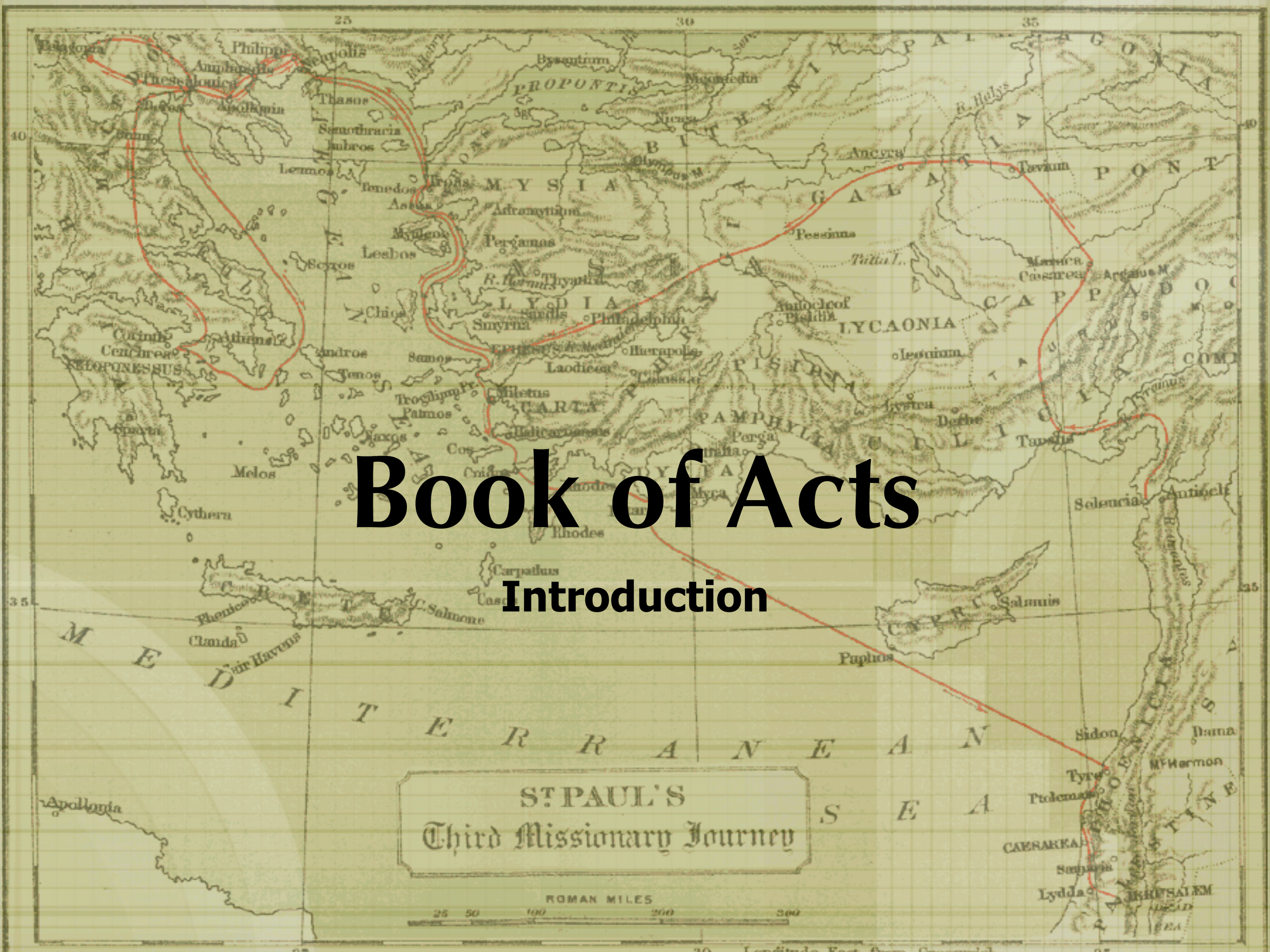
Book of Acts

Introduction



Luke: the hidden witness behind Acts

- *Luke 1.1-2 ¶ Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us.*
- *Luke 1.3-4 So it also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.*

