

Acts of the Apostles: An Outline

(Compare Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel*)

I. Prologue (1:1—5)

II. Judean Followers of “the Way” (1:6—6:7)

- A. Introduction: A Spiritual and Universal Kingdom (1:6—11)
 - 1. **The commission (1:6—8)**
 - 2. Jesus ascends into the sky (1:9—11)

- B. The Rapid Growth of “the Way” in the area of Jerusalem (1:12—6:7)
 - 1. The apostles gather for prayer and wait in Jerusalem (1:12—14)
 - 2. They replace Judas (1:15—26)
 - 3. **Pentecost (2:1—41)**
 - a. The Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples (2:1—13)
 - b. **Peter addresses the crowd (2:14—36)**
 - c. About three thousand are saved (2:37—41)
 - 4. The early Christians share their resources (2:42—47) (See also 4:32—37)
 - 5. A lame man is cured (3:1—10)
 - 6. Peter addresses the people (3:11—26)
 - 7. Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin (4:1—22)
 - 8. The apostles pray as they face persecution (4:23—31)
 - 9. The early Christians share their resources (4:32—37) (See also 2:42—47)
 - 10. **Ananias and Sapphira are stricken dead** for deceiving the church [lying to God] (**5:1—11**)
 - 11. Summary of the ministry of the early church (5:12—16)
 - 12. The apostles are arrested, then miraculously delivered (5:17—21a)
 - 13. The apostles are brought before the Sanhedrin (5:21b—33)
 - 14. Gamaliel, a Pharisee, intervenes on behalf of the apostles (5:34—42)
 - 15. **Greek-speaking Jews claim discrimination** in the daily distribution of food to widows; Seven people are selected to oversee this task (**6:1—6**)
 - 16. **Summary statement:** The number of Christians increases rapidly in Jerusalem (**6:7**) (Compare 1:8)

III. The Universal Applicability of “the Way” Asserted by Hellenistic Jews and Gradually Accepted by the Apostles (6:8—Chapter 12)

- A. **Stephen**, an early Christian preacher, is **falsely accused** and stoned to death (6:8—8:3)
 - 1. Stephen’s arrest (6:8—15)

2. Stephen's speech (7:1—54)
 3. [Much of Stephen's speech is a summary of elements from the history of Israel as presented in Genesis and Exodus.]
 4. **The stoning of Stephen (7:55—8:1a)**
- B. The Christians are persecuted for their faith (8:1b—3)
- C. Philip preaches to the Samaritans and an Ethiopian (8:4—40)
1. Philip in Samaria (8:4—25)
 - a. The Samaritans welcome Philip message (8:4—8)
 - b. Simon the magician and his followers are converted (8:9—13)
 2. Peter and John go to Samaria and pray for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit (8:14—17)
 3. Peter rebukes Simon [the former magician] for attempting to buy the power of the Holy Spirit (8:18—25)
 4. **Philip baptizes an Ethiopian eunuch** on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza (8:26—40)
- D. **Saul the persecutor becomes a defender of "the Way" (9:1—30)**
1. Saul's conversion (9:1—9)
 2. Saul is commissioned and baptized (9:10—19a)
 3. Christian reactions to Saul are varied at first (9:19b—30)
 - a. Christians at Damascus are amazed by Saul's powerful preaching; A group of Jews plots to kill him (9:19b—25)
 - b. Christians in Jerusalem are afraid at first, but soon accept Saul; Greek-speaking Jews decide to kill him (9:26—30)
- E. The Church Grows in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (9:31—43)
1. *Summary statement:* Churches in Judea, Galilee and Samaria Grow under the Encouragement of the Holy Spirit (9:3 Compare 1:8).
 2. Everyone in Lydda and Sharon is converted to the Lord (9:32—35)
 3. Peter is called from Lydda to Joppa (Jaffa) to raise Dorcas from the dead and many believe (9:36—43)
- F. Peter is called from Joppa to Caesarea to preach to Cornelius, a God-fearing Gentile (Chapter 10)
1. Cornelius sees a vision of an angel who tells him to send for Peter (10:1—8)
 2. **Peter's vision: no person is inherently unacceptable to God (10:9—16)**
 3. Cornelius' messengers invite Peter to go see Cornelius (10:17—23a)
 4. Peter visits with Cornelius and preaches in his house (10:23b—43)
 5. The Holy Spirit comes upon the Gentiles (10:44—48)
- G. A potential hindrance to the Gospel: Peter is challenged for eating with Gentiles (11:1—18)
- H. Other Christians begin to preach to Gentiles (11:19—24)

