

## SOME INTERESTING FACTS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

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I. One of the problems that the early church had to face was that some denied that Paul was an apostle equal to the twelve. He spent a lot of time defending his apostleship, especially in the Corinthian letters and in the letter to the Galatians. For example, observe the following verses from the NKJV which indicate that some were questioning his true apostleship:

1. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. *My defense to those who examine me is this....*(I Cor. 9:1-2)
2. For I consider that I am *not at all inferior* to the most eminent apostles. (II Cor. 11:5)
3. In nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. Truly *the signs of an apostle* were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. (II Cor. 12:11-12)
4. Paul *an apostle* (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead) and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia. (Gal. 1:1-2).
5. But I make known to you, brethren, that *the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man*. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:11-12)
6. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and *called me through His grace*, to reveal His Son in me, *that I might preach Him among the Gentiles*, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (Gal. 1:15-19)
7. But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me. But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for *the circumcised was to Peter* (for *He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles*), and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.(Gal. 2:6-9).
8. Now when Peter had come to Antioch, *I withstood him to his face*, because he was to be blamed.....(Gal. 2:11ff).

II. In nine of his letters, Paul refers to himself as an "apostle" in the opening statement. Only the letters to the Thessalonians, Philippians, Philemon, and Hebrews omit the claim.

This fact may also indicate that some were denying his apostleship. In the two letters that Peter wrote he reminded the readers, in the first verse of each book, that he was an “*apostle of Jesus Christ*”. (See I Peter 1:1 & II Peter 1:1). But it is interesting that the apostle John does not mention that he was an apostle in any of the five books he wrote. This could possibly indicate that most of the comparing of Paul was to Peter, when the subject of Paul’s apostleship came up. If this is the case, then it would also possibly explain some things that Luke recorded in the book of Acts. The book of Acts is not the acts of the apostles, but primarily records the acts of only *two apostles*, namely, Peter and Paul. And it is interesting to notice the things that the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to record about these two apostles. This is what this study is all about. We will compare the things that Luke says Peter did in chapters 1-12, with what he says Paul did in chapters 13-28. And it seems to me that, since the Lord knew that some would question Paul’s authority as an apostle and possibly try to make Peter a pope, He had Luke to write in a way to emphasize that Paul was not inferior to the other apostles, especially Peter. And that Peter was not superior to the other apostles, especially Paul.

### III. Notice the comparison between Peter and Paul as recorded in the book of Acts:

1. Peter’s sermon to the Jews in Jerusalem is recorded in Acts 2:14-36.  
Paul’s sermon to the Jews and Gentiles in Antioch is recorded in Acts 13:16-41.
2. Peter is instrumental in healing a lame man in Acts 3:1-8.  
Paul is instrumental in healing a lame man in Acts 14:8-10.
3. Peter’s “shadow” was used by God to heal the sick in Acts 5:14-16.  
Paul’s “handkerchiefs” were used by God to heal the sick in Acts 19:11-12.
4. Peter was given destructive power in the death of the couple in Acts 5:1-11.  
Paul was given destructive power in striking a man blind in Acts 13:8-12.
5. Peter was beaten for healing and preaching in Acts 5:40.  
Paul was beaten for healing and preaching in Acts 16:14-24.
6. Peter had to deal with a sorcerer named Simon in Acts 8:9-24.  
Paul had to deal with a sorcerer named Elymas in Acts 13:8-12.
7. Peter laid hands on the Samaritans to impart miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in Acts 8:14-19.  
Paul laid hand on the Ephesians to impart miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in Acts 19:1-6.
8. Peter was instrumental in raising Dorcas from the dead in Acts 9:36-42.  
Paul was instrumental in raising Eutychus from the dead in Acts 20:8-12.
- 9 Peter has a miraculous vision to convince him to go preach to the Gentiles in

Acts 10:1-29.

Paul has a miraculous vision to call him to go preach to those in Macedonia in Acts 16:9-10.

10. Peter refuses to be worshipped in Acts 10:25-26.

Paul refuses to be worshipped in Acts 14:11-18.

11. Peter was a prisoner of Herod and was in chains in Acts 12:1-6.

Paul was a prisoner of Rome and was in chains in Acts 28:16-20.

12. Peter had angel of the Lord appear to him in Acts 12:7-9.

Paul had an angel of God appear to him in Acts 27:23-24.

13. Peter related how Christ's body did not experience corruption but David's did in Acts 2:25-27.

Paul related how Christ's body did not experience corruption but David's did in Acts 13:35-36.

14. Peter said to the lame man "In the name of Jesus Christ..., rise up on walk" in Acts 3:6.

Paul said to the demon in the girl, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her..." in Acts 16:18.

There are, no doubt, numerous other similarities that could be found in the book of Acts concerning Peter and Paul, but hopefully these are enough to help us see the point.

IV. Peter is referred to, by name, at least sixty times in the first twelve chapters of the book of Acts, and only a few times after chapter twelve. Paul is referred to, by name, about one hundred fifty times from chapter thirteen to chapter twenty eight, and about sixteen times or so in the first twelve chapters. What does all of this mean? Maybe nothing. But after carefully reading the book of Acts, one would be hard pressed to prove that Paul was inferior to any of the other apostles including Peter. And Peter was not superior to Paul in any respect. Perhaps this is part of what God had in mind when He inspired Luke to write the book, perhaps not. But when I studied the book these were **SOME INTERESTING FACTS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**, at least to me. That's why I decided to pass them on to you.

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