26-1115sc - Detailed Summary

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Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 40:19), Teacher: Steve Cain

(0:04 - 0:59) Opening Discussion on Studying Acts

Steve opens the class by asking if anyone has aversions to studying the book of Acts. He states that he does not mind doing so, though he only did a cursory look before coming and has not read the whole book all the way through lately. He enjoys Acts because it provides history and insight into Paul and how the first-century church started. He notes that Paul rehearses his conversion several times in the book, giving a different concept of those events. He emphasizes that in studying Acts the class does not have to worry about how Paul wrote; instead they must deal with Luke as the author. He then invites the class to begin with a word of prayer.

(0:59 - 1:45) Opening Prayer

Steve leads the class in prayer. He addresses the Heavenly Father and thanks Him for the opportunity to study His Word, described as the product that the Holy Spirit produced for them, searching His mind and giving the thoughts He wants them to have concerning Him and their life with Him. He asks that God bless them and reward their study, and specifically requests wisdom, insight, and understanding. He asks for blessing as they look at the book of Acts and the way Luke produces the history for them. The prayer concludes in Jesus Christ's name, followed by Amen.

(1:45 - 3:34) Luke as Physician and Precise Writer

Steve expresses that he likes the idea that Luke wrote Acts and asks what is known about Luke. The response is that he is a physician. Steve elaborates that in those days physicians did more than just study or practice medicine; it really was a practice, more so than today, though it still is a practice now. He asks for other thoughts about Luke as a physician and why his writing is so important. A class member suggests that as a physician he studied in more detail and would probably be a better writer. Steve affirms this as correct and true. As a student of medicine he would write down the results of his studies, take into consideration the weather, the history, and things that were going on, and be more precise in what he was writing. The things he writes down are the result of his training in recording histories and being more exact in what he was writing and observing.

(3:34 - 6:01) Luke's Prologue and Investigation

Steve quotes from the opening of Acts: in his former book, Theophilus, Luke wrote about all that

Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven. He directs attention to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke and says he enjoys that part. He quotes that many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among them. He explains this means many people were trying to record the events of Jesus' life, how the church evolved, and the way Christianity began. The concept of being fulfilled refers to prophecies, which people were examining. This is one of the things Paul would use when going into the synagogues to present the Gospel of Jesus, trying to convince them that Jesus was the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham; he used prophecies and was able to present that to them. Continuing the quotation, many have undertaken to draw up an account of things that have been fulfilled (prophecies) among them, just as they were handed down by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word. With this in mind, since he himself has carefully investigated everything from the beginning, he too decided to write an orderly account for the most excellent Theophilus, so that he may know the certainty of the things he has been taught. Steve concludes that as a historian Luke is talking about having gone around and investigated the things.

(6:01 - 9:29) Date of Writing and Available Eyewitnesses

Steve asks what date is being ascribed to Luke's writings. A class member suggests AD 60, which Steve accepts. He notes that this is thirty years after the crucifixion of Christ. He then asks how old they think Luke is at this time, observing that he is older than thirty. If he was born at the same time or in the same general area as Jesus (as is believed of Paul), he must have been somewhere in his fifties or sixties. Under this assumption, Luke has gone out and researched all the things that have been told about Jesus and his life. Steve asks how many people would still be alive at that time for him to go back and research, looking up various individuals, especially the old-timers who can recall Jesus' life. He directs the class to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, reading from the New International Version beginning at verse 1. The passage reminds the brothers and sisters of the gospel preached to them, which they received and on which they have taken their stand; by this gospel they are saved if they hold firmly to the word, otherwise they have believed in vain. What Paul received he passed on as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James and then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to Paul as to one abnormally born. Steve asks what this tells about the witnesses of Jesus' life and their availability: they are still available. There are some who are going to be very reliable, and he appeared to over five hundred people. He did not appear to everybody. Steve notes he was thinking about this earlier that morning because he looked into Acts a little bit before coming. Jesus did not appear to people openly in Jerusalem or openly to those in Rome; he appeared to selected people, at least five hundred, and most of those are still alive according to Paul, so they are available as witnesses.

