

Exploring the Bible

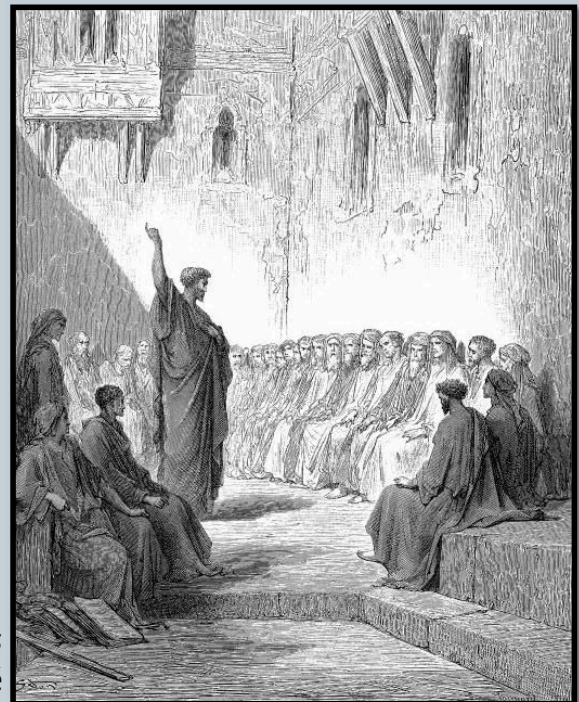


ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: PART II

Acts and Paul



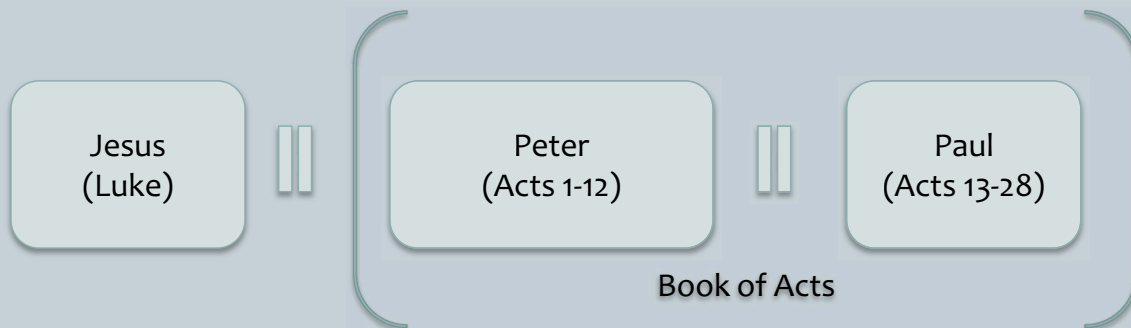
- The second part of Acts portrays the mission of Paul and the Gentile expansion of the church.



St. Paul Preaching to the Thessalonians
Gustave Doré

Literary Parallels in Luke-Acts

- Just as book of Acts has many literary parallels with the book of Luke, so the portrayal of Paul parallels the portrayal of Peter:



Peter & Paul in Acts

Peter

- Signs & wonders
- Healing lame man
- Rebukes Ananias & Sapphira
- Prayer shakes building
- Healing by shadow
- Sudden healing of paralytic
- Resuscitation of Tabitha
- Removal of prison chains

Paul

- Signs & wonders
- Healing lame man
- Rebukes Elymas
- Praise shakes building
- Healing by handkerchiefs
- Sudden healing of dysentery
- Resuscitation of Eutychus
- Removal of prison chains

