### Acts

#### Universal Savior Proclaimed in Sovereign Kingdom Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jerusalem</th>
<th>Judea and Samaria</th>
<th>Uttermost Part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1–6:7</td>
<td></td>
<td>6:8–8:40</td>
<td>Chapters 9–28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>Samaritans (mixed breeds)</td>
<td>Gentiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 33-35 (2 years)</td>
<td>AD 35 (a few months)</td>
<td>AD 35-62 (27 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Stephen &amp; Philip</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing Home Base</td>
<td>Nearby Outreach</td>
<td>Missionary Journeys</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
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</table>

**AD 62**
(completed after Paul’s house arrest)

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**Key Word:** Sovereignty II

**Key Verse:** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

**Summary Statement:** The reason to witness everywhere is because God has directed the progress of the kingdom message to all people since early church history.

**Application:**
Is God extending his kingdom message through you?
How are you fitting into his overall purpose to spread the gospel throughout the entire earth?
Acts

Introduction


II. Authorship

A. External Evidence: The Church Fathers from the latter half of the second century agreed that Luke, "the beloved physician" (Col 4:14), wrote Acts after writing Luke. Both books circulated together during the latter half of the first century until the beginning of the second century AD when Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were gathered together and circulated as a fourfold gospel (Bruce, 15). The tradition for Luke as author is strong:

1. The earliest evidence for Lukan authorship stems from the Anti-Marcionite Prologue (AD 150-180) and the Muratorian Canon (AD 160-200).

2. Others cite Luke as the author such as Irenaeus (Against Heresies; ca. AD 185) and Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 155-216; cf. Hiebert, 1:248-49).

Luke's name appears only three times in the NT (Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 24). Since Paul lists his companions as Jews (Col 4:10-11) then Gentiles (Col 4:12-14), and Luke's name appears in the latter group, he evidently was a Gentile, confirmed by his brilliant use of Greek. Tradition says that he came from Syrian Antioch, never married, and died at age 84 (TTTB, 327).


1. Luke and Acts had the same author since: (a) both are dedicated to the same man, Theophilus, (b) Acts 1:1 refers to "the first account," which most naturally refers to Luke's Gospel, (c) The language and style of the two books are remarkably similar, and (d) both books share many common interests (see "Characteristics" below; cf. Guthrie, 100).

2. Acts has four first person narratives often called the "we-sections" (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) that show the author as Paul's traveling companion. Of his traveling companions, only Titus and Luke are not mentioned by name in these sections and Titus has never been seriously considered as a candidate for the authorship of Acts (Hiebert, 1:119ff.).

III. Circumstances

A. Date: Acts is fairly easy to date, assuming that Luke wrote church history up to his time. It ends with Paul's two-year imprisonment (AD Feb. 60-Mar. 62; cf. Acts 28:30-31) and does not mention Nero's persecutions (AD 64), Paul's ministry in the remaining years until his death (AD 62-68), nor the climactic destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). Therefore, the most likely date of composition is AD 62.

B. Origin/Recipients: No one knows for certain where Luke wrote this account, nor does the book itself give any hint. Suggestions include Rome (since this is the location of the story at the end of the book), Antioch, Ephesus, Asia Minor, and Achaia. He clearly wrote to Theophilus (1:1), a man whose name means "lover of God." The title of "most excellent" for Theophilus (Luke 1:3) indicates that he was probably an official in some capacity and as a man of high social standing he may have funded the publishing of Luke and Acts.

C. Occasion: Theophilus apparently thought Luke the physician a great source to write an orderly account of the life of Christ and the early history of the Church. He was detailed, well educated, an excellent historian, well acquainted with Paul, and as a single man able to travel and interview eyewitnesses. Luke probably wrote at Theophilus' request, but in any event, he purposed to strengthen the wealthy Christian's faith by showing that his faith rested on firm historical fact (Luke 1:3-4). Perhaps even more significantly, Luke sought to explain to his wider Gentile audience that God directed the progress of the kingdom message, not human ingenuity and skill.
IV. Characteristics

A. Different opinions exist for purpose of Luke-Acts:

1. Conciliation: to solve an opposition between Peter and Paul to show that Paul's credentials are equal to Peter's in order to defend Paul's apostleship of his letters (Baur and Tübingen School cited by Liefeld, EBC, 8:801). This view is speculative.

2. Soteriological/Evangelistic: to present Christ to non-Christian Gentile readers as the perfect Son of Man who “came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10; TTTB, 328). This view really explains only a purpose for the Gospel of Luke.


4. Apologetic: to show that Christianity was not a politically subversive sect but rather a universal movement (cf. Pilate's three announcements of Christ's innocence in Luke 23:4, 14, 22; TTTB, 328; the tracing of the movement from a primarily Jewish to a predominately Gentile membership, TTTB, 353).

5. Ecclesiastical: to “trace the development and distinction of the Church over and against Judaism” (Ellis, The Gospel of Luke, 60-62)

6. Historical Narrative: to preserve “the record of the origin and growth of the early church” (Fitzmyer cited by Liefeld, EBC, 8:800).

7. Kingdom: to explain how God has orderly and sovereignly directed the progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles to answer the natural questions of any Gentile unbeliever: (1) “How could a Jewish Savior be the Savior of the world?” (Book of Luke) and (2) “How does this 'little Jewish sect' relate to me?” (Book of Acts).

   a. Luke answers question #1 by showing that Jesus was a universal Savior, not a Jewish Savior. Then he answers question #2 in that Christianity is not a Jewish sect but a divinely directed movement that began in Jerusalem but reached the center of the known world—Rome.

   b. That this kingdom theme appears in Luke's Gospel is unquestionable as the phrase “kingdom of God” appears at least 27 times. In Acts it appears only eight times but the concept is throughout from the beginning (1:3, 8) to the end (28:31).


   d. Since Luke and Acts have the same author and the Gospel account has a strong kingdom emphasis, one would expect the same emphasis in Acts since it is a continuation of Luke's gospel. This emphasis does in fact exist.

   e. Acts 1:8 shows that the kingdom message (cf. 1:3, 6) would expand into three different people groups in three ever-widening geographic circles: the witness in Jerusalem (1:1-6:7), Judea and Samaria (6:8-8:40) and the uttermost part (Acts 9-28).

   f. This purpose for Acts is seen in several “progress reports” of the expanding kingdom message (2:47; 6:7; 8:40; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31; also possibly 2:41; 4:31; 5:42; 8:25, etc.; adapted from Toussaint, BKC, 2:352).

   g. This view includes all the views above (except #1 and #2).
B. The Book of Acts is significant for several reasons (Toussaint, BKC, 2:349):

1. While the Bible contains four accounts of the life of Christ, Acts provides the only narrative of the early Church. Thus, it links the Gospels with the Epistles and provides invaluable insights into how the first century Church operated.

2. The chronological arrangement of the material enables a more accurate background for understanding of the Pauline and General Epistles.

3. The early saints’ zeal, faith, joy, commitment, and obedience in Acts exhorts us today.

C. Interpretive problems come when establishing doctrinal beliefs based only upon the Acts narrative. A proper understanding of Acts recognizes it as a transitional book not intended to set norms for the post-apostolic age. For example, note the transitional nature of speaking in tongues in Acts:

**Speaking in Tongues in Acts** (Toussaint, Bible Knowledge Commentary, 2:408, adapted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Related to Salvation</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:1-4</td>
<td>Apostles+</td>
<td>Unsaved Jews at Pentecost</td>
<td>After salvation</td>
<td>Validate for Jews the fulfillment of Joel 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:14-17</td>
<td>Samaritans</td>
<td>Saved Jews doubting God’s plan (Peter+)</td>
<td>After salvation</td>
<td>Validate for Jews God’s acceptance of Samaritans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:44-47</td>
<td>Gentiles (Cornelius+)</td>
<td>Saved Jews doubting God’s plan (Peter+)</td>
<td>At salvation</td>
<td>Validate for Jews God’s acceptance of Gentiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:1-7</td>
<td>OT believers in Messiah</td>
<td>Jews needing gospel message confirmed</td>
<td>At salvation</td>
<td>Validate for Jews God’s message through Paul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


E. The universal message of the gospel is stressed (1:8; 28:30-31). In fact, Acts records over 80 geographical locations—more than any other New Testament book.

