

THE STORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

BOOK *of* ACTS



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The Apostle Paul and the Mission

Before becoming Paul, Saul was a deadly enemy of Christianity. After a personal encounter with the resurrected Christ (9:1–19), Paul became God’s special representative to the Gentiles. His ministry, as recorded in the book of Acts, changed the history of the church and of the world. In four recorded trips, Paul preached the gospel from Jerusalem to Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and back to Jerusalem. He planted new churches and trained new leaders. His letters, which form the bulk of the New Testament and are aimed at instructing and guiding those new groups and leaders, continue to shape, inform, and nurture the faith of millions of believers today all over the world.

THE MISSION IN JERUSALEM

- After Jesus ascended to heaven (1:8), the disciples received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (2:1–4).
- Peter preached and 3,000 people received the gospel (2:5–41).
- The apostles Peter and John performed miracles (3:1–10) and preached the gospel in the temple in Jerusalem and 5,000 people believed (3:11–4:4).
- Despite the persecution against the disciples, many people believed in the gospel. The apostles chose seven believers “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (6:3) to help them with the life of the growing group of believers.

THE MISSION IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA

- In the midst of persecution, Christ’s disciples continued to proclaim the good news. Stephen, one of the seven chosen by the apostles, provided an example of perseverance, faith, and obedience when he faced an angry crowd. He preached a powerful message, the longest speech in the book, and argued for the gospel using the Old Testament as his basis. Stephen became the first recorded martyr (6:8–7:60). Saul, a Jewish leader who would later become the apostle Paul, was present at that moment.
- After Stephen’s death, the persecution against believers increased dramatically and “all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria” (8:1). As they moved away from Jerusalem, they brought the gospel with them. Philip preached in Samaria and to the Ethiopian eunuch, who had been to Jerusalem to worship God. After his baptism, the Ethiopian official returned home, bringing along with him the transformative power of the gospel (8:26–40).
- Jesus confronted Saul on the road to Damascus (9:1–22) and called him to become his instrument “to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel” (9:15). The church found peace throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria and “grew in numbers” (9:31).



THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE FIRST CENTURY AD

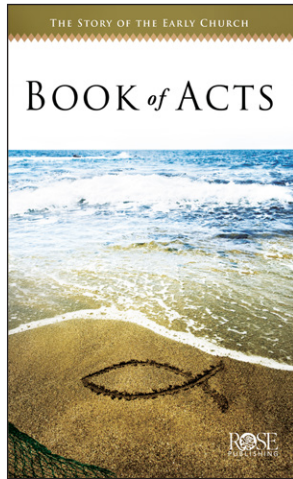


THE MISSION TO THE GENTILES

- Jesus' disciples continued to preach the gospel outside of Jerusalem, reaching places like Joppa (9:42), Caesarea (10), Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (11:19). Antioch became the base for Paul's missionary journeys.
- Despite persecution, Jesus' followers continued to preach the gospel in and around Jerusalem so that "the word of God continued to spread and flourish" (12:24).
- Along with Barnabas, Paul began an adventure that would take him to Asia Minor, the Greek Islands, and beyond. He rarely traveled alone. Barnabas was his first companion (15:39–40). Silas would be his next companion (15:40). Along the way, other companions joined the apostle in his journeys.

Paul's Missionary Journeys

JOURNEY	ACTS	BASIC INFORMATION	HIGHLIGHTS
First Journey AD 47-49	13:1-14:28	Travelers: Paul, Barnabas, John Mark Main Route: (Modern names) Cyprus and Turkey Distance: 1,400 miles	After being set apart for this journey, Paul and Barnabas faced a sorcerer, opposition from Jewish leaders, sick people who were healed, persecutions, and the crucial Jerusalem Council at the end of the journey (15:1-35).
Second Journey AD 49-51	15:36-18:22	Travelers: Paul, Silas, Timothy, Priscilla and Aquilla, Luke Main Route: (Modern names) Syria, Turkey, Greece, Jerusalem Distance: 2,800 miles	Paul and Barnabas went separate ways. With Silas, Paul visited churches, and received visions from God. They were thrown in jail and met people who eagerly received their message. At Athens, Paul preached to the Greeks.
Third Journey AD 52-57	18:23-21:16	Travelers: Paul, Timothy, Luke, others Main Route: (Modern names) Turkey, Greece, Lebanon, Israel Distance: 2,700 miles	Paul visited the churches of the area. He remained for two years at Ephesus. Paul wrote several of his letters during this journey. He revived a young man who had an accident. He also experienced persecution and suffering. At the end, he went to Jerusalem.
Journey to Rome AD 57-62	21:17-28:31	Travelers: Paul, Roman guards, Luke, others Main Route: (Modern names) Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, Crete, Malta, Sicily, Italy Distance: 2,250 miles	Paul was arrested in Jerusalem. In Caesarea, Paul was tried before two governors: Felix and Festus. After two years, Paul appealed to Caesar and appeared before King Agrippa. Paul was sent to Rome. After a shipwrecked trip, Paul arrived in Rome. He remained there under house arrest for two years.



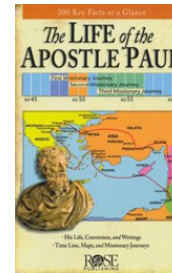
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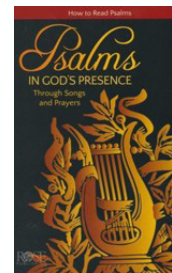


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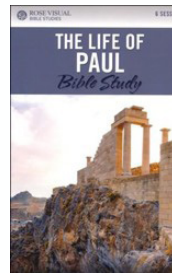


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