

Acts of the Apostles

Teacher Notes for class #1

The Book is titled in Greek "Praxis ton Agion Apostolon," that is, the Acts of the Holy Apostles.

What is an Apostle?

--There are several sets of Apostles. Apostle means "one sent on a mission," of which we have several groups. The word disciple means "learner," which was a word used sometimes to signify the Apostles and sometimes to reference all followers of Christ.

--There are, first of all, the Twelve Apostles, those "twelve disciples" whom Jesus called and sent out to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick (Matt. 10.1ff; Luke 9.1ff). Their names are listed Matt. 10.2-4. Two of these were among the four Evangelists, or Gospel writers, namely Sts. Matthew and John. St. Andrew was the first-called among the 12, and St. Peter was, as is evident in Scriptures and clearly stated in Holy Tradition, the first among the 12 equals.

--St. Paul, who had a specially chosen Apostleship, equal to the twelve but not numbered among them, became, together with St. Peter, a leader among the Apostles (and hence the feast day of the "Holy, Glorious, and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul" (June 29/July 12). Though Luke records the Acts of all the Apostles, and records their collective name quite a bit, he mentions Sts Peter and Paul by name far more than any others in the book of Acts.

--Then there were the seventy Apostles, which are mentioned in Luke 10.1ff, whose names we have according to Tradition (turn to pp818 & 819 in Orth. St. Bible, where all 70 are named).

--Among these are the other two Gospel writers, Luke and Mark (otherwise known as "John Mark," who is also reputed to have been the 'pen' of St. Peter).

Also notably among these:

-St. James the Just, the Brother of the Lord, chosen to be the first Bishop of Jerusalem by the 12. Eusebius of Caesaria records this about St. James: "James, called the brother of our Lord, because he is also called the son of Joseph, for Joseph was esteemed the [human] father of Christ, because the Virgin was betrothed to Him...This James, therefore, whom the ancients, on account of the excellence of his virtue, surnamed the Just, was the first that received the episcopate of the church at Jerusalem (Eccl Hist. 2.1). One of the major proofs of the truth of the Gospel is that those who were brothers of Jesus would come to believe that He is the God-Logos of the Universe. There is no other man in history whose own household bowed down to him as the Lord of Hosts as did Christ's brethren, Sts. Jude and James.

-St. Barnabas, the companion of the Apostle Paul.

-St. Clement of Rome, reputed author of Epistles and the first to record the Apostolic canons, and 3rd Bishop of Rome, appointed by St. Peter and mentioned by St. Paul in Philippians 4.4.

-St. Hermas, reputed to be author of the Shephard

-Philip the Deacon and Stephen the Archdeacon/Protomartyr

-Sts. Timothy and Titus, to whom St. Paul wrote Epistles

-St. Stachys, the first to hold the episcopal throne of Byzantium/Constantinople, appointed by St. Andrew.

See Orthodox Study Bible p165 for article on the 70 Apostles.

The Book of Acts

Bible Study Class #1 Handout

When the Acts are read liturgically in the Orthodox Church Year
(Note: there is some variation according to regional custom):

Acts

Chapter & Verse: When Read:

- 1.1-8 Pascha: the Feast of the Resurrection
1.12-17;.21-26 Bright Mon.
2.14-21 Bright Tues.
2.22-36 Bright Wed.
2.38-43 Bright Thurs.
3.1-8 Bright Prep. (Fri.)
3.11-16 Bright Sab. (Sat.)
5.12-20 Thomas Sunday: 2nd Lord's Day of Pascha 3.19-26 Mon. 2nd wk
- 4.1-10 Tues. 2nd wk
4.13-22 Wed. 2nd wk
4.23-31 Thurs. 2nd wk
5.1-11 Prep. (Fri.) 2nd wk
5.21-33 Sab. (Sat.) 2nd wk
6.1-7 Sun. of the Myrrhbearing Women:3rd of Pascha
6.8-7.5;.47-60: 8.5-9.31 Third Wk of Pascha
9.32-42 Sun. of Paralytic: 4th of Pascha
10.1-11.10; 14.6-18; 12.1-11 4th Wk. of Pascha
11.19-26;.29-30 Sun. of Samaritan Woman: 5th of Pascha
12.12-15.41 5th Week of Pascha
16.16-34 Sunday of the Blind Man: 6th of Pascha
17.1-18.28 Mon-Wed of 6th Wk. of Pascha
1.1-12 The Holy Ascension: Thurs of 6th Wk of Pascha
19.1-8-20.12 Fri-Sat 6th wk
20.16-18;.28-36 Sun Holy Fathers of Nicea (bef. Pentecost)
21.8-.32;23.1-11;25.13-19;27.1-44;28.1-31 7th Wk of Pascha
2.1-11 Pentecost Sunday
- 13.25-32; 19.1-18 Eve of Theophany (Jan. 5/18)
13.25-32 Beheading of St. John the Baptist



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