

Week 4: Beginning of missionary trips

- **Brief introduction about St. Luke and the Book of Acts:**

- St. Luke accompanied the St. Paul on his missionary journeys, so he accurately narrated what he witnessed. Being a physician, he also described events in detail.
- He did not conclude the book of Acts with "Amen" like the other books because the *Synaxarion* (Church calendar of saints and events) comes after it, serving as the continuation of the Church's history beyond the Book of Acts.
- The Church reads the **Synaxarion** (the lives of the saints of the day) after the Book of Acts during the liturgy, to declare that the Word of the Lord continues to grow and multiply in His holy Church.
- The placement of the Book of Acts between the **Gospels** and the **Epistles** serves as a connection between them: the Gospels present the life of Christ, the Book of Acts shows the preaching of the Gospel, and the Epistles reflect how to live according to the Gospel.

- **Introduction:**

- **Author:** St. Luke
- **Time of writing:**
 - It was written around the year 63 AD in Rome, after he had written his Gospel. It covers a period of about thirty years—from the Ascension of Christ to Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.
- **Purpose of the book**
 - A clear record of the ministry of Peter and Paul.
 - Demonstrates the behavior of the early Christians as high examples for us.
 - Shows the mighty work of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling Christ's promises and establishing the Church.
 - Displays the divinity of the Son.
 - Proclaims the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

- **Outline**

- ◦ **Chapter 1** – *The Apostles in Jerusalem from the Ascension to Pentecost:* Includes the selection of Matthias and the worship of the Church.
- ◦ **Chapters 2-7** – *The Beginning of Evangelism until the Martyrdom of Stephen:* Includes the gifts of the Spirit, the growth of the Church, the healing of the lame man, threats against the apostles, the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the imprisonment of the apostles, the selection of seven deacons, and the stoning

of Stephen.

- **Chapters 8-12** – *The Persecution of the Church in Jerusalem:*
Includes the faith of the Ethiopian eunuch, the conversions of Paul and Cornelius, the founding of the Church in Caesarea, the martyrdom of James, the imprisonment of Peter, and the death of Herod.
- **Chapters 13-15** – *The Evangelism of Paul and Barnabas Until Their Separation:*
Includes the story of Elymas the sorcerer, the Church in Antioch, the healing of the lame man in Lystra, the stoning of Paul, and the First Council of Jerusalem.
- **Chapters 16-20** – *Paul's Preaching in Europe*
- **Chapters 21-28** – *Paul's Trials:*
Includes his journey to Jerusalem, his arrest and transfer to stand trial in Rome, his trials before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, the shipwreck in Malta, and finally his arrival in Rome and preaching there for two years.

- **Reading:**

- Chapters 13-20

- **Resources:**

- [The Book of Acts - Fr. Daoud Lamei English](#)

- **Key verse:**

- "I have set you to be a light of the nations, for you to be for salvation to the end of the earth." *Acts 13:47*

- **Comments:**

- **Introduction about St. Paul**

- St. Paul wrote 14 epistles out of the 27 books in the New Testament.
- Known as the Apostle of the Gentiles.
- Received 4 crowns: martyrdom, purity, apostleship, and righteousness.
- Early preparation for ministry:
 - **Roman Citizen:** enabling him for safe travel and legal protection.
 - **Greek education:** Exposure to Greek philosophy
 - **Jewish heritage:** Adhering to Jewish law and traditions and studied under Gamaliel in Jerusalem.