F. A large emphasis is the Holy Spirit and his ministries (Acts 2; cf. Acts 1:8).

G. Assuming the author of Hebrews was a Jew, the combined Luke-Acts remains the only book in the Bible written by a Gentile.


I. Sermons play a very important role in the chronology with 24 of the 28 chapters including a sermon or portion of a sermon.

J. The Gospel of Luke contrasts with Acts as such:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Verses</th>
<th>Verses per Chapter</th>
<th>Time Period Covered</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Kingdom Message from…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Acts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1150</td>
<td>988</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 BC-AD 33 (37 yrs.)</td>
<td>AD 33-62 (30 yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Life of the Christ</td>
<td>Life of the Church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jews to Gentiles</td>
<td>Jews to Gentiles</td>
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K. Acts provides the framework of Paul’s missionary journeys. These enable us to understand the historical context of the epistles:
Paul's Missionary Journeys in Acts
(Furloughs in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Acts Texts</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Yrs.</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Men with Paul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Galatia</td>
<td>12:25–14:28</td>
<td>April 48–Sept. 49</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Galatians</td>
<td>Barnabas, Mark (.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Aegean</td>
<td>15:36–18:22</td>
<td>April 50–Sept. 52</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1, 2 Thess.</td>
<td>Silas, Timothy, Luke (.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ephesus &amp; Aegean</td>
<td>18:23–21:16</td>
<td>Spring 53–May 57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1, 2 Cor., Romans</td>
<td>Timothy, Luke, Titus, Erastus, Aristarchus, Sopater, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, Trophimus, Sosthenes (.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Jerusalem, Caesarea</td>
<td>21:26–26:13</td>
<td>May 57–Feb. 60</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Timothy, Luke (.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These were imprisonments rather than missionary journeys.

L. Contrasting the beginning and the end shows the progress of the gospel in Acts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acts 1</th>
<th>Acts 28</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Non-existent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of believers</td>
<td>100% Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Figure</td>
<td>Peter (narrow ministry)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Argument

Luke's Gospel is written from a Gentile mind to the Gentile mind to confirm Theophilus' faith (Luke 1:3), but also to answer how the Jewish Savior could be a Savior for Gentiles. Luke continues this universal emphasis in Acts, tracing the progress of the kingdom message from its reception by Jews in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7) to Judeans and Samaritans (6:8–8:40) to Gentiles toward the uttermost part of the Roman Empire (Acts 9–28) to encourage believers that the responsibility for the growth of the Church is God's work, not man's. This divine responsibility for the task is clearly stated in Acts 1:8 as the key verse, which affirms that God gives the power to witness rather than people earning it.

However, Luke also notes how the early church was faithful to the task. This serves to encourage all believers everywhere to be faithful witnesses to their own locale (their “Jerusalem”), immediately outside this area (their “Judea and Samaria”), and throughout the globe (their “end of the earth”). Thus, Luke's purpose is to show both the divine and human roles in world evangelism, although God ultimately takes final responsibility for his Church (cf. Matt. 16:18).

Acts 1:8 has the preceding threefold outline where each section ends with a summary statement (“progress report”) to show the extent the kingdom message traveled up to that point (i.e., 6:7; 8:40; 28:31). Five more "progress reports" (2:47; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20) end subsections within the major sections (adapted from Toussaint, BKC, 2:352).
Synthesis

Universal Savior proclaimed in sovereign kingdom progress

1:1–6:7  Jerusalem

1–2  Established
1  Preparations
1:1–5  Transition from Luke
1:6–8  Outline for Acts
1:9–11  Ascension
1:12–26  Prayer/Matthias

2  Church born
2:1–13  Spirit comes
2:14–41  Peter’s sermon
2:42–47  Fellowship  (Underlined numbers = progress reports)

3:1–6:7  Expands  Opposition:
3:1–4:31  Temple beggar  External
4:32–5:11  Barnabas/Ananias/Sapphira  Internal
5:12–16  Healings reach immediate area
5:17–42  Peter’s escape  External
6:1–7  Food distribution  Internal

6:8–8:40  Judea and Samaria

6:8–8:3  Stephen—cause
6:8–7:1  Jerusalem: Seized for miracles/preaching
7:2–53  Indicting sermon
7:54–8:3  Results
7:54–8:1a  Martyrdom
8:1b–3  Persecution: scattered in Judea and Samaria

8:4–40  Philip—effect
8:4–25  Samaria—Simon the sorcerer
8:26–40  Judea—Ethiopian eunuch

9–28  Uttermost part

9:1–31  Damascus—Paul
9:32–12:24  Antioch/Samaria Gentiles
9:32–11:18  Peter—Samaria Gentiles (Cornelius)
11:19–29  Barnabas/Saul—Antioch
12:1–24  Peter escapes vs. Herod dies

12:25–16:5  Galatia
12:25–14:28  #1—Paul, Barnabas, minus John Mark
15:1–35  Jerusalem Council
15:36–16:5  #2 begins—Paul, Silas, plus Timothy
16:6–19:20  Aegean area
16:6–10  Macedonian call
16:11–19:20  Macedonia, Achaia, Ephesus
16:11–18:22  #2 ends—3 plus Luke
18:23–19:20  #3 begins—confirms Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus

19:21–28:31  Rome
19:21–21:16  #3 ends—Aegean strengthened
21:17–28:31  Captivities (people reached in parentheses)
21:17–23:22  Jerusalem (Jews, commander, Sanhedrin)
23:23–26:32  Caesarea (Felix, Festus, Agrippa)
27:1–28:30–31  Rome (ship passengers, Malta inhabitants, Romans, Nero?)
Outline

Summary Statement for the Book
The reason to witness everywhere is because God has directed the progress of the kingdom message to all people since early church history.

I. We should witness to our own area first because God began the kingdom message expansion in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7).
   
   A. The Spirit established the Jerusalem church by preparing the believers and Spirit baptism to teach us to trust the Spirit for witness (Acts 1–2).
      
      1. Believers wait for the Spirit so they could witness until Christ’s return and prepared by prayer and leadership replacement (Acts 1).
         
         a) Luke ties this account to his gospel by summing up Christ's ministry until his command to wait for baptism with the Holy Spirit (1:1-5).
         
         b) Rather than focus on Israel's restoration, Jesus commanded his disciples to witness everywhere starting in Jerusalem (1:6-8).
         
         c) Jesus ascended to heaven with the promise of his return to the Mt. of Olives to exhort witnessing until he comes again (1:9-11).
         
         d) The apostles and 120 believers prepared for the coming of the Spirit by prayer and by replacing Judas with Matthias (1:12-26).

      2. The Spirit baptizes the 120 believers into the new Church and empowers Peter to bring 3000 more Jews into the faith, teaching and fellowship (Acts 2).
         
         Progress Report #1: “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (2:47b).

   B. The Spirit expands the Jerusalem church to nearby towns by miraculous healings despite both external and internal opposition (3:1–6:7).
      
      1. External opposition of the Sanhedrin after Peter and John heal a beggar enables witness to this highest religious body in Israel (3:1–4:31).
      
      2. Internal opposition from Ananias and Sapphira’s deceit backfires to cause a fear of God needed for church growth (4:32–5:11).
      
      3. Miraculous healings by the apostles expand the church beyond Jerusalem to people from nearby towns who bring others for healing (5:12-16).
      
      4. External opposition of the Sanhedrin again persecutes the apostles so God could provide escape from jail and joy from suffering for Christ (5:17-42).
      
      5. Internal opposition regarding food distribution is squashed by delegating seven managers to show God's commitment to his Church (6:1-7).
         
         Progress Report #2: “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (6:7).

