

Maranatha Bible Church 2019

Equipping Hour: NT Gospels and Acts Introduction

Week 6: The Book of Acts

Introduction

To begin these final two classes, we are going to look at Luke and Acts as a single unit and then look at each book individually. The reason for putting these two books together is because they are a part one and part two of Luke's story. Luke 1:1-5 "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught."

Then we read in Acts 1:1-2 "The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen."

These two simple introductions tell us much about how these books come together. Luke investigated everything carefully which was handed down by eyewitnesses. Furthermore, he sought to put things in consecutive order to show the life of Jesus (and then Peter and Paul) from start to finish. Luke was really the church's first historian, covering some 60 years of church history, starting with the birth of Christ.

Just in verses 5-25 in Luke's opening chapter, we have such detail in names, places, conversations and an establishment of a theme and plot. This was written by a man who set out to make sure all his "t's" were crossed. There is no doubt about how much work he put into this writing.

Luke and Acts

- The Importance of Luke/Acts
 - 28% of the NT is from Luke/Acts
 - Luke is the longest and the most eloquent in their Greek
 - Luke gives us the most complete history of Christ
 - He coordinates the life of Christ w/ historical data
- The Relationship between the Gospel of Luke and Acts (Lk. 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2)
 - Both are dedicated to Theophilus
 - He identifies that others have written about Jesus and he wants to improve on that (he is writing an orderly account).
 - He was aware of other works, but we can rightly assume there were no canonical works

Background to Luke and Acts

Author

- Luke (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24) (both internal and external point to Luke)
 - It is determined by its relation to Acts...Luke uses the term 'us', switches from 'he' to 'us' The writer of Acts includes himself sometimes w/ Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16; cf. esp. 20:4-5)
 - Both are addressed to Theophilus
 - Medical Language (14:2)
 - Church fathers were nearly unanimous in favor of Luke
 - The Muratorian canon (c. 170)
 - This is an ancient list of New Testament books (the oldest such list we have found) and is dated to about 180 AD and lists 22 of the 27 books that were later included in the NT of the Bible.
 - Irenaeus
 - Clement of Alexandria
 - Tertullian
 - The Anti-Marcion Prologue (200-300 AD)¹
 - He taught that Jesus was sent by the Supreme God and there were two different gods, one in the OT and one in the NT.
 - He lived around 144 AD in Rome.
 - Biblical Information on Luke (see Luke: Author in next section)
 - General information we gather by reading Scripture about him.

Readers

- Theophilus (1:3; cf. Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25)
 - 'Most Excellent' is common for someone who is a government official in Rome
 - Same phrase Paul uses when addressing Felix and others in Acts as a title for dignitaries

Purpose

- Gentile Christians from the Pauline mission could know with certainty that the Word taught to them was absolutely true.
 - It also sets their boldness with Theological ideology
 - Vindication of Paul against Judaizers

¹ Indeed Luke was an Antiochene Syrian, a doctor by profession, a disciple of the apostles: later however he followed Paul until his martyrdom, serving the Lord blamelessly. He never had a wife, he never fathered children, and died at the age of eighty-four, full of the Holy Spirit, in Boetia. Therefore --- although gospels had already been written ---- indeed by Matthew in Judaea but by Mark in Italy ---- moved by the Holy Spirit he wrote down this gospel in the parts of Achaia, signifying in the preface that the others were written before his, but also that it was of the greatest importance for him to expound with the greatest diligence the whole series of events in his narration for the Greek believers, so that they would not be led astray by the lure of Jewish fables, or, seduced by the fables of the heretics and stupid solicitations, fall away from the truth. And so at once at the start he took up the extremely necessary [story] from the birth of John, who is the beginning of the gospel, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was a companion in the perfecting of the people, likewise in the introducing of baptism and a companion in martyrdom.

