

**The Acts of the Apostles**

The Journey – 2020  
Jim Hoffman

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48 AD	The Council at Jerusalem	Acts 15
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey	Acts 15:36
49 AD	Paul in Philippi	Acts 16
49 AD	Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens	Acts 17
51 AD	Paul in Corinth	Acts 18
54 AD	Paul in Ephesus	Acts 19
57 AD	Paul in Macedonia and Greece	Acts 20
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem	Acts 21 - 23
60 AD	Paul imprisoned in Caesarea	Acts 24
62 AD	Paul Before Festus	Acts 25
62 AD	Paul Before Agrippa	Acts 26
62 AD	Paul Sails for Rome	Acts 27
62 AD	The Shipwreck	Acts 27:13
62 AD	Paul Ashore at Malta	Acts 28
62 AD	Paul Preaches at Rome	Acts 28:11

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Acts 20:13 Paul went by land to Assos, where he had arranged for us to join him, while we traveled by ship. 14 He joined us there, and we sailed together to Mitylene. 15 The next day we sailed past the island of Kios. The following day we crossed to the island of Samos, and a day later we arrived at Miletus. 16 Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus, for he didn't want to spend any more time in the province of Asia. He was hurrying to get to Jerusalem, if possible, in time for the Festival of Pentecost. 17 But when we landed at Miletus, he sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him. NLT

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The Acts of the Apostles

- True to form Paul is recovering some familiar ground and while doing so he is gathering an offering for the church in Jerusalem.
- He goes north to Mitylene, then heads south past the island of Kios, then past Samos before going ashore in Miletus.
- It is from Miletus that he decides to call what appears to be the first ever pastors retreat when he invites the elders in Ephesus to come to him.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- At this point in his life Paul is on a collision course with more pain, suffering, and jailtime – he knows it and is not about to shy away from it.
- He is determined to go to Jerusalem and take an offering to the Jerusalem church from all of the newly started churches in the Asia Minor and Macedonia.
- Two reasons for this – the Jerusalem church was poor and Paul knows lots of people, saved and lost, in that city.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- He remembers well that he was once lost and a vicious enemy of the church – he understands the Jewish mindset because it was once his.
- Though he was the apostle to the gentiles, look at his commitment to rescuing the Jewish people.
- **Romans 9:1 With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. 2 My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief 3 for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them. NLT**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

**So here is the question for all of us – who do you love enough to trade your salvation for their hell?**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Acts 20:18 When they arrived he declared, “You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now 19 I have done the Lord’s work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me from the plots of the Jews. 20 I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. 21 I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus. NLT
- Paul is delivering his first sermon to an audience that is exclusively Christians who are leaders in the church.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- What he will say is bold, may even sound a little like he is bragging, but his intent is to teach what it takes to be a successful Christian leader.
- Were this not Spirit led it would sound a bit arrogant, but Paul is simply telling the truth - “I have done”, “I have endured”, “I never shrank back”, and “I have had one message”.
- He is delivering a message about what it takes to serve Christ in the face of opposition to the gospel – the message that changes people and the culture. **(there is always opposition)**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

Culture is always upstream from politics –  
Andrew Breitbart

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“I never shrank back”** – if you recall just back in chapter 19, Paul had to be restrained to keep him from walking out into the street to face the mob in Ephesus.
- He faced nearly constant opposition, yet we never read of him even thinking about calling it quits.
- If you step out to serve the Lord in any capacity at all, you can expect opposition – **the enemy and his minions will work hard to discourage you.**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- We should make up our minds that we will never quit, that we will never surrender, and **we will try hard to write our own obituary right here, right now.**
- If you’ve never thought about what you want said about yourself at your funeral you should start now.
- It will help you to stay in the fight when the enemy comes against you to tell you that you’re a failure and that the little you do for Christ is meaningless.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- There is something far worse than doing what little we can for Christ – and that is not even trying to do our little bit for the kingdom.
- When we have a King and a Judge who is quoted as saying, **“even a cup of cold water given in his name brings with it a reward”** then we should believe him!
- So don’t quit – find where you fit even it takes 10 separate tries to find your spot.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- There is an old illustration about \$5 worth of steel that goes like this -
  - If \$5 worth of steel is heated and beaten into a nice pair of horseshoes the value of the steel goes to \$20.00
  - If that steel is heated and beaten into surgical scalpels the value of the steel balloons to \$2500.00
  - If that steel is heated and beaten into the springs that go into common ink pens its value zooms to \$250,000.00

