

NEW TESTAMENT SYNTHESIS NOTES

by Dr. Fred Wittman

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

INTRODUCTION:

- A. To what length would you go if you knew that you could be fully filled with joy and The Holy Spirit after being confronted with serious persecution by zealous antagonistic religious people opposed to The Truth of The Gospel?
- B. Review: 1. The Theme of The Bible: **The Coming of The Messiah, The King and His Kingdom of Righteousness and Peace.**
2. The Purpose of The Bible: **To Teach The God's Plan of Redemption.**

PRESENTATION:

I. Facts to Be Noted

A. Pertinent Facts:

Author: Luke, The Beloved Physician Date Written: mid to late A.D. 63 Provenance: Rome
Written to: **Theh-óhfeelohs** and Greeks (Gentiles), Christians wherever, interested in knowing) Key Verse: 1:8
Key word: (The) Holy Spirit Theme: The Early Church Content: History of The Early Church
Purpose: To convince readers that Jesus is The Messiah, Son of God Emphasis: The ministries of Peter and Paul

1. Authorship

- a. Who is Luke? His name is mentioned only three times in The New Testament (Col. 1:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phile. 24). From these verses we learn that he was: a beloved physician; a faithful and loyal friend of Paul in his deepest trial as a prisoner of Rome (Nero) for the second time in the spring of A.D. 68, when all others he relied upon forsook him and departed from Rome; and he was with three others who were loyal under his first three-year imprisonment in Rome in A.D. 62.
- b. His background probably from **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** (Antioch), Syria (learned from early tradition and reinforced by an unusual emphasis upon **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** in The Book of Acts and identification of his brother, **Téetohs** (Titus) also from **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** (Gal. 2:1-10; Tit). His brother (2 Cor. 8:16-19 cf. 12:18) was , a convert of Paul's (Tit. 1:4) living in **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** (Antioch), Syria. He went with Paul and **Bahrnáhbahs** from **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** on Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10).
- c. Luke was a Gentile, being listed among the Gentile (uncircumcised) fellow workers of Paul (Col. 4:1-14).
- d. His occupations:
- (1) He was a physician. By 300 B.C. there was a very sophisticated medical school that existed in Alexandria that educated physicians throughout the Roman Empire . Additionally those who practiced medicine had to pass strict examinations and were regulated and supervised by senior physicians.
 - (2) He was an accurate historian and author (Lk. 1:1-4; Acts 1:1,2).
 - (A) He was responsible for twenty-five percent of The New Testament.
 - (B) He was reliable to the minutest detail. As other historians studied him they found him to be one of the most accurate and trustworthy of historians. William M. Ramsay, an archaeologist and historian of the early 1900's claimed he was "the best historian of the first century. He set out to write a book to show how foolish Luke was when travelling throughout the Mediterranean world, only to discover this about Luke, " In the entire Greco-Roman world he is 'he is unsurpassed in his trustworthiness.'"
 - (3) He was a missionary and traveling companion to Paul (Acts 16:10-17; as noted in the "we" passages in Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-13,15; 21:1-5,7,8,10,12,15-17; 27:1; 28:2,3;11-16). He spent seven ears and five months at Philippi serving and caring for the church there nurturing her to maturity.
- e. His character
- (1) He was careful, caring for Paul in his needs and the needs of others.
 - (2) He was concerned:
 - (A) for **Theh-óhfeelohs** - to give a complete an accurate account in response to his inquiry concerning The Gospel (Lk. 1:1-4; Acts 1:1,2).
 - (B) For other Gentiles of his age, who were lost, in His responsibility for them to become informed of The Gospel through his evangelistic enterprise.
 - (3) He was committed. In both of Paul's imprisonments in the darkest of times, He was committed to remain there with Paul. In the second imprisonment which ended with Paul's martyrdom, only Luke was with him (2 Tim. 4:;11).

2. Evidence of Authorship

- a. Internal Evidence: The switch from third person "they" to first person "we" indicates the author is giving first hand knowledge to the narrative. The "we" passages are: Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21; 27:1-28:16.
- (1) The author must have been present and a traveling companion of Paul.

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A. Pertinent Facts (cont.)

2. Evidence of Authorship (cont.)

a. Internal Evidence (cont.)