- Defense (legal brief) of Paul for trial as insurrectionist

Date

- c. A.D. 60-61 / 62–63 (Reign of Tiberius and Paul's 14 years)
 - Jesus' ministry from 30-33
 - Jerusalem church 33-35 (then Paul's conversion)
 - 14 years (according to Galatians) had a brief visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18) 40-44 AD from Acts 11:30
 - 49 AD Jerusalem counsel
 - 50-52 1st missionary journey
 - 54-56 2nd missionary journey
 - Paul's then in prison for a number of years and appeals to Caesar (59 AD)
 - In Rome to 61 or 62
 - Luke ends Acts with Paul in prison (if Paul was released, then Luke would have recorded it) therefore, the dating should line up with Paul's imprisonment

The Characteristics and Themes of Luke and Acts

The Sovereign Plan of God

- The dei (it is necessary or it must) Motif found ½ of their uses in Luke/Acts] [18x in Luke; 22x in Acts] (Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 11:42; 12:12; 13:14, 16, 33; 15:32; 17:25; 18:1; 19:5; 21:9; 22:7, 37; 24:7, 26, 44; Acts 1:16, 21; 3:21; 4:12; 5:29; 9:6, 16; 14:22; 15:5; 16:30; 17:3; 18:21; 19:21, 36; 20:35; 21:22; 23:11; 24:19; 25:10, 24; 26:9; 27:21, 24, 26)
 - These things had to happen to fulfill prophecy in the OT, fulfilling the will of God
- The Determination of God (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 10:42; 17:26, 31)
 - Delivered Jesus by the predetermined plan of God
- The Appointment of God (Acts 3:20; 10:41; 22:14; 26:16)
 - God appoints times and season for Israel to go through.
 - These books both show a very high sovereignty of God.
- The Fulfillment of Scripture (Luke 4:21; 18:31; 21:22; 22:37; 23:46; Acts 3:18; 13:27; 26:22-23)

The Power of God

- Power is used numerous times (dunamai – 26x in Luke; 21x in Acts; dunamis – 15x in Luke; 10x in Acts; dunatos – 4x in Luke; 6x in Acts. See Luke 1:35; 4:14; 22:69; Acts 1:8; 4:7, 33; 6:8)
 - Though this is where we get our modern word *dynamite*² from, it is very important not to read back into the text. Luke (or any NT author) did not have dynamite in mind when they were writing their letters...because it did not exist.

² 1867 by Alfred Nobel (founder of Nobel Prizes).

- This is an important point, as we will read through the book of Acts, the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements use this term to teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit must be explosive, like dynamite.
 - We will discuss this more as we look at the individual passages in their respective books.

Savior

- Savior (soter – Luke 1:47; 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23); Salvation (soteria – Luke 1:69, 71, 77; 19:9; Acts 4:12; 7:25; 13:26, 47; 16:17; 27:34; soterion – Luke 2:30; 3:6; Acts 28:28); To save, free from disease, free from harm (sozo – Luke 6:9; 7:50; 8:12, 36, 48, 50; 9:24, 56; 13:23; 17:19; 18:26, 42; 19:10; 23:35, 37, 39; Acts 2:21, 40, 47; 4:9, 12; 11:14; 14:9; 15:1, 11; 16:30, 31; 27:20, 31)
 - Salvation is the whole deal in Luke, from enemies, suppression, deliverance from your sinful nature, set free to be able to serve God

The Outcasts of Society

- The Poor (Luke 4:18; 6:20; 7:22; 14:13, 21; 16:20, 22; 18:22; 19:8; 21:2,3)
 - More than anyone else, Luke highlights this
 - Who did Jesus consider those to be poor? That is why He came Luke 4:18
- Tax Gatherers (Luke 5:29, 30; 7:29, 34; 15:1; 18:10, 11, 13; 19:2)
 - Luke talks about them in a positive way, unlike the other gospels
- Women (Luke 1:5, 13, 18, 24, 28, 42; 3:19; 4:26; 7:28, 37, 39, 44, 50; 8:2, 3, 43, 47; 10:38; 11:27; 13:11, 12, 21; 14:20, 26; 15:8; 16:18; 17:32; 18:29; 20:28, 29, 32, 33; 22:57; 23:27, 49, 55; 24:22, 24; Acts 1:14; 5:1, 2, 7, 14; 8:3, 12; 9:2; 13:50; 16:1, 13, 14; 17:4, 12, 34; 18:2; 21:5; 22:4; 24:24)
 - Nothing Luke says violates Pauline theology

