

Hello. /We will begin the 9th lecture on “An Introduction to the New Testament.” /The book of Acts is the primary source of our knowledge of the early church. /We will study the book of Acts at this time.

/The location of Acts in the New Testament shows us that it functions as an excellent bridge connecting the Gospels and the other epistles.

/In the book of Acts, we are able to see how the gospel of Christ was proclaimed in the apostles’ ministry. It also helps us understand the birth of the churches that are found in the epistles, the strife in these churches, and the political and economic environment of these churches.

/The book of Acts, the only book of the New Testament that is categorized as a historical book, gives us an incredibly well-organized record of the events, figures, and regions of the early church.

/1. The author of Acts. /The Bible doesn’t clearly tell us who the author of Acts is, but we believe Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke, wrote the book of Acts. /The reason is Acts, like Luke, is dedicated to Theophilus.

/Furthermore, Luke and Acts share many similarities in their style of writing. /Acts, like Luke, is written in a beautiful Greek style of writing.

/Dr. J. Gresham Machen said that Acts is written in an outstanding style of writing, as if it received rhetorical criticism. /We have other evidence showing us that Luke is the author of Acts. They are the verses called the “we-section.”

/In Acts, the author includes himself as he uses the word “we.” “We” appears in four main paragraphs. /Through chapters 16, 20, 21, and 27-28, through these four paragraphs, we can know who accompanied Paul in his missionary journey. These verses all mention “Luke.”

/Because we already learned about Luke in the Gospel of Luke, I will not say more about who he is. /Regarding the date of when Acts was written, J. Gresham Machen claims that Acts was written at around 63 AD, for the book abruptly ends around this date.

/If Acts was written after Paul’s trial, then it would be unnatural to leave out even one line of the results of the trial. /Luke recorded the Gospel of Luke, and because he wrote about Jesus’ life and ministry, his writing covered a period of 33 years.

/Also, if we view Jesus’ ascension as taking place at 30 AD and the Apostle Paul’s release from prison happening at the year 63, then this too is a record of 33 years. /Therefore, Luke records the first 66 years of the Christian church’s history.

/2. The structure of Acts. /The basic structure of Acts shows us how the gospel is spread in Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria, and to the Gentiles to the end of the earth, and it shows us how God's kingdom expands.

/The structure of Acts is different from Luke in that it goes in a reverse order. /Luke follows the structure of showing Christ who came as Savior of all people heading to Jerusalem and carrying the cross and dying. However, Acts is structured in a way that shows us Christ who died, resurrected, and ascended to heaven, and from there his Holy Spirit and his word spread the gospel in Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

/For this reason, the preface of Acts connects the Gospel of Luke and Acts. This is 1:1-5. /Next, 1:6 to 6:7 is about the birth of the Jerusalem church and the church's growth amidst persecution, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Jerusalem, and other church incidents.

/Thus, the first part is centered on Jerusalem. /The end of this paragraph summarizes the ministry that took place in Jerusalem. It is summarized in 6:7.

/From there to 9:31, we learn about the gospel being spread in all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. 9:31 summarizes this for us.

/From there to chapter 12, we learn about Cornelius' conversion through Peter, revival in the Antioch church, which served as a base for foreign missions, and persecution by Herod Agrippa. 12:24-25 summarizes this.

/The gospel began to flourish in Jerusalem, and the churches in all of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria stood firmly on the gospel, and furthermore, God's word reached the church of Antioch. In this way, the gospel steadily expanded its boundaries.

/As we have just studied, Acts chapters 1 to 12, centered on Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the Antioch church, are about the early church's mission work carried out by the apostles.

/From the second half of Acts, from chapter 13, Luke records Paul's mission work. /He shows us the expansion of gospel missions.

/From chapter 13, we see a record of the gospel being preached to the Gentiles of Asia Minor and Europe. /Here, we also find Paul's first missionary journey. Chapter 15 talks about the Jerusalem Council and its decision on how to preach the gospel to Gentiles.

