

Quest Confirmation Class

Week 9

Acts & the Apostles Creed & The Holy Spirit

AUTHOR OF ACTS

- 😊 A sequel to Luke's Gospel, written to Theophilus, an educated Roman who knows something about Christianity
- 😊 Luke was a friend of Paul and traveled with Paul during some of his missionary journeys.

WHAT IS ACTS ABOUT?

- 😊 The New Testament can be divided in two sections: The Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and the letters written to the churches. Acts gives a transition from the life of Christ to the new church.
- 😊 Acts tells of the gospel ("Good News" of Jesus' life, death and resurrection) spreading to the known world through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 😊 We read of the opposition to this new church ("The Way" or Christianity)
- 😊 As the Apostles go out into the world with energy to share the gospel, there are healings and signs from God.
- 😊 We see a picture of what the church should look like (Acts 4:32-37)
- 😊 There are 18 different speeches by Paul, Peter and others. The apostles explained the spiritual significance of Jesus' life and shared depending on the audience they were speaking to

KEY EVENTS

- 😊 The Ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:6-11)
- 😊 The coming of the Holy Spirit and birth of the new church (Acts 2)
- 😊 Arrest and stoning of Stephen (Acts 6:8-8:1)
- 😊 Severe persecution of the church (Acts 8:2-3)
- 😊 Saul's conversion (Acts 9:1-18)
- 😊 Gentiles hear the "Good News" (Acts 10:34-48)
- 😊 James killed, Peter Imprisoned and Peter's escape (Acts 12)
- 😊 Paul's missionary journeys: First (Acts 13-14), Second (Acts 15:36-18:28), Third (Acts 19-21:6)
- 😊 Paul goes to Jerusalem (Acts 20:1-16) and is arrested (Acts 21:15-22:29)
- 😊 Paul, a prisoner, sent to Rome (Acts 27-28)

PROOF FOR JESUS' RESURRECTION?

- 😊 These ordinary men were willing to change their lives, face persecution and death in order to spread the story of Jesus!

THE APOSTLES CREED

- 😊 The basic creed of Reformed churches, as most familiarly known, is called the Apostles' Creed. It has received this title because of its great antiquity; it dates from very early times in the Church, a half century or so from the last writings of the New Testament (c. 180 A.D.).

As the Christian church spread throughout the Roman world in the first century, and as the first leaders died out, there was a practical need for local churches to have a basic statement of beliefs. As false teachers began to bring in strange ideas, Christians needed to know "Just what is it that we believe?"

Some of these churches had a few books of the New Testament, perhaps some of Paul's letters or one of the Gospels. But none of the churches had all the New Testament. They needed a standard to judge whether a teaching was truth, or heresy.

The early Christians also realized that new people didn't have to know everything before they could be baptized and accepted as believers. How much should they know and accept before being admitted into the church? This was another reason that early churches wanted a brief statement of what they believed to be most essential.

Churches in different cities and regions made their own lists, which had many points in common, since all the churches had traditions tracing back to the apostles in one way or another. The small differences were eventually eliminated as church leaders discussed these things with one another. They shared not only the scriptures they had, but also their statements of faith.

One of the doctrinal lists commonly used in the Western empire was called the Apostles' Creed. The word creed comes from the Latin word *credo*, meaning "I believe." It was called "Apostles" not because the apostles themselves wrote it (although some people may have thought this), but because the Creed was believed to be an accurate summary of what the apostles taught.

The Creed was useful in several ways:

- The Creed was a public statement of faith, a standardized way in which new people could confess their faith in Jesus Christ.
- The Creed anchored Christian faith to a tradition, to make it difficult for people or churches to be led astray by strange doctrines.
- The Creed was a preaching and teaching tool, giving an outline for further discipleship.
- The Creed was memorized through frequent repetition, which helped the many believers who could not read.
- The Creed provided a doctrinal basis for different churches to accept one another, and to reject those who did not accept the basic truths.

ACTS & THE APOSTLES CREED: REFLECTION

Name: _____

Class Summary:

With the coming of the promised Holy Spirit (God's Spirit always present with us), the Christian church began. Its preachers had a message so exciting and urgent that they took every opportunity to pass it on, whatever the cost to themselves in hardship and suffering. The message they preached was that Christianity is not a religion, it isn't morality (a list of ways to "Be good"), but it is ultimately about a close, personal relationship with Jesus, God come to earth to show us his great love and forgiveness. The Apostles' Creed was written by early churches to summarize and unify church foundational beliefs.

Scripture Memory Work:

Old Testament Books of the Bible

Also, CONTINUE memorizing the books of the Bible. You will be quizzed on this (Old Testament AND New Testament). But it's a lot! Start now!

Family Time Questions *Youth and parents please talk about and answer together*

- Youth and Parents, how has the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection changed your life?
- Youth and Parents, how do you share your faith boldly like the apostles did?
- Youth and Parents, how do you see the Holy Spirit active in your life (for example: teaching, encouraging, convicting of sin, etc)? Share an example.
- Youth and Parents, what are your spiritual gifts given to you by the Holy Spirit?
- Youth and Parents, who is someone you can share the Gospel with this week? How will you share? Pray for each other, sharing prayer requests and asking God to help.

For next week: Every day we eat so that we can keep our bodies healthy. What are ways that you keep your spiritual-self healthy? Are you "feeding" yourself spiritually enough right now?

If you have any questions about this lesson, please contact Jim and I will try to answer your questions (234-8673, jpope@fpcf.org)