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The Acts of the Apostles

In that illustration of the \$5 worth of steel you will notice that the more the steel is pressed and seemingly reduced, the more valuable it becomes.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear”**
- Here Paul is telling us he preached the whole counsel of God – he didn’t dodge doctrines like hell, election, predestination, providence, and spiritual gifts.
- One of the reasons I like to go verse by verse is so that I have to deal with every subject presented by the text of the book we are in.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- We should also note that Paul, while teaching the deep and difficult things of God, never left unsaid the simple things that are so essential to salvation.
- Acts 20:21 **“testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ”**. ESV
- **Repentance and faith** – the two essential pillars of the gospel that always seem to go together.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

**One way to think about the whole counsel of God is to remember it was all given by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.**

**(we shouldn’t shy away from any text)**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“I have endured”** – Paul seemed to have the mindset that if serving the Lord was going to cost him well then he was going to get his money’s worth.
- This too is a question for all of us to ask ourselves – if stepping out and serving the Lord is going to cost me, how much am I willing to pay?
- May I suggest before you answer that you measure the cost of serving Christ against the cost of not serving him.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Paul’s message was not like what we hear so much in the modern church where you would think the gospel is primarily to show you how Jesus can improve your life.
- Paul’s message was, “the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus”.
- Paul was convinced that we were **made in the image of God, made for God, and that worshipping God is not optional but is commanded by Him for all.**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- While the gospel is straightforward and relatively easy to articulate, it takes courage to deliver because it is not what our world wants to hear.
- Our world today, much like Paul’s, prefers a religion that assures one of heaven without the demands of laying down sin.
- Some modern churches know what their “customer” wants and will bend over backwards to make everyone comfortable on their way to hell.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- I say if we're going to make them comfortable with plush seating, free coffee, and with "come as you are" attire we should give them what they need to hear.
- It's not the "extra touches of comfort" that I object to, but the weak watered-down preaching that some offer so as not to offend anyone.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling, **and a rock of offense.**" They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. ESV

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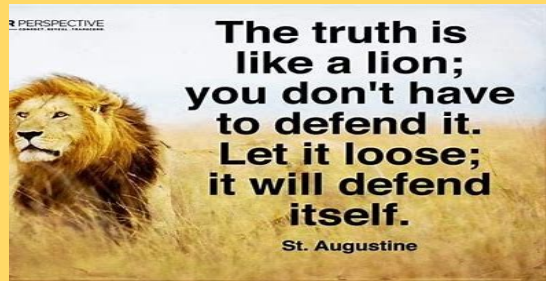
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### The Acts of the Apostles



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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 20:22 "And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what awaits me, 23 except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. 24 But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God." NLT
- The Holy Spirit told him more than once about the trap, the confinement, and the suffering that awaited him if he went to Jerusalem – was he wrong to go there?

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The Acts of the Apostles

Just because an event is predicted does not mean it is prohibited.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- Notice what Paul has to say about his going to prison as a result of pressing on to Jerusalem despite the certainty of suffering for going.
- **Philippians 1:12** “I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel”.
- His enemies probably thought that he had finally been shut up when Paul went to prison. 😊

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The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 20:25 “And now I know that none of you to whom I have preached the Kingdom will ever see me again. 26 I declare today that I have been faithful. If anyone suffers eternal death, it’s not my fault, 27 for I didn’t shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know. 28 “So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders. 29 I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. 30 Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. 31 Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you—my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you. NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- **“I declare today that I have been faithful”** – yes, no one is in a better position to judge ourselves than ourselves.
- In fact we should trust ourselves to be more honest with ourselves than most of those around us.
- Mark 14:8 **She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time.** – it is never said that someone did what they could not. 😊

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- **“I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock”**
- And yet he left anyway – so if he knew this local church would be attacked, why did he leave them?
- Because he had prepared them to protect themselves – in fact if they couldn’t fend for themselves then they were not the shepherds he thought them to be.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 20:32 **And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself. 33 “I have never coveted anyone’s silver or gold or fine clothes. 34 You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me. 35 And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” 36 When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them. 37 They all cried as they embraced and kissed him good-bye. 38 They were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship.**  
NLT

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The Acts of the Apostles

- **“And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard”**
- If we are ever in doubt about what we can do to serve Christ, we should remember that helping those in need requires no special talent beyond generosity.
- An industrious life often provides us the ability to be generous to others – Jesus never condemned anyone for giving too much whether time, talent, or treasure.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- **“You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”**
- You will not find these words in red anywhere in the gospels – yet Paul was sure Jesus said them.
- John 21:25 **Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.**

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