

THE EARLY JEWISH CHURCH

I. THE BOOK OF ACTS (1:1-5)

- A. Authorship: Same as Luke (1:1); church tradition: Luke the physician
 - 1. “**We**” **Sections** indicate a traveling companion of Paul/eyewitness
 - 2. Data eliminates other companions (20:4-6; Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11)
- B. Ending and date: ends with Paul awaiting trial (for two years) in Rome; about AD 62
- C. Purpose
 - 1. Traces the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome: to awaken faith; for history
 - 2. A defense of Paul/Church against legal charges
 - a. Shows Christianity is a product of Judaism, a legal religion
 - b. Shows innocence of Paul/apostles under Roman law
 - c. Addressed to “most excellent Theophilus,” an official?
- D. Emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit
- E. Historical accuracy: titles of government officials; archaeology

II. AWAITING THE SPIRIT (1:6-26)

- A. The last appearance of Jesus (Acts 1:6-11)
 - 1. “You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the Earth.”
 - 2. The ascension
- B. Matthias chosen to replace Judas (Acts 1:12-26)

III. IN JERUSALEM (2-12)

- A. Pentecost (Acts 2)
 - 1. Pentecost/weeks = 50 days after Passover
 - 2. Many Jewish pilgrims from Diaspora still in Jerusalem
 - 3. The coming of the Holy Spirit
 - a. God living within believers
 - b. Part of new covenant (Jer 31:31): law in mens’ hearts
- B. Other events
 - 1. Peter and John heal a lame man, are imprisoned, and released (Acts 3:1 - 4:31)
 - 2. Sharing of goods; the sin of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:32 - 5:11)
 - 3. Second arrest of the apostles and council of Gamaliel (Acts 5:12-42)
 - 4. Dispute over rations; deacons (all Hellenistic) chosen (Acts 6:1-7)
 - 5. Stephen: the first martyr; the appearance of Saul (Paul) (Acts 6:8 - 8:1)

IV. THE INCLUSION OF NON-JEWS

- A. Persecution in Jerusalem; disciples scattered (Acts 8:1-3)
- B. Gospel taken to non-Jews: the work of Philip the evangelist (Acts 8:4-40)
 - 1. Samaritans (ethnically half Israelite) receive the gospel (4-25)
 - 2. The Ethiopian Eunuch (26-40)
 - a. Ethiopian: a non-Jew; but a **God-fearer** (a gentile worshiper of the Jewish God)
 - b. Eunuch: castrated and not able to become a **proselyte** (gentle convert to Judaism) (cf. Deut 23:1)

- C. The conversion of Saul/Paul (ca AD 34) (Acts 9:1-31)
 - 1. Experience on the road to Damascus (1-9)
 - 2. Paul in Damascus: Ananias and a plot on his life (10-31)
 - 3. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem (ca AD 37) (26-31; Gal 1:15-18)
- D. The inclusion of gentiles: conversion of the centurion Cornelius (Acts 9:32-11:18)
 - 1. Peter's vision: God can make all clean
 - 2. Cornelius was the epitome of the hated gentiles; a centurion, not even a God-fearer
 - 3. Peter's defense in Jerusalem (11:1-18)
- E. "Christians" at Antioch: Jews and gentiles; famine relief sent to Jerusalem (11:19-30)
- F. Herod Agrippa I: persecution of the church (Acts 12)
 - 1. Apostle James executed; Peter's arrest, escape (1-19)
 - 2. Death of Herod Agrippa I: spring, AD 44 (20-23)
 - 3. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, taking John Mark (24-25)

V. WRITINGS OF THE JEWISH CHURCH

- A. The Epistle of **James**
 - 1. Most practical (and least doctrinal) book in the NT
 - a. A manual of Christian conduct
 - b. Assumes a foundation of faith; emphasizes works over theological issues
 - 2. James -- Jesus' half-brother, leader of the Jerusalem church
 - a. Not an apostle; canonicity questioned early
 - b. Killed AD 62 (Josephus Antiq. 20.9.1); therefore written prior
 - 3. Rambling proverbial style; a sermon with following themes:
 - a. Trials and temptations (1:2-8, 12-18)
 - b. The rich and the poor (1:9-11; 2:1-13; 4:13-16; 5:1-6)
 - c. Faith and works (1:22-27; 2:14-26; 4:17)
 - d. The tongue (1:19-21, 26-27; 3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:12)
 - e. Patience and prayer (5:1-11, 13-18)
 - f. Wisdom of life (3:13 - 4:10; 5:19-20)
- B. The Epistle to the **Hebrews**
 - 1. Authorship, date, and destination
 - a. Anonymous; evidently a Hellenized Jew
 - 1) Not Paul (not his style; Paul never wrote anonymously)
 - 2) Barnabas, Apollos, Silvanus, Philip, Priscilla, Clement?
 - b. Used by Clement, AD 95; probably before AD 70 (temple destroyed)
 - c. To Jewish Christians, likely outside of Palestine
 - 2. Theme: portrays Christ as the great High Priest and ultimate offering
 - 3. Purpose: to prevent the Jewish Christians from reverting to Judaism
 - 4. Outline of Hebrews: the superiority of Christ over . . .
 - a. Prophets and angels; warning against apostasy (1:1 - 2:18)
 - b. Moses (3:1-6); another warning (3:7-19)
 - c. Joshua (4:1-10); another warning (4:11-13)
 - d. The Aaronite priests; with warnings (4:14 - 12:29)
 - 1) Jesus a divine/human High Priest (priest = intermediary between God and man)
 - 2) Christ a priest after the order of **Melchizedek** (a priest without genealogy in Gen 14) (7:1-10)
 - 3) Aaronic priesthood is temporary
 - 4) Christ's eternal sacrifice is superior
 - 5) Encouragement from OT heroes of faith (11) and Christ
 - e. Practical exhortation and conclusion (13:1-25)