(9:29 - 15:55) Mary as Source and Jesus' Humanity

Steve states that he does not know specifically about Mary, but Mary had to be available for someone to get the information concerning Jesus' birth, how it happened, and his life. Mary was available after Jesus' ascension into heaven; she was still around. The information concerning his birth and the events that evolved around it, recorded in Matthew and the Gospels (especially Matthew and Luke), has to come from Mary. When she brought the baby Jesus into the temple, one

of the prophetesses who had been promised that she would not die until she saw the promise was there. Scripture says that Mary put these things in the back of her mind; she remembered them and made a purpose of remembering the things that took place in those days. If someone was alive during Jesus' day, he appeared just like ordinary people. He walked in and sat in the assembly just as people do today. One might look at him and say he was an unusual character, but would not think anything really weird or odd about him because he did not have wings or a halo. He probably had a demeanor that was unique, but he bled just like people bleed and ate and slept just like people eat and sleep. What was different about him? Not everybody was around for every event. The shepherds saw the angels announcing his birth and went to see the baby Jesus in a manger. The wise men later met him in their house and gave him frankincense, incense, and myrrh. He looked just like a baby and grew just like others. Luke records that after Jesus came home from being lost by his parents, they found him studying with the priests, and he said he must be about his father's business. Luke tells that he grew in stature and wisdom in favor with God and man, so he is just one of us. That is what believers are supposed to hold: he took on the form of man, dwelt among us, and we beheld him as the only begotten Son; he was just like us. After Jesus' resurrection from the grave, proving that he is the Christ (as Peter points out in Acts 2, or will be pointing out in Acts 2:38), he was shown to be the Christ through signs, wonders, and miracles. He was not the only one who did signs, wonders, and miracles; prophets did, including Elijah and Elisha, and Paul used them in establishing the church. According to Peter in Acts 2, the purpose of signs, wonders, and miracles was to prove that he is the Christ, to validate the fact that he is who he says he is, and to validate the message and the messenger. Matthew and Luke have Mary available to them when they are writing. They are going to go to Mary and ask what was unusual about Jesus, since obviously he is more than just a man, and what she knows about him. The information that Mary was a virgin and that an angel came to her and said she is highly blessed comes from Mary. Mary is the source of much of the Gospel, especially the beginning of it, including her asking him to change water into wine, to which he replied that his time has not come yet. These things are known. The class is in the book of Acts.

(15:55 - 21:30) Reliability of Accounts and Archaeological Confirmation

Steve emphasizes that Mary had to be a source because Matthew and Mark and the others did not write at AD 30; they wrote somewhere around the same time that Luke did, roughly AD 50, 55, or 60. They were writing at that time during the recording of the history, so they have witnesses they can go to in order to find out whether Jesus actually did these things. It is important to recognize that they are going to real witnesses who can validate the things these people are writing concerning what Jesus did. When these letters went out, were published, and were distributed throughout all the churches, nobody is going to come along and say that he did not do that, challenging it. The Bible could have been challenged way early. When Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are writing their accounts, and Luke is writing Acts, recording the things that took place, if they could be challenged they would have been challenged. They were not challenged. Nobody came forth and said that is a lie or that did not happen. There were people who are eyewitnesses of the things that actually took place. This is a point that needs to be appreciated about the Bible. The Bible has been around for years and it could be challenged for facts. Today when speakers get up and talk, as President Trump does and others do, there are fact-checkers. There are fact-checkers concerning the Bible as well. Things are constantly verifying the Bible and its facts because of history. Steve refers to people who dig up and find things through excavation and archaeology. Archaeology is uncovering facts constantly, proving the Bible to be true in all of the cases. If there was anything that could prove the Bible was wrong, they would come up with it. In this particular

case the Bible is true. A class member named Mike notes that for a while there were challenges as to whether the Hittites were really people, but archaeology proved that the Hittites really did exist. Diggings uncovered showed that the Hittites really were a people that actually existed, just as the Bible mentions. Archaeology has proved that on occasion. Steve likes to think in terms of time capsules (a thought not original with him). There are time capsules, and there are pyramids and digs that archaeology will not go into because they want to preserve them; that is the reason they have not gone into them, to preserve whatever is hidden in them. He asks whether the Holy Spirit can be given credit for these time capsules. He thinks so. He believes the Holy Spirit is making available to us these things, because the challenge of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of sin and to verify the things He has provided in His writings that He had the writers write, the prophets and so on. The Holy Spirit is completely in charge of helping to prove God and His existence. This is one of the things that was so important for him.