The Holy Spirit

- Between Luke and Acts, one can formulate a fairly complete Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25, 26, 27; 3:16, 22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10, 12; Acts 1:2, 5, 8, 16; 2:4, 17, 18, 33, 38; 4:8, 25, 31; 5:3, 9, 32; 6:3, 5, 10; 7:51, 55; 8:15, 17, 18, 19, 29, 39; 9:17, 31; 10:19, 38, 44, 45, 47; 11:12, 15, 16, 24, 28; 13:2, 4, 9, 52; 15:8, 28; 16:6, 7; 19:2, 6; 20:23, 28; 21:4, 11; 28:25)
 - He goes to great lengths to show what was happening was not the will of man or by the power of man, but average men empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

- “to pray” (Luke 1:10; 3:21; 5:16; 6:12, 28; 9:18, 28, 29; 11:1, 2; 18:1, 10, 11; 20:47; 22:40, 41, 44, 46; Acts 1:24; 6:6; 8:15; 9:11, 40; 10:9, 30; 11:5; 12:12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 28:8)
- “prayer” (Luke 6:12; 19:46; 22:45; Acts 1:14; 2:42; 3:1; 6:4; 10:4, 31; 12:5; 16:13, 16)
- “to entreat” (Luke 5:12; 8:28, 38; 9:38, 40; 10:2; 21:36; 22:32; Acts 4:31; 8:22, 24, 34; 10:2; 21:39; 26:3)
- “entreaty” (Luke 1:13; 2:37; 5:33)
- More than any other gospel writer

Gentiles

- Luke talks about the Gentiles and their response to the message (Luke 2:32; 7:9; 12:30; 18:32; 21:10, 24, 25; 23:2; 24:47; Acts 2:5; 4:25, 27; 7:7, 45; 8:9; 9:15; 10:22, 35, 45; 11:1, 18; 13:19, 46, 47, 48; 14:2, 5, 16, 27; 15:3, 7, 12, 14, 17, 19, 23; 17:26; 18:6; 21:11, 19, 21, 25; 22:21; 24:2, 10, 17; 26:4, 17, 20, 23; 28:19, 28)

Rejection

- Israel's rejection (Luke 2:34; 11:49-51; 13:7-9, 28, 33-35; 14:16-24; 19:41-44)

The Call for Repentance and Response to the Message

- "to repent" (Luke 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 16:30; 17:3, 4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20)
- repentance" (Luke 3:3, 8; 5:32; 15:7; 24:47; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 13:24; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20)
- "to turn" (Luke 1:16, 17; [2:39; 8:55; 17:4, 31] 22:32; Acts 3:19; 9:35, [9:40]; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19 [15:36; 16:18] 26:18, 20; 28:27) "conversion" (Acts 15:3)
- "to believe" (Luke 1:20, 45; 8:12, 13, 50; 16:11; 20:5; 22:67; 24:25; Acts 2:44; 4:4, 32; 5:14; 8:12, 13; 9:26, 42; 10:43; 11:17, 21; 13:12, 39, 41, 48; 14:1, 23; 15:5, 7, 11; 16:31, 34; 17:12, 34; 18:8, 27; 19:2, 4, 18; 21:20, 25; 22:19; 24:14; 26:27; 27:25)
- "faith" (Luke 5:20; 7:9, 50; 8:25, 48; 17:5, 6, 19; 18:8, 42; 22:32; Acts 3:16; 6:5, 7; 11:24; 13:8; 14:9, 22, 27; 15:9; 16:5; 17:31; 20:21; 24:24; 26:18)

Joy

- "to rejoice" (Luke 1:14, 28; 6:23; 10:20; 13:17; 15:5, 32; 19:6, 37; 22:5; 23:8; Acts 5:41; 8:39; 11:23; 13:48; 15:23, 31; 23:26)
- "joy" (Luke 1:14; 2:10; 8:13; 10:17; 15:7, 10; 24:41, 52; Acts 8:8; 12:14; 13:52; 15:3)
- "rejoice greatly" (Luke 1:47; 10:21; Acts 2:26; 16:34)
- "exultation" (Luke 1:14, 44; Acts 2:46)
- "to cheer, be glad" (Luke 12:9; 15:23, 24, 29, 32; 16:19; Acts 2:26; 7:41)
- "joy, gladness" (Acts 2:28; 14:17)