II. We should witness outside our own locale because God expanded the kingdom message in all Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:40).

   A. God uses Stephen’s martyrdom by the Sanhedrin to incite persecution that brings the kingdom message throughout Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:3).

   B. Philip witnesses in Samaria to crowds and Simon the sorcerer and in Judea to an Ethiopian eunuch as God’s plan to witness in these two areas (8:4-40).
III. We should witness to all the world because God expanded the kingdom message to Rome to reach the end of the known world (Acts 9–28).

A. God saves Saul who preaches even beyond Judea and Samaria in Damascus of Syria as God's tool to reach Jews and especially Gentiles (9:1-31).

Progress Report #4: “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord” (9:31).

B. God protects believers in Samaria and in Gentile cities of Caesarea and Antioch despite Jerusalem church racism as he is committed to the uttermost part (9:32–12:24).

1. Peter reaches Gentiles in Joppa, Lydda, and Caesarea [all in Samaria] despite racist Jerusalem believers as God’s kingdom message is for all (9:32–11:18).

2. The Gentile church in Antioch alleviates famine in the Jerusalem church to show God's blessing on its ministry (11:19-29).


Progress Report #5: “But the word of God continued to increase and spread” (12:24).

C. God expands the church to Asia Minor in Paul and Barnabas's two missionary journeys and the Jerusalem Council approves witness to Gentiles (12:25–16:5).

1. The first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas extends the kingdom message to Cyprus and Asia Minor (12:25–14:28).

2. The Jerusalem Council decision not to require the Law for Gentiles is directed by God to expand the kingdom message through the Roman Empire (15:1-35).

3. The second missionary journey of Paul and Silas strengthens Asia Minor churches and Barnabas and John Mark go to Cyprus due to a ministry conflict (15:36–16:5).

(Note: Second Missionary Journey = Acts 15:36–18:22)

Progress Report #6: “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew in numbers” (16:5).

D. God extends the church to the Aegean area after keeping Paul from Asia so he can first evangelize Macedonia and Achaia (16:6–19:20).

1. Paul is called to Macedonia after Phrygia and Galatia but kept from Asia by the Spirit as God planned the kingdom message first to reach Europe (16:6-10).


   a) The end of the second missionary journey extends the church into Macedonia and Achaia (16:11–18:22).


      (2) Paul plants churches in Athens and Corinth in Achaia and then leaves Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus while he returns to Antioch (17:16–18:22).
b) The third missionary journey begins by confirming churches in Galatia, Phrygia, and Ephesus with miracles and exorcisms (18:23–19:20).

(Note: Third Missionary Journey = Acts 18:23–21:16)

Progress Report #7: “In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (19:20)

E. God extends the kingdom message to Roman rulers after Paul’s third missionary journey leads to his trip to Rome as a prisoner (19:21–28:31).

   a) The uproar at Ephesus shows Christianity innocent of wrongdoing but idolatry useless (19:21-41).
   b) Paul says farewell to the Ephesian church by exhorting the elders to care for the flock in light of future apostasy (20:1-38).
   c) Paul continues to Jerusalem despite prophecies of suffering ahead of him (21:1-16).

   a) Paul's Jerusalem captivity spreads the gospel to his own Jewish people, a Roman officer, and a new Sanhedrin with Roman protection to Caesarea (21:17–23:22).
   b) Paul's Caesarean captivity extends the kingdom message to Governor Felix, Porcius Festus, and King Agrippa II all under Roman support (23:23–26:32).
   c) Paul's captivity in Rome extends the gospel to Gentile passengers and Malta dwellers en route to Jews and Gentiles unhindered in Rome (Acts 27–28).

Progress Report #8: “For two whole years Paul stayed there [in Rome] in his own rented house and 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).
And the story continued…
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CHAPTERS 1—7
Formation of church
Jewish
Jerusalem center
Peter
To Jerusalem
A.D. 30-36 (7 years)

33-35 (2 years)

CHAPTERS 8—12
Transition of church
Samaritan
Antioch center
Peter & Barnabas
To Judea & Samaria
A.D. 37-46 (10 years)
36-47 (12 years)

CHAPTERS 13—28
4 JOURNEYS OF PAUL:
1. Chapters 13—15 (Galatia)
2. Chapters 16—18 (Greece)
3. Chapters 18—21 (Asia)
4. Chapters 22—28 (Rome)

Expansion of church
Gentile
Rome center
Paul
To uttermost parts
A.D. 47-66 (20 years)
48-62 (14 years)

Terry Hall, Bible Panorama, 162
Chronology of the Book of Acts
Questions on Acts 2

My friend Oliver sent me four questions that I attempted to answer below…

I have a question that was brought up during my Care Group's Bible study…

The question is the prophecy of Joel in Acts 2:17-21 (cf. Joel 2:28-32). We have the following points of which we are uncertain:

1. Who does "all mankind" in verse 17 refers to? All believers? Everybody, both believers and non-believers? Or the saved in the millennial kingdom?

Joel's prophecy up to Joel 2:28 refers to the future time of judgment and restoration of Israel that we know also as Daniel's seventieth week (cf. Dan. 9:27), or the seven-year Tribulation. "After" that time (2:28a), there will be a pouring out of the Spirit that the world has never seen when everyone will receive the Spirit regardless of sex (sons and daughters), age (young and old), or rank (even on my servants). Jeremiah spoke of the same time period that we know call the millennial age (cf. Rev. 20:1-6) when he said that everyone will know the Lord (Jer. 31:34). In other words, at the beginning of the millennium, every person on earth will believe in the Lord! Wow! Before Joel's time the Spirit had come only on certain leaders to empower them for ministry—and that only for a limited time. But the Spirit indwelling now and in the future is eternal (John 14:16).

2. When does "those days" in verse 18 refers to? Pentecost and after? Or during the days when Christ returns?

Joel's prophecy details the coming of a "day of the LORD" which follows a recent locust invasion in Judah. The prophet's point is that while the people are concerned about the existence of their crops due to the locusts, even more serious "locusts" (eschatological armies) are coming which threaten the existence of their nation.

Then Joel declares that in the last days the LORD will pour out His Spirit on all flesh (all of Judah or all of the earth) so that young men will have dreams and old men see visions (2:28-32). This is a clear prophecy of the Holy Spirit's coming and eschatological dimensions. In other words, deliverance in Joel's time foreshadows deliverance in the end times.

When Peter and the apostles saw the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, several unusual things also occurred. Each of the apostles praised God in new languages that could be understood by pilgrims to Jerusalem visiting at that time (e.g., from Pontus, Cappadocia, Rome, and other distant places). Further, tongues of fire appeared on their heads. With these new languages and strange fiery phenomena the accusation came that the apostles were drunk with wine. Peter refuted this claim by quoting Joel 2:28f. He declared that what they were witnessing was an actual fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of the giving of the Holy Spirit. This is clear in his designation, "This is that which was spoken..." (Acts 2:16) which leaves no question that the reception of the Spirit was what Joel had in mind.

However, Joel also prophesied strange events in the sky as well—the sun darkened and the moon turning blood red. Acts 2 records no such phenomena because the prophecy was left incomplete due to Israel's unbelief. These certain elements are reserved for a future time when the nation will believe just prior to the return of Christ. (For a study of five views on this issue see Hobart Freeman, An Introduction to the OT Prophets, 154-56.)

But why does Peter apply this yet future event to his own age? This was because the Spirit was bestowed on all people even in his day, which announced that the “last days” had already arrived.
3. Does the "Day of the Lord" in verse 20 refer to the return of Christ?

The coming day of the LORD, a time of awesome judgment upon people who have rebelled against God, is the preeminent theme of Joel’s prophecy (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14, 18). The day of the LORD theme pervades this prophecy perhaps more than any other with the possible exception of Zephaniah (e.g., Zeph. 1:14-18; chaps. 2–3) and finds mention throughout the Bible (cf. Amos 1:3–2:3; Zech. 12–14; Isa. 13:6, 9; 14:28-32; 17:1ff.; 20:1-6; 31:1-5; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 30:3ff.; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). Joel mentions this “day” several times (1:15; 2:1-2, 11, 31; 3:14, 18), indicating that it actually refers to a time period that “is to be a day of wrath and judgment upon the wicked and a day of salvation to the righteous” (Hobart E. Freeman, An Introduction to the OT Prophets, 146).

