



Lecture # 12 Part 3

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS

III. DATE

- A. There is much discussion and disagreement as to the time of the writing of Acts, but the events themselves cover from about **A.D. 30–63** (Paul was released from prison in Rome in the middle 60's and rearrested and executed under Nero, probably in the persecutions of **A.D. 65**).
- B. If one assumed the apologetic nature of the book concerning the Roman government, then a date **(1)** before **A.D. 64** (the beginning of Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome) and/or **(2)** related to the Jewish revolt of **A.D. 66–73**.
- C. If one tries to relate Acts to Luke's Gospel in sequence, then the date for the Gospel influences the date of the writing of Acts. Since the fall of Jerusalem to Titus in **A.D. 70** is prophesied (i.e. **Luke 21**), but not described, seems to demand a date before **A.D. 70**. **If so, then Acts written as a sequel must be dated in the 80's.**
- D. If one is bothered by the abrupt ending (i.e. Paul still in prison in Rome, F. F. Bruce), then a date related to the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment, **A.D. 58–63**, is favored.
- E. Some historical dates related to the historical events recorded in Acts.
 - 1. widespread famine under Emperor Claudius, **Acts 11:28**, **A.D. 44–48**
 - 2. death of Herod Agrippa I, **Acts 12:20–23**, **A.D. 44 (spring)**
 - 3. proconsulship of Sergius Paulus, **Acts 13:7**, **appointed in A.D. 53**
 - 4. expulsion of Jews from Rome by Claudius, **Acts 18:2**, **A.D. 49 (?)**
 - 5. proconsulship of Gallio, **Acts 18:12**, **A.D. 51 or 52 (?)**
 - 6. proconsulship of Felix, **Acts 23:26; Acts 24:27**, **A.D. 52–56 (?)**
 - 7. replacement of Felix by Festus, **Acts 24:27**, **A.D. 57–60 (?)**
 - 8. Judea's Roman officials
 - a. Procurator
 - Pontius Pilate, **A.D. 26–36**
 - Marcellus, **A.D. 36–37**
 - Marullus, **A.D. 37–41**
 - b. In **A.D. 41** the procuratorial method of Roman administration was changed to an empirical model. The Roman Emperor, Claudius, appointed Herod Agrippa I in **A.D. 41**.
 - c. After the death of Herod Agrippa I, **A.D. 44**, the procurator method was reestablished until **A.D. 66**
 - Antonius Felix



Lecture # 12 Part 3

- Porcius Festus

IV. PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

- A. One purpose of the book of Acts was to document the rapid growth of the followers of Jesus: from Jewish roots to worldwide ministry; from the locked upper room to the palace of Caesar.
1. This geographical pattern follows [Acts 1:8](#), which is Acts' Great Commission ([Matthew 28:19–20](#))
 2. This geographical expansion is expressed in several ways.
 - a. Using major cities and national boundaries. In Acts there are 32 countries, 54 cities, and nine Mediterranean Islands mentioned. The three major cities are Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome (cf. [Acts 9:15](#)).
 - b. Using key persons. Acts can almost be divided into two halves: the ministries of Peter and Paul. There are more than 95 people mentioned in Acts, but the major ones are: Peter, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, James and Paul.
 - c. There are two or three literary forms that appear repeatedly in Acts which seem to reflect the author's conscious attempt at structure.

(1)
summary statements

(2)
statements of growth

(3)
use of numbers

[Acts 1:1– Acts 6:7](#) (in Jerusalem) [Acts 2:47](#); [Acts 2:41](#)

[Acts 6:8– Acts 9:31](#) (in Palestine) [Acts 5:14](#); [Acts 4:4](#)

[Acts 9:32– Acts 12:24](#) (to Antioch) [Acts 6:7](#); [Acts 5:14](#)

[Acts 12:25– Acts 15:5](#) (to Asia Minor) [Acts 9:31](#); [Acts 6:7](#)

[Acts 16:6– Acts 19:20](#) (to Greece) [Acts 12:24](#); [Acts 9:31](#)

[Acts 19:21– Acts 28:31](#) (to Rome) [Acts 16:5](#) [Acts 11:21, 24](#)

[Acts 19:20](#) [Acts](#)

[Acts 14:1](#)

[Acts 19:20](#)



Lecture # 12 Part 3

12:24

B. Acts is obviously related to the misunderstanding that surrounded the death of Jesus (for treason). Apparently, Luke is writing to Gentiles (Theophilus, possibly a Roman official). He uses (1) the speeches of Peter, Stephen, and Paul to show the scheming of the Jews and (2) the positiveness of Roman governmental officials toward Christianity. Romans had nothing to fear from the followers of Jesus.

1. speeches of Christian leaders
 - a. Peter, Acts 2:14–40; Acts 3:12–26; Acts 4:8–12; Acts 10:34–43
 - b. Stephen, Acts 7:1–53
 - c. Paul, Acts 13:10–42; Acts 17:22–31; Acts 20:17–25; Acts 21:40–22:21; Acts 23:1–6; Acts 24:10–21; Acts 26:1–29