

# THE BOOK OF ACTS

From Dust to Destiny

# FROM DUST TO DESTINY

## THE BOOK OF ACTS

- Luke-Acts (Acts of the Apostles?)
- Evidence for one work, two volumes
  - Similar prologues (“theophilus”; “in my first work”; “all that Jesus began to do”)
  - Similar language (vocabulary and style - classical Greek)
  - Similar emphases (social relationships, women, Christianity anchored in Judaism, Christianity not an enemy of Rome, God's initiative in salvation, universal offer of salvation)

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## THE BOOK OF ACTS

- Longest book in NT
  - The combination of Luke's Gospel with Acts makes Luke the writer of more content in the NT than any other author
- Historical Value
  - 30 countries, 50 cities, many islands, nearly 60/100 persons are exclusive to Acts
  - Impressive knowledge (geography, local politics, customs, seafaring, Mediterranean work) - ex. *polytarch*

# FROM DUST TO DESTINY THE BOOK OF ACTS

## ■ Powerful Narratives

- Early Church development - all we know of the early NT church comes from Acts
- Early apostolic teaching (speeches, sermons)

## ■ Literary Quality

- Extensive vocabulary: 400 words exclusive to Acts (Lk - 310; Matt - 100; Mk - 90)
- Narrative Development (central characters, epoch events) - e.g. watershed moments of the early church = Pentecost (Feast of Weeks); Cornelius' conversion; Damascus Rd.

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### ■ The Author: LUKE

- “We” sections (3 sections using 1<sup>st</sup> person plural)
  - Acts 16:10-17 (2 MJ: Troas vision to Phillipian fortuneteller) - “they/he” to “we”
  - Acts 20:5-21:18 (3 MJ: Philippi on return to James in Jerusalem) - “us” to “we”
  - Acts 27:1-28:16 (JR: Caesarea to Rome) - “we”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> person to 1<sup>st</sup> person to 3<sup>rd</sup> person

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### ■ The Man: LUKE

- Birth and early life
- Conversion
- Occupation
  - Col. 4:4
  - Luke 4:38-39; 8:43-44; 13:11; 16:20-32

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## ■ The Man: LUKE

### ○ Historian

- 1:5, 26, 56; 2:1-2, 21-22, 36-37, 42; 3:1-2

### ○ Evangelist

- co-laborer on Paul's missionary journeys  
(2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24)

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### ■ Place & Date of Writing

- Likely Rome
  - While Paul was serving two-year imprisonment
- Around 61 A.D.
- Before Nero's persecution (64) and fall of Jerusalem (70)

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### ■ Audience / Readers

- Same as Luke
- Theophilus (Theos + phileo) - "loved of God" or "lover of God"
- "most excellent" - c.f. Acts 23: 26; 24: 3 (Felix) and Acts 26: 25 (Festus)
- Luke reassures Theophilus and other members of the mixed congregation of their place in God's people by now narrating the effectiveness of the ministry of God's Word and Spirit as it advanced from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

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### ■ Outline (3 versions)

- Gospel Advance (Acts 1:8) - Holy Spirit (70 x's)
  - Jerusalem (Acts 1-7)
  - Judea & Samaria (Acts 8-12)
  - Uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 13-28)
- Prominent Leaders & Missions
  - Peter & the Jewish Mission (Acts 1-12)
  - Paul & the Gentile Mission (Acts 13-28)

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## ■ Outline (3 versions)

### ○ Summary Statements

- Acts 2:47 (Jerusalem)
- Acts 6:7 (Jerusalem)
- Acts 9:31 (Judea, Samaria)
- Acts 12:24 (Antioch)
- Acts 16:5 (Asia Minor)
- Acts 19:20 (Aegean Sea area)
- Acts 28:31 (Rome)

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### ■ Acts 1-12

- Luke 24:49 - Acts as a continuation
- Acts 1:6 - expectation of the kingdom by Christ's disciples (promise of Matt. 19:28)
- Need to choose a 12<sup>th</sup> disciple
- “repent, believe, baptize” (2:38; 8:14-15; 10:44)
- Pentecost
  - Joel's prophecy (who does it relate to?)
  - Peter's message (a resurrected Christ)
  - Kingdom, not the Church?

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### ■ Acts 1-12

#### ○ Minor Characters

- Philip
- Ethiopian Eunuch
- Ananias & Sapphira
- Aeneas
- Tabitha (Dorcas)
- Simon (Tanner)
- Cornelius (Centurion)
- Barnabas
- Agabus
- James

#### ○ Two Who Disbelieved

- Simon the Sorcerer
- Herod Agrippa I

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### ■ Acts 1-12

#### ○ Major Characters

- Peter (Pentecost; Cornelius event) - 7 speeches
- Paul (4 glimpses: Stephen, Damascus Rd., Antioch, Jerusalem Famine visit) - 3 sermons

#### ○ Epoch Events

- Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) - Tower of Babel
- Stephen's Martyrdom (Speech & Theme) - longest speech in Acts
  - God as Active
  - God as Resisted

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### ■ Acts 1-12

- Speech is the literary form chosen by Luke in the narrative because it is the heart of history.
- Speech = more important than action
  - It gives interpretation to the action
  - Today, we want action and not speech

