

The Book of Acts

**FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11:00 PASTOR'S CLASS
SPRING, 2019**

Introduction

The Book of Acts is full of the energy and excitement of the early Christians as they found God doing new things all over the world and learned to take the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. It is also full of the issues and challenges that faced the church—then and today: crisis over leadership, money, political and social persecution. At one level this book is the story of the early church told selectively with a particular concern and interest of Luke. He also wants us to read it as the story of Jesus, for the whole of Acts is based on the resurrection of Jesus and his presence within the church by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our hope and prayer is that this class will provide you with a better knowledge of the Bible and a deeper love for Christ and his people. Please attempt to answer the week's questions before the class. Being prepared will allow you and others to participate more effectively in the discussions, bringing everyone to a greater level of understanding of God's Word and a deepened fellowship.

Commentary

The commentary we will be using is *The Message of Acts (Bible Speaks Today)* by **John Stott**. A limited supply will be available for sale on a first come, first served basis. It is suggested that you purchase your commentary, which is available from a variety of online vendors, among them, Amazon and Christianbook.com.

Recommendations for Table Discussion

There will be some who are more eager to share around the table than others. Please be respectful and kind as the discussion unfolds, recognizing there are varying levels of Biblical proficiency and levels of comfort in sharing. Your table hosts are wonderful brothers and sisters who are there to love and support you, and will do their best to foster a safe, welcoming environment that is profitable and edifying for everyone present.

Additional Resources for Further Study

- *Acts for Everyone* by Tom Wright (Part 1 – Chapters 1-12)
- *Acts for Everyone* by Tom Wright (Part 2 – Chapters 13-28)

Thank you for spending the time to take this class, and for contributing to the fellowship and mutual learning around your table. Our hope is that the effort you put into this class will be rewarded many times over in your daily Christian walk and in the years to come.

Schedule

Week	Date	Scripture	Teacher
1	6-Jan	Acts 1	Robert Norris
2	13-Jan	Acts 2:1-41	Mike Domenica
3	20-Jan	Acts 2:42—3:26	Mike Domenica
4	27-Jan	Acts 4:1-31	Robert Norris
5	3-Feb	Acts 4:32—5:42	Robert Norris
6	10-Feb	Acts 6	Mike Domenica
7	17-Feb	Acts 7:1—8:3	Mike Domenica
8	24-Feb	Acts 8:4-40	Robert Norris
	3-Mar	Missions Week	Guest Speaker
9	10-Mar	Acts 9 & 10	Chris Istrati
10	17-Mar	Acts 11 & 12	Chris Istrati
11	24-Mar	Acts 13 & 14	Mike Domenica
12	31-Mar	Acts 15 & 16	Mike Domenica
13	7-Apr	Acts 17 & 18	Robert Norris
14	14-Apr	Acts 19 & 20	Robert Norris
	21-Apr	Easter	No Class
15	28-Apr	Acts 21 & 22	Mike Domenica
16	5-May	Acts 23 & 24	Mike Domenica
17	12-May	Acts 25 & 26	Robert Norris
18	19-May	Acts 27 & 28	Robert Norris

January 13, 2019—Week 2Acts 2:1-41

1. What signs were given in connection with the coming of the Holy Spirit? What purposes of God was the Holy Spirit given to fulfill?
2. Identify the three Old Testament passages Peter quotes from in his address. What may we learn from them concerning the place and use of the Old Testament today?
3. What characteristics does Peter show in his preaching?
4. What is the significance of people from all over the Mediterranean regions hearing the disciples speak to each in their own native languages?

January 27, 2019—Week 4Acts 4:1-31

1. What were the causes of the arrest and release of Peter and John? What verbal and visible evidence did Peter offer in their defense? How does fear often motivate us to be silent today?
2. The disciples pray as they are returning to their fellow Christians. What is the reason, request and result of their prayers?
3. When the authorities confront Peter and John, how did they know that they were people who had been with Jesus, and how does Peter respond?
4. How do Christians show respect both for human authorities and God's authority?

February 3, 2019—Week 5.....Acts 4:32—5:42

1. What essentials of fellowship are demonstrated in these verses?
2. What made the sin of Ananias and Sapphira so grave and what led to it? Why was such a divine judgment necessary?
3. In spite of being warned, the apostles continued to witness and were therefore imprisoned. What different parts were played by the angel, the Holy Spirit, and Gamaliel?
4. How are the different reactions of the religious opposition relevant to us in our witnessing today?