So the “glorious day of the Lord” noted here seems to refer to the latter part of this “day.” In other words, after the sun turns dark and moon turns red (during the judgment part of the “Day”) then the “great and glorious day…” will arrive when Christ rules.

4. Was the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 fulfilled at the day of Pentecost or will it be fulfilled when Christ returns?

When is this day? The mention of apocalyptic phenomena such as wonders in the heavens (i.e., the sun being turned to darkness and the moon to blood; 3:20-21) indicate that while to some extent near judgment would strike Judah for disobedience, the ultimate judgment would befall the nation at Christ’s second advent (cf. Matt. 24:29-30). However, this will not just be a day of wrath upon the unbelieving but of blessing as well for the righteous (Joel 2:32; Zech. 14; Zeph. 3:8-20; Isa. 2, 11; 65–66; Amos 9:11-15; Ezek. 20:33-44, etc.; idem., 147). I think that Pentecost only put in place the events that will culminate at the return of Christ. Therefore, we have a partial fulfillment during Peter’s time but the full fulfillment will occur at Christ’s return.

I trust I didn’t confuse you more! Good questions!

Still learning with you,

Rick
Church Planting in Acts & Church History

I. Definitions

A. Acts 2 records how the Church began on the day of Pentecost in fulfillment of Acts 1:8, where Christ promised that witnesses will begin in Jerusalem and expand from there.

B. However, is it true that, following this first church plant, “churches should always be planted by other churches”? Was this true even in the book of Acts?

II. How Churches Began in Acts

A. Ethiopia saw its first church planted not by another church but by Philip, whom God used to share the gospel to one of Ethiopia’s highest officials (Acts 8:26-40). The church tradition in Ethiopia is that this official brought Christianity back to his nation.

B. Damascus had one of the first churches outside Jerusalem (9:19b). Did the Jerusalem church plant the Damascus church? Paul reached both Jews and Gentiles there (Gal. 2:11-16) but he had to defend himself before the Jerusalem church (9:26). The best we can tell is that it was the persecution in Jerusalem—not a church plant—that thrust out the disciples into places such as Damascus (Acts 8:1).

C. Antioch remains a superb example of a local church sending out missionaries like Paul and Barnabas into the harvest to plant churches (13:1-3). This support was not consistent, however, which resulted in Paul needing to support himself as a tentmaker while Corinth (Acts 18:3). One wonders whether it can accurately be said that the Antioch church really planted the church at Corinth.

D. Colossae and the other Asia Minor churches began in a way that is unknown to scholars. The best guess as to their origin is from Paul’s daily teaching at the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus. “This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (19:10). While we may wish that the church of Ephesus planted these churches, such was not the case.

E. Rome also baffles experts of early church history. Paul wrote the Romans in AD 56 to an established church, yet no one knows how it started. Catholics claim Peter started it, but we have no evidence of Peter arriving in Rome until the AD 60s. Our best guess is that Jews who trusted Christ on the day of Pentecost brought the gospel back to Rome, as we know that some from Rome attended this important gathering (2:10b).

III. How Churches Began in Church History

A. European Christians who migrated to America in the 1600s were not sent by their churches at home in England and other European nations. Nevertheless, they still came, thrust out in large measure by Anglicans and other state churches that persecuted rather than supported them!

B. The modern missionary movement from Europe began in 1792 when William Carey left England for India. His own church refused to send him, so he established the first missionary society.

C. J. Hudson Taylor initially entered China backed by British churches. However, when his senders insisted that he stay in the coastal areas in missionary compounds and wear western dress, God called him otherwise. He moved inland and established the China Inland Mission. CIM missionaries were viewed as “renegade” since they adopted Chinese dress and integrated into society. However, this began a movement that lasts to this day in millions of Chinese believers, though it was not initiated by the local churches of Hudson Taylor’s day.
D. History records that Jesus Christ Himself built His church throughout the centuries, according to His promise (Matt. 16:18). Often He did this through the faithfulness of local churches that saw their responsibility to establish new congregations. However, as in the book of Acts, He continued to call individuals to faithfulness in establishing churches when their institutions failed to catch this vision.

IV. Do You Agree or Disagree?
To explore your own ideas on this vital subject, please mark as A, U, or D beside each statement below to show whether you Agree, are Unsure, or Disagree with the teaching.

A. Other churches always planted churches in the book of Acts.
B. Other churches always planted churches in church history.
C. The only way to plant churches today is for churches to plant other churches.

V. Conclusion

God desires that churches plant other churches. But is this the only way that He works? Both in the book of Acts and throughout church history, churches often failed in this role. At these times, God raised up individuals who shared His heart with the lost, resulting in the establishment of new congregations.

This subject causes one to reconsider the identity of the bride of Christ. Is His “bride” the local church? If so, Jesus has many brides. The bride of Christ is His universal church that He washed, sanctified, and will present to Himself at his return (Eph. 5). Christ is adorning and expanding this bride through numerous strategies of church planting.

Contrary to popular belief, Scripture does not command church planting. The Great Commission is to make disciples—not to plant churches (Matt. 28:18-20). I believe in church planting and am involved in this endeavor myself with a church planting mission board and in my helping establish Crossroads International Church in Singapore. Disciple-making best occurs in the context of the local church, but God brings into being these local assemblies in a variety of ways—sometimes through faithful churches, but other times through His faithful individuals who obey God’s voice even when their institutions neglect to respond to the Spirit’s promptings.
PERMANENT or temporary?

Which of the specific practices and commands that appear in the New Testament are to apply to all times in all places? Which are merely temporary, needed at one particular time in one particular place, but not necessarily applicable at other times and in other places?

To get a handle on the problem, try this self-think exercise we've adapted from some material put together by Mont Smith, a former missionary in Ethiopia. We've listed 50 practices and commands that appear in the New Testament. In a sense, all are "scriptural." The question is: Which are meant to be permanent (P)? Which are merely temporary (T)? Think about each one, then circle the appropriate response.

1. Greet one another with a holy kiss (Rom. 16:16).
2. Abstain from meat that has been sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:29).
4. A woman ought to have a veil on her head (1 Cor. 11:10).
5. Wash one another's feet (John 13:14).
6. Extend the right hand (left hand?) of fellowship (Gal. 2:9).
7. Ordain by the "laying on of hands" (Acts 13:3).
8. "It is indecent for a woman to speak in an assembly" (1 Cor. 14:35).
9. Have fixed hours of prayer (Acts 3:1).
10. Sing songs, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16).
12. Slaves, obey your earthly masters (Eph. 6:5).
13. Observe the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:24).
14. Do not make any oaths (James 5:12).
15. Anoint the sick with oil (James 5:14).
16. Permit no woman to teach men (1 Tim. 2:12).
17. Preach two by two (Mark 6:7).
18. Go into Jewish synagogues to preach (Acts 14:1).
19. Eat what is set before you asking no questions of conscience (1 Cor. 10:27).
20. Prohibit women from wearing braided hair, gold, or pearls (1 Tim. 2:9).
22. Do not seek marriage (1 Cor. 7:27).
24. Women should pray with their heads covered (1 Cor. 11:5).

