

Concluding the Book of Acts – Acts 28

Elder Lee Ang Seng

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Introduction

- Acts 28 : the final chapter of Acts
- Book of Acts ended rather abruptly with Paul being put in prison.
- No records of the outcome of Paul's appeal to Caesar or Paul's death.
- Likely that Luke, the author of the book of Acts completed the book of Acts before all these subsequent events happened.



Introduction


– I will structure my message in 3 key areas:

A) Key Summary of the Book of Acts

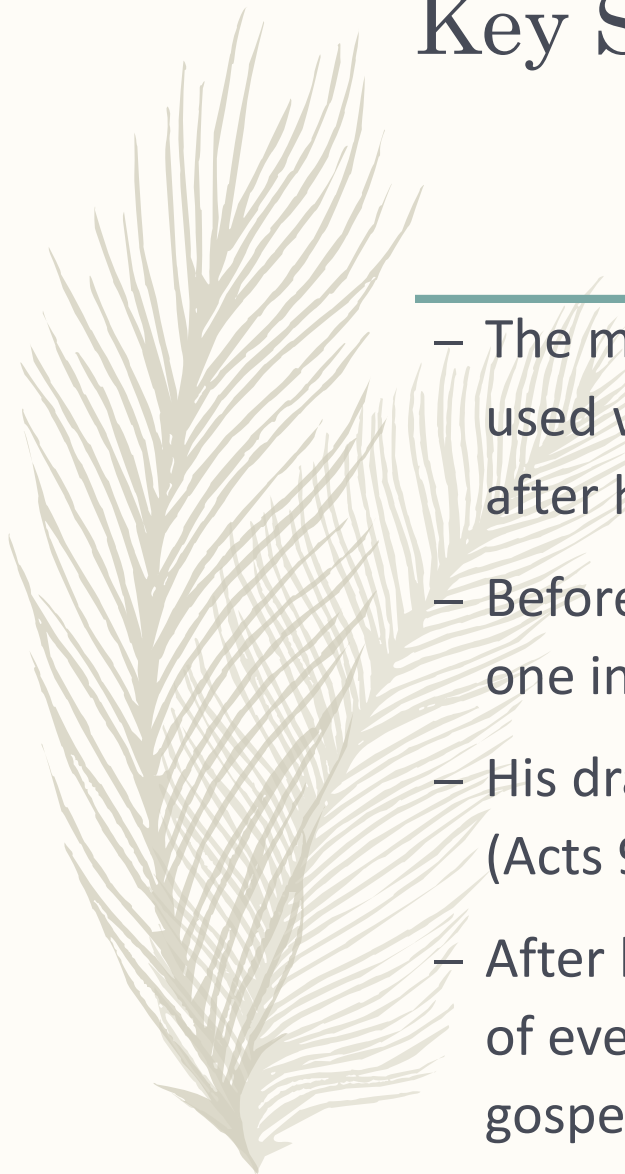
B) Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

C) How can I Apply What I have learnt.

