

“Journeys With Paul”

The First Record of Coordinated Efforts at Spreading the Gospel

Introduction

Why Acts? After four different accounts of Jesus Christ, the New Testament turns to the book of Acts. The theme of this book is the spread of the gospel of Jesus. In other words, the main “act” of the first generation of Christians was to actively teach other people about Christ. Why did the Holy Spirit, working through Luke, leave us this record of the first thirty years after the ascension of Christ? And why did Luke choose to focus most of that record on the missionary journey’s of the Apostle Paul?

After Acts, the New Testament records 21 letters written by first century Christians. Thirteen of these letters are penned by this same Apostle Paul. Why is so much of the historical record after the ascension of Jesus, devoted to Paul, the churches he helped and the Christians he interacted with?

It appears that God wanted every generation after the first generation to have some insight into how the good news of Jesus Christ was spread. True enough, all of this information provides encouragement and builds our faith. But we also have a duty to teach others. We can safely conclude that God wants us to use the book of Acts, and the example of Paul, as a blueprint for teaching others about The Faith.

Course Objectives

1. Participants will be able to explain what happened at 12 key locations of the Missionary Journey’s of Paul
2. Participants will be able to explain why the events that took place at these 12 key locations were significant.
3. Participants will be able to apply the examples and teachings of the Apostle Paul to their lives.

So how can we use a two thousand-year-old historical record to help us learn how to spread the gospel?

Method of Study

1. Read

2. Ask and answer some basic questions as you read...
 - Location – What do we know about this place historically?
 - Concepts – What are the key words and phrases in the text?
 - People – What do we know about the people mentioned in the text?
 - Approach – What was Paul's strategy to evangelism in this place?
 - Success – To what extent was Paul successful?
 - Cross Reference – Is there other information from other passages in Acts or the Epistles that help us understand these events?

3. Apply what you read...
 - What can we learn as students of the gospel? What's the point of view of the people receiving Paul's message?
 - What can we learn as teachers of the gospel? What's the point of view of Paul and his fellow teachers?

Resources

St. Paul – The Traveler & Roman Citizen by William M. Ramsay

Kregal Publications, 2001

Evidence and Paul's Journeys by Jefferson White

Parsagard Press, 2001

A Commentary on Acts, by Leo Boles

Gospel Advocate Company, 1941

New Commentary – Acts of the Apostles, by J.W. McGarvey

Standard Publishing Company, 1892