The Word

- Luke places a great deal of importance on what was already recorded. Both in a historical aspect and also Scripture. (Luke 1:2, 4, 20, 29; 3:4; 4:22, 32, 36; 5:1, 15; 6:47; 7:7, 17; 8:11, 12, 13, 15, 21; 9:26, 28, 44; 10:39; 11:28, 12:10; 16:2; 20:3, 20; 21:33, 22:61; 23:9; 24:17, 19, 44; Acts 1:1; 2:22, 40, 41, 4:4, 29, 31; 5:5, 24; 6:2, 4, 5, 7; 7:22, 29; 8:4, 14, 21, 25; 10:29, 36, 44; 11:1, 19, 22; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 15, 26, 44, 46, 48, 49; 14:3, 12, 25; 15:6, 7, 15, 24, 27, 32, 35, 36; 16:6, 32, 36; 17:11, 13; 18:5, 11, 14, 15; 19:10, 20, 38, 40; 20:2, 7, 24, 32, 35, 38; 22:22)

The Structure of Luke and Acts

The Structure of Luke/Acts		
Luke		Acts
1:1–4	1. Preface	1:1–2
1:5–4:13	2. Preparation by the Spirit	1:3–2:13
4:14–30	3. Ministry opened by a Sermon stressing fulfillment and rejection	2:14–40
4:31–8:56	4. Ministry emphasizing theme of fulfillment and conflict	2:41–12:24
5:17–26	a. Lame Man Healed	3:1–10
5:29–6:11	b. Conflicts with Religious Leaders	4:1–8:3
7:1–10	c. Centurion’s Request for a Visit	10:1–48
7:11–17	d. Widow and Resurrection	9:36–43
7:36–50	e. Criticism by Pharisees	11:1–18
9:1–50	5. Messengers sent out	12:25–19:20
9:51–19:28	6. Last Journey to Jerusalem	19:21–21:17
19:29–23:5	7. Events in Jerusalem	21:17–28:16
19:37	a. Good reception	20:17–20
19:45–48	b. Temple entrance	21:26
20:27–39	c. Sadducees and the Resurrection	23:6–9
22:19	d. Taking and Blessing Bread	27:35
22:54	e. Seizure by Mob	21:30
22:63–64	f. Slapping at High Priests Command	23:2
22–23	g. Four Trials	23–26
24:1–53	8. Conclusion: Ministry ends on the positive note of fulfillment of Scripture	28:17–31

- If both of these letters were written by the same person to the same person, we should see some general similarities between them...and we obviously do.

Now we are going to take a look at each individual book and what we can glean from them.

The Gospel of Luke:

Author

- Luke's name is never in his own writings but found in Col. 4:42; 2 Tim. 4:11 and Philem. 24.
- These passages reveal that he was a physician, beloved by Paul and was with Paul during his first and second Roman imprisonments.
- He was a Gentile.
 - Acts 1:19 he says "their own language" referring to the Jewish people.

Date of Luke's Writing

- To add to what we already talked about, those who hold to Mark's gospel being written first, they would say that Luke was written 80 AD or later.
- There is no evidence to support this theory.
- There is nothing in Luke's gospel historically that happens after 61 AD.
 - Significant events are:
 - James (Jesus' brother and head of the Jerusalem church) being murdered (62 AD)
 - Nero persecuting the church and ultimately killing Peter and Paul (mid-60's)
 - The Temple falling in Jerusalem (70 AD)
 - He never references Paul's epistles either, leading us to believe that though some were written, they were not circulated within the region he was writing.

Where and to whom was he writing

- We do not know where he was when he wrote this gospel.
- Some say that he was in Greece (as noted earlier) and others say Rome as he was with Paul during his imprisonments.
- His intended audience was Theophilus and by extension other Gentiles.
 - He avoids using Aramaic terms that Gentiles may not know or are unfamiliar with their usage.
 - He explains Jewish customs (22:1, 7) and also Israel's geography (1:26; 4:31, etc.)

