

Acts: More Resources

The following resources are from *The Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John and Acts* and the *Life Application Bible Commentary: Acts*.

Foundational Elements of Early Christian Life

Luke lists four features that characterized the lives of the first Christians. They devoted themselves to:

1. Instruction: The Apostles' Teaching: The 12 apostles had a significant role in the beginnings of the church. They taught these new Jewish believers all about Jesus' life and teaching, including much of what came to be included in the four Gospels.

2. Fellowship: It was important to these early believers to spend a lot of time together. They would have discussed the apostles' teaching, encouraged each other, and challenged one another to do those things that please God. They also cared for the needs of those poorer members of their new community.

3. Worship: The Breaking of Bread: This expression refers both to sharing ordinary meals together and to remember the significance of the death of Jesus by celebrating "the Lord's Supper." In the early church, the Lord's Supper was held in conjunction with a common meal in homes throughout the city.

4. Prayer: The first Christians spent a lot of time praying. They prayed privately and they prayed together as a group. Some Christians even maintained the Jewish pattern of setting aside three times a day to pray.

Missionaries of Acts and Their Journeys

Name	Purpose of Journey	Scripture in Acts
Philip	One of the first to preach the gospel outside Jerusalem	8:4-40
Peter and John	Visited new Samaritan believers to encourage them	8:14-25
Paul (Saul)	Set out to capture Christians but was captured by Christ	9:1-25
Peter	Led by God to one of the first Gentile families to become Christians—Cornelius' Family	9:1-25
Barnabas	Went to Antioch as an encourager, then traveled on to Troas to bring Paul back to Jerusalem from Antioch	11:25-30
Barnabas, John Mark,	Left Antioch for Cyprus, Pamphylia, and Galatia on	13:1-14:28

Paul	the first missionary journey	
Barnabas, John Mark	After a break with Paul, they left Antioch for Cyprus	15:36-41
Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke	Left Antioch to revisit churches in Galatia, then traveled on to Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia on a second missionary journey	15:36-18:22
Appollos	Left Alexandria for Ephesus; learned the complete gospel Story from Priscilla and Aquilla; preached in Athens and Corinth	18:24-28
Paul, Timothy	Third missionary journey, revisiting churches in Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia journey	18:23; 19:12-21:14

The Missionary Travels of Peter

Paul wasn't the only missionary in Acts who had a productive missionary career. Peter had a widespread ministry as well. His travels aren't as well documented as Paul's, but the New Testament letters give us clues.

We know that Peter was in Jerusalem for a brief period in A.D. 46, where he met with Saul (Gal. 2:9). Shortly after he was in Antioch of Syria, where he and Paul had a disagreement (Gal. 2:11-15). He then returned to Jerusalem in 49 for the Jerusalem Council.

It's possible that Peter visited Corinth sometime between 52 and 55, based on a group in Corinth that claimed they were "of Cephas" (1 Cor. 1:12).

Did you know Peter had a wife? According to 1 Corinthians 9:5 (written around 54 or 55), Peter had a wife who accompanied him on his missionary travels.

Peter must have spent considerable time in northern and central Asia Minor, since he addressed his two letters to believers in those regions.

It is unlikely that Peter ministered in Rome for any length of time in the 40s and 50s, because Paul never mentions him. However, at some point, probably in the early 60s, Peter did journey to Rome, and it was from there that he wrote his two letters. He refers to Rome in his first letter as "Babylon" (1 Peter 5:13).

Peter was martyred in Rome under the persecution of Nero around the same time Paul was put to death.

Four "James" in the Early Church

James, the father of Judas	His son, Judas, was one of the 12 apostles (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13)
James, the son of Alphaeus	One of the 12 apostles (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13)
James, the brother of John	The son of Zebedee (Luke 5:10; 9:28,54) One of the 12 apostles (Acts 1:13) Killed by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2)
James, the brother of Jesus	Half-brother of the Lord Jesus; son of Mary and Joseph (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19; 2:9; 12) The author of the book of James (James 1:1)

Paul's Use of the Old Testament

In Paul's address to the philosophers in Acts 17:16-34, he makes many references to the Old Testament:

Paul's Statement	Old Testament Reference
God made the world and everything in it (v. 24)	Gen 1-2; Isa. 42:5; Jer. 10:12
Lord of heaven and earth (v. 24)	Ex. 20:11; Isa. 42:5
God does not live in temples built by hands (v. 24)	1 Kings 8:27

God does not
need anything
from the people he has created
1 Chron. 29:14; Ps. 50:7-15
(v. 25)

God as the
source of “breath”
Gen 2:7; Isa. 42:5
(v. 25)

God appointed
the eras for the
successive
nations
Deut. 32:8; Dan. 2:36-45
(v. 26)

God established
national
boundaries
Duet. 32:8; Ps. 74:17
(v. 26)

Names and Titles for Jesus in Acts

Reference	Name/Title
1:6	Lord
1:21	Lord Jesus
2:22	Jesus of Nazareth
2:27	Holy One
2:30-31, 36	Messiah
2:38	Jesus Christ
3:13	[God's] servant Jesus
3:15	the author of life
3:20	Jesus your Messiah

5:31	Prince and Savior
7:52	the Righteous One
7:56	the Son of Man
9:20	the Son of God
10:36	Lord of all
10:42	the judge of all—the living and the dead
10:43	the one all the prophets testified about
13:23	God's promised Savior of Israel
16:7	the Spirit of Jesus
17:7	king
24:24	Christ Jesus
28:20	the hope of Israel