- 2) Medical language is used, indicative of a physician: “ankle bones received strength” (3:7); “fell from his eyes . . . scales” (9:18); “for your health” (27:34).
- (3) Paul called Luke, ‘the Beloved Physician’ (Col. 4:14).
- (4) Only one of Paul’s companions had medical knowledge, Luke.

b. External Evidence: Patristic tradition of the Early Church:

- (1) The Muratorian Canon, (A.D. 160-200) , *Documents of the Christian Church* , p. 28; Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 153-217) wrote and taught in Egypt, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* Vol. II, p. 464; and Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202), all quote from The Book of Acts ascribing its authorship to Luke.
- (2) There is no contradictory evidence (or tradition) in Early Church writings.

3. Characteristics of Acts

- a. Placed in The New Testament between The Gospels and The Epistles, Acts is a bridge or link.
- b. Acts is a supplement to The Gospels and explains The Church, the promise of The Holy Spirit, and The Great Commission.
- c. Acts introduces us to Paul and to the churches which played an important roll in his life and became the vehicle through whom The God communicated Church Truth.
- d. Acts is a brief view of Early Church History and shows The God’s direction and control of His Church.
- e. Acts is a portrait of primitive communities.
- f. Acts is a record of primitive theology.
- g. There is reference to prayer in nearly every chapter
- h. Since Luke gave such an accurate and prestigious historical account of what The Lord Jesus began to do in His Gospel (Lk. 1:1-3) and what He continued to do through his disciples under the power of The Holy Spirit after He was taken up, it is striking to observe that he makes no mention of his name, nor the date of his writing two significant Books of The New Testament. Therefore dating presents a puzzle with several proffered proposals, some of which could not be substantiated if all the known facts are considered.

4. The Dating of Acts

It must have been written before the burning of Rome which occurred in July A.D. 64, otherwise such a catastrophic event blamed upon the Christians would have been recorded by such an accurate historian. Luke ceased recording events in Acts after Paul’s third year of imprisonment in March, A.D. 63. There are no references to the events of A.D. 60-70, including the burning of Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. The martyrdom of James, the brother of our Lord, is not mentioned (A.D. 62-63). The other later views (between A.D. 70-85, preferred by those who believe in the two document theory, and the second century A.D. theory denying Luke as author) are spurious speculations without foundation.

Most significant for the late A.D. 63 (before July, A.D. 64) date is the abrupt end of the book.

5. The Title: Acts of The Apostles is not inspired. The Book deals with the Acts of The Holy Spirit through the Apostles.

6. The Purpose for which Acts was written: to show through Peter and Paul the progress in the spread of The Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome and to show what Jesus continued to do through The Holy Spirit. (Other purposes have also been cited.)

- a. The central subject of the Christian witness is Christ.
- b. The exclusive source of the Christian witness is The Church.
- c. The widening sphere of the Christian witness embraces the world.
- d. The unailing secret of the Christian witness is The Holy Spirit.

B. Scenes in Acts.

- a. Jerusalem and Mount of Olives (1:1-7:60; 9:1,2; 9:26-31; 11:1-18, 30-12:25; 15:1-29; 21:17-23:32).
- b. **Sahmáhreh-eeah** (Samaria) (8:1-25).
- c. **Gáhzah** (8:26-40).
- d. **Dahmahskóhs** (Damascus) (9:3-25).
- e. Mediterranean coast: Lúddah (Lydda), Yōppay (Joppa), **Kaisáh-reh-eeah** (Caesarea), (9: 32-10:48; 21:8-16; 23:33-27:1).

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- f. **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** (Antioch) of **Peeseedéeah** (11:19-30; 13:1-3; 15:30-40).
- g. Turkey: {**Kúprohs** (Cyprus), **Gahlahtéeah** (Galatia), **Lukah-ohnée-ah** (Lyaconia)} (13:4-14:28).
- h. Mediterranean lands (15:41-21:7; 27:2-28:15).
- i. **Rōmay** (Rome) (28:16-31).