Purpose of Luke's writing

- Luke wrote his gospel so that the readers "might know the exact truth about the things which they were taught" (1:4).
- The greatest theme in Luke's gospel is the love of God for lost sinners. It is from God's love that He sent Christ to "seek and save that which was lost."
- As stated above, Luke paid close attention to those who were outcasts of the Jewish society. He focuses on Gentiles, women, tax collectors, Samaritans and lepers.
- He also focuses in on the result of these outcasts coming to faith in Christ...Joy
 - Luke alone records the five great tributes of praise connected with the birth of Christ.
 - Elizabeth (1:41-45)
 - Mary (1:46-55)
 - Zacharias (1:67-79)
 - The angels who announced the birth of Christ (1:1-4:13)

- Simeon (2:25-32)

Unique Features of the Gospel of Luke

- The Classical Greek Language (1:1-4) Still Koine Greek, but tilted toward formal Greek
- Unique Parables to Luke (7:41-43; 10:30-37; 11:5-13; 12:16-21, 35-40, 42-48; 13:6-9; 14:16-24, 25-35; 15:8-10, 11-32; 16:1-13, 19-31; 17:7-10; 18:1-8; 18:9-14; 19:11-27)
- Prevalence of Angels (1:11, 13, 18, 19, 26, 28, 30, 34, 35, 38; 2:9, 10, 13, 15, 21; 4:10; 9:26; 12:8, 9; 15:10; 16:22; 22:43; 24:23)
- Secular History (1:5; 2:1-2; 3:1; 13:1)
- A Unique “Travelogue” Section (9:51-19:27)
 - Recording Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem through Galilee through Perea and Jericho
- The inclusion of Gentile in God’s Plan (2:29-32; 13:22-30)

Literary Structure and Outline

- **The Preface:** An account of the things God had fulfilled so that a Gentile Christian might know that what he had been taught was true (1:1-4)
- **The Prologue:** The Announcements, Births, and Childhoods of John the Baptist and Jesus (1:5-2:52)
- **The Body:** The Public Ministry of Jesus [The Deeds and Discourses of Jesus] (3:1-21:38)
 - The Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus (3:1-4:13)
 - The Preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-20)
 - The Baptism of Jesus by John (3:21-22) – Luke doesn’t tell us that Jesus was baptized by John. That gives us an insight. He wants to direct us not to the physical baptism, but to the impact and result of the baptism. He adds that He was praying. The Spirit and the voice were a response to His prayer. The dependence on the father that results in the Holy Spirit
 - The Genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38)
 - The Temptation of Jesus by the Devil (4:1-13)
 - The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee: The Revelation of Jesus (4:14-9:50)
 - The Commencement of the Ministry of Jesus: Jesus’ Rejection at Nazareth and Reception at Capernaum (4:14-44)
 - Jesus’ Calling and Teaching of the Twelve (5:1-6:49)
 - Jesus’ Manifestation to the Multitudes (7:1-8:56)
 - Jesus’ Commission of and further Teaching of the Twelve (9:1-50)
 - The Ministry of Jesus on the Way to Jerusalem: The Teaching of Jesus in Response to His Rejection (9:51-19:27) 9:51 is a significant break in Jesus’ life and ministry
 - Jesus’ Teaching concerning the Duties of His Disciples (9:51-13:21)
 - Jesus’ Teaching concerning the People Who are His Disciples (13:22-17:10)
 - Jesus’ Teaching concerning the Future of His Disciples (17:11-19:27)
 - The Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem: Jerusalem’s Rejection of Jesus and Jesus’ Prediction of Jerusalem’s Destruction (19:28-21:38) – Culminating His public ministry

- The Epilogue: The Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus (22:1-24:53)