(21:31 - 26:13) Theophilus as Friend and Verified Teachings

Steve returns to the first chapter of Luke because Luke is also writing to Theophilus in Acts. Theophilus is the recipient of the letter in Acts. Some challenge whether Theophilus was an individual or a group of people, but Steve regards him as an individual and a friend of Luke. He thinks Luke and Theophilus grew up together and perhaps were in the same church and the same Sunday school, receiving teachings just as children do today when brought in. Steve recalls his own Sunday school experience in which his teacher sat in front of him and told him about Jesus, Noah and the Ark, and other Bible things. He learned these things from Sunday school, and this is what he believes Luke is saying to Theophilus: you and I learned these things, and I went out and purposely searched them out to see if they were actually true and if the teacher was telling the truth and teaching actual facts. Luke is saying that it is true and can be banked on; the things learned in Sunday school are true and can be rested upon. Steve then reads from Luke 1:1 again: many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the Lord. They were taught by people who actually were there; what was shared was not folklore but true. With this in mind, since Luke himself has carefully investigated everything from the beginning—in other words, he has gone all the way back to Mary and as far as he can go searching out people who will verify the facts that he and Theophilus learned in Sunday school—he too decided to write an orderly account. As a historian he is writing this down so that Theophilus can rest on it himself. This is what he found out; it is actual and can be verified and banked on. The things written in the Gospel of Luke are verified; Luke has purposely gone to these individuals and to eyewitnesses who were actually there when the events happened. That is what he is telling them.

(26:13 - 27:17) Jesus' Ascension and Church Development

When the class gets into Acts, Luke is verifying or assuring Theophilus that the same thing is going to be true about what transpired since then. It is known that Jesus ascended into heaven; Matthew 28 and Mark 16 tell that Jesus has ascended into heaven, and Luke is going to tell that he was present when that happened. Jesus has ascended into heaven and angels have come and said, "Why do you stand looking into heaven? He is going to come back the same way that you saw him go." Luke is going to share this information with Theophilus, and from that moment on the development of the church.

(27:17 - 30:09) Restoration Movement and True Worship

As Steve reflects on this material—and since he has not really delved into it—he shares something else that is on his mind and heart. He has been thinking about making a sermon out of it, and he might still do so next time; it is about whether or not instrumental music is used and why the congregation insists on a cappella. He is thinking in terms of the Restoration Movement. As was pointed out last week, the Methodists, the Baptists, and all the various other denominations are denominations; the class is not a denomination unless one believes it is. It all depends on whether one believes one is a member of the Church of Christ or a member of Jesus' church. Steve likes to think they are members of Jesus' church, the church that Jesus came to establish. That is the reason the sign outside says Church of Christ: it is meant to recognize that this is where people who worship Jesus and are members of his church worship. The sign is going to be variously interpreted, because people who are Methodists or Baptists will interpret it as being a denomination too and challenge them on that, but he digresses. What he wants the class to think about is the purpose of the Restoration Movement: why does it exist and what is its purpose? He notes that he is 85 years old, has grown up in the Restoration Movement, has studied it, and knows quite a bit about it. One of the things is the desire to make sure that worship is offered to God in truth and in spirit. That is one of the prayers offered: that worship has been received as a sweet-smelling savor. The concern is whether worship is in truth and spirit. With that in mind, how concerned are they about worshiping God in truth and spirit? Does God really have a word in what is done in worship?

(30:09 - 32:08) Five Parts of Worship from Scripture

With the Restoration Movement, when one comes in, one knows that there will be five parts of worship: psalms, sermons, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and a collection. Those are known to be present because they are read in the Bible and there is a test for them. There must be a necessary direct commandment in order to do something, and there must be necessary examples. These examples are found out of the Bible; the class is only going to go to the Bible. The Bible gives the fact that there must be belief that there is a God and that there is going to be singing. It is known that singing was part of the first-century church, and that there are going to be sermons because it is a necessary example. There must be necessary influence. When baptizing, complete immersion is practiced; the Ethiopian eunuch is one of the examples for immersion. The Lord's Supper is observed every Sunday because of examples. These serve as the test as to whether worship is offered to God in truth and spirit. It is coming from the Bible, and the Bible alone is used to give that example.

(32:08 - 35:37) First-Century Worship and A Cappella

The other thing about the Restoration Movement is that the interest is only in knowing what the first-century church did. There is no concern about what kind of synagogue worship they had or what kind of temple worship they had, or whether or not they used instrumental music to accompany their psalms. The interest is in knowing what kind of worship the first-century church had. When Paul would leave the Christians together by themselves, what kind of worship did they have at that time? It is known that they were influenced by the synagogue worship. Because of the scribes and the Pharisees and the arguments that they had, the synagogue had only a cappella singing; they did not have or use instruments in the synagogue. That is known for a fact. In the book of Acts it will be seen what the first century did: they continued to worship in the synagogue

until the synagogue decided to cut them out. The two apostles who were going into the synagogue to worship—the person who was there asking for alms of silver and gold, Peter and John—were still going to the synagogue to worship until they were told to leave. Then the synagogue kicked the Christians out because they did not want to believe that Christ was the Son of God; they kicked them out and made them go worship on their own. What did the first-century church do? They met, they sang songs, and they observed the Lord's Supper. That is known. But they did not have instrumental music. It does not matter if one wants to say that the temple did, or what one says about Jewish worship. The first-century church did not use instrumental music, and it was not introduced until many years later. Steve cannot recall the year the piano was first introduced or the organ, but it was many years later and not without controversy and a lot of hard feelings. The interest is in knowing how the first-century church worshiped, and the assumption is made that what they did was in harmony with God's will. If there was anything else to be added to it, Paul would have added to it.