- **What does it mean to be "called" by God?** as mentioned in verse 2, To be called by God means to offer your life fully to Him—surrendering your plans, desires, and time to follow His will.
- **The ministry in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:13-39):**
 - The two apostles traveled by sea to the coast of what is now Turkey. At this point, St. Mark departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. St. Luke does not mention the reason for Mark's departure, but later we learn that the Apostle Paul was upset by it. However, Barnabas tried to excuse Mark's actions, which eventually led to a disagreement between him and Paul (Acts 15:37-39). Despite this, Paul later showed love and trust toward Mark again (2 Timothy 4:11).
 - Verse 33, St. Paul testified and spoke about the divinity of Christ that He is the eternal Son of God, who was born in the flesh at a specific point in time to save the world through His death and resurrection.
- **The Jews rejected the word of God (Acts 13: 45-52)**
 - Ver 47, "I have set you as a light to the Gentiles...." ask yourself how can this verse apply to me?
 - I can shine God's light to those around me through my words, behavior, appearance, and actions.
- **Acts 14**
 - **Signs and wonders in Iconium. (Acts 14: 1-10)**
 - Continuation of the 1st missionary trip
 - Healing of the cripple man
 - **Contemplation:** If you let God lead your life and follow His path, He will work wonders through you and reveal His power in amazing ways.
 - **Stoning of St. Paul and completion of the 1st missionary trip (Acts 14:19-28):**
 - Verse 24, "prayed with fasting" again it shows the importance of prayer and fasting in our life
 - They made many disciples after preaching in these cities, **so they appointed priests** and organized the ministry in the churches.
- **Acts 15**
 - **The Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15: 1-12)**
 - The believers from Jewish origin were arguing, saying that in order to become Christian you have to be Jewish first by submitting to the law of Moses and be circumcised first.
 - The leaders of the church (the apostles and elders), which is now represented by the Holy Synod, got together to solve this issue and stated that the law of Moses and Jewish traditions was symbolic traditions to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our salvation comes only from the blood of Jesus Christ through His death and resurrections.
 - Ver 8-9, Peter explained how the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles even before they were baptized, showing that God approved their baptism without the need for circumcision or keeping the Law of Moses.
 - **The Council's decisions (Acts 15: 22-29)**
 - **2nd missionary trip (Acts 15:36-41)**

- Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go on a second missionary journey to visit the believers they had preached to during their first journey and to check on how they were doing.
- **Acts 16**
 - **2nd missionary trip (Acts 16: 1-15)**
 - 2nd trip: St. Paul and Timothy
 - The second missionary journey was marked by the beginning of evangelism in Europe.
 - The journey began from Antioch (in Syria) and continued overland to Tarsus (Turkey), to Neapolis in Europe.
 - This second journey is recorded in the Book of Acts from chapter 15 -18 and lasted approximately three and a half years, from 51 AD to 54 AD.
 - In this part we see that God directed St. Paul through the vision of the Macedonian man.
 - **Paul and Silas imprisoned and freed (Acts 16: 22-40)**
 - Verse 25, Paul and Silas prayed and praised God, teaches us that praising and praying to God in the midst of suffering is very powerful act that can inspire others.
- **Acts 17**
 - **St. Paul preaching the word of God in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens (Acts 17:1-9)**
 - **Main points from the sermon of St. Paul (Acts 17: 22-34)**
 - Verse 24, God is the creator
 - Verse 25, God is self-sufficient
 - Verse 27, Seek God, He is not far
 - Verse 30, Repent
- **Acts 18**
 - **St. Paul in Corinth (Acts 18: 1:11)**
 - Aquila: a Christian of Jewish origin, Priscilla: his wife. They were originally from Pontus Turkey
 - **The End of the Second Missionary Journey (Acts 18:18-22)**
 - St. Paul ended his missionary journey by revisiting some of the cities where he had previously preached, encouraging and strengthening the believers, before returning to Antioch in Syria.
 - **The 3rd missionary trip (Acts 18: 23-28)**
 - Asia minor and Macedonia
 - Paul remained in Antioch for less than a year before beginning his third missionary journey, following his usual path through regions in Turkey and then into Europe. This journey lasted from the year 54 AD to 58 AD.
- **Acts 19**
 - **Paul's Ministry in Ephesus and His Miracles (Acts 19:1-12):**
 - Paul corrected incomplete teaching and gave proper Christian baptism.
 - **God performed extraordinary miracles** through Paul: even **handkerchiefs and aprons** that had touched him healed the sick and cast out evil spirits.
- **Acts 20**

- **The Move to Greece and the Raising of Eutychus (Acts 20: 1-12)**
 - After his ministry in Ephesus, **Paul traveled to Greece**, where he stayed for three months, strengthening the believers and facing plots from the Jews.
 - During his journey from **Troas**, he was preaching for many hours, and a young man named **Eutychus** was sitting by a window. As Paul continued speaking late into the night, Eutychus fell asleep, fell from the third floor, and died.
 - **Paul went down, embraced him, and brought him back to life by the power of Jesus Christ**, reassuring everyone that he was alive.
- **Paul's sermon to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38):**
 - He reminded them of his faithful service to God **with humility, tears, and trials**, and how he **preached the full truth** without holding anything back.
 - Paul warned them to **watch over themselves and the flock**, because **false teachers** would arise even from among them.
 - He ended by reminding them of Jesus' words: ***"It is more blessed to give than to receive."***

1. Review/recap questions

** Servant may add more questions

8. Homework

** Servant may add more questions



Revision #3

Created 2025-05-19 16:06:27 UTC by Ehab Khalil

Updated 2025-05-19 20:40:26 UTC by Ehab Khalil