C. Characters in Acts.

The eleven; Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, **Thōmahs** (Thomas), **Bahrthohlohmaíohs** (Bartholomew), Matthew, James the son of (**Alphaeus**), **Seemōn Zaylōtays** (Simon Zelotes), and **Yoūdahs** (Judas) the brother of James, **Bahrsahbáhs** (Barsabas), **Yoústohs** (Justus), **Annas**, **Kaiáhfahs** (Caiaphas), John and **Ahlehs-áhdrohhs** (Alexander), **Gahmahlee-áyl** (Gamaliel), **Ahnahnéeahs** (Ananias) and **Sahpfeh-éeray** (Sapphira), Philip, **Stéhfahnohs** (Stephen), Saul or Paul, **Seemōn** the Sorcerer, **Ahnahnéeahs** (Ananias) the prophet, **Bahrnáhbahs** (Barnabas), **Tahbeetháh** (Tabitha), **Kohrnáyleeohs** (Cornelius), **Seemōn** the tanner, Herod, **Sehrgéeeohs Paúlohs** (Sergius Paulus), **Ehlúmahs** (Elymas) the Sorcerer, **Séelahs** (Silas), Timothy, **Ludéeah** (Lydia), **Yáhsōn** (Jason), **Ahkúláhs** (Aquila), **Préeskeellah** (Priscilia), **Gahlléeōn** (Gallio), **Ahpohllōs** (Apollos), **Gáh-éeeohs** (Gaius), **Ahréestahrkohs** (Aristarchus), **Ahlehs-áhdrohhs** (Alexander), **Daymáytreesohs** (Demetrius), **Éutukh-ohs** (Eutychus), **Áhgahbohhs** (Agabus), **Ahnahnéeahs** (Ananias) {23:2}, **Luséeahs** (Lysias), **Fáyleeks** (Felix), **Fáystohs** (Festus), **Ahgréepahs** (Agrippa), **Behrnéekay** (Bernice), **Káisahr** (Caesar), **Maht-théeahs** (Matthias).

D. Outline of Acts.

- I. Witnessing in Jerusalem (1-:1-8:3).
- II. Witnessing in Judaea, Samaria, and the Provinces (8:4-12:25).
- III. Witnessing to the uttermost part of The Earth (13:1-28:31).

E. There are Nine Fulfilled Prophecies in Acts.

- 1. Replacement for The Christ's betrayer and his future (Acts 1:20 cf. Ps. 69:25; 109:8).
- 2. The Baptism and Outpouring of The Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16-21 cf. Joel 2:28-32).
- 3. The body of The Christ will not see corruption (Acts 2:27 cf. Ps. 16:10).
- 4. David's seed to rule on his throne (Acts 2:30 cf. Ps.132:11).
- 5. The exaltation of The Resurrected-ascended Christ (Acts 2:34,35 cf. Ps. 110:1).
- 6. The Christ is The Stone to become The Head of the Corner {Acts 4:11 cf. Ps. 118:22}.
- 7. The Heathen Rage (Acts 4:25 cf. Ps. 2:1,6).
- 8. The Habitation of The God (Acts 7:49 cf. Isa. 66:1,2).
- 9. The Gospel to The Gentiles (Acts 13:46-48; 14:27; 15:13-18 cf. Amos 9:11).

F. Chapter Headings

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| Ch. 1. Plan for Witnessing. | Ch. 15. A Peril to Witnessing. |
| Ch. 2. Power for Witnessing. | Ch. 16. Paul Witnesses in Europe. |
| Ch. 3. Pattern for Witnessing. | Ch. 17. Paul Witnesses to Heathen. |
| Ch. 4. Persecution for Witnessing. | Ch. 18. Paul Witnesses to Wicked Cities. |
| Ch. 5. Power in Witnessing. | Ch. 19. Paul Witnesses Again to the Ephesians. |
| Ch. 6. Persistence in Witnessing. | Ch. 20. Paul Witnesses to the Ephesian Elders. |
| Ch. 7. Painful Witnessing. | Ch. 21. Prosecuted for Witnessing. |
| Ch. 8. Progress in Witnessing. | Ch. 22. Paul Witnesses to his Persecutors. |
| Ch. 9. A Prosecutor Witnessing. | Ch. 23. Paul Witnesses to The Sanhedrin. |
| Ch. 10. Peter Witnesses to a Gentile. | Ch. 24. Paul Witnesses to Fáyleeks (Felix). |
| Ch. 11. Reviewing Peter's Witness. | Ch. 25. Paul Witnesses to Fáystohs (Festus). |
| Ch. 12. Prayer Essential for Witnessing. | Ch. 26. Paul Witnesses to Ahgréepahs (Agrippa). |
| Ch. 13. Paul Travels to Witness. | Ch. 27. Witnessing in Perils of the Sea. |
| Ch. 14. Paul Witnessing with Power. | Ch. 28. Paul Witnesses to Pagans. |

The Theme of Bible: The Coming of The Messiah: The book of Acts emphatically emphasizes that The Messiah has come as prophesied by The Old Testament Prophets in the person of The Lord Jesus Christ Whom the Jews crucified but He has risen again and for forty days He proved Himself to be absolutely alive and then He ascended into Heaven and sat down on the right of The Throne on The God. The Gospel message now replaces the kingdom with The Church preparing for her marriage rather than for His kingdom reign. The emphasis has now shifted to discipleship as a result of witnessing.