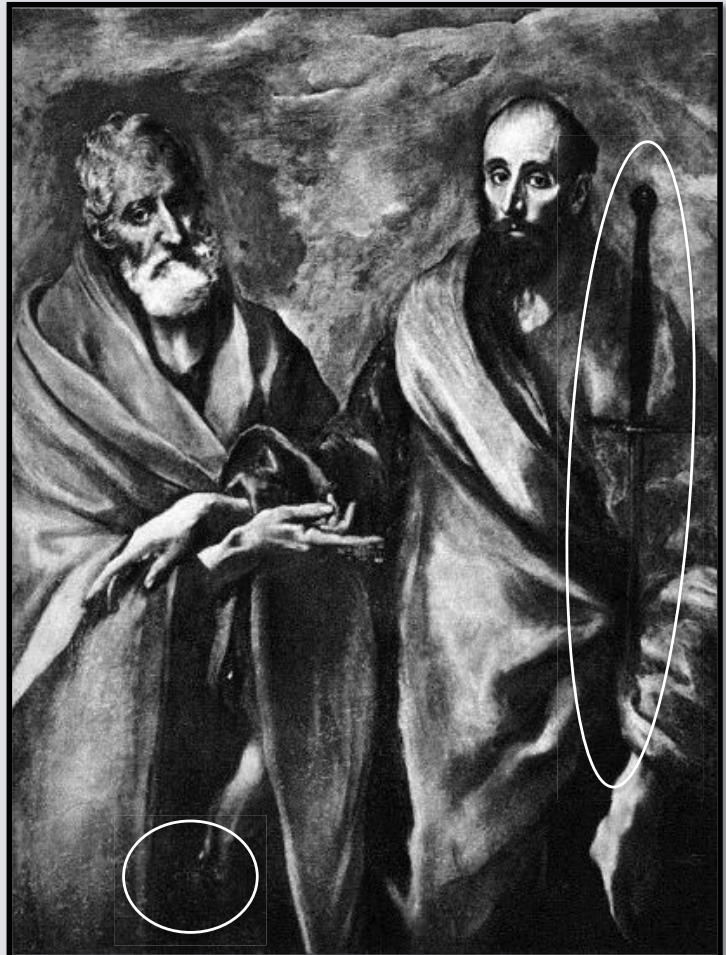
Peter & Paul in Acts (Scripture References)

Peter

- Signs & wonders (2.43)
- Healing lame man (3.1ff)
- Rebukes Ananias & Sapphira (5.1ff)
- Prayer shakes building (4.31)
- Healing by shadow (5.15)
- Sudden healing of paralytic (9.33ff)
- Resuscitation of Tabitha (9.36ff)
- Removal of prison chains (12.5ff)

Paul

- Signs & wonders (14.3)
- Healing lame man (14.7ff)
- Rebukes Elymas (13.8ff)
- Praise shakes building (16.25ff)
- Healing by handkerchiefs (19.12)
- Sudden healing of dysentery (28.7ff)
- Resuscitation of Eutychus (20.9ff)
- Removal of prison chains (16.25ff)



Peter and Paul
El Greco

Paul's First Missionary Journey



- Paul is a member at the diverse and hugely successful church in Antioch
 - Antioch is a prosperous city on main trade and travel routes.
 - Paul works with Barnabas, a Greek-speaking Jewish Christian from Cyprus
- Paul and Barnabas are sent off on their first missionary tour of Asia Minor.





Paul's First Missionary Journey

- Paul & Barnabas follow the pattern of preaching first in Jewish synagogues.
- When rejected at the synagogues, the two turn to Gentile audiences.

Paul and Barnabas at Lystra
Nicolaes Berchem



Paul's First Missionary Journey

- Their method it works. Paul & Barnabas convert huge numbers of Gentiles.
- But it doesn't work easily. They encounter harsh opposition and brutality.
- Their success leads to the first major crisis in the church.



The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)



- The issue: Must Gentiles become Jews before converting to Christianity?
 - Jewish Christians in Antioch and Jerusalem see circumcision and the law of Moses as prerequisites for being part of God's kingdom.
 - ✦ “Unless you are circumcised, ... you cannot be saved.” (Acts 15.1)
 - ✦ “It is necessary to circumcise [the Gentiles] and to order them to keep the law of Moses.” (Acts 15.5)
 - Therefore, foreigners must become Jews before becoming Christians.
 - Paul & Barnabas “had no small dissension and debate with them.” (Acts 15.2)

The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)



- It's kind of a big deal...

*And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he **made no distinction between us and them**, having cleansed their hearts by faith.*

-Acts 15.8-9

The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)



- James (brother of Jesus) issues a decision:
 - Not “trouble those of the Gentiles” turning to God
 - Follow four requirements:
 1. Don’t eat meat contaminated by idols.
 2. Don’t eat animals that were strangled.
 3. Don’t eat blood.
 4. Abstain from sexual immorality.
- ❖ Note that the first three allow for table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles.

The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)



- The Jerusalem council episode functions as a *typology* for the early church.
 - Delegates sent to investigate and hold lengthy debate
 - Peter speaks, followed by Barnabas & Paul. James decides.
 - The decision awards victory to one party, but is sensitive to the ideals of the losing party.
 - Delegates spread word of the decision by means of a letter.
- ❖ Note the theme of unity: the “whole church” agrees and “of one accord” sends the decision that “seemed good to the Holy Spirit.”

