

New Testament II – Acts and Epistles

Preview Sheet – John McGrath, Instructor

Following upon our first NT session on Jesus in the Gospels, we'll next turn our attention to life in the Church following the resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We'll examine remarkable texts in the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians.

Ideally, one should read these seminal works in their entirety. Realistically, with busy lives, I suggest that you read and study the following selections from Acts:

Acts 2 – the Pentecost Event and Peter's first speech

Acts 8-9 – The rise of persecution and Paul's conversion

Acts 10 – Cornelius and Peter

Acts 15 – The Council of Jerusalem and the Circumcision debate

Acts 17 – Paul evangelizes the Athenians

Paul's two Epistles to the Corinthians offers us "*a fuller insight into the life of an early Christian community of the first generation than any other book[s] of the New Testament*" according to the Introduction to the NAB Bible. Please read the following selections from 1 and 2 Corinthians

1 Cor 1-4 – Paul presents the paradox of the Cross as a challenge to problems in the Corinthian Church

1 Cor 9 – Paul defends his pastoral leadership

1 Cor 11 – Paul addresses problems at the Corinthian liturgy

1 Cor 12-14 – The use of gifts in ministry

1 Cor 15 – Clarification on the resurrection of the body

2 Cor 2-5 – Paul's personal examination of his ministry

2 Cor 10-12 – Hardships in Paul's ministry

As you read these selections, consider these questions:

1. Where do you encounter the Holy Spirit in Acts? What role does the HS play?
2. How does Acts compare with Paul's epistles on these topics: a portrait of Paul as pastoral leader? Dealing with issues and concerns in Church life? Paul's Conversion?
3. What wisdom do these readings offer us concerning life in the Church today?

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