

# An Abridged Reading Of The Book of Acts

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[0:00] Here's our elders. And over the last about year, we've walked together through the book of Acts. Last week, we concluded our series in the book of Acts.

! We left Paul in prison in Rome. From there, he wrote his prison epistles, including the book of Philippians.

And I told you that we would begin a series in the book of Philippians this week. That's not what's going to happen today. Based on the excellent suggestion of one of the other elders, we are going to shift gears slightly and begin our series in Philippians next Sunday, Lord willing.

But today, the Lord, through his apostle Paul, the same apostle Paul who we left in prison in Rome last week, instructed Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 4 to devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture.

And we try to do that here at Shoreline. Not just in the reading of the Scriptures, which we proclaim week by week, but also by publicly gathering together and speaking the words of Scripture as we begin our services each week.

[1:22] This morning, we read together from Colossians. And incorporating songs of Scripture, like Psalm 130 in one of our songs today. And today, we will recount what we have covered in this last year with a summary reading of the book of Acts.

There's something very different about hearing large sections of Scripture that all at once, everything is in context. You see the relationship between the many smaller episodes that compose the book.

You don't forget the passages that we read a year ago as we get to the ones at the end. Now, the book of Acts contains roughly 25,000 words, which is about six shoreline-length sermons.

So buckle up. No. So in order to survey the book within the bounds of one worship gathering and get the full scope of the book of Acts, I am going to read an abridgment.

Peter will stand before the Jerusalem Council only once. Paul will accomplish only one missionary journey today. Entire characters have been excised, like Barnabas.

[2:49] If you feel like I have cut something critical, you're right. This was a painful process for me. But if you are longing to hear more of your favorite episodes from the book of Acts, that is your cue, then, to go back and contemplate it again.

As we said, the book of Acts concludes with Paul in Rome, writing to, among others, the Philippians, and we are going to be directing our attention in the coming weeks to that letter to the Philippians.

And so today, I want you to pay attention, be on the lookout for Paul's ministry in Philippi to reestablish our remembrance of his ministry and his relationship with that church.

And finally, because the cuts that I'm about to make to this, some of them are larger than one or even two chapters at a time, I do not recommend that you try following along in your Bible.

It will likely frustrate you. Instead, experience this as the people of God have mostly engaged with Scripture throughout the years, throughout the centuries, as something that is heard.

[4:10] So, Shoreline, hear now an abridged reading of the acts of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus by his Spirit and through his church.

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying with them, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

So when they had come together, he said to them, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven, as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, and men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?

[5:47] This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

And suddenly, there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

And at this sound, the multitude came together and they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians.

[6:58] We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, What does this mean?

Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them. Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst.

As you yourselves know, this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

This Jesus, God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit.

He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

[8:22] And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

So those who received his word were baptized. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

And awe came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God.

and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Now, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer.

[9:39] And a man, lame from birth, was being carried. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him and said, I have no silver and gold, but what I do have, I give to you.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up. And immediately, his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming, in Jesus, the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and put them in custody. But many of those who had heard the word believed. And the number of the men came to be about 5,000.

[10:44] On the next day, there were rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem. And when they had set them in their midst, they inquired, By what power or by what name do you do this?

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him, this man is standing before you well.

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But they conferred with one another, saying, What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed to them is evident to all, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.

[12:21] So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in Jesus' name. But Peter and John answered them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than God, you must judge.

for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles.

Saul was ravaging the church and entering house after house. He dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Now, those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. On the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip. And they heard him and saw the signs that he did.

For unclean spirits crying out with a loud voice came out of many who had them and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

[13:36] But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus so that if he found any belonging to the way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Now, as he went on his way, he approached Damascus and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him and falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

And he said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city and you will be told what you are to do.

Saul rose from the ground and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus and for three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, Rise and look for a man of Tarsus named Saul for behold, he is praying and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias.

[14:51] Come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight. Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel for I will show him how

much he must suffer for the sake of my name.

So Ananias departed and entered the house and laying his hands on him he said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus and immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues saying, He is the Son of God.

And all who heard him were amazed and said, Is this not the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose to bring them bound before the chief priests?

But Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was built up.

[16:20] And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it multiplied. At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius a centurion a devout man who feared God with all his household gave alms generously to the people and prayed continually to God.

He saw in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him Cornelius your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

Now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. When the angel who spoke to him had departed he called two of his servants and a devout soldier and having related everything to them he sent them to Joppa.

The next day as they were on their journey and approaching the city Peter went up on the housetop at about the sixth hour to pray. He fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened.

And something like a great sheet descending being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air and there came a voice to him rise Peter kill and eat.

[17:35] But Peter said by no means Lord for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice came to him a second time what God has made clean do not call common.

this happened three times and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision might mean behold the men who were sent by Cornelius stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called to Peter was lodging there.

The next day he rose and went away with them and on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and he called together his relatives and close friends.

So Peter opened his mouth and said truly I understand that God shows no partiality but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

As for the word that he sent to Israel preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ and we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem they put him to death by hanging him on a tree but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear and he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

[19:02] To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. While Peter was still saying these things the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word and the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles for they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.

