

THE DAWNING OF THE CHURCH

ACTS – ROMANS – 1 & 2 CORINTHIANS

NT202 Revised Edition

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STUDENT'S GUIDE ACTS

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This course is dedicated to Eileen Williams, whose passion for the church and the sharing of Jesus' message of love and hope has inspired countless numbers of people. The priceless words from these books of the Bible were her inspiration and the basis of much of her life's work in advancing God's kingdom.

Lesson 1 - Introduction to the Dawning of the Church Course

The *Dawning of the Church* (NT202) is the first course in the New Testament Studies Series, covering the books of Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians. The central theme that emerges from the Book of Acts and that runs through this course is the continuing work of Jesus to establish His church through His disciples. In these books we will study the people, places and events involved in the initial establishment of the church. The four gospels reveal Jesus' life and purpose; but with Jesus' ascension, the focus of Scripture turns to Jesus' followers and to the beginnings of His church. Within 30 years this small band of faithful Christ followers spread and multiplied to impact much of the Roman world. By 60 A.D, the church was dawning brightly over the Roman Empire, and Jesus' plan for world evangelism was well underway. How could so few impact so many? How could Christ's followers, opposed by the might and resources of Rome, so affect the known world that their beliefs and teachings survived long after Rome fell? The answers to these and other questions will be found as we explore the biblical account of the "Dawning of the Church."

In our study of the Book of Acts and the letters to the Roman and Corinthian churches, we see vivid pictures of how the church emerged and how it was to function. As we examine the Book of Acts we will discover how the lives of people, nations, and world events shaped and formed the church. We will learn how the Holy Spirit led and empowered ordinary men and women to spread Christ's message of love and hope to the world. The lives and travels of the apostles will come alive to us as we read and discuss how they overcame the challenges of establishing the newborn church. From our study of the Book of Romans, we will discover how to apply the essential theology that undergirds our faith and lives as believers. In Paul's letters to the Corinthian church we will learn how believers are to live out their lives together in the community of faith. This class will reveal timeless lessons of courage and faith as we learn how the Holy Spirit empowered and equipped Christ's followers in the building of His church.

The emphasis of this course will be to highlight the people and events that shaped the formation of the church in the first century. The story of Jesus in the Gospel accounts comes to a close with Jesus' ascension. Then the focus of Scripture turns to the apostles and others and their labors to spread the good news about Jesus to the world. We see that this monumental task is accomplished by Christ's disciples through the establishment of the Church, God's chosen means of revealing Himself to mankind. The first 30 years of the Church's history is told in the Book of Acts. However, this book really is just the continuing story of Jesus' work in the world occurring through the Holy Spirit's work in people of faith. Therefore, we will spend time studying the person and works of the Holy Spirit throughout this period. As we understand how these men and women worked under the leading and anointing of the Holy Spirit, we will learn timeless lessons for how we are to live and minister today. Let's begin our study with the first lecture by Dr. Charles W. Anderson.

Lesson 1 – Acts 1

Preview

The Book of Acts (*of the Apostles*) chronicles God's plan for the spreading of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The book could equally be titled the Acts of the Holy Spirit, for it is a narrative of His descent upon the early disciples and His works through these faithful people.

Without this book it would be hard to understand the rest of the New Testament. It is the bridge between Jesus' earthly ministry and that of His disciples as they participate in the spreading of the church from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. The Book of Acts describes the missionary efforts of these early disciples as they fulfill the great commission Jesus gave them in Matthew 28:18-20.

The Book of Acts begins with the ministry of Jewish believers predominantly in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. However, soon the Book of Acts reports the conversion of Samaritans and even Gentiles. The truth that the Gospel of Jesus is for everyone becomes reality as the pages of Acts reveal how the young and initially entirely Jewish church struggled to incorporate non-Jewish believers. The early chapters of Acts follow the ministry of Peter and others while the central figure in the later chapters is a passionate, committed man, the Apostle Paul. He traveled through much of the Roman Empire sharing the Gospel of Christ, founding churches and writing letters to young churches which make up much of the epistles of the New Testament.

Outstanding Events in Acts 1

- I. Introduction
 - A. Authorship and title
 1. Luke the author
 2. "Acts of the Holy Spirit" or "Acts of the Risen Savior" might also be good titles
 - B. The purpose of Acts
 1. To chronicle the missionary advance of the early Church
 2. To be a guide book for the missionary enterprise
 - C. A quick look at the Book of Acts
- II. The Period Preceding Pentecost
 - A. The proofs of Jesus' resurrection
 - B. The promise that Jesus gave
 - C. The program that He outlined for His disciples
 - D. The parting and promise of His return

Lesson 1 Assignments:

- ✓ Review lecture No. 1 (sections I-Introduction through section II-The Period Preceding Pentecost) by Dr. Charles W. Anderson.
- ✓ Read following Scriptures:
 - Acts 1**
 - Jeremiah 31:3-33**
 - Ezekiel 36:2-27**
 - Joel 2:28-29**
 - Matthew 28:18-20**
 - Mark 16:15-18**
 - Luke 3:16, 22; 24:49**
 - John 15:26-27**
 - 1 Corinthians 15:5-8**
- ✓ Complete the homework.
- ✓ Complete the take-home exam during the week.