(35:37 - 40:10) Reformation versus Restoration Analogies

A class member comments that this is what differentiates them from the Reformation. Steve notes that he does not know much about Catholicism, but Catholicism was the parent of the Reformation. The Reformation was to reform the fallen church, but they still used human creed and the information from the early church fathers. The early church fathers follow the first century; they are not from the first century. They only reformed the issue that they had an issue with. The Methodists reformed because they had issues with what the churches were doing at that time. The Baptists reformed because they were having issues with what the church was doing at that time. When they left, the only thing they did was kick out what they had issues with and continued practicing what they had learned. That is the difference between Reformation and Restoration. Steve likes to use an illustration to know the difference, one he mentioned last week: a car. One goes out and sees a car that is supposed to be a Mercury. It is said that because it has been customized: it has been lowered, it has been channeled, it has fender skirts on it, and it has been shaved. Steve knows all those terms; that is the advantage of being 85 years old because he has seen all that stuff. The car is bought with all of that done to it, but it is known that it is supposed to be a Mercury. What is wanted is to restore it. How does one restore a car that has been shaved, lowered, and channeled? One has to go to the original blueprint to see what it looked like and what it was made of, then start taking away or redoing the Mercury so it looks exactly like that. That is what the Restoration Movement is all about. In fact, what the Restoration did was throw out the car and start from scratch from the blueprint. That is the reason Steve said what he said about the Boy Scout manual. The Reformation tried to reform it, but they still pinned it up; it still had the underlying scars of everything else. When he was a Boy Scout they had a manual that was that thick. That manual covered everything: what the troop meeting was supposed to be, what the scout leader was supposed to be, how the uniforms were supposed to be done, and how the badges were supposed to be added to the uniform. It did everything. Suppose one comes upon that book and has never seen a Boy Scout manual and did not even know the Boy Scouts existed. With that manual one can reconstruct 100 percent what a Boy Scout meeting and everything is supposed to be. That is what the Bible is, and that is how the Bible is being used. It is the creed. The Bible is used to give how the church ought to be. That is what Luke is doing and what he has done; he wants to do that.

(40:10 - 40:19) **Closing and Next Week**

Steve announces that Acts will be next week. He thanks the class so much for humoring him and thanks them so much.

Verses Steve Covered in this class

Primary passages Steve covered or read:

- **Luke 1:1–4** (prologue) — Quoted and discussed at length. He emphasized Luke's careful investigation, the role of eyewitnesses, and the purpose of writing so Theophilus would know the certainty of what he had been taught.
- **Acts 1:1** — "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven."
- **1 Corinthians 15:1–8** — Read in full from the NIV. Used to show that many eyewitnesses of the resurrection (including over 500) were still alive when the Gospels and Acts were written.
- **Luke 2:49 and Luke 2:52** — Jesus' statement "I must be about my Father's business" and the summary that he grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.
- **Acts 2** (especially the theme of Acts 2:22 and the surrounding context of Peter's sermon) — Signs, wonders, and miracles as validation that Jesus is the Christ (and the messenger/message). Acts 2:38 was mentioned specifically.
- **Acts 1:11** — The angels' words at the ascension ("Why do you stand looking into heaven? … He will come back in the same way…").
- **Acts 3** (Peter and John going to the temple / the lame man asking for alms) — Used in the discussion of the early church still meeting in the synagogue until they were driven out.

Other clear allusions (not fully read):

- Matthew 28 and Mark 16 (ascension)
- The birth narratives involving Mary (Luke 1–2)
- John 2 (water into wine)
- Acts 8 (Ethiopian eunuch and immersion)
- Various New Testament references to the five acts of worship (singing, prayer, preaching, Lord's Supper, giving)

Summary: The class was not a verse-by-verse study of Acts. The main Scripture actually covered was **Luke 1:1–4**, **Acts 1:1**, **1 Corinthians 15:1–8**, and the supporting references to the ascension (Acts 1:11 / Matthew 28 / Mark 16) and the early church's practice in Acts 2–3. The rest of the time was spent on the reliability of the eyewitness accounts and the Restoration Movement / a cappella discussion.