

ST ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

COME, JOIN THE CONVERSATION!
about
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson Plan for Thursday – January 10, 2013

Resource Book – Kerygma Program - *“into the world”*

Chapter 1 – *“Prologue to the Acts of the Apostles”*

Our Learning Objectives:

1. To become acquainted with one another and with the study we are about to begin
2. To appreciate the Resource Book as a personal source of valuable biblical information
3. To describe some links between the Gospel of Luke and Acts
4. To state Luke’s purpose in writing Acts and relate the purpose to the outline of the book
5. To list several of the major themes found in Acts
6. To discuss the important relevance of Acts for the church today

Opening Worship: A responsive reading of *“Awe and Wonder”* - Psalm 8
(from: *Everyday Psalms* by James Taylor; 1994 - Wood Lake Books)

My God, my God, how wonderful you are!

There is nothing like you in the whole earth.

I look up to the skies, and I see you there;

Babies and infants open their mouths, and I hear them cry your name.

Compared to you, our weapons, our bombs, our power to destroy, dwindle into insignificance.

On a starry night, with your glory splashed across the skies, I gaze into your infinite universe, and I wonder:

What do I matter? Why do you care about mere mortals?

We humans are less than specks of dust in your universe.

We have existed less than a second in the great clock of creation.

Yet you choose us as your partners.

You share the secrets of the universe with us;

You give us a special place in your household:

You trust us to look after the earth, on your behalf –

Not just the sheep and oxen, but also the wolves that prey on our domestic animals; the birds, the plants, and even creatures we have never seen in the depths of the sea.

My God, My God! How amazing you are!

A) DISCUSSION ABOUT AUTHORSHIP OF THE 3rd GOSPEL AND BOOK OF ACTS

1. What does the author of Luke 1:1-4, say about his purpose in writing?

1 Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

2. What does the author of Acts 1:1-3, say about the relationship of Acts to the Third Gospel?

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning 2 until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

For the following questions, consult the *RESOURCE BOOK*

3. Under pg. 6 heading: *"Where Did It Come From?"* What are the clues in Luke/Acts that show common authorship?

4. Review pgs. 10-11 *"Parallels to Luke's Gospel"* What was Luke's underlying theological purpose in writing?

5. Review pgs. 6-7 *"Why Was Acts Written?"* Why has Luke chosen to arrange and record his material as he has done?

B) Six Major themes in Book of Acts:

1) Universality of the Early Church

- a) **Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
- b) **Acts 8:26-38** 26 Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (*This is a wilderness road.*) 27 So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." 30 So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. 32 Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." 34 The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35 Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. 36 As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" 37 He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.
- c) **Acts 10: 44-48** 44 While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, 46 for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, 47 "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

2) Prominent Role of Women in the Early Church

- a) **Acts 1:13-14** 13 When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.
- b) **Acts 8:3** 3 But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.

3) Holy Spirit – the solid foundation of the new faith community

a) **Acts 1:4-5** 4 While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

b) **Acts 2:1-4; 37-41** 1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability...(THEREAFTER COMES PETER'S ADDRESS; THEN, THIS REACTION)..37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." 40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

c) **Acts 10:44-48** (a repeat of #1c above)

4) Fulfillment of Old Covenant

a) **Acts 1:15** (NOTE: 120 IS PROPER # FOR FORMATION OF A SYNAGOGUE WITH ITS OWN COUNCIL.) 15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said...

b) **Acts 21:26** (NOTE HOW THE APOSTLES CONTINUED AS OBSERVANT JEWS) 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having purified himself, he entered the temple with them, making public the completion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them.

c) **Acts 2:14-36** (PETER'S ADDRESS TO THE CROWDS AT PENTECOST – WHICH WILL BE DEALT WITH IN GREATER DETAIL AT A SUBSEQUENT STUDY SESSION)

5) Nature and Mission of the Church (MANY EXAMPLES COULD BE PROVIDED, BUT THIS IS A CLASSIC:)

a) **Acts 26:19-32** 19 "After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. 21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. 22 To this day I

have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: 23 that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles." 24 While he was making this defense, Festus exclaimed, "You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!" 25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth. 26 Indeed the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." 28 Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?" 29 Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am—except for these chains." 30 Then the king got up, and with him the governor and Bernice and those who had been seated with them; 31 and as they were leaving, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." 32 Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor."

6) Geographical Background of Paul's Travels – Acts 10:1 – 28:28

C) A Comprehensive Outline of the Book of Acts –

AN ATTACHMENT DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY FROM THIS LESSON PLAN

D) For further Discussion and/or Reflection:

1. How would you define the Church to someone who never heard of it?
2. What is the purpose of the Church?
3. Where is it? Who is in it?
4. How does one become a member of the Church?
5. What is your opinion of the importance of the church in the world of 2013?
6. Is it necessary that all followers of Christ be a part of the church?
7. In Resource Book, re-read sections entitled: "**The Authority of Acts**" and "**Acts and the Canon**" (page 8) When did the Scriptures become authoritative for you?

CLOSING PRAYER: FROM "SOUL WEAVINGS" BY LYN KLUG – A MEMBER OF THE IONA COMMUNITY (SCOTLAND)

***You keep us waiting.
You, the God of all time,
want us to wait for the right time in which to discover who we are,
where we must go, who will be with us,
and what we must do.
So, thank you . . . for the waiting time.***

*You keep us looking.
You, the God of all space,
want us to look in the right and wrong places for signs of hope,
for people who are hopeless, for visions of a better world that will appear
among the disappointments of the world we know.
So, thank you . . . for the looking time.*

*You keep us loving.
You, the God whose name is love,
want us to be like you –
to love the loveless and the unlovely and the unlovable;
to love without jealousy or design or threat;
and most difficult of all, to love ourselves.
So, thank you . . . for the loving time.*

*And in this, you keep us,
through hard questions with no easy answers;
through failing where we hoped to succeed
and making an impact when we felt we were useless;
through the patience and the dreams and the love of others;
and through Jesus Christ and his Spirit, you keep us.
So thank you . . . for the keeping time,
and for now, and forever. Amen.*

Preparation for our next meeting – Thursday, January 17, 2013

1. Resource Book – Chp. 2 – “*Preparing for the Church’s Birth*”
2. In Scripture read: ACTS 1:1-26
3. **Need for a Volunteer!** – Someone to research and give 2-3 minute report on how clouds symbolize the presence and power of God in the Bible.