- I. Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch where the disciples are called “Christians” (11:25—26)
- J. Barnabas and Saul are sent to carry relief to the Christians in Jerusalem (11:27—30)
- K. Herod attempts to hinder the Gospel (12:1—23)
 - 1. Herod begins to persecute certain Christians (12:1—5)
 - 2. Peter is rescued by an angel from Herod’s persecution (12:6—19)
 - 3. An angel kills Herod for allowing the people to call him a god (12:20—23)
- L. **Summary statement:** The word of God continues to spread (12:24—25)

IV. The Unhindered Preaching of the Gospel and the Growing Separation between “the Way” and Those Who Oppose It (Chapters 13—28)

Paul’s First Missionary Journey (Chapters 13—14) begins here

- A. Jews and Gentiles Approached Primarily Through Synagogues; The Door of Faith for Gentiles is Acknowledged (13:1—16:5)
 - 1. **The Mission of Barnabas and Paul (Chapters 13—14)**
 - a. The Holy Spirit chooses Barnabas and Paul for a special work, and the church at Antioch [in Syria] supports them (13:1—3)
 - b. The proconsul, Sergius Paulus of Paphos becomes a believer (13:4—12)
[Notice that Saul is identified as “Paul” in verse 9. From here on he is called “Paul.”]
 - c. Paul and company arrive at *Antioch in Pisidia* (13:13—15)
[This Antioch is not the same as Antioch in Syria mentioned above.]
 - d. Paul preaches to Jews and God-fearers (13:16—41)
 - e. Many people respond positively to the preaching and teaching of Paul and Barnabas (13:42—43)
 - f. Paul and Barnabas preach to the Gentiles (13:44—49)
 - g. The upper class women and leading men are turned against Paul and Barnabas (13:50—51)
 - h. Both Jews and Greeks respond to the message in Iconium (14:1—7)
 - i. Pagans at Lystra attempt to worship Paul and Barnabas (14:8—18)
 - j. Paul is beaten by Jews from Antioch [in Pisidia] and Iconium attempting to hinder the Gospel (14:19—20)
 - k. Paul and Barnabas preach in Derbe then return to Antioch [in Syria] (14:21—26)

1. Having completed their mission, Paul and Barnabas tell the church at Antioch [in Syria] how God has opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (14:27–28)
2. Another potential hindrance: Gentile liberty is debated at Antioch and Jerusalem [**The Council of Jerusalem**] (15:1–35)
 - a. Judean visitors to Antioch argue for requiring circumcision of gentile Christians (15:1–3)
 - b. Some Christian Pharisees in Jerusalem insist that gentile Christians must be circumcised and obey the Law of Moses (15:4–5)
 - c. Peter argues against requiring gentile Christians to observe the Law of Moses (15:6–12)
 - d. James suggests a compromise (15:13–21)
 - e. The apostles send a letter to the Christians in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia (15:22–35)
3. Paul and Barnabas Separate (15:36–39)
4. Paul Chooses Silas to Accompany Him (15:40–41)

<h2>Paul's Second Missionary Journey (16:1–18:21) begins here</h2>
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5. Paul Revisits Churches in Galatia; Timothy is Circumcised (16:1–5)
- B. Jews and Gentiles Approached Apart from Synagogues; Rejection of “the Way” by Many “Judeans” Increases (16:6–19:20)
 1. The Call to Macedonia; a Change in Plans (16:6–10)
 2. Work established at Philippi (16:11–15)
 3. Pagan Resistance over Money; Paul and Silas Go to Jail (16:16–24)
 4. **Paul and Silas Are Miraculously Freed**; Conditions for the Salvation of Pagans (16:25–34)
 5. Paul and Silas, Roman Citizens, Are Released; They Go to the House of Lydia (16:35–40)
 6. The Jews at Thessalonica Accuse the Christians (17:1–9)
 7. The Jews at Beroea Accept the Message of Paul and Silas (17:10–15)
 8. Paul Preaches in Athens (17:16–34)
 - a. Paul debates in the synagogue and the market (17:16–21)
 - b. Paul speaks at the Areopagus (17:22–34)
 9. Paul Preaches at Corinth (18:1–11)
 - a. Paul lodges with Aquila and Priscilla (18:1–4)
 - b. Paul is rejected by the Jews and breaks with the synagogue (18:5–8)
 - c. Paul is encouraged in a vision (18:9–11)
 10. The Corinthian Jews Fail in their Attempt to Have Christianity Declared Illegal (18:12–17)