P T 25. Drink communion from a single cup (Mark 14:23).
P T 27. Avoid praying in public (Mt. 6:5; 6).
P T 28. Speak in tongues and prophecy (1 Cor. 14:5).
P T 29. Meet in homes for church (Col. 4:15).
P T 30. Work with your hands (1 Thess. 4:11).
P T 31. Lift your hands when praying (1 Tim. 2:8).
P T 32. Give to those who beg from you (Mt. 5:42).
P T 33. Pray before meals (Lk. 22:30).
P T 34. Support no widow under 60 years old (1 Tim. 5:9).
P T 35. Say "Amen" at the end of prayers (1 Cor. 14:16).
P T 37. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic (Mark 6:9).
P T 38. Wives, submit to your husbands (Col. 3:18).
P T 39. Show no favoritism to the rich (James 2:1-7).
P T 40. The unleavened bread for communion (Lk. 22:13, 19).
P T 42. Owe no man anything (Rom. 13:8).
P T 43. Have seven deacons in the church (Acts 6:3).
P T 44. Don't eat meat from animals killed by strangulation (Acts 15:29).
P T 45. If anyone will not work, don't let him eat (2 Thess. 3:10).
P T 46. Worship on Saturday (Acts 13:14, 42; 44).
P T 47. Give up personal property (Acts 2:44, 45).
P T 48. Remove self-employed clergy (2 Thess. 3:7, 8).
P T 49. Take collections in church for the poor (1 Cor. 16:1).
P T 50. Long hair on a man is a disgrace (1 Cor. 11:14).

Now that you're finished, get ready for the hard part. What principle did you use to decide which were permanent and essential and which were temporary and cultural? Since you made a separation, you must have used some standard. What was it? Remember that your principle must be one that can apply to every example in the above list.

Write out your principles here. Then, just to keep yourself honest, have a friend examine your categories for a second opinion on how well you held to your principles.

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*Principles of Biblical Interpretation.

(your name)

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How Do We Know Whether a Bible Passage Is “Culturally Conditioned”?  
Dr. Roy Zuck, unpublished class handout, “Hermeneutics & Bible Study Methods” (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983)

To what extent is the relevance of Bible passages to us today limited by cultural contexts? Is every cultural practice and every situation, command, and principle in the Bible immediately transferable to our culture? How do we determine what is transferable and what is not?

1. Some situations, commands, or principles are repeatable, continuous, or not revoked, or pertain to moral and theological subjects, or are repeated elsewhere in Scripture, and therefore are transferable. 
   Examples: Gen. 9:6; Prov. 3:5-6; John 3:3; Rom 12:1-2; l Cor. 12:13; Eph. 6:10-19; Col. 3:12-13; 1 Pet. 5:6.

2. Some situations, commands, or principles pertain to an individual’s specific nonrepeatable circumstances, or nonmoral or nontheological subjects, or have been revoked, and are therefore not transferable. 
   Examples: Matt. 21:2-3; 2 Tim. 4:11, 13; Heb. 7:12; 10:1; Lev. 20:11 (cf. 1 Cor. 9).

3. Some situations or commands pertain to cultural settings that are only partially similar to ours and in which only the principles are transferable. 
   Examples: Rom 16:16; 1 Cor. 8; Deut. 6:4-6.

4. Some situations or commands pertain to cultural settings with no similarities to ours but in which the principles are transferable. 
   Examples: Matt. 26:7; Exod. 3:5.

***

A frequently discussed passage pertaining to the question of “culturally conditioned” biblical material is 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. One question to answer is, Does this passage refer to the hair as a covering or to a separate head covering, such as a veil, over the hair? If it means the latter (and that seems to be suggested by verses 4, 5, 6, and 7) then there are four options in interpreting its cultural conditioning and the extent of its relevance for today:

a. Women today should wear shawls in church as a sign of their submissiveness. 
   - The situation and the principle are both repeatable.

b. The passage has no relevance at all for women today. 
   - The situation and the principle are not repeatable.

c. Women today should wear hats in church as a sign of their submissiveness. 
   - The situation is partially similar, and the principle is transferable.

d. Women today need not wear hats in church but they are to be submissive. 
   - The situation is entirely different (a woman’s veil was a symbol of her husband’s authority; therefore sacred prostitutes in Corinth did not wear veils), but the principle is transferable.
Pentecost Countries & Damascus

Bible Visual Resource Book, 215

Acts

Countries of People Mentioned at Pentecost
Acts 2:9-11

- Rome (13)
- PONTUS (7)
- ASIA (8)
- PHRYGIA (9)
- PAMPHYLIA (10)
- CRETE (14)
- CAPPADOCIA (6)
- PARTHIAN empire (1)
- Media (2)
- Susa (3)
- Ecbatana (4)
- CYRENE (12)
- JUDEA (5)
- EGYPT (11)
- ARABIA (15)

ASIA—Provinces of the Roman empire
Media—Provinces of the Parthian empire
Rome—Cities
CRETE—Island

Miles: 0 200 400 600 800 1000
Kms: 0 300 600 900 1200 1500

Roman Damascus

Damascus represented much more to Saul, the strict Pharisee, than another stop on his campaign of repression. It was the hub of a vast commercial network with far-flung lines of caravan trade reaching into north Syria, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Persia and Arabia. If the new "Way" of Christianity flourished in Damascus, it would quickly reach all these places. From the viewpoint of the Sanhedrin and of Saul, the arch persecutor, it had to be stopped in Damascus. The city itself was a veritable oasis, situated in a plain watered by the Biblical rivers Abana and Pharpar.

Roman architecture overlaid the Hellenistic town plan with a great temple to Jupiter and a mile-long colonnaded street, the "Straight Street" of Ac 9:11. The city gates and a section of the town wall may still be seen today, as well as the lengthy bazaar that runs along the line of the ancient street.

The dominant political figure at the time of Paul’s escape from Damascus (2 Co 11:32-33) was Aretas IV, king of the Nabateans (9 B.C.-A.D. 40), though normally the Decapolis cities were attached to the province of Syria and were thus under the influence of Rome.

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Philip's and Peter's Missionary Journeys

_Bible Visual Resource Book, 223_
The Spread of the Gospel

Bible Visual Resource Book, 217
Two Important Issues in Acts
Dr. Walter Steitz, East Asia School of Theology (Singapore, 2005)

1. What is the purpose of Acts? Is Acts 1:8 a full statement of the purpose of this book?

   a. Test cases:

   1) Acts 5:12-42: What is emphasized? The proclamation of the gospel or the opposition?

   2) The ministry at Cyprus (13:4-12). What do these nine verses relate? What is the author emphasizing in this account? (The narrative technique of pace of the narrative gives us the clue).

   3) The ministry at Thessalonica (17:1-9).

   Conclusion: Opposition by the Jews is emphasized more than the preaching of the gospel.

   b. How much preaching of the gospel is recorded in Acts 21-28? (Why is the long account of the shipwreck of chapter 27 included)?

   What is emphasized?


   2) Why are the Jews so hostile? (11:1-3; 12:3,4,11; 21:28; 22:21). (The preaching and inclusion of the gentiles, and yet this was specifically directed by the sovereign Lord).


   c. The major theme of a narrative is normally repeated continuously throughout that narrative, is emphasized by much slow paced narrative (mimetic scenes and direct discourse), and is stated at the very end of that narrative. Acts 28:25-28 is the statement of the major theme of Acts.

   d. Never in Acts did the gospel go "to the end of the earth." The gospel went as far as Rome, which was considered to be the center of the world. The "end of the earth" would be Tarshish (Spain).

2. What is the role of Acts 12 in the greater narrative of Acts? A secondary question: Why was the Jewish laity so hostile toward the apostles?

   a. Commentators (even evangelical) hold varied viewpoints concerning the function and significance of Acts 12.
b. This chapter is located at the very hinge of Acts.

Book 1--Acts 1-12: Primary character is Peter; all of the action with the exception of 11:19-30--ministry in Antioch) is in Jerusalem or originates from Jerusalem.

Book 2--Acts 13-28: Primary character is Paul; the action of the earlier part originates from Antioch of Syria. With the exception of the Jerusalem council of Acts 15, none of the action originates from Jerusalem--Jerusalem becomes the great source of animosity to the supernatural work of God through Paul.