- *Acts 1.1-2 ¶ I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.*

Unique witness of Luke

- Only gentile writer of the New Testament
  - Col. 4.14 (mentioned in the non-circumcision list)
    - Was a physician
    - Beloved
  - 2 Tim. 4.11 Faithful to the end
- Only writer <u>not</u> an eyewitness of Jesus' life and death
  - Probably a 'god-fearer' bc/ knew the OT septuagint
  - Probably saved under Paul's witness
- Yet wrote more than anyone in the New Testament (25%)



Thorough witness of Luke

- Luke's fourfold research in compiling the book
  - Lu. 1.3 felt a burden from the Lord to compile events
  - Lu. 1.2 only used eyewitnesses who were trustworthy
  - Lu. 1.3 investigated reports back to their beginnings
  - Lu. 1.3 put the presentation of the events in order
- Acts 1.1 Luke then wrote the sequel to the gospel
- Luke used his own eyewitness accounts where appropriate
  - Acts 16.10-16, 20.5-21.18, 27.1-28.16
  - "we" passages
  - 78 times in Acts



Detailed witness of Luke

- His personal details of Jesus' early life and the early events in the church must have come from no less an eye witness than Mary the Lord's mother
- His penchant for details shed tremendous light on the events described
  - His method of dating events by dates of secular rulers and events has produced major archaeological confirmations
  - His unique medical details fill in many stories and give evidence to his desire for medical detail
  - His eyewitness details of Paul's shipwreck (harbors, ship names, wind and current details) paints a vivid picture of the trials of God's servants



Relevant witness of Luke

- Luke's gospel was written for Theophilus (gentiles)
  - Lu. 1.4 " so that you may know the <u>exact</u> truth about the things you have been taught"
  - Implies written after some years when some stories/rumors may have started circulating throughout the churches which were either wrong or inaccurate (rumors? myths? Judaizer accusations?)
- Luke clarifies three outward facts in Acts
  - Paul was truly a primary apostle faithful in calling and work
  - 'The way' was universal transcending racial and gender limitations
  - The Romans (military and governing leaders) were often sympathetic to 'the Way'



Connective witness of Luke

- His comprehensive perspective provides strategic connections and continuity to the rest of the New Testament
  - Gospels and epistles
  - Resurrection/ascension and Pentecostal birth of the church
  - 12 apostles accepted Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy as fellow apostles
  - Church in Israel was one with gentile churches in the uttermost parts of earth
  - Jewish believers and gentile believers one body in Christ
  - Jesus' promise to build his church and the actual building process



Beautiful witness of Luke

- Luke/Acts were both written in the highest literary style Greek in the New Testament
  - His sermon 'fragments' (summaries) were written in the various distinctive styles of those who spoke them
  - Yet Luke used Koiné (simple) Gk of the common people
- The balance of material in his treatises provides the reader with a balanced sense of life and ministry
  - preaching and miracles balanced (acts: 18/18; gospel 14/14)
  - power of the Spirit's wind was balanced by the Spirit's breath leading and speaking
  - disputes, persecutions and real struggles in the Kingdom are balanced with blessings, oneness and growth of the church
  - repetition is used to emphasize key elements



Excellent witness of Luke

- Luke's objective eyewitness account gives us a history with very little ouvert theological interpretation
- Luke's broadness of concern for the plight of mankind witnesses to the heart of God to <u>save</u>
- Luke's candid description of ministry and church life helps us understand that the church has always been a living testimony though imperfect
- Luke's dedication to using his talents to witness encourages all who walk in professions to use our 'best' in witness
- Is 2cor. 8.18-19 talking about Luke?



Overall Perspective to Keep in Mind re: Acts

- *Acts 28.30 Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house. And he welcomed all who visited him,*
- *Acts 28.31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.*



1. Acts is a history of the expansion of the Kingdom of God from Luke's perspective as the central work of the church moved from Jerusalem to Rome where Paul ends up
2. Luke reports that God's workers were building the church by preaching the Kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ
3. History tells us that whatever happened to Paul after those 2 years (the ending of Acts) the church had greatly expanded in size (possibly with meetings on all the 7 hills of Rome) but even more greatly influenced practically all strata of Roman society so Luke's history brought the Kingdom pf God to the center of the world

Next week :
Acts 1- The 50 days
before Pentecost

ACTS