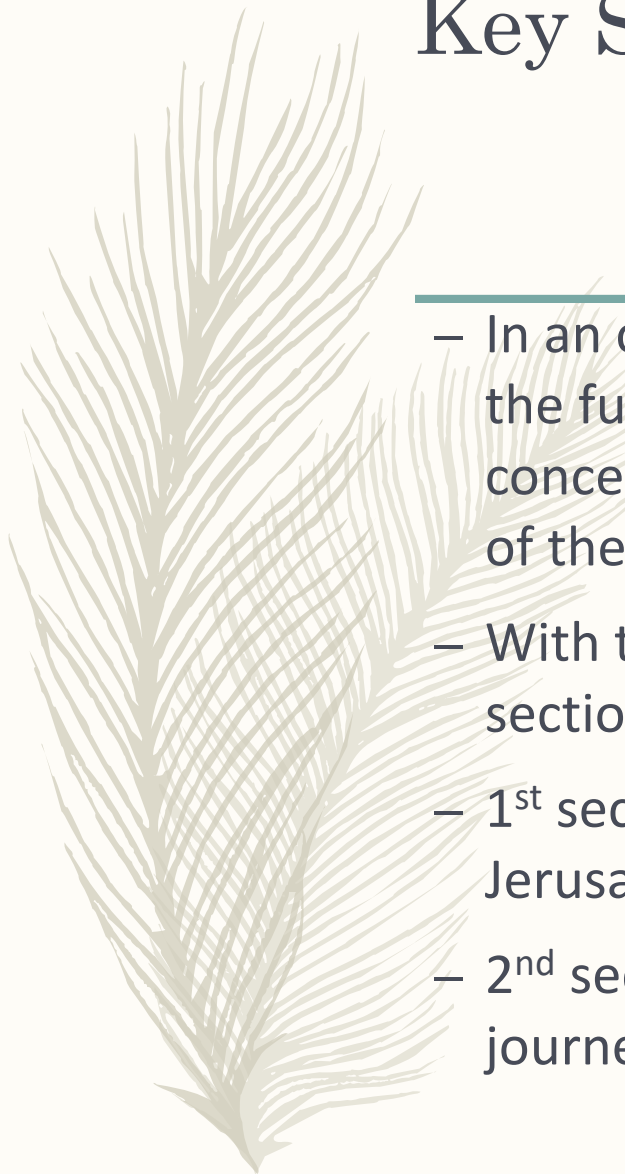
Key Summary of Acts

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- Author of Acts – Luke (Acts 1:1-3)
 - This book gives us a historical record of the early church, how after the day of Pentecost, the disciples and believers were empowered to become effective witnesses for Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the rest of the surrounding world.
 - Key descriptions on the spreading of gospel to the Jews and Gentiles.
 - The power of the Holy Spirit working in the believers' lives was phenomenal despite mounting oppositions and persecutions by those opposed to Jesus Christ as Messiah.

Key Summary of Acts

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- The most influential preacher that God the Holy Spirit used was Paul, whose name was changed from Saul after his conversion.
 - Before his conversion, Paul was the most notorious one in persecuting and killing Christians.
 - His dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9 : 1-31) is a special highlight in the Book of Acts.
 - After his conversion, he went to the extreme opposite of even prepared to give his life in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ with such fervency and zeal.

Key Summary of Acts

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- In an overview, the Book of Acts is about proclaiming the fulfilment of the prophecies in the Old Testaments concerning Jesus Christ the Messiah and the ministry of the gospel of salvation to all who believe.
 - With this in mind, we can be divided this book into 2 sections;
 - 1st section : covers the ministry of the apostle Peter in Jerusalem and Samaria (Acts 1-12)
 - 2nd section : covers the apostle Paul in his missionary journeys throughout the Roman Empire (Acts 13-28).

Key Summary of Acts



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- The book of Acts also emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's Word. There are also references about those that rejected the truth that the disciples preached about the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - The whole Book of Acts ends with apostle Paul imprisoned in Rome for sharing the gospel.



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

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- Firstly, this is the only book that biblically records for us the history and the powerful deeds of the Holy Spirit working through the early church performing miracles, signs and wonders immediately after Jesus' ascension.
 - Secondly, it provides a detailed account of how the early church could grow and expand God's Kingdom, turning Jerusalem and the rest of the world upside down with a movement that transformed people whom had committed their lives to Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus' promise in Acts 1 : 8 came true in the lives of the believers **“⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important


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- Thirdly, this book shows that the gospel is spread not just geographically but culturally as well.
 - Peter's vision in Acts 10 relates to this when the Lord spoke to him in verse 15 **"¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'**"
 - This had led him to share the gospel not just to the Jews alone but to the Gentiles. (this ministry to the Gentiles was primarily Pauls' call by God to him as well).
 - This is a clear demonstration that God wants His message of hope and salvation to reach all people in this world.



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

- Another observation I could make is this – This book serves as a transition from the Old Covenant of law-keeping to the New Covenant of grace and faith in Christ Jesus.
- This transition of Old to New Covenant can be seen in several key instances in the book of Acts.
- I can give you 2 examples regarding this transition.
- 1st example : the account of Peter's vision in Acts 10

Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important



– “¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” ¹⁴ “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” ¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.” –
(Acts 10 : 11 – 16)



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

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- Why did the Lord told Peter not to call anything impure that God had made clean?
 - The “clean” animals symbolized the Jews and the “unclean” symbolized the Gentiles.
 - In the New Covenant, both the Jews and Gentiles were declared “cleansed” by God through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the Cross.
 - This vision is also a sign of transition from the Old Covenant of dietary laws applicable to the Jews, to the New Covenant of unity of Jew and Gentiles under one new man in one universal church of Jesus Christ.



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

- Jews and Gentiles are now united under the New Covenant of grace through faith in the Jesus Christ through the shedding of His blood on the Cross.
- Let's take another example of this transition of Old to New Covenant : the life conversion story of Paul.
- Before his conversion, he declared he was the Hebrew of the Hebrews, the most knowledgeable and blameless concerning the law of God, and the most zealous for God persecuting and killing Christians who taught salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- But after his conversion, he realized all his legalistic efforts were worthless and garbage.



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

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- **“⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in^[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”. (Phil 3: 7-9)**



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

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- Like Peter and Paul, we similarly are saved by grace through faith in Jesus (Eph 2 : 8-9), not by the works of the law so that there is no boasting.
 - What is also most remarkable about the work of God in the Book of Acts is the change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 - In the OT times, the Holy Spirit primary function was the external anointing of God's people, among them Moses, Gideon, David, and Saul, etc



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

- God speaking to Moses – **“¹⁷ I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.”** (Num 11:17)
- It is quite common to read in the OT that God’s Spirit came upon His people, for example Judges 6:34 – **“³⁴ Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon,...”**
- But there is a change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the NT, which instead of coming on His people, the Holy Spirit came to live in the very hearts of born-again believers, guiding and empowering them from within.