Lesson 1 – Acts 1

Overview of the Book of Acts

According to church tradition the beloved physician, Luke, wrote the Book of Acts. The book is a sequel to the gospel of Luke. As in his gospel account, Luke directs the Book of Acts toward Gentiles. He is especially writing to those who have an interest in the historical origins of Christianity. He emphasizes the religious piety and moral purity of these early Christ followers and how their view of messianic life (Christian life) should be worked out in the lives of Gentile believers.

In the Book of Acts Luke stresses the ministry described in John 15:26-27 and carried on through the work of the Holy Spirit in the disciples' lives.

The Book of Acts begins with the risen Lord meeting with this small band of Christ followers in Jerusalem. Jesus tells them to wait for “what the Father had promised” (the gift of the Father, the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:4-5) and explains to them what their future mission would look like (Acts 1:8).

The Letters to the Churches

As early Christianity spread out from Jerusalem, there was the establishment of churches. There was an urgent need for these new fellowships of believers to stay in touch with the teachings of Jesus and with the Apostles. The believers in these new churches had to learn how to apply the teachings of Christianity to their lives while existing in a pagan world. This need gave rise to the Epistles (letters written to churches and people). Of the 22 epistles, Paul wrote 13. Much of our understanding of New Testament theology and Christian principles for living are derived from these letters.

Major Spiritual Events During the Period of the Book of Acts

Dates (AD)	Acts	Events/Personalities in Acts	Epistles	Organization of Acts
~30	1-2			
~30-37	2-7			
~37-40	8-10			
~41-46	11-12			
~45-48	13-14			
~50-52	15-18			
~53-56	18-21			
~56-60	21-28			
~60-70				
~70-80				
~80-90				
~90-100				

Key Facts of Acts Chapter 1

1. Purpose
2. Major Topics
3. Setting
4. Time

Book of Acts – Chapter 1**The Promise of the Father**

The promise that Jesus referred to is the Holy Spirit. The person and works of the Holy Spirit can be seen throughout Scripture. We first meet the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament where we see His power and actions as He falls upon believers; and we also see a promise of something new coming! The New Testament calls this new thing the “Promise of the Father.”

THIS PROMISE IS FOR ALL

The Purpose of the Holy Spirit

The Prayer of the Disciples

Review

Reference Points (people, places and events in Acts)

J _____
G _____ C _____
P _____ of the F _____

Homework Assignment

The word “church” is first mentioned briefly in the Gospels (Matthew 16:18; 18:17), but it occurs often in the Book of Acts. In our future studies we will examine the biblical meaning of “church.” We’ll begin by developing a working definition. This week in your **Fellowship/Study group** discuss this concept and together write a one-sentence definition of the word “church” based upon your personal study and experiences. Be prepared to share your description in the next class meeting.

Take-home exam

Complete the take-home exam this week and turn it in at the beginning of the next lesson.

Reading for Lesson 2

- ✓ Review lecture No. 1 continued (sections III-Descent of the Holy Spirit through section VII-The Background and Place of Paul) by Dr. Charles W. Anderson.
- ✓ Read following Scriptures:
 - Acts 2-12**
 - Matthew 3:11**
 - Mark 1:8**
 - John 7:37-39; 14:12, 16-18; 15:26-27; 20:19-22**
 - Romans 10:9-10**
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17-18**
 - Ephesians 5:18**
 - Galatians 5:16**

TAKE-HOME EXAM
Lesson 1 (Acts 1)

Name _____

1. (2 pts.) In a single, short paragraph provide a illustrative title and description of the main theme of the Book of Acts.

2. (4 pts.) Describe a general organizational plan for the Book of Acts (include approximate dates, chapter references, the major people and events that occurred in each section).

3. (3 pts.) What is an epistle? Give a biblical example.

4. (2 pts.) When did the events described in the Book of Acts occur?

5. (3 pts.) In the Book of Acts, Luke stresses the ministry described in John 15:26-27 and carried on through the work of the Holy Spirit in the disciples' lives. What is Jesus saying that the main role of the believers should be?

6. (1 pt.) Where do the events described in the first chapter of the Book of Acts take place?

7. (4 pts.) What do you think was the purpose of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to His disciples?
8. (2 pts.) What important information did Jesus convey to His disciples in these final meetings before His ascension?
9. (4 pts.) What is the "Great Commission?" What specifically did Jesus tell His disciples to do?
10. (3 pts.) What does Jesus' directive in the "Great Commission" to His disciples mean for us today?
11. (2 pts.) Read John 14:16-18; 16:7. Why is the Holy Spirit going to come?
12. (12 pts.) For each verse(s) list the divine attribute of the Holy Spirit:
- (a) Hebrews 9:14
 - (b) Psalm 139:7-12, Jeremiah 23:23-24
 - (c) Luke 1:35, Romans 15:19, Matthew 12:28, Micah 3:8, Acts 1:8
 - (d) 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Isaiah 40:13, 18, John 14:16-17
 - (e) Romans 8:27
 - (f) Matthew 12:31-32, Romans 15:30, Ephesians 4:30
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13. (8 pts.) Throughout the Bible we see many “works” of the Holy Spirit as God. For each situation describe the “work” of the Holy Spirit.

(a) Read Exodus 31:2-3

(b) Read Deuteronomy 34:9

(c) Read Judges 6:34

(d) Read 2 Samuel 23:1-2

ASSIGN POINTS FOR SCORING:

_____ points out of 50 total possible points.