There are numerous parallels in the two books. The intensity of the miraculous through the primary character increases and culminates with the raising of the dead (4:15, 9:40-41; 19:11,12; 20:9-12). The primary character is supernaturally delivered by God from certain death. Each book is initiated by the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4 also 5:20,21; 13:1-3).

c. The book of Acts is very selective. It covers a historical period of at least 27 years. Thus the average pace of the book is one chapter per year. Yet the events of Acts 12 cover a very short period of time (12:6-18 occur within one night) and are recounted at very slow pace which indicates the importance of this chapter.

d. Throughout Acts 1-11 God is supernaturally working. Each time that He works there is acceptance and opposition (a cause/effect relationship). However, the opposition is emphasized much more than the acceptance. A major work of the Lord is preparing Peter for the receptivity of the gentiles in Acts 10. The importance of this is greatly emphasized by the numerous repetitions of this event in very slow pace. However, no effect is directly stated other than that of the circumcised believers (11:1-3).

However, a definite pattern of cause/effect has been established in Acts 1-11. Once a definite pattern is established in narrative, it is no longer necessary to state that an effect is an effect. The reader intuitively understands that it is an effect.

e. Conclusions: The hostility of the Jewish laity of Acts 12 (repeated three times) is the effect of the gospel going to the gentile Cornelius through the Apostles (and particularly Peter).

Acts 12 is a critical hinge in the narrative of Acts. The culmination of the Jewish hostility in Acts 12 is "the straw that broke the camel’s back"--"the Kadesh-Barnea." Because of this the Lord turned His back on the nation. He removed His center of spiritual operations from Jerusalem to a gentile city, Antioch of Syria.
I have not developed an adequate subject-complement for Acts. At this time I am not aware of anyone who has done this.

The subject-complement must include the following elements:

1. The unusual supernatural activity of God which initiated and sustained the proclamation of the gospel to the gentiles.

2. This work was increasingly resisted by the Jews. Ultimately there was a total rejection of this work.

3. Yet ironically God used this very Jewish resistance to further move the gospel to the gentiles.

4. Regardless of the intensity of the Jewish opposition, God’s work could not be thwarted. (Peter and Paul should have died—there was no other alternative from the human perspective. However, God miraculously overruled. Neither of them could be put to death).

5. The result of the intense Jewish opposition was that Israel was blinded.

6. This book shows the move of the gospel from the Jews to the gentiles.
Saul and Paul

Probably one of the most dramatic conversions in the early church was that of Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul, the best missionary in the first century. God often takes persons of great passion like Saul and breaks them to use in his service. Notice the differences between the "two men":

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Saul</th>
<th></th>
<th>Paul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning of Name</strong></td>
<td>&quot;to demand&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;little&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong></td>
<td>Roman citizen &amp; Jew</td>
<td>Same—could preach in either Greek or Hebrew</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Pharisee, rabbi (orthodox)</td>
<td>Apostle, servant of Jesus Christ (orthodox)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trainer/Place</strong></td>
<td>Gamaliel in Jerusalem (22:3)</td>
<td>God in Arabia &amp; Damascus (Gal. 1:17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style of Education</strong></td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passion</strong></td>
<td>Zealous for the Law (Phil. 3:5-6)</td>
<td>Zealous for Grace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defended</strong></td>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Audience</strong></td>
<td>Jews alone</td>
<td>Mostly Gentiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demeanor</strong></td>
<td>Killed Christians (22:4)</td>
<td>Blessed all (23:1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opponents</strong></td>
<td>Fought &quot;heresy&quot; called Christianity</td>
<td>Fought heresies of Judaizers, mystery religions, Stoics, Epicureans, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prayer</strong></td>
<td>Others prayed for him (7:60–8:1)</td>
<td>He prayed for others</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Do you know anyone who is so opposed to Christ that it seems impossible to envision that person as a Christian? I hope not after seeing Paul's background!
The Use of Amos 9 in Acts 15

Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, 2:394-95
Interpreting Acts

How Does Luke Teach Theology Through His Narrative?
Dr. Tim Wiarda, Singapore Bible College (February 2005)

1. How are the passages in Acts 16:10-17 (the trip from Troas to Philippi), 20:5-21:18 (the trip from Philippi to Jerusalem) and 27:1-28:16 (the trip from Caesarea to Rome) different from the rest of the book of Acts?

2. What does this tell you about the author of Acts?

3. What if someone said, ‘The author put in these first-person plurals on purpose in order to make people think he was an eye-witness, when actually he wasn’t.’

4. What if someone said, ‘The author found a record written by someone else and incorporated it into his narrative, forgetting to change the first-person plurals to third person.’

5. Why does Luke end the book of Acts the way he does? Does the ending tell you anything about when the book was written?
Interpreting Acts

How Does Luke Including Himself in Certain Accounts Affect the Theology?
Dr. Tim Wiarda, Singapore Bible College (February 2005) Page 2 of 2

Elwell and Yarbrough highlight a key question for interpreters of Acts: ‘How much of Acts merely describes what once took place, and how much prescribes what should take place in other times and settings?’ At one extreme are those who want to make everything they see in Acts a normative pattern for doctrine and practice. At the other end of the spectrum are those who say Acts is purely descriptive history and therefore not a source of teaching at all. Better than either of these two extremes is to recognise that Acts does provide important teaching for Christians, but that we must think carefully to make sure we discern Luke’s intended lessons.

How do we know whether something we see in Acts should be taken as a pattern for us today? The following five questions can help us decide.

1) What is the primary *focus* of the section of narrative in which the item occurs?
2) Does the item occur only once or is there a repeated pattern of similar behaviour?
3) Does the item play a special role relating to a unique moment in the history of God’s redemptive plan?
4) Is the item somehow related to the particular cultural or situational context of the early church?
5) Is there didactic material (direct teaching material) elsewhere in the NT that throws light on the item we find in Acts?

Test case for discussion: Should we choose church leaders by casting lots?

1. How does the practice of casting lots measure up when the five questions above are asked?

2. What is Luke’s intention or purpose for including 1:26 in his history of the early church?

3. What is the primary focus of the whole episode of choosing a replacement for Judas (1:12-26)?

4. What details in the narrative of 1:12-26 show you its primary focus?
The Land of Acts and Letters Compared with the USA
Terry Hall, Bible Panorama, 144

After Pentecost the church was mainly Jewish and was centered in Jerusalem. Then Philip took the Gospel to Judea and Samaria before Saul of Tarsus was converted on the Damascus Road. Peter was encouraged, in a vision of a sheet full of ceremonially clean and unclean animals, to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. Then Jewish persecution caused a great expansion of the church as far north as Antioch in Syria, where the disciples were first called “Christians.” Antioch soon became the missionary center of the early church. The first three evangelistic tours by the Apostle Paul began in this city.

Let’s let the S of Syria also remind us of Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, who began the church and who still seeks to empower it. Twenty-six times in Acts we read that Christians spoke the word of the Lord boldly. Many of those references, in their contexts, also mention the Holy Spirit. Who converted the cowardly Peter after Jesus’ trials into the powerful, bold preacher on the Day of Pentecost? The Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit who enabled the apostles to rejoice when they were persecuted for Jesus’ sake. There is a principle here for us. God’s power works in and through His people by His Holy Spirit.
Sermons in the Book of Acts