Paul's First Missionary Journey



- Paul's first missionary journey highlights Luke's theme of the expansion of the church beyond the world of Jerusalem.



Paul's Second Missionary Journey



- Begins with a disagreement over John Mark.
 - Barnabas takes John Mark and heads for Cyprus
 - Paul takes Silas and Heads for Syria
 - In Lystra, Paul picks up Timothy

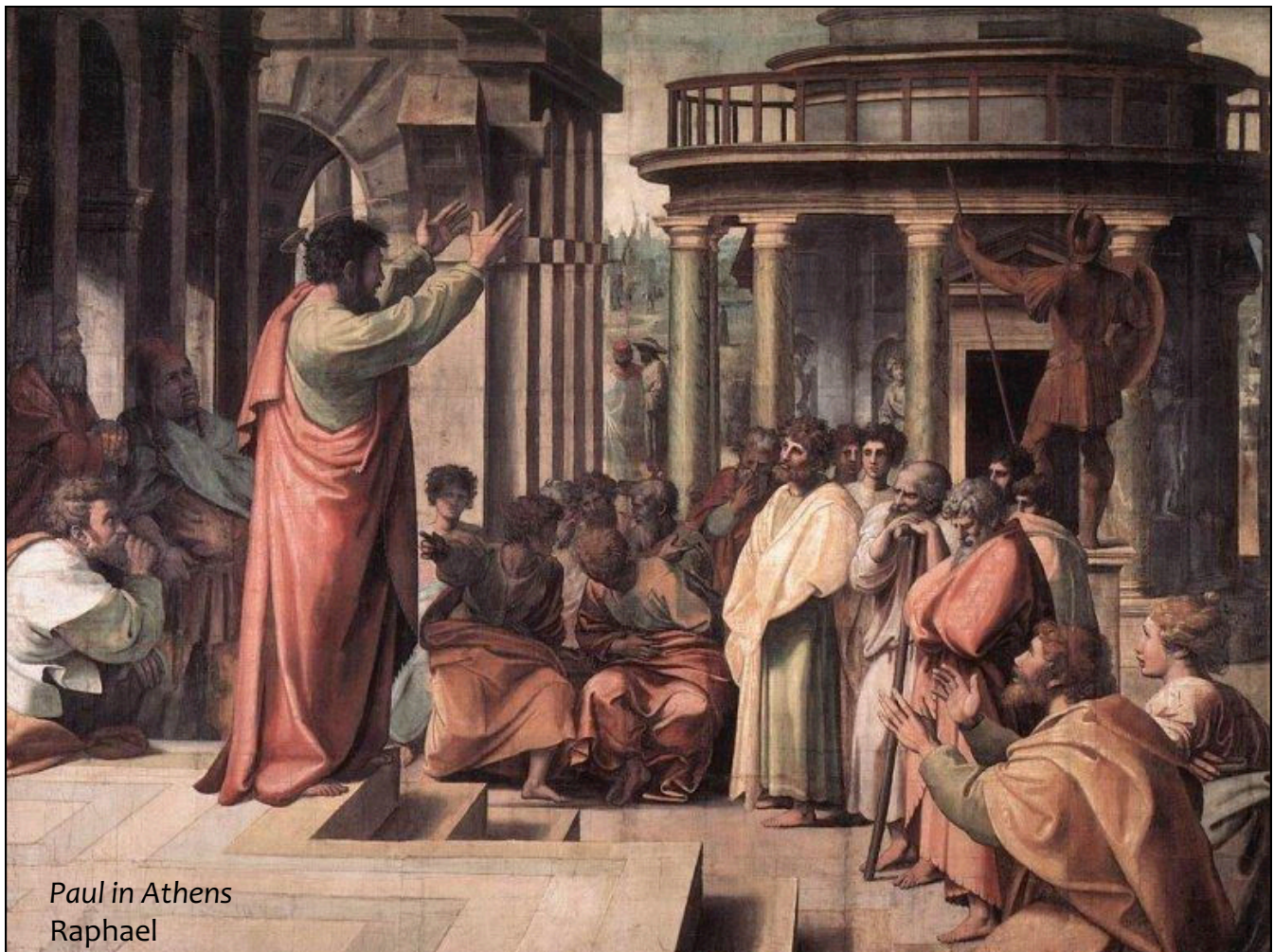


Paul's Second Missionary Journey

- **Paul in Athens:**
 - Teaches daily in the Athens marketplace
 - Curious philosophers invite Paul to speak at the Areopagus
 - Athenians are very religious; Paul notices altar to unknown God



