

Acts, Our History Book

Revelation 22:18-19

INTRODUCTION

- A. Introduce this study by briefly mentioning the obvious classification of the sixty-six books of the Bible and how Acts occupies the history book posture.
- B. The book of Acts is designed for the enlightenment of Christians generally concerning the historic origins of Christianity. It is in truth the first church history. It is in reality the Acts of the Holy Spirit as wrought through these men. It is an inspiring narration.
- C. Change to the gospel is forbidden – GA 1:6-9; RE 22:18-19; 1 CO 4:6.
- D. God did not intend to introduce the Christianity of the First Century and let it evolve to its present changed state. The gospel was then and remains our standard of conduct and religious creed (GA 2: 14).
- E. The gospel or the faith was once delivered and is to serve as our creed. Jude 3.

DISCUSSION

I. SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL.

- A. PH 1:7, 17. “Defense” defined:
 - 1. “Apologia, a speck made in defence.” (Vine)
 - 2. “ἀπολογία -“1.verbal defence, speech in defence. 2. a reasoned statement or argument.” (Strong’s #627).
 - 3. “Apologia” is the Greek word translated “defense” or “defence” in Philippians 1: 7, 17. It is an aggressive term showing the militancy involved in the preservation of the purity of the Jerusalem gospel (see the Greek dialegomai, translated “reasoned,” “disputing” in the KJV, in Acts 17: 2, 17, 18: 4, 19, 19: 8, 9, 24: 12). Show how dialegomai means, “To think different things with oneself then, with other persons, to converse, argue, dispute” (W. E. Vine). Acts shows Paul’s style of preaching to be consistent with his affirmation in Philippians 1: 7, 17. His style was often that of a debater (Acts 19: 8, 9).
- B. This shows from Acts, Our History Book HOW people became Christians. The same process then is the same process now.

II. THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION FULFILLED.

- A. The Book of Acts covers about thirty years of history from around 30 A. D. (the commencement of the church, Acts 2) to the first imprisonment of Paul (Acts 28). It was affirmed that the gospel had been preached to every creature in about 56 A. D. (RO 10: 18).
- B. MK 16:15-16.
- C. Acts 1:8; 2:14-47; 8:35; 10-11; 28:30-31

III. ATTITUDE TOWARD DISCIPLE IS REVEALED.

- A. Acts 5:1-11. God dealt directly with the matter involving the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, inflicting capital punishment.
- B. 2 TH 3:6. God does not so directly deal today, but he has taught withdrawal.

IV. PROVIDES INSIGHT AS TO PUBLIC WORSHIP.

- A. Acts 2:42, 46; 4:4, 31; 20:7.
- B. Giving and Singing – 1 CO 16:1-2; CO 3:16.

V. THE INDEPENDENT STRUCTURE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

- A. Acts 14:23.
- B. It would have been automatic for the Jerusalem church and the Antioch church to have assumed oversight of Jewish and Gentile churches, respectively, if God had so intended.

1. Yet, autonomy is seen regarding all these churches as they functioned and collectively executed the work of the church (cp. I TI 3: 15). T
2. These elders had the oversight only were they served, we learn from I Peter 5: 2, 3.
3. The seven churches of Asia also exemplify autonomy in that they each have separate conditions and problems. Had they been denominationally linked and joined, they would have had the same doctrinal errors and practices (RE 1-3).

VI. QUALIFIED MEN FOR CERTAIN ASSIGNMENTS IS OBSERVED IN ACTS.

- A. Acts 6:3.
- B. When there has been a special need, God has required qualified people to serve.
- C. I Timothy chapter 3 list the qualifications for elders and deacons (see Titus 1, in the case of elders).
- D. The prevailing too often in America today is against such qualifications. The, "We are all equal" mentality is causing many problems in society and even in the Lord's church.

VII. DOCTRINAL ISSUES WERE ADDRESSED.

- A. Acts 15:1ff.
- B. Notice the logic, focus, and progression of the arguments provided regarding the binding of the law on Gentiles. Consider how each speaker appealed not to emotion but to fact and the will of God. Order characterized the whole procedure, one that was potentially a very volatile racial issue.

VIII. FELLOWSHIP IS PRESENTED IN ACTS, OUR HISTORY BOOK.

- A. Acts 2:42; 9:26, 27.
- B. Compare 1 JN 1:3, 7.
- C. Fellowship is seen in Acts as conditioned upon mutual conformity to the teaching and practicing of the scriptures. Ecumenism and unity-in-diversity are foreign to the Book of Acts and the scriptures (EP 4: 3-6).

IX. HOW THE PHYSICAL NEEDS WERE MET.

- A. Acts 4:32-37.
- B. Acts 11:27-30.
- C. There were no outside missionary societies or benevolent orders.

CONCLUSION

- A. Just as the USA is rejecting the heritage of her history; so is the Lord's church, in many instances. Instead of attempting to become "modern," we must remain with the pure gospel as exemplified and practiced in Acts.
- B. Acts 20:27-32. The lesson gleaned from these scriptures is simple, change was not permitted and when it occurred, it was wrong, it was dealt with.
- C. Therefore, the Book of Acts is more than just a Book of ancient, inapplicable history.