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

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- The indwelling Spirit is the gift of God given to those who come to Christ Jesus in faith.
 - **Romans 8 : 9-11** – “⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life^[d] because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[e] his Spirit who lives in you.”



Why Studying the Book of Acts is Important

- When you believed and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit lives in you and will never be taken away from you.
- The moving, leading and working of the Holy Spirit was so powerful in the days of Acts in the lives of the early church that affirmed what Paul is teaching in all his epistles concerning the Holy Spirit.
- That is why it is important to study the book of Acts so that you and I can similarly depend on the leading and moving of the Holy Spirit in our lives to live a victorious lives in this world full of challenges.



How can I Apply What I have learnt

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- Question - how can we apply what we have learnt in our lives?
 - The Book of Acts is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit working through the believers to do evangelism and mission.
 - Peter and Paul powerfully presented the gospel to individuals and groups that we see God's Kingdom expanded significantly. What we can apply is similarly allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us as we bring the gospel to the pre-saved.
 - Too often, just by preaching the gospel may not bring about conviction.



How can I Apply What I have learnt

- But if we live such pure and victorious lives overcoming every struggles and adversities through the power of the Holy Spirit, this will attract pre-believers to Jesus.
- We are the light that shines for Jesus.
- God can do amazing things through ordinary people like you and I when He empowers us through His Holy Spirit giving us a passion to spread the good news of salvation to lost souls.



How can I Apply What I have learnt

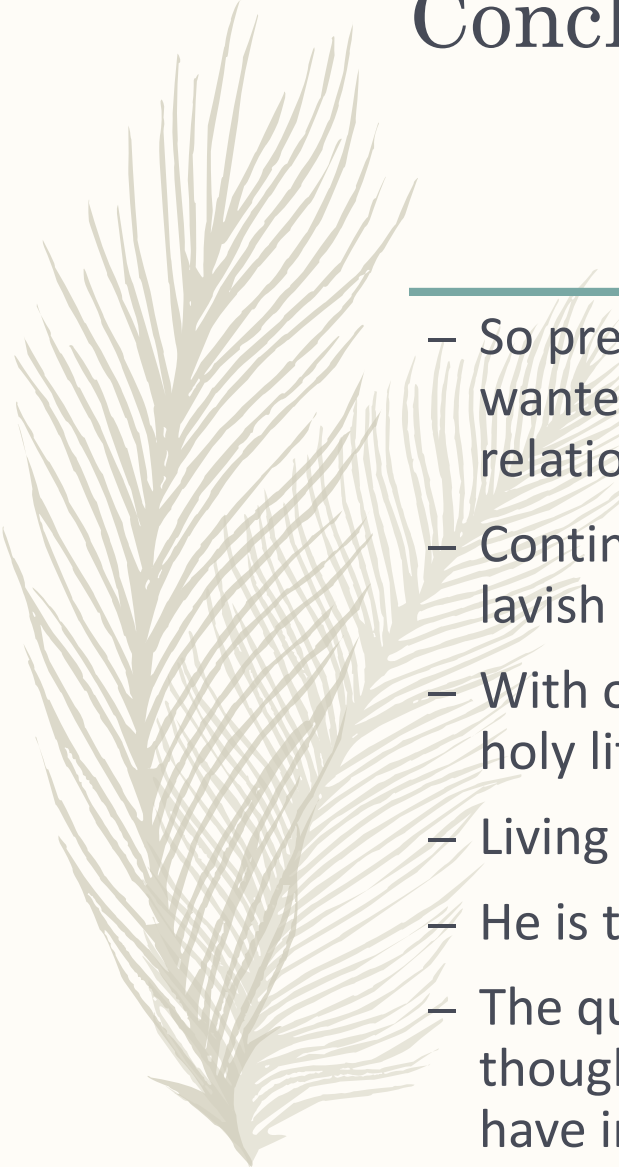
- If we try to accomplish these things in our own power, we will fail. Like the disciples in Acts chapter 1, we must wait for the empowering of the Spirit as we live out the risen Christ in our lives.
- Allow what we studied and learnt in the Book of Acts to encourage you to walk more closely with God so that you might make Christ's name known.

Conclusion



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- **1 Peter 1:13-16 (NIV) ¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."**
 - Because Jesus had suffered and died for us and is now risen, let us prepare our minds for action.
 - If He had gone to such great effort and sacrifices to save us, He must have something for us to do.

Conclusion

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- So prepare our mind for action for the work that He wanted us to do while maintaining a close and intimate relationship with him.
 - Continue to keep our hope on the grace that He will lavish on us when Jesus appears in glory.
 - With our eyes fixed on that day to come, let us live a holy life.
 - Living a holy life means a life set apart for His purposes.
 - He is the standard and the reason why we live and serve.
 - The question I would leave with you is this – is my thought life and self-discipline reflecting the calling I have in Christ?