The Areopagus Hill, Present-Day



Paul in Athens
Raphael

Paul's Second Missionary Journey



- Paul Sermon at the Areopagus:
 - God is creator, all-powerful and life-giving
 - God is in control of history
 - God offers proof by raising Jesus from the dead
 - Philosophers: “You had me until resurrection.”
 - ✦ Ridiculous idea to some of the audience
 - ✦ Others want to hear more about this God
 - ✦ Some believed and became Christians
- Paul's travels continue, eventually returning to Antioch to give a report.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18-20)



- Paul revisits churches in Asia Minor and Greece
- Concentrates on Paul's activities in Ephesus.
 - Two occasions involving Christians influenced by John the Baptist
 - ✦ Priscilla & Aquila correct the eloquent Apollos
 - ✦ Christians observing “John's baptism” receive the Holy Spirit after being baptized in Jesus' name.
 - Astonishing miracles (Paul) and miserable failures (Jewish exorcists) illustrate superiority of Christianity over opposition.
 - Spread of Christianity bad for religion business (Artemis)



Artemis

Ephesian Goddess



Paul's Arrest and Trials

- Paul and his fellow workers head for Jerusalem.
- Paul is accused of preaching against Jews, Torah, and Temple. Angry mob seizes Paul.
- Roman soldiers hear word of an uproar in Jerusalem and intervene.
- Paul is allowed to address the crowd and tell of his conversion.
- When he speaks about preaching to the Gentiles, pandemonium ensues once again.

Paul's Arrest and Trials

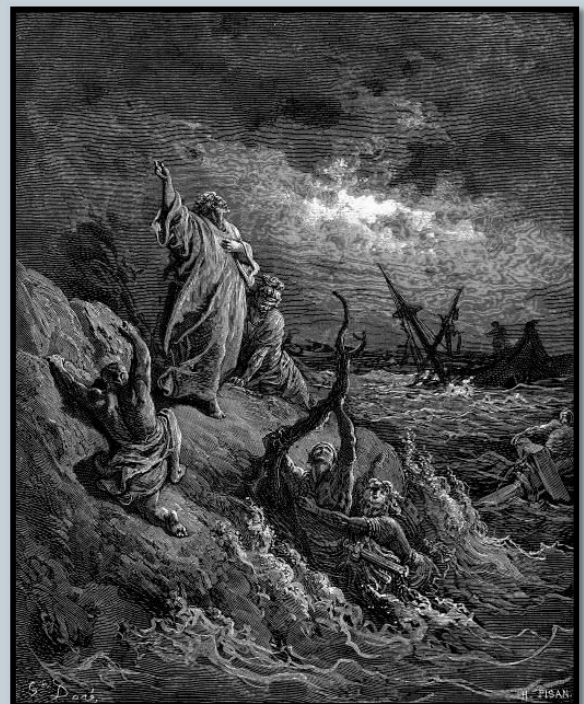


- Soldiers rescue Paul, but decide to beat a confession out of him.
- Paul invokes his Roman citizenship. Soldiers release him.
- Jewish leaders gather to examine Paul
 - Paul defends himself, instigating an argument between Pharisees and Sadducees about the resurrection.
 - Crowd becomes violent again, Paul once again taken into Roman custody (where he remains).
- Jesus visits Paul, encourages him, and tells him that he must bear witness in Rome

Paul's Arrest and Trials



- Paul's Voyage to Rome:
 - Storm at sea (Acts 27) emphasizes Paul's divine protection
 - Paul tells centurion how to save ship and crew
 - Paul foretells when they will reach dry land
 - Paul, shipwrecked on Malta, survives snake bites (vipers) and heals people on Malta





Paul's Shipwreck
Ludolf Backhuysen

Paul's Arrest and Trials



- Paul in Rome
 - Under house arrest, with some freedoms
 - Our last sight of Paul is him preaching Jesus and the Kingdom of God in Rome (recall Jesus' words to Paul)
- (Acts does not tell of Paul's death)



The Final Act: Paul's Fade-Scene

Paul “...welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.”

-Acts 28.30-31



The Acts of the Apostles

- ❖ The Holy Spirit guides the expansion of the church.
- ❖ The church continues the character and work of Christ.
- ❖ The explosive, multicultural expansion includes serious but manageable stress-points.
- ❖ Christianity is a universal, peaceful and lawful faith.