropriate name for this writing because it tells of some of the acts, or actions, of the apostles in fulfilling the plans of Christ. They received the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and were used by Christ to bring the church into existence in Jerusalem. They then played a key role in its growth and development, taking the gospel into "all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Although a list of eleven of the apostles is given in the first chapter of Acts, and the choosing of Matthias as a replacement for Judas Iscariot is recorded there, the book focuses on the lives of two of the apostles in particular. The first is Peter, one of the original twelve. The second is a man chosen by Christ to serve in this special capacity years after the others, Saul of Tarsus, who would later become known as Paul. Peter preached mostly to Jews but also to Gentiles. It was his sermon in Acts two that opened the doors of the kingdom to the Jews and resulted in 3,000 of them being saved. Some years later, after learning that the Gentiles also were welcomed in the kingdom of God, he was given the opportunity to work with Cornelius and his household, who became the first Gentile converts. Paul on the other hand, preached many sermons to the Jews but was primarily sent to the Gentiles, going into foreign lands, where on some occasions, there was very little, if any, Jewish presence. Many local congregations were established as a result of his missionary journeys. The book closes with Paul in prison in Rome waiting to stand trial before Caesar. While there, Paul remains active in the work of the kingdom, preaching and teaching and even writing four New Testament books, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

The author is unanimously accepted among conservative scholars to be Luke. As we have already seen, he is also recognized as the one who wrote the gospel bearing his name. Some of the reasons for accepting Luke's authorship are listed below:

- 1.) Both books are addressed to Theophilus (Lk 1:3; Acts 1:1).
- 2.) The overlapping of the end of Luke 24 and the beginning of Acts 1.
- 3.) At least 50 words are peculiar to Luke and Acts and some of them are medical terms. Luke was a physician (Col 4:14).
- 4.) Passages where the author uses "we" shows he was with Paul (Acts 16:11-12; 20:6). From Paul's writings we know this was true of Luke (Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 24).
- 5.) Those men from history known as the "church fathers" attribute both Luke and Acts to Luke.

The date of the writing of Acts is around A.D. 62-63.

The Purpose of the book is to let the people of Luke's time, as well as future generations, know about the the origin and progress of the church in Jerusalem and its spread throughout the world. It provides necessary information for anyone who wants to be part of the New Testament church today.

An outline for Acts:

- 1.) Establishment and growth of the church in Jerusalem 1-7
- 2.) The spread of the church throughout Judea and Samaria 8-12
- 3.) Paul's journeys 13-28

Questions for Acts 1-28:

- 1.) What was the first message from heaven after the apostles witness Christ ascend into the clouds in chapter one?
- 2.) In chapter six what does it say that a large number of the priests were doing?
- 3.) Why was Cornelius told that he should send for Peter in 11:14?
- 4.) Paul did what great thing for Eutychus in chapter twenty?
- 5.) What did Festus say about Paul in 26:24?

Answers to questions for Week #18 – Second Kings 1-25:

- 1.) Elisha ask for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.
- 2.) He was given the leprosy of Naaman and it would never depart from him or his descendents.
- 3.) He was anointed king of Israel.
- 4.) They were captured and taken away into Assyrian captivity.
- 5.) King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.