11. Paul Goes to Ephesus then Returns to Antioch in Syria (18:18—23)
 - a. Paul gets a hair cut at Cenchreae (18:18)
 - b. The Jews at Ephesus Want Paul to Stay (18:19—21)

Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:22—20:38)

- c. The Return to Antioch; Start of a New Journey (18:22—23)
12. Disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus (18:24—19:7)
 - a. Priscilla and Aquila Teach Apollos, a Disciple of John the Baptist, at Ephesus (18:24—28)
 - b. Paul teaches that baptism in the name of Jesus is greater than John's baptism; Former disciples of John receive the Holy Spirit (19:1—7)
13. Paul Breaks with the Synagogue at Ephesus (19:8—10)
14. The Word of the Lord Is More Powerful than Magic; *The Word Spreads More and More Successfully* (19:11—20)
- C. Paul Is Arrested in Jerusalem; Unhindered in Rome—the Results of a Peace Mission (19:21—28:16)
 1. The Return to Jerusalem (19:21—21:26)
 - a. Paul Decides to Go to Jerusalem and then on to Rome (19:21—22)
 - b. Paul Completes the Aegean Campaign (19:23—29:38)
 - (1) Ephesus is shaken by the Way (19:23—41)
 - (2) Paul leaves Ephesus and takes a multi-national missionary team to Troas (20:1—6)
 - (3) **Paul preaches till the middle of the night and raises a man from the dead in Troas (20:7—12)**
 - (4) From Troas to Miletus [near Ephesus in Asia] (20:13—16)
 - (5) Paul says farewell to the elders of the church of Ephesus (20:17—38)
 - c. The Trip from Miletus to Jerusalem (21:1—16)
 2. Paul Attempts to Appease the Zealous Jews in Jerusalem (21:17—26)
 3. Non-Christian Jews and Paul: The Arrest and Defense (21:27—26:32)
 - a. Paul Is Falsely Accused and Arrested (21:27—36)
 - b. Paul Asks to Speak to the People (21:37—40)
 - c. Paul's Defense (22:1—21)
 - d. Reaction against Paul's Claim to Be Sent to the Gentiles (22:22—24)
 - e. Paul Tells the Tribune that He is a Roman Citizen (22:25—29)
 - f. Paul Divides the Sanhedrin (22:30—23:10)
 - g. Paul Receives Comfort and Direction in a Vision (23:11)
 - h. Some Jews Plot to Kill Paul (23:12—22)
 - i. Paul Is Transferred to Felix in Caesarea (23:23—35)
 - j. Paul Is Accused before Felix (24:1—9)
 - k. Paul's Defense before Felix (24:10—21)

- l. Paul Remains in Prison for Two Years (24:22—27)
 - m. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1—12)
 - n. Festus (Felix' successor) Explains Paul's Case to Agrippa II and Bernice (25:13—22)
 - o. Festus Believes Paul Is Innocent but Must Honor Paul's Appeal to the Emperor (25:23—27)
 - p. Paul's Defense before Agrippa II (26:1—23)
 - q. Agrippa II Is Almost Converted (26:24—29)
 - r. Agrippa II, Bernice, and Festus Agree that **Paul is Innocent** but Must Be Sent to Rome (**26:30—32**)
4. The Journey to Rome: A Prisoner Takes Charge (27:1—28:16)
 5. The Departure for Rome (27:1—8)
 6. Paul's Advice Not to Sail Is Ignored (27:9—12)
 7. The Ship Is Driven by a Mighty Storm (27:13—20)
 8. Paul Takes Charge; All Survive the Shipwreck (27:21—44)
 9. Waiting on Malta (28:1—10)
 - a. The inhabitants of the island treat the shipwreck victims kindly (28:1—2)
 - b. Paul survives a snake bite (28:3—6)
 - c. Paul heals many sick people after praying (28:7—10)
 10. From Malta to Rome (28:11—16)

V. Many "Judeans" Oppose Paul, yet the Gospel Is Unhindered (28:17—23)

- A. Paul's Defense before Roman Jews (28:17—22)
- B. One Statement and Self-exclusion (28:23—28)
- C. **The Gospel Unhindered (28:30—31)**
[Notice that the book ends with the statement that Paul was proclaiming the kingdom of God with complete fearlessness and without any hindrance. (28:31)]