Acts has numerous, abbreviated sermons. In fact, 24 of the 28 chapters include a sermon or sermon portion. This study contrasts three key sermons to discover some of the clues as to what made them so effective.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker</strong></td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>Jews and God-fearing Gentiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City</strong></td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Antioch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place</strong></td>
<td>House (v. 2) at the Temple (Luke 24:53)?</td>
<td>Synagogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Place</strong></td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Day of Pentecost</td>
<td>1st Missionary Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject (theme)</strong></td>
<td>The reason some Jews miraculously speak unknown languages</td>
<td>The fulfillment of Israel’s national history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complement</strong></td>
<td>is because God’s Spirit is poured out on them through Jesus, Israel’s resurrected Messiah</td>
<td>is in Jesus as our risen Savior who is worthy of our trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short MI</strong></td>
<td>Jesus is Messiah (36)</td>
<td>Believe in Jesus (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application Structure</strong></td>
<td>Simple—application at the end (38-39)</td>
<td>Cyclical—application in centre (26) &amp; end (38-41)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main Idea Structure</strong></td>
<td>Inductive (36)</td>
<td>Inductive (23)-Deductive (24-37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
<td>Topical-Biblical</td>
<td>Expositional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style</strong></td>
<td>Extemporaneous</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> &quot;Ho Hum!&quot; (How he gets attention)</td>
<td>Cites a recent event: Spirit baptism (14-15)</td>
<td>Tells a familiar story: Identifies with listeners by citing common history (16-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thrust of Introduction</strong></td>
<td>“Why do you think these people appear drunk?”</td>
<td>“I am an informed Jew who also has longed for the Messiah”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How the Speaker Draws in His Listeners</strong></td>
<td>Raises curiosity about the miraculous speaking in other languages</td>
<td>Raises curiosity about how his Judaism differs from theirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body</strong></td>
<td>“The Spirit descended from the risen Messiah Jesus” (16-36)</td>
<td>“Jesus is Israel’s risen Messiah” (23-37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illustration Sources</strong></td>
<td>Scripture (Joel 2:28-32; Ps. 16:8-11; 110:1)</td>
<td>Scripture (Ps. 2:7; 16:10; Isa. 55:3; Hab. 1:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resurrection of Christ Noted</strong></td>
<td>Extensive with scriptural support (24-32)</td>
<td>Extensive with scriptural support (30-37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>Main Idea: Jesus is the Messiah (36)</td>
<td>Scripture: Habakkuk 1:5 quoted: “I will do something that you won’t believe” (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Indirect: Implications left to them: “How can we be saved?” (37)</td>
<td>Direct: “Forgiveness is offered to you” so “don’t be scoffers” (38, 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong></td>
<td>3000 saved (41)</td>
<td>Invited to speak again, some believed, he turned to Gentiles (42-48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kerygma* of the Early Church
H. Wayne House, Chronological Charts of the NT

*Kerygma (Gr. κήρυγμα) is a noun that means “what is preached, message, proclamation.”

1. The promises by God made in the Old Testament have now been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus the Messiah (Acts 2:30; 3:19, 24; 10:43; 26:6-7, 22; Rom. 1:2-4; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:18-19).

2. Jesus was anointed by God at His baptism as Messiah (Acts 10:38).


4. He conducted a beneficent ministry, doing good and performing mighty works by the power of God (Mark 10:45; Acts 2:22, 10:38).

5. The Messiah was crucified according to the purpose of God (Mark 10:45; John 3:16; Acts 2:23; 3:13-15, 18; 4:11; 10:39; 26:23; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 1:17-18; 15:3; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:2, 19; 3:18; 1 John 4:10).

6. He was raised from the dead and appeared to His disciples (Acts 2:24, 31-32; 3:15, 26; 10:40-41; 17:31; 26:23; Rom. 8:34; 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:4-7, 12ff.; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Peter 1:2, 21; 3:18, 21).

7. Jesus was exalted by God and given the name “Lord” (Acts 2:25-29, 33-36; 3:13; 10:36; Rom. 8:34; 10:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22).


9. He will come again for judgment and the restoration of all things (Acts 3:20-21; 10:42; 17:31; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; 1 Thess. 1:10).

10. All who hear the message should repent and be baptized (Acts 2:21, 38; 3:19; 10:43, 47-48; 17:30; 26:20; Rom. 1:17; 10:9; 1 Peter 3:21).

This schema served as the essential proclamation of the early church, though different authors of the New Testament may leave out a portion or vary in emphasis on particulars in the kerygma. Compare the entire Gospel of Mark, which closely follows the Petrine aspect of the kerygma.
Key Characters in the A.D. Video

Religious life was complex during the time Paul wrote his epistles. Probably the most extreme differences came in the contrast between Roman religion and Judaism (and those Jews who had embraced Christ as Messiah). The conflicts are well portrayed in the film viewed in class entitled “A.D.” This 12-hour Vincenzo LaBella production cost US$30 million to produce and was filmed on location in Tunisia, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome. It was broadcast in the USA during the 1984-85 television season. Gospel Films, Inc. (PO Box 455; Muskegon, Michigan 49443-0455) edited the version seen in class to a 6-hour series that I purchased from Christian Book Distributors (www.christianbook.com). The following characterizations are taken from the study guide that accompanies this 3-tape set on pages 7-9.

Thought Questions:

1—Contrast the reactions of Nero and his advisor with that of the senators and common people on the burning of Rome.

2—What are your feelings and thoughts about the Christians dying in the arena?

3—Valerius states after seeing the slaughter of Christians, “I am not a Roman soldier anymore. I will not serve a butcher and a pack of wolves... I renounce my rank. I renege my service to the Emperor, this city!” How did hearing this strike you? Have you ever heard something similar in your own experience or that of others?
FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

Two of the three couples who play key roles in the developing story of A.D. (the third couple is Aquila and Priscilla) are (1) Caleb, (the Jewish zealot freedom fighter) and Corinna, (daughter of a Senator and female gladiator) (2) Valerius, (the Roman soldier) and Sarah, (sister of Caleb). Aside from being interesting characters, they represent four important social and cultural perspectives that had great effect on the Roman world of A.D.

Caleb bridges the Judean resistance fighters who sought to overthrow the Roman government and bring in the Messianic Age by force with the violent world of the gladiators - people trained to fight and die for the supposed entertainment of the Emperor and the citizens. Since the excesses of the Emperor often left the public treasury without any money, the games were created to take the people’s minds off the unemployment, poverty and hunger that gripped Rome during these years.

Although Caleb’s character does not end the program with a confession of faith, it is clear that the words, teachings and lives of the Christians has made a dramatic impact on his life.

His early relationship with the various groups within Jewish culture gives an introduction to the following:

Pharisees - a strict and legalistic group that studied the Torah and spent much of its time debating the implications of the Law.

Saducees - a group that drew its heritage out of the Wisdom books in the Scriptures and had very different views of life, death and resurrection.

Nazarenes/Essenes - members of reclusive, monastic communities that pulled away from the rest of Jewish society and spent most of their time in rites of purification, study, and prayer.

Zealots - Jewish freedom fighters who fought as guerilla bands, attacking the Romans where they could and working for the overthrow of the government.

Corinna, who becomes Caleb’s wife, represents a small but active part of Roman society. Although history concentrates on the male gladiators, Roman historians make the point that women were also involved in the gladiatorial training and struggles. Because she is a Roman, Corinna’s character is much more reliant on the superstition and mysticism that were a major part of Roman religion.

Valerius represents the side of Roman life that was most stable through the tumult of the various Emperors. The military, carefully organized into units that were highly disciplined, represented the strength and presence of Rome. Being a career soldier was considered an honor and the military had great status in the community. The character of Valerius presents a uniting thread between Roman history and the growth of the faith. His presence with Emperors and governors and with Paul and Aquila and Priscilla pulls the narrative together and, in a believable way, bridges the two worlds.