February 17, 2019—Week 7Acts 7:1—8:3

1. Using Moses and Joseph as examples of God's intention to deliver his people from bondage, Stephen's speech seeks to show that God's presence with his people is not limited to a particular place or building. How does this foreshadow the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in terms of the treatment they received? What are the results?
2. The tragedy of Israel's spiritual blindness is described in these verses. How did it manifest itself first in thought, will and desire, and finally in action?
3. What was the nature of the penalty that was exacted by God?
4. In what ways does Stephen resemble his Lord in his life, character and death? Where did this likeness come from?

February 24, 2019—Week 8Acts 8:4-40

1. How successful was Philip's ministry in Samaria? To what was his success attributed and what results followed?
2. Simon was intellectually convinced of the truth and power of the gospel but his heart was unchanged. How did this come to light? In what ways is it right or wrong for us to covet the power of God's spirit?
3. The Ethiopian eunuch was already interested before Philip met him. What more did he need before he was able to go on his way rejoicing?
4. What lessons can we learn from Philip about the quality and methods used in leading another person to Christ?

March 10, 2019—Week 9Acts 9 & 10

1. What do these verses reveal of Christ's power, majesty and glory—and his compassion, love and grace?
2. What two marks of a healthy spiritual life are expounded upon in 9:31?
3. What ideals of Christian character and service are exemplified by Dorcas?
4. How did God teach new truths to both Peter and Cornelius? What new truths did Peter learn from his vision and how do they challenge us?

March 17, 2019—Week 10.....Acts 11 & 12

1. What main point does Peter emphasize when he recounts his meeting with Cornelius?
2. What was the distinctive feature which, from the beginning, marked the preaching of the gospel at Antioch? What were the far-reaching results?
3. What stages mark the establishment of the church in Antioch? What part did Barnabas play? How does this provide an example for us?
4. Sum up Herod's character as outlined in these verses. Why was his life so abruptly ended?

March 24, 2019—Week 11.....Acts 13 & 14

1. What caused Paul to clash with Elymas? What was the reason for Paul's strong condemnation of him?
2. What was the result of the jealous opposition to the work of Paul and Barnabas?
3. A man crippled from birth is healed at Lystra. What is his spiritual condition and the basis of his faith?
4. Paul and Barnabas report to the church which had sent them out. What do they emphasize in the way they report?

March 31, 2019—Week 12.....Acts 15 & 16

1. At issue in the Jerusalem council is the nature of salvation. On what terms can Gentiles be saved?
2. Of what three facts did Peter remind the council of Jerusalem? What conclusion does he draw from them?
3. What was the contention between Paul and Barnabas? Was one of them right, or were they both wrong?
4. In what ways was the nature of Paul's guidance unique? In what ways can we expect guidance?

April 7, 2019—Week 13Acts 17 & 18

1. What was the nature of Paul's preaching at Thessalonica and Berea? How did the Bereans respond?
2. What differences does Paul draw between idols and the true God?
3. What encouragement and difficulties does Paul experience in Corinth?
4. Apollos knew about the baptism of John for the forgiveness of sins. What did Apollos apparently not know or understand?

1. What does Paul find lacking in the lives of the Ephesian disciples?
2. How do the exorcists misunderstand the power of God? Why did their humiliation have such a far-reaching effect?
3. Why do the silversmiths see Paul and his message as a threat? How does the reaction of the town clerk show wisdom?
4. What counsel does Paul give to those whom God has given positions of leadership? How can they guard the flock against the dangers that threaten?

1. How are we to understand the warnings of the Holy Spirit in this passage? How did Paul and his friends interpret these warnings differently?
2. As Paul continues his journey to Jerusalem and gives us a picture of the hospitality received, what insights does this give us about the influence of a Christian home on visitors and children?
3. How does Paul's use of personal testimony in the face of a murderous mob provide a powerful example to us in dealing with others?
4. Paul cites his Roman citizenship to prevent scourging; yet at Philippi he had acted otherwise. Compare the circumstances and consider the reason for his actions.

1. How does Paul get to the heart of the issue (23:6-10) while once again showing himself to be as wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove in dealing with the political powers at work?
2. How does Paul's experience illustrate the relationship between prayer, "coincidence," and God's work in the world?
3. How does Paul deny some of the charges, and what does he admit to in his defense before Felix (24:10-21)?
4. What accounts for Felix's inconsistent treatment of Paul (24:22-27)?

1. What evidence is there that Festus can be commended for his fair dealings with Paul? Nevertheless, what major fault did he reveal, and how does this demonstrate that God sometimes uses non-Christians for his own purposes?
2. What promises of God are now being fulfilled in Paul's experience (Acts 9:15)?
3. How does the commission that the Lord Jesus gave to Paul (26:16-18) describe first of all the lost condition of mankind and the content of salvation, and then the message of salvation?
4. How does Paul claim that he is fulfilling rather than undermining the most ancient traditions and richest hopes of his people (26:19-23)?



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