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### ■ Acts 1-12

- God as Active
  - Patristic Examples:
    - Abram was called as a Gentile, not circumcized
    - Moses is called in the Arabian desert
    - Joseph's dreams occur in Egypt
- God is active outside the Promised Land showing His big plan not just to Israel but to the entire world
- God was active first to Israel and it will be Israel that will likewise be the first to resist Him
- Journey of Church from Jerusalem, to Antioch, to Rome

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### ■ Acts 1-12

#### ○ Peter's Sermons

##### 1. Acts 2

- To Jewish Pilgrims
- God's Church is empowered

##### 2. Acts 3

- To Jewish Inhabitants
- God's forgiveness is offered (Part I)

##### 3. Acts 4

- To Jewish Crowds
- God's forgiveness is offered (Part II)

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### ■ Acts 1-12

#### ○ Peter's Sermons

##### 4. Acts 5

- To Jewish Leaders (Sanhedrin)
- God's forgiveness is rejected

##### 5. Acts 10

- Cornelius' Home
- God's redemptive plan for Gentiles unfolds

##### 6. Acts 11

- To Jewish Christians
- God's redemptive plan for Gentiles resisted

##### 7. Acts 15

- To Jerusalem Council
- God's redemptive plan for Gentiles settled

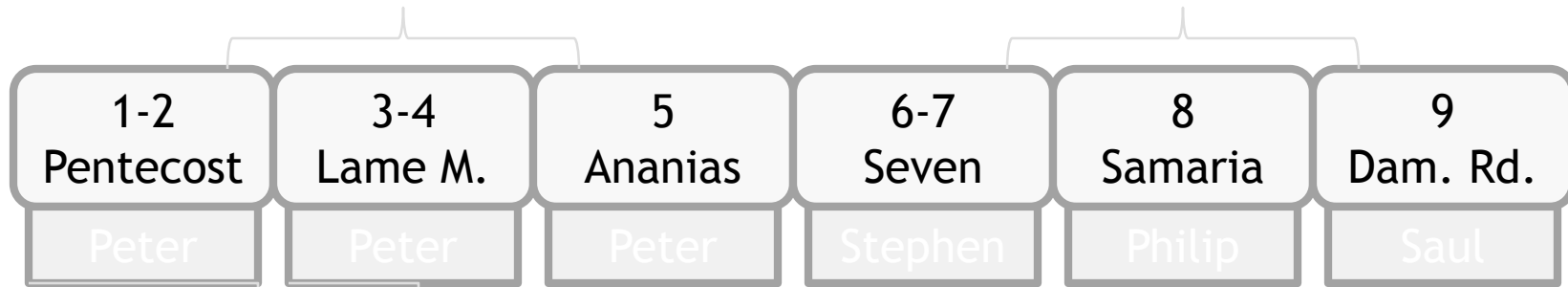
# ACTS STRUCTURE

## PART I: THE MISSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

### ■ Peter: Acts 1-12

The Early Church in Jerusalem

Early Church Beyond Jerusalem



Lame man's healing @ the beautiful gate in sight of the temple but not in it - Temple system is now obsolete

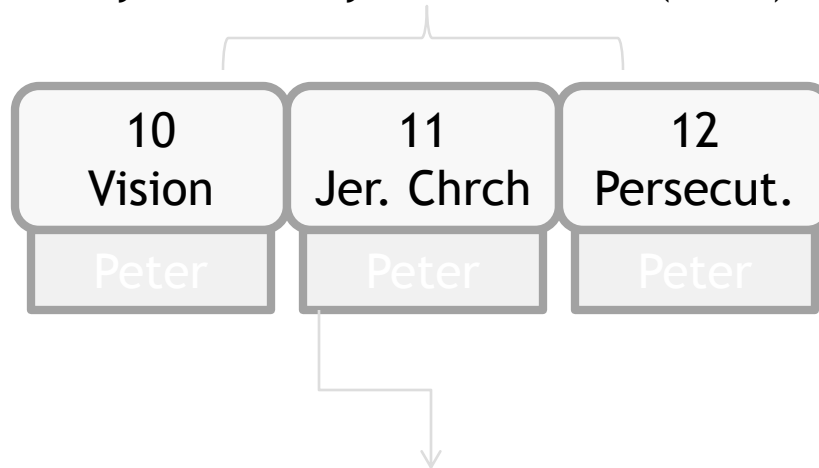
“this is that” - Peter quoting Jonah; Never before had the Spirit of God been available to all, a sure mark of the last days, which Peter believed he was living in

# ACTS STRUCTURE

## PART I: THE MISSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

- **Peter: Acts 1-12**

Early Church Beyond Jerusalem (cont.)



Where is Peter when he receives his vision?  
Where else in the Bible is Joppa mentioned?

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### ■ Acts 13-28

- Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)
  - Leaders: Paul, Barnabas, Peter, James
  - Decide what is the basis of salvation
    - ◉ What role does circumcision play, if any?
  - Establishes fellowship requirements

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### ■ Acts 21-28

- Caesarean Imprisonment (2 years) - Gospel of Luke written
  - Felix, Festus, Herod Agrippa II
  - Two more accounts of Paul's testimony given
  - Appeal to Caesar (mistake?)
- Journey to Rome
  - Storm and shipwreck
- Roman Imprisonment (2 years)
  - Gospel preached freely to "ends of earth"
  - Letters written: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians