

STUDY THE BIBLE 8 (STB 8)

"The Book of the Acts of the Apostles"

There are seven books, in particular, in the New Testament that can give Christians a lot of **doctrine trouble** – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, James. Why? They all have, or seem to have, works to maintain your salvation.

Doctrine is the set of rules you are going to live by. It's your creed, your beliefs, your principles, your religion, it's your everyday life. And this is why the Book of Acts is a **trap if you're not careful.**

Now, the correct title is The Acts of the Apostles. "Good" says the Christian "we are to follow the apostles." However they don't realise that **all apostles are not equal.** As the saying goes "Forget the rest and use the best." Paul was the best. All the apostles that came before Paul had insights, but Paul is not lying when he says "Look, the others had little pieces of the jig-saw puzzle, but I'll give you the big picture. I'll make sense out of it all for you." He says

*"Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me.**" (1Cor 4:16)*

*"Those things ... ye have both **learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do...**" (Phil 4:9)*

*"And ye became **followers of us, and of the Lord ...**" (1Thess 1:6)*

*"... God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to **my gospel.**" (Rom 2:16)*

*"... a dispensation of **the gospel is committed unto me.**" (1Cor 9:17)*

*"... Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to **my gospel:**" (2 Tim 2:8)*

The Christian gets his doctrine from Paul

Paul's has 13 epistles to the churches - Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

Paul states: *But thou hast fully known **my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,** (2 Tim 3:10)*

*Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by **sound doctrine** both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. (Titus 1:9)*

There is a simple rule of thumb: **"If it agrees with Paul, it's doctrine for the Christian. If not, it is still true, however it is meant for another time – either past or future."**

The first principle to study the Bible is to know which of the three following groups, God is talking to.

*Give none offence, neither to the **Jews**, nor to the **Gentiles**, nor to the **church of God**: 1 Corinthians 10:32-33. **If you can't, or won't, or don't, work out the difference, with these three groups, then interpreting the scriptures will be an impossible task.***

BACKGROUND and THEME

"Peter is replaced by Paul"

Although the gospel of Christ had expanded to every nation of the known world (Colossians 1:23; Romans 16:26), the book of Acts limits itself to the preaching of the gospel over Palestine, North to Antioch, West through Asia Minor and Greece, to Rome. Basically **this area was backbone of the Roman Empire.**

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is mainly about **the acts of Peter and Paul**, but mostly Paul.

*"... the gospel of the **uncircumcision** (these are the Gentiles which are all other nations other than the Jews) was committed unto me (Paul), as the gospel of the **circumcision** (the Jews) was unto **Peter**" Galatians 2:7.*

The **main theme** of the Book of Acts, is the **extension** of the gospel to the Gentiles.

But here's the problem for the present day Jew and Roman Catholic. He says "Right, I'll follow Peter." But there's the thing, **there is no choice anymore.** Paul severely corrects Peter (Gal 2:11) and Peter admits being bamboozled by Paul (2 Peter 3:16). Paul says "Thank you Peter, you sit in the back seat now. I'll take over the wheel."

It's a book of **two halves** with **Peter in Acts 1-12** and **Paul in Acts 13-28.**

TIMELINE

It can be terribly confusing to figure out when and where Paul went on his **3 main trips + 4th trip** to Rome at the end. The following is a guide as to what he did and **when he wrote his 14 books** of the New Testament.

33 AD – the cross and the church is formed after Pentecost

34 - Saul (Paul) threatens the church, puts them in prison and kills them (Acts 8:3; 9:1)

34 - Saul (Paul) gets saved on the road to Damascus

34 – 37 Saul (Paul) goes into Arabia for three years. He visits Mt Sinai in Arabia (Gal 4:25).

37 – The **gospel of Matthew written by Matthew.**

40 – Saul (Paul) visits Peter and James in Jerusalem (3 years after Arabia Gal 1:18)

43 – Paul caught up to **3rd heaven** (2Cor 12:2-4). This is the “**14 YEARS AGO**” (2Cor 12:2).

This is God’s preparation for Paul before his first trip two years later in 45AD. There are two lots

of 14 years – one that is 14 years ‘**ago**’ (2Cor 12:2) and one that is 14 years ‘**after**’ (Gal 2:1)

43 – Barnabas collects Saul (Paul) from Antioch (Acts 11:22)

44 – Saul (Paul) and Barnabas return to Jerusalem with money for the saints (Acts 11:29-30)

44 – James Zebedee killed (Acts 12:2). James writes the **book of James** before 44AD.

45 - 48 PAUL’S 1st TRIP (Acts 13-14). Saul has name change to Paul. (12 years after the cross)

50 – Jerusalem meeting. Confronts Peter (Acts 15:2; Gal 2:11). Paul writes **Galatians** soon after.

This is the “**14 YEARS AFTER**” he returns from Arabia (Galatians 2:1). (early 37 to late 50 = 14)

50 – 53 PAUL’S 2nd TRIP (Acts 16-18:22). He writes **1&2 Thessalonians** at Corinth (Acts 18:11)

54 - 58 PAUL’S 3rd TRIP. Paul writes **1Corinthians** at Ephesus (Acts 19:8); writes **2Corinthians** in

57AD; at Macedonia (Acts 20:1; writes **Romans** at Corinth around 57AD as well (Acts 20:3)

58 – 60 Paul put in prison at Caesarea. **Luke** probably writes the **gospel of Luke** about this time.

60 - 61 PAUL’S 4th TRIP to Rome as a prisoner.

61 – 63 House arrest, Rome, for 2 years. Paul writes **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon**

63 - Released. Paul writes **Titus, 1Timothy** and **Titus** between 63-66

64 – Emperor Nero burns Rome and blames the Christians. He re-captures Paul around 66AD.

65 – **Peter** writes **1&2 Peter**

66 – Jude writes the book of **Jude**

66 – 68 Paul put in prison. Paul writes **2Timothy** and **Hebrews**.

68 – Paul beheaded (35 years after the cross)

POINTS TO CLEAR UP IN ACTS

1. TONGUES. (Acts 2:4) Are they for today?

No. They were exclusively for the Jews, starting at Pentecost up to when Paul is beheaded in 68AD. Tongues were a **sign of judgment**, as God had only ever spoken to the Jew through their prophets, with the **Hebrew language**. They were now being **put aside for 2,000 years**. God was speaking in other languages. Their exclusive access to God the Father was over.

Known tongues were the 17, and ONLY THE 17, proper languages (Acts 2:9-11)

Unknown tongues were the 17, and ONLY THE 17, proper languages (Acts 2:9-11). They were proper languages but **just not known by anybody at a gathering or meeting**.

Today's mouth noises are just babble. They are **not** of the 17 tongues.

2. WAS PENTECOST THE DAYS OF JOEL? Acts 2:16

*"But **this is that** which was spoken by the prophet **Joel**" Acts 2:16.*

Let's compare the two accounts:

1. I will pour out my spirit upon *all flesh*; ... your sons and your daughters shall **prophesy, your old men shall **dream dreams**, ... young men shall see **visions**. And also upon the **servants** and upon the **handmaids** in those days will I pour out my spirit. Joel 2:28-29 **NONE OF THIS HAPPENED AT PENTECOST!****

2. ... *wonders in the heavens ... in the earth... blood ... fire ... pillars of smoke*. The **sun shall be turned into **darkness** ... **moon into blood** Joel 2:30-31. **NONE OF THIS HAPPENED AT PENTECOST!****

3. ... *before the great & the terrible day of the LORD* come. Joel 2:31. **was Pentecost a terrible day? NO!**

4. Joel is foretold for the day of the LORD. This is the **seven year wrath** of God. This is the **tribulation**.

5. *...whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered:* (Joel 2:32). They weren't being delivered at Pentecost! However, if they **would call on the Lord Jesus Christ** (Acts 2:38), **they would be saved**.

In Joel they will call upon the **LORD** who is **Jehovah**. At Pentecost, they call on the **Lord** who is **Jesus**. Also, Pentecost was **voluntary**. Joel is **forced** upon Israel. It will be a **mandatory** deliverance.

6. *....for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, ... and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call. Joel 2:32.* Pentecost was **not** about a remnant being delivered.

7. Joel does **not** talk of anyone speaking in **tongues**, of **rushing wind** or **cloven tongues** of fire.

8. The Spirit is **never** poured out anywhere in the New Testament **upon** any flesh. However God's Spirit touches the flesh, when a person is born again (Col 2:11-14), in that, the soul is cut from the flesh in a spiritual circumcision that separates the soul **from** the body of flesh.

9. The Jews at Pentecost knew they were **not** in the last days. These two events are separated by 2,000 years.

10. So the **"...this is that..."** refers to the same Spirit that will work **at both times**. Peter is merely calming down the agitated and confused Jews at Pentecost by saying "Don't be alarmed. This is not an evil spirit. It is God's Spirit that is working here. It is the same Spirit that will work in the future – in the days of Joel. Be comforted! Everything is OK.

Peter says "THIS (Spirit at work here at Pentecost) **IS THAT** (Spirit which will work in the last days mentioned in Joel)."

3. PETER'S GOSPEL TO THE MEN OF ISRAEL. (Acts 2:38) **Is that for today?**

Peter's gospel is one of **works**

*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be **baptized** (water) every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission** of sins (past), and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38*

Peter's gospel could only bring **remission of past sins**, not future sins. Furthermore, **water baptism is a work**.

You've got to physically go to where some water is, climb in the pool/sea/bath-tub and physically go under the water. Then you have to come up. If you do this today for your salvation, you'll just go down a dry sinner and come up a wet sinner.

Paul's gospel is **not of works**

Peter's gospel is **NOT** Paul's gospel.

Paul has **no works** – **only believe, no water** and **redemption**, being for past, present and future sins.

The two gospels are as similar as chalk is to cheese.

*As the jailer asked "...Sirs, what must I do to be **saved**? And they said, **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts 16:30-31*

And of course "to believe" is **not** a work.