Sarah brings the Jewish tradition into her slavery, represents the struggle that the Jews had under Claudius, and through her marriage to Valerius, shows not only the traditional Roman wedding, but also the process through which slaves could become free.
Paul's First Missionary Journey

Acts 13:2-14:28 April 48-September 49

13:14-50 Paul's first missionary journey
13:51-14:15 Paul expelled from synagogues, persecution, conversion
14:16-28 Preaching in synagogues, conversion, preaching to Gentiles
14:27-28 Preaching in Lystra, Derbe, and Perga
14:29-30 Preaching in Antioch
14:31-33 Preaching in Ephesus
14:34-52 Preaching in Corinth
14:53-54 Preaching in Athens
14:55-56 Preaching in Thessalonica
14:57-58 Preaching in Philippi
15:1-2 Preaching in Jerusalem
15:3-4 Preaching in Antioch
15:5-28 Preaching in Samaria
16:1-2 Preaching in Philippi
16:3-4 Preaching in Thessalonica
16:5-10 Preaching in Athens
16:11-17 Preaching in Corinth
16:18-33 Preaching in Ephesus
16:34-38 Preaching in Jerusalem
16:39-40 Preaching in Antioch
16:41-42 Preaching in Samaria
16:43-50 Preaching in Jerusalem
Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Acts 15:36-18:22 April 50-September 52

16:12-46
- Aug-Oct 50: Lydia converted
- July 50: Paul imprisoned in Philippi
- July 50: Paul released, spent three months in Father Titus
- July 50: Paul ordained in Ephesus, later preached in Crete
- Sept 51: Paul preached at Corinth

16:4
- July 50: Many believe in Ephesus

16:8
- July 50: Set free by God

16:10-15
- Feb 51: Paul preached in Thessalonica
- Feb 51: The referral of Paul's name to Felix

17:1
- Nov 50-Jan 51: Paul preached in Thessalonica
- Feb 51: Preached three sabbaths in Thessalonica
- Mar 51: Elected elders in Thessalonica
- Apr 51: Preached in Athens, where he was forced to leave

17:16-24
- Feb-Mar 51: Paul preached about the "Unknown God"
- Feb-Mar 51: Paul preached in Athens
- Apr 51-Sept 52: Paul preached in Corinth
- Apr 51-Sept 52: Paul preached in Ephesus

18:1-18
- June 51: Paul and Silas expelled from Ephesus
- June 51: Paul preached in Crete
- Aug 51: Paul preached in Ephesus
- Aug 51: Paul preached in Crete

18:19-21
- Sept 52: Paul and Silas expelled from Ephesus
- Sept 52: Paul preached in Corinth
- Sept 52: Paul's return to Ephesus

18:21-22
- Sept 52: Paul preached in Ephesus
- Sept 52: Paul emphasized the meaning of the Gentiles

18:22-23
- Nov 52: Paul met Timothy
- Nov 52: Paul met Timothy, strengthened believers

19:1-4
- Dec 20: Paul greeted saints

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18:23–21:16 Spring 53–May 57

- June-Nov 56: Paul visits Macedonia
- Apr 6-14, 57: Leave for Troas
- May 56: Call of the prophets and teachers
- June-Nov 56: Visit to Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea, Athens
- June-Oct 57: Visit to Ephesus
- Oct 57: Return to Antioch
- Spring 58: Visit to Jerusalem
- July 58: Return to Antioch
- Sept 58: Visit to Troas
- Oct 58: Travel to Mytilene
- Nov 58: Visit to Troas
- Dec 58: Return to Ephesus
- May 59: Visit to Jerusalem

Key Events:
- 18:22: Left Antioch
- 21:3: Visited brethren
- 21:24: Stayed with Philip
- 21:31: Received by church

Map Showing:
- Jason's House
- Thessalonica
- Philippi
- Berea
- Athens
- Corinth
- Ephesus
- Miletus
- Mytilene
- Troy
- Antioch
- Jerusalem
- Arabia

Rick Griffith, PhD
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21-Dec-20
Paul's Trials & Imprisonments
Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey

Bible Visual Resource Book, 259 adapted

It is clear from Acts 13:31–21:17 that Paul went on three missionary journeys. There is also reason to believe that he made a fourth journey after his release from the Roman imprisonment recorded in Acts 28:30. There is some disagreement as to whether Paul’s fourth journey was to Spain (Clement of Rome, Epistle to Polycarp, 2, 2, 2–3; 1, 1, 1; 1, 1, 1) and whether he reached his goal of going to Spain (Rom. 15:24, 28).

The places Paul may have visited after his release from prison are indicated by statements of his intentions in his earlier letters and by subsequent mention in the Pastoral Letters.

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21-Dec-20
Walk Thru the Pauline Epistles

"Unto the uttermost part of the earth..." (Acts 13-28)

1. Galatia
   - Place: Antioch
   - Date: Autumn 49

2. Jerusalem Council
   - Place: Jerusalem
   - Date: Autumn 49

3. Macedonia and Achaia
   - Place: Corinth
   - Date: Spring 50

4. Galatia
   - Place: Antioch
   - Date: Autumn 49

5. Romans
   - Place: Rome
   - Date: Autumn 61

6. 1 Thessalonians
   - Place: Thessalonica
   - Date: Summer 51

7. 2 Thessalonians
   - Place: Thessalonica
   - Date: Summer 51

8. Ephesians
   - Place: Ephesus
   - Date: Autumn 60

9. Philippians
   - Place: Philippi
   - Date: Summer 62

10. Colossians
    - Place: Colossae
    - Date: Autumn 62

11. 1 Timothy
    - Place: Macedonia
    - Date: Autumn 62

12. 2 Timothy
    - Place: Rome
    - Date: Autumn 67

13. Titus
    - Place: Macedonia
    - Date: Summer 66

14. 1 Peter
    - Place: Antioch
    - Date: Autumn 55

15. 2 Peter
    - Place: Antioch
    - Date: Autumn 55

16. 1 John
    - Place: Ephesus
    - Date: Autumn 60

17. 2 John
    - Place: Ephesus
    - Date: Autumn 60

18. 3 John
    - Place: Ephesus
    - Date: Autumn 60

19. Jude
    - Place: Antioch
    - Date: Autumn 61

20. Hebrews
    - Place: Antioch
    - Date: Autumn 61

21. James
    - Place: Jerusalem
    - Date: Autumn 61

22. Matthew
    - Place: Maccabees
    - Date: Spring 68

23. Mark
    - Place: Rome
    - Date: Autumn 62

    - Place: Rome
    - Date: Autumn 65

25. Acts
    - Place: Rome
    - Date: Autumn 67
“Unto the uttermost part of the earth…” (Acts 13–28)

Walk Thru the General Epistles

NT Epistle Contrasts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pauline</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Named after</strong></td>
<td>Recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>Earlier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chronology</strong></td>
<td>Most during missionary journeys and Acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of letters</strong></td>
<td>Soteriology (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theological Categories</strong></td>
<td>Ecclesiology (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eschatology (2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christology (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missiology (2)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Timeline of Paul's Life

Lines, brackets, and dotted lines help show sequence of events, but are not meant to point to precise months or days within a given year, since exact dating is difficult.

A.D. 0  
Birth of Saul  
Between B.C. and A.D. 10, but probably about A.D. 5  
(based on the terms "young man," Ac 7:58, and "old man," Ptm 9).

A.D. 1  
43/44 Famine visit (Ac 11:27-30; 12:1-17)  
Herod's death, which occurred in A.D. 44, is sandwiched between the trips to and from Jerusalem (Ac 12:19-23).

A.D. 2  
35 Martyrdom of Stephen (Ac 7:57-60)  
35 Conversion of Saul (Ac 9:1-19)

A.D. 3  
38-43 Ministry in Syria and Cilicia (Ac 9:30; Gal 1:19)

A.D. 5  
38-38 Arabian trip (Gal 1:17)  
Fits in at Ac 9:25, during the "many days"

A.D. 7  
51 Writing of 1 Thessalonians from Corinth

A.D. 8  
46-48 First missionary journey (Ac 13:2-14:28)

A.D. 10  
51/52 A Ephesus (Ac 19:1-20:1)

A.D. 11  
57 Arrest in Jerusalem (Ac 21:27-22:30)

A.D. 12  
52 Return to Jerusalem and Syrian Antioch (Ac 18:22)

A.D. 13  
52-53 Second missionary journey (Ac 15:40-18:23)

A.D. 14  
57-59 Caesarea imprisonment (Ac 23:25-26:32)

A.D. 16  
60 Writing of Ephesians from Rome

A.D. 17  
60/61 First Roman imprisonment (Ac 28:18-31)

A.D. 18  
62 Release from Roman imprisonment

A.D. 19  
62-67 Fourth missionary journey including ministry on Crete

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