Then Peter declared can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses you cannot be saved. After Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.

The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter and after there had been much debate Peter stood up and said to them brothers you know that in the early days God made a choice among you that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe 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. Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear but we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus just as they will.

[20:54] And all the assembly fell silent and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles after they finished speaking James replied brothers listen to me Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for his name therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God and so after some days Paul and Barnabas Paul said to Barnabas let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaim the word of the Lord and see how they are as they went on their way through the cities they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem so the churches were strengthened in the faith and they increased in numbers daily and a vision appeared to Paul in the night a man of Macedonia was standing there urging him saying come over to Macedonia to help us so setting sail from Troas we made a voyage to Philippi which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony and on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside where we supposed there was a place of prayer and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together and one who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira a seller of purple goods and who was a worshiper of God the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul and after she was baptized and her household as well she urged us saying if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord come to my house and stay and she prevailed upon us as we were going to the place of prayer we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune telling she followed Paul and us crying out these men are servants of the most high God who proclaim to you the way of salvation and she kept doing this for many days

Paul having become greatly annoyed turned and said to the spirit I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her and it came out at that very hour now while Paul was at Athens his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols so he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there and they brought him to the Areopagus saying may we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting so Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus said men of Athens I perceive that in every way you are very religious for as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship I found an altar with this inscription to the unknown God what therefore you worship as unknown this I proclaim to you the God who made the world and everything in it being Lord of heaven and earth does not live in temples made by man nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone an image formed by the art and imagination of man the times of ignorance

God overlooked but now he commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead now when they had heard of the resurrection of the dead some mocked but others said we will hear you again about this so Paul went out from their midst but some men joined him and believed now after these events Paul resolved in the spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem saying after I have been there I must also see Rome when he had come to Jerusalem the brothers received us

gladly then Paul purified himself and went into the temple Jews from Asia seeing him in the temple stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him crying out men of Israel help this is the man who was teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place then all the city was stirred up and the people ran together they seized

Paul and dragged him out of the temple and at once the gates were shut and as they were seeking to kill him word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion he at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them and when they saw the tribune and the soldiers they stopped beating Paul then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains he inquired who he was and what he had done and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar he ordered him to be brought into the barracks as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks he said to the tribune I beg you permit me to speak to the people and when he had given him permission Paul standing on the steps motioned with his hands to the people when there was a great hush he addressed them in the Hebrew language saying brothers and fathers hear the defense that I now make before you I am a Jew born in Tarsus but brought up in this city educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers being zealous for God as all of you are this day

I persecuted this way to the death binding and delivering to prison both men and women as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness from them I received letters to the brothers and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished as I was on my way and drew near to Damascus a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me and I answered who are you Lord and he said to me I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting and I said what shall I do Lord and the Lord said to me rise and go into Damascus and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do and one Ananias a devout man came to me and standing by me said to me brother Saul receive your sight and at that very hour

[28:14] I received my sight and saw him and he said the God of our fathers appointed you to know his will to see the righteous one and to hear a voice from his mouth for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard and now why do you wait rise and be baptized and wash away your sins calling on his name when I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me go for I will send you to the Gentiles when it was day the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush so he went and entered the barracks and the tribune took him by the hand and going aside asked him privately what is it that you have to tell me and he said the Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him but do not be persuaded by them for more than 40 of their men are lying in ambush for him who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they have killed him and now they are ready waiting for your consent then he called two of the centurions and said get ready to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night and bring him safely to Felix the governor so the soldiers according to their instructions took Paul to Caesarea and presented Paul before him and desiring to do the Jews a favor

Felix left Paul in prison when two years had elapsed Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus when he had arrived Paul argued in his defense neither against the law of the Jews nor against the temple nor against Caesar have I committed any offense but Festus wishing to do the Jews a favor said to Paul do you wish to go up to Jerusalem maybe tried on the charges before me there but Paul said I am standing before Caesar's tribunal where I ought to be tried to the Jews I have done no wrong as you yourself very well know if there is nothing to their charges against me no one can give me up to them I appeal to Caesar and Festus answered to Caesar you have appealed to Caesar you shall go and when it was decided that we should sail for Italy they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete close to the shore but soon a tempestuous wind called the nor'easter struck

down from the land when the ship was caught and could not face the wind we gave way to it and were driven along since we were violently storm-tossed they began the next day to jettison the cargo on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands when either sun nor stars appeared for many days and no small tempest lay upon us all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned but Paul stood up among them and said men

I urge you to take heart for there will be no loss of life among you but only of the ship for this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship and he said do not be afraid Paul you must stand before Caesar and behold God has granted you all those who sail with you so take heart men for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told but we must run aground on some island and when it was day they noticed a bay with a beach on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore so they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach the centurion ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship and so it was that we were all brought safely to land after three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island and so we came to Rome and the brothers there when they heard about us came as far as the forum of Appius and the three taverns to meet us on seeing them

Paul thanked God and took courage and when we came into Rome Paul was allowed to stay by himself with the soldier who guarded him he lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance so ends the reading God's holy inerrant and inspired word for his people Amen God's holy will never be as far as as as as as as!

Thank you.