/From there to chapter 18 is a record of Paul's second missionary journey. Up to 21:17 is the third missionary journey. /Next, from there to chapter 26, we learn about Paul's arrest in Jerusalem and his defense in Caesarea.

/From there to chapter 28 is a record of Paul's journey to Rome, a place where he wanted to go, and the gospel being preached in Rome. /It would be helpful for me to explain the simple structure of the book, as is written in the syllabus, to help you remember the structure of Acts.

/3. The content and characteristics of Acts. /We can look at the New Testament as being divided into four parts. /The first part is the Gospels, the second part is the Historical Book, which is Acts, the third part is the Epistles, and the last part is Revelation.

/The Old Testament is also divided into four parts. The Pentateuch, or the Law, makes up the first part. Next, we have the Historical Books, the Poetic Books, and the Prophetic Books.

/The word "Acts" in its original meaning refers to "actions." /We call this Acts. /Therefore, "Acts" is a written record of words, actions, and achievements. /Then whose actions and achievements are they?

/(1) The book of Acts is a record of the acts, the history, of the risen Jesus Christ. /The book of Acts isn't simply a book of the acts of the apostles, but it is the acts of Jesus Christ done through his Holy Spirit.

/The risen Christ is still working and teaching. /In the early church, the risen Jesus, through the apostles and with his Holy Spirit, raised up churches and spread the gospel in the world. Acts is a record of this history.

/In the book of Acts are the acts and work of God the Father. /It is a record of how God the Father fulfills the promises he made in the Old Testament.

/It is a testimony of how God with his Holy Spirit rules over everything in his sovereignty and how he reigns over the church and protects his people. /In this aspect, the book of Acts is the acts, the history, of the Holy Spirit.

/The Gospel of Luke shows us the history of the Holy Spirit in the birth and growth of the church. /All the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit, to preach the gospel.

/That is why the book of Acts is also called the "Acts of the Holy Spirit." /When the Holy Spirit comes, people change and receive power. / "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." /Zechariah 4:6.

/All people are insignificant. /To do the work of the kingdom of God, we must rely on the Holy Spirit alone. /That is why the apostles waited for the Holy Spirit. /They waited to be filled with the Holy Spirit. /They prayed hard for this.

/When they were held by the Holy Spirit, something incredible happened. /This guidance of the Holy Spirit did not happen on its own. /They had to pray.

/Story has it that the Apostle James' knees were hard as a camel's. /Our knees are smooth, unlike those of a camel's.

/If we want to receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit, then we must pray. /Whoever follows the Father's promise and prays earnestly can receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit. /Whoever is deeply captivated by the word can receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

/Then whose acts are written in the book of Acts? /They are the acts of the risen Jesus Christ, /the acts of God the Father, /and the acts of the Holy Spirit.

/(2) The book of Acts is about the acts, the history, of the apostles' preaching of the gospel. /Acts is a record of Peter, John and James, Paul and Barnabas, Stephen and Silas and Timothy proclaiming Christ and preaching the gospel.

/The book of Acts tells of the workers of the gospel going around bearing witness about Christ and the gospel of his cross. Their sermons, words of admonishment, and the suffering and death they endured for this cause are also written in the book.

/Acts is a history of gospel missions. /It is a history of the expansion of the kingdom of God. /It is a history of the changes brought by the gospel that was spread across the world. /It is a history of the church that tells us about the persecution that was present when the gospel was preached, a history of the spread of the gospel.

/In the middle of all this, Acts noticeably reveals the power of the gospel. /Like a little leaven that leavens the whole lump, a few people carried the gospel and had it spread throughout the entire world. Acts is about the history of this mission.

/Concerning this matter, Acts especially tells us how today's churches should give sermons or preach the gospel. /Acts contains a total of 26 accounts of early gospel evangelists' sermons.

