

## **The Acts of the Apostles, Letters and Revelation**

The Acts of the Apostles takes up where the Gospel of Luke leaves off. Written by the same author and at the same time as the Gospel of Luke, Acts describes for its readers the beginnings of the Church in Jerusalem, the first missions outside of the city, the conversion of Paul, the missionary trips of Paul and his arrest and trip to Rome. The next twenty one books of the New Testament are called letters. Some of these letters are just that in our modern vernacular but others are actually sermons or theological treatises. Thirteen of these are attributed to Paul. Yet he dictated many of his letters to secretaries. It is important to note here that none of the letters are a complete theological explanation of Christian doctrine. Instead, they were written to meet the very specific needs of the early Christians to solve problems. They were an insight into the meaning of Christ's life and messages. Here are some important highlights from these twenty one books. Paul devotes the last four chapters in Romans to an explanation of the moral duties of Christians and to the meaning of life in Christ. In First and Second Corinthians, Paul addresses issues like cliques in the community, sexual morality, virginity, marriage, love and the Resurrection. In Galatians, he refutes those who demand that Christians be circumcised. He reminds them that we are saved by placing our faith in Christ. In Ephesians, it lays the foundation for the understanding of the Church as "one, holy, Catholic and apostolic." In 2 Peter, the three letters of John and Jude, it warns against false prophets and reminds us of the promised return of Christ. Now the last book of the Bible is Revelation and is often times the most misunderstood because it speaks in symbols and not everyone agrees on the interpretation of it. It is a vision of the things to come that are both terrifying and comforting. The last words of the Bible are saturated with grace: ***"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen"*** (Rev. 22:21). –Sherrie Clutts DRE