*For by grace are ye **saved through faith**; and that **not of yourselves**: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9*

Furthermore, *But to him that **worketh not, but believeth** on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Romans 4:5*

Peter's gospel to the men of Israel is **not** Paul's gospel that is to be preached to everyone today - that is to the Gentiles and including the Jews. For the Jew to go to heaven today, they must believe Paul **not** Peter.

Paul's gospel makes Peter's gospel obsolete (useless and out of date). If you want to send people to hell today, just preach Peter's gospel of water baptism for the remission of past sins.

4. PAUL ENDORSES PROPHECY. IS THAT FOR TODAY? (1Cor 12:10)

Paul prophesied (1Thess 4:16-18; 1Thess 2:1-12)
No. But he does say prophecy is OK because the New Testament canon (the 27 books) had **not** been completed when he writes 1 Corinthians. That is, the following books had **yet** to be written: - 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Titus, 1&2 Timothy, 1&2 Peter, Jude, Hebrews and Revelation. Once they were written, the New Testament would be closed. There would be no more prophecy. Today's prophecies are pure lies, and nothing more than 3rd rate, crystal ball, fortune telling. It's just people puffing themselves up.

5. CAN WE DO HEALINGS TODAY? Paul did (Acts 19:11) IS THAT FOR TODAY?

We can pray for healings according to the Lord's will (James 4:15), but physical healings are not a guarantee. The healing mentioned in both testament (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24) is for sin **not** the body.

6. APOSTLES AND PROPHETS? Paul was. ARE THEY FOR TODAY?

No. The **cornerstone** of the church was **Christ**. (Ephesians 2:20)
Then **foundation** of the church are the **apostles** and the **prophets**. (Ephesians 2:20; 2Cor 12:12)
The **bricks** are the **evangelists, pastors** and **teachers** (Ephesians 4:11)
To be an **APOSTLE** you had to 1. **Physically** accompany the Lord Jesus (Acts 1:21-22) 2. Witness his **resurrection**.
Secondly, no prophecy is needed today. It's all been foretold. Contrary to popular preaching, the world is not in for a huge revival. Just the opposite. Pure lies to **deceive** the simple and **extort** money.

7. IS EXORCISM FOR TODAY? Paul did it (Acts 16:18). IS THAT FOR TODAY?

Many have tried to their utter failure. Nowhere in Paul's writings to the churches does he even suggest this. If you were an apostle, God gave this to you as a special miracle (Peter Acts 3:6-7; Paul 19:11)

8. PAUL GOT WATER BAPTISED (Acts 9:18) **SHOULDN'T I DO THAT AS WELL?**

No. Paul was merely following the standard procedure for then. He knew very little of what God would show him in the future. He had to go into Arabia for three years (Gal 1:17); then he had to consult with Peter and James (Gal 1:18), then he was taken up into the 3rd heaven (2Cor 12:2-4). Even then, he water baptised a couple of people (1Cor 1:16) till God showed Paul that water baptism was getting in the way of people's salvation.

"Well, I've been water baptised. I guess that makes me saved?" "I got water baptised as a baby. I'm going to heaven." So Paul says *For Christ sent me **not to baptize**, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, **lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect**. 1 Corinthians 1:17.*

9. CAN I LOSE MY SALVATION?

No you can't. **Peter** preaches **remission** of sins (Acts 2:38), that is, the forgiveness of **past sins** (Rom 3:25). *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission** of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38.*

See point 3 above. Peter's preaching was for another dispensation, and has been **superceded** (replaced) and made **obsolete** (useless and out of date) by Paul's gospel which is for the **redemption** for sins.

*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and **hath** (constantly working) **translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son**: In whom we have **redemption through his blood**, even the forgiveness of sins: Colossians 1:13-14.*

We can never be lost. Want more proof?

*For by one offering he hath **perfected for ever** them that are **sanctified**. Hebrews 10:14.*

Christians are **sanctified (set apart)**. If you are in Christ, you have been set apart.

Yes. Being in Christ, we are set apart. **Christ** is our **sanctification**.

*But of him **are ye in Christ Jesus**, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and **sanctification**, and **redemption**: 1 Corinthians 1:30.*

Those in Christ have been **redeemed**. They are **sanctified**.

The penalty for past, present and future sins has been paid for – not just past sins (remission). "... *Jesus Christ... Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, Revelation 1:5*

10. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The **entry criteria** for getting into **Peter's church** (Acts 2:38, 47) was not the same for getting into **Paul's church**, which is to **believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. When the Jews were wandering in the **desert** for 40 years, they were called the **church** (Acts 7:38). But they had **not** been put into Jesus Christ. They were **not redeemed**. This was not Paul's church.
2. When Peter preaches his gospel to the men of Israel, many were **added** to the **church**. They were **not redeemed**. This was not Paul's church.
3. Paul writes to the **church** at various places. They have been **redeemed** by simply believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The definition for a church is a group of worshippers called out by God. There is only one church now, those **IN** Christ ... *and gave him to be **the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:22-23***

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(STB 9 – "The Pentateuch")