Selected Interpretive Problems

- Luke and Paul's History/Theology
 - Contradictory
 - Paul, saved by grace and not works
 - Luke doesn't bring out these motifs when writing
 - Complementary
 - Paul was writing to Gentile churches and the historical setting was driving the content of his letters.
 - Luke was writing to Theophilis and was addressing him
- "In the _____ of my Father" (2:49)
 - Family (cf. 8:19-21; 11:27-28)
 - **House** (cf. 6:4; 19:46; 20:1-21:4) [Marshall; Stein; Bock; EBC]
 - Things (cf. Mark 8:33; 1 Tim. 4:15)
- "I was seeing Satan fall from heaven" (10:18)
 - Historic – (referring to when Satan was cast out of heaven)
 - Inceptive – (i.e. begun, but not culminated) [Marshall (?); Stein; Bock]
 - Prophetic – (Anticipating what we see in Revelation chapter 12, where Satan is cast out by Jesus)
- "The Kingdom of God is within you" (17:21; cf. 10:9, 11; 11:20)
 - Inside you [classic reformed view]
 - Within your grasp or power [Bock (?); EBC (?)]
 - **In your midst** [Marshall; Stein; Bock; EBC; BKC]
- Why did John the Baptist send people to ask Jesus if He's the Christ?
 - John's personal crisis (he was in prison) (Jesus said not to doubt 7:23)
 - Misconception view (John was a product of his own time, he did not have special revelation regarding Jesus, but had the wrong idea of Jesus' coming)
 - incomplete revelation view (John knew there was a necessary time for Christ to suffer and be rejected, but he didn't know the rejection and exaltation of Christ were separated by 2000 years)
 - Discipleship view (John is trying to engender faith in his disciples)
- Luke 6:20-23 & Matt. 5:3-12
 - Are these two sections of Scripture the same Sermon on the Mount?
 - Luke records what he heard there or from another source?
 - Did Matthew record a more robust understanding because he was actually there?
 - Do the two stories, in their full record, line up?
 - Geography, people, etc.
 - Did Jesus teach this sermon on more than one occasion?
 - He traveled this area quite extensively and surely would have said the same sermon on more than one occasion.

The Book of Acts

The book of Acts is unique to the New Testament as it serves primarily as a historical record for the early church. Though not known for being theologically rich, Acts has an important role in the New Testament as it shows the development of the early church but also how the first Christians put into practice all Jesus had taught.

This book would've been written sometime between 60-62 AD, and all of Paul's writings fit into the timeline Acts represents except 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. You can read about the churches he planted and letters he wrote as you read through the book.

The book actually divides up easily. **Chapters 1-12 are all about Peter** and his exploits to bring the gospel to the world. Then **chapters 13-28 are all about Paul** and his missionary journeys as he spread the gospel to the world. These two men, Peter and Paul, are foundational figures in the early church, and we today stand on what they accomplished. Though these two men were instrumental in the early church, both men were only successful in their efforts b/c of the empowering of the Holy Spirit, **who is the main character of this book**.

The Book of Acts serves as a transition from the Old Covenant of law-keeping to the New Covenant of grace and faith. This transition is seen in the change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, whose primary function in the Old Testament was the external "anointing" of God's people. After the resurrection of Jesus, the Spirit came to live in the very hearts of believers guiding and empowering them from within. The indwelling Spirit is the gift of God to those who come to Him by faith.

- This book is Luke's account of the work after Jesus but through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church. It is there for us today to have a foundation but also for us to continue the work which was started.
- It is important to remember that between Jesus' resurrection and ascension, there were 50 days which took place.
 - There were 40 days before He ascended and then 10 days the disciples were on their own.
 - It was during the 40 days between Jesus death and ascension to heaven that He, through the Holy Spirit, gave commands to the chosen apostles.
 - Jesus appeared to many (over 500 1 Cor. 15:6) and to the disciples.
 - By focusing in on Jesus' commands, Luke is defending all the apostles would do in the name of Jesus.
 - Perhaps most importantly, we read of Jesus restoring Peter in John 21:15-17.
 - This is so important to understand because Peter ran away from Jesus when He was going to be crucified and was actually lying along the way (John 18).
 - Now, as the book of Acts starts out, in 1:12-26, Peter is taking the lead and getting someone to replace Judas.
 - Peter goes from close companion of Christ, denying Christ and then leading Christ's people and establishing Christ's church.

We will look at how this plays out next week as we finish the book of Acts.