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The Purpose of The Bible: To Teach The Plan of Redemption: The plan of redemption henceforth calls for complete surrender to the Lordship of The Lord Jesus Christ, resulting in salvation from Sin's penalty, power, and plight, forgiveness (5:31;13:38), and justification (Acts 13:39), completely clearing from the guilt, blame and penalty of all Sin the Master and Root and sins the fruit, sanctification and an anticipated inheritance with The Lord Jesus Christ (20:32; 26:18).

The Progressive Revelation of God: The practical manifestation of the universality of the message of The Gospel and the concern The Lord Jesus Christ had to reach the ends of the Earth is emphasized and demonstrated. The enabling power and fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the ministry of The Holy Spirit has taken place as promised. The building and extensive ministry of The Church in fulfilling The God's plan and purposes for her has been revealed. The explanation of the means of salvation after Calvary includes Repentance, faith, forgiveness of sins, justification, complete surrender to The Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Lordship of Christ (Acts 10:36) has been emphasized. The development of New Testament Truth such as Ordinances of The Church: The Lord's Supper and Baptism, Fellowship, Prayer, The Lordship of Christ, Second Coming of Christ, Stewardship, local church officers, Gentile abstinence: from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from strangled flesh, and from sexual immorality (Acts 15:29), sending missionaries, and training disciples. All this has been brought to light in Acts.

DISCUSSION:

What occasioned the outburst of serious persecution by zealous antagonistic religious people in **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah** (Antioch) of **Peeseedéeah** against the newly converted Gentile disciples and against Paul and (Acts 13:14, 38-52)?

What prompted these newly converted Gentile disciple to be fully filled with joy and The Holy Spirit?

How can newly converted disciples be sure to be fully filled with joy and The Holy Spirit mid serious persecution today?

APPLICATION:

What will you do beginning today to insure that you are shall be filled with joy and The Holy Spirit as you grow in faithful discipleship even as the Gentile newly converted disciples of **Ahnteeóh-kheh-eeah**, **Peeseedéeah** persisted in learning in discipleship from Paul and **Bahrnáhbahs** mid persecution from zealous pharisaical Jews ?

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An Explanation for Change of Order of Books Considered

When first approached to teach New Testament Survey, this author utilized the order in which The Books appearing The Bible and taught this subject this same way many times over a period of thirty-three years. Then when compiling a booklet titled *How The Bible Can Make Sense to You* [available on Happy Heralds website for those who have properly completed First and Second Stages of *How to Mature in Christ*] in order to fulfill a requirement for a Doctorate degree, the author encountered a vital requirement must be considered in order to be accurate and achieve hermeneutically correct interpretation. It was strongly emphasized that throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, there is a progress of revelation. The God deals with man in different ways under different responsibilities and requirements according to what He has revealed. The periods of time in which God deals in different ways with men are called dispensations (Eph. 3:2). 'Dispensation' is the translation of the Greek word *oikonomía* which is made up of two words *oĩ kos* meaning 'house' and *nómos* meaning "law." Thus it literally means 'house law.' *Oikonomía* is the word from which we get 'economy' and refers to a time in which man relates to The God under a certain economy, stewardship, or administration. There are at least two dispensations (the Old Testament and the New Testament). Some scholars claim seven, others, eight dispensations. At least make a distinction of time periods as follows:

before the flood; from the flood (Gen. 9:1) until The God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 15);

from the promise until The God gave The Law (Ex. 20 cf. Gal 3:16,17);

from The Law until the death and resurrection and ascension of The Christ (Lk. 22:20 cf. Heb.9:14-17;10:5-10);

from the death and resurrection and ascension of The Christ **and** the descent of The Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost until the second coming of The Lord Jesus Christ in the air for His saints (1 Thes. 4:15-17);

after His second coming in the air until the millennial reign of The Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:4);

and after the millennial reign of The Lord Jesus Christ.

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A question that must be answered in order to be sure an interpretation is Scripturally accurate and hermeneutically correct is: “Where is the recipient who initially reads this Book of The Bible (in which the passage is found) in the history of The God’s Revelation?” The progressive revelation of The God is contained in each Book of The Bible but often is overlooked or ignored. It takes discipline and time to do this every time, but it needs to be done.

With this understanding in mind the author has considered The Epistles and The Revelation in these New Testament Synthesis Notes in chronological order i.e. the order they were written.