

**STUDIES IN THE
ACTS AND EPISTLES**

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Studies in the Acts and Epistles by Edward I. Bosworth

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EDWARD I. BOSWORTH

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BY
EDWARD I. BOSWORTH

BASED ON
THE RECORDS AND LETTERS OF
THE APOSTOLIC AGE

BY
ERNEST DE WITT BURTON

NEW YORK
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1900

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STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES

STUDY

1. The Promise to Empower the Witnesses, and its Fulfilment
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3. Persecution of the Leading Witnesses, and Growth of the Church in Jerusalem
4. The Appointment of the Seven, and the Martyrdom of Stephen
5. The Work of Philip the Evangelist, and the Conversion of Saul
6. The Early Christian Life of Saul, and Peter in Lydda, Joppa and Cæsarea
7. The Early Days of the Church in Antioch, and Contemporary Events in Jerusalem
8. Review, and Paul's First Missionary Journey
9. Paul's Second Sojourn in Antioch, and the Council at Jerusalem
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11. Paul's Ministry in Corinth on the Second Missionary Journey, and his Letters to the Thessalonians.
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13. Paul's Return to Syria, and Third Sojourn in Antioch: the Letter to the Galatians
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17. Paul's Ministry in Ephesus, and the First Letter to the Corinthians; in the Third Missionary Journey
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STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES

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STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

1. These Studies are laid out with a view to securing *daily* study of the *text itself*. Their success depends upon your keeping this end persistently before you.

2. Give the best and freshest half-hour of the day to them—preferably a half-hour in the early morning.

3. Endeavor (1) to bring out in a scholarly way the thoughts that are really in the text, and (2) to make devout application of them to daily life.

4. Remember that the question you have constantly to ask is this,—WHAT THOUGHT DID THE WRITER OR SPEAKER OF THESE WORDS INTEND THEM TO CONVEY TO HIS ORIGINAL READERS OR HEARERS? When you have ascertained this thought, transmute it into life.

5. Try each day to take from your study some definite thought for the day's life, but do not strain the text in an effort to secure such a thought if there happens to be none specially applicable to you. Simply take what the text yields.

6. Remember that many of the largest and best thoughts that you will derive from this study will be those that come out slowly in the course of many lessons.

7. Keep a note book in which to record your answers to the questions asked in the Studies, and any other thoughts that grow immediately out of the study. You will be astonished to see how much you gain by persisting in this habit.

8. Record in a separate place, for subsequent investigation, interesting side questions that may arise in connection with your study.

9. Make note of any questions you are not able to answer, and bring them up in the class meeting.

10. Compel your imagination to produce for you every scene that is described, and your mind to think every thought that is expressed in the text.

Do not be content with words, but *see* the real thing described, and *think* the real thought expressed.

11. You will save time if you do things in the order indicated in each Study. Do not first read over the whole page of directions.

12. You have but a few moments for study. Keep your mind on the subject. Do not let your thoughts wander for a moment.

13. Begin and end your study with prayer. Life consists in personal relationships,—in friendships. If this study is to give you larger life, it will do so by introducing you into closer and truer relationships, of which the chief is that between yourself and God in Jesus Christ. In prayer you cultivate this relationship.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES

INTRODUCTORY NOTE ON THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

The purpose of the book of Acts is to show how Christianity ceased to be a Jewish sect, and became a world-religion. Even the apostles of Jesus in the first months or years after the resurrection supposed that none but Jews could have the opportunity of accepting Jesus as Messiah, and being saved in the Kingdom of God. They supposed that God, who had seemed always to honor the Jews above other nations, had now graciously given them a monopoly of this high privilege. It is not until 11:18 (read § 25, 11:1-18) that we find the apostles admitting that foreigners could become Christians without first becoming Jews. The book of Acts describes step by step the process by which, through the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, the church was emancipated from this narrow view.

At the beginning of the book Christianity is established in Jerusalem, the Jewish capital; at the close of the book it is established in Rome, the capital of the world. (B. Weiss, *Einleitung*, p. 562, 2d ed.) A company of Jews empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit begin at Jerusalem and carry the message out into the wide world (§ 1, 1:8). The author of Acts considers only such of these men as are connected with the movement of the Gospel toward Rome, with its passage from the Jew to the Gentile. He drops Peter as soon as Peter's work ceases to be serviceable to his great purpose. Even Paul, whose work among Gentiles necessarily makes him the most prominent figure in the book, is dropped as soon as he has made his proclamation of the Gospel in the great metropolis. Luke is probably acquainted with the interesting details of Paul's two years of city mission work in Rome (§ 68, 28:30, 31), but he has no occasion to give them, because the purpose of his book is accomplished when he has represented Christianity in the person of its great apostle, as established in the Gentile capital.