

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Introduction: The story of how uneducated, timid, and fearful men came to turn the world upside down!

Author: Luke, the Gospel Writer – His purpose for both volumes noted in Luke 1: 1-4: *“Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.”*

Date: AD 62-63

Recipient(s): Theophilus and more

Context: Galatians 4:4 – **The Fullness of Time**

A common language – Greek

Multiple Deities – Open for new Spiritual ideas

Roman **Roads**

Roman **Peace**

Messianic **Expectancy**

Themes:

A. The Formation of the Church

B. Jewish Sect → Christianity

C. Expansion of the Church - Acts 1:8 - key Verse

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Characteristics:

A. Historical narrative written in 3 parts:

1. Chs. 1-7: Jerusalem

2. Chs. 8-12: Judea and Samaria

3. Chs. 13-28: To the Ends of the Earth

Characteristics Cont.

- B. Sermons/Speeches (10): 3 by Peter, 1 by Stephen, 6 by Paul
- C. High Literary Quality
- D. Luke and Acts make up 27% of NT (Paul 23%, John 20%)

Literary Features

- A. A collection of genres: Epics, Adventure, Travel, Conversion, and Miracle stories
- B. Journey Narratives
- C. A repeating pattern
 - ♦ Leaders identified,
 - ♦ They preach,
 - ♦ Listeners are converted,
 - ♦ Opposition begins, leaders persecuted,
 - ♦ God Acts

How to Understand Acts

The Apostolic Age will not be repeated

There will not be another Pentecost

Speaking in tongues is not a gift given to all who believe

The Laying on of Hands by Church Leaders does not equate to the giving of the H.S.

The Ananias/Sapphira event will not repeat

ACTS: THE BOOK, PART I

CHS 1-7: THE GOSPEL IN JERUSALEM

A. Acts begins where Luke' Gospel ends

- 1. Jesus is alive and present with the Disciples**
- 2. Jesus gives the disciples marching orders (1:8)**
- 3. The Ascension:**



The Importance of the Ascension

Past: Exclamation point on Jesus statement, “It is finished!” It is proof of the resurrection and proclaims that the atonement is complete.

Present: :

- Christ is our High Priest (Heb 4:14)
- Christ seated at the RH of God (Acts 7:55)
- Christ, our advocate (1 John 2:1)
- The fulfillment of John 14:12-14

Future: Acts 1:11: Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven...He will return!!!

B. Acts 1:12-2:47

1. Judas' fate and his replacement Matthias (1:15-26)
2. Pentecost: 120 Disciples (waiting on Jesus)



*...I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy. Acts 2:18*



Results of Pentecost

Peter becomes spokesman for Church (2:14-47) He proclaimed Christ crucified, dead, buried, and Risen – the Gospel...

The Church Grew to over 3000, that day

A Lesson from Acts: 2:42 - Want to be a great Christian witness and disciple? This is the key!

“Awe came upon every soul”

Tim Keller Quote: “Nothing could be worse before the Almighty God of the Universe than to be devoid of Awe.”

The Church as Intended

Acts 2:44-47: And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved

The Holy Spirit Power on Display

Opposition Begins (3:1-7:60)

Miraculous Healings

Ananias & Sapphira – A Lesson in Motivation

The Spirit's Power

Ministry Divided

**Apostles Arrested, Stephen is stoned to death
(a turning point for the Church)**

A New Player introduced

A Key Verse of Acts 1-7

*Acts 4:12: “And there is salvation
in no one else, for there is no
other name under heaven given
among men by which we must be
saved*

Lessons from Part I

1. From Jesus, Acts 1:4 We learn to wait on the Lord for His Timing (*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit*)
2. Through the miracles, we learn even more of the power of God to work through humans

Quote from Dwight Moody:

“The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him. By God’s help, I aim to be that man.”

3. Through opposition we learn that suffering may well be a part of the Christian's life

4. Through the choosing of the 6 men to minister to the congregation, we learn that the only difference between clergy and the people is God's calling

Part II - Acts 8-12: Judea and Samaria

A. We meet Saul of Tarsus at the stoning of Stephen...Persecution – Jesus' Church expands; God's plan in motion

Proverbs 19:1 – *“Many are the plans of a man, but the Lord's purpose will prevail”*

B. Over 100 persons introduced

Philip – 1 of the 6 – takes Gospel to Samaria

Ananias – validates Paul's conversion

Paul Escapes in a basket



3. Peter tours the churches in Judea healing and preaching -- the Church continues to grow
4. Tabitha (Aramaic), Dorcas (Greek) died; God through Peter raises her from the dead – the Church continues to expand
5. Cornelius – God's bigger plan is revealed to Peter dramatically – the Holy Spirit poured out on a Gentile
6. Agabus, Simon the Sorcerer, Herod Agrippa I
7. Major figures: James, John, and Saul

Lessons from Part II

1. No one is beyond God's reach to save
2. We Ask God, "Why was Peter rescued and not James?"

What is the only answer for us???

God's Sovereign Plan

Part III - ACTS 13-29: To the Ends of the Earth

Journey 1: AD 47-50...Antioch in Syria to Perga in Pamphylia to Galatia and back to Antioch in Syria (13:4-14:23)

Paul and Barnabas with John Mark, Barnabas' cousin...

John Mark abandons them in