/Peter's sermons, Stephen's sermons, and Paul's sermons are recorded in the book. /About one-fifth of the book of Acts is the early church leaders' sermons and speeches.

/Because this is true, we are able to vividly hear the sermon message of the apostles of the early church. /Through their sermons, today's church and we learn how and what to preach.

/Wherever these people went, they preached Jesus and gave sermons about Jesus' cross. They bore witness about this gospel. /Did the preachers preach about Jesus and his cross because these things were popular at the time? /No.

/Christ and his cross were a stumbling block to the people of the time, and they thought them to be foolishness. /There was fierce rejection and opposition to Christianity at the time.

/1 Corinthians 1:23 says that the word of the cross is a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles. /But the Apostle Paul calls Christ the power of God, the wisdom of God. /The gospel preached by the apostles is the answer.

/The gospel that says that Jesus died, rose again, and ascended is a gospel that must be heard by the people of our time, people who are tormented by political and economic problems.

/The gospel explains how the story of Jesus, the Son of God who was nailed to a cross two thousand years ago in Palestine, can be a gospel to them today.

/Just because they are not interested in something does not mean we should only preach to them the things of the gospel that they want to hear. /Without the word of the cross, it is not the gospel.

/Acts is an amazing book that tells mankind about the gospel, about the power of the gospel. /In this light, Acts can be called “the next book” of the gospels.

/After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, the gospel began to spread more rapidly. /Even today, Christ with his Holy Spirit works through his chosen servants.

/The Lord is working among us right now, and he is building churches. /As we have seen in this lecture, the book of Acts is about the acts and history of the apostles’ preaching of the gospel.

/(3) The book of Acts is about the acts, the history, of the church. /The book of Acts shows us the shape of the early church and answers the question “What is the church?”

/We learn many lessons of ecclesiology through the book of Acts. /Acts shows us the shape of the early church, providing significant testimonies about the wake of the church.

/Also, the history of Christ, who is the head of the church, is the history of the church. It all begins with Christ. /Acts informs us of the suffering the church will face in this world.

/In Acts, the apostles and churches, in order to preach the gospel, face severe persecution and hardship and strong opposition. /Filled with the word, the Holy Spirit, wisdom, faith, and love, they went out into the world to save it. However, they were persecuted and rejected.

/Therefore, the history of the church of Acts is a history of persecution. /This is something churches of today must remember. /But that wasn’t all there was to the church. /The church has always been victorious.

/Acts talks about the beginning of the church and its great vision for the future. /Many churches in this world have suffered through affliction. /However, when the Lord returns, they will taste great victory.

/With the gospel, they conquered Jerusalem. /The word flourished in all of Judea. /The gospel flourished in Galilee and Samaria as well. /More believers were added to the number in Syria and Antioch.

/The number of believers grew in Asia Minor and Rome also. /The book of Acts, in terms of time, looks forward to Christ's return, and in terms of space, it spreads the gospel to the end of the earth, and the church continues to expand.

/In the beginning, the flame of the gospel started with a few people, but it spread to Asia and Rome. /This was the tearing down of the differences of tribes, languages, cultures, and identities.

/It is a display of the ultimate victory that the church will experience in the future. /To add one more thing, the book of Acts is about the history of individuals within the church who are saved and transformed.

/Acts includes stories of numerous individuals. /Of course, there are people who are not named. /However, the names of many are written in the book.

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/We are certain that God today appoints his servants and is building his kingdom of grace through these servants. /God reveals the ministry of proclaiming the gospel to those who have decided to believe.

/God in three Persons is reigning over and preserving the church today. /With the gospel, he changes the individual. /The Lord is building churches in places that do not have churches. /God is lifting the workers of the gospel back to their feet so that they are able to manage the work they are doing wherever they may be.

/We must give thanks and praise to this God. /Like the disciples did, we too must pray earnestly. /Let us channel everything we have into preaching the gospel. /And let us give all glory to God.

/This concludes the 9th lecture on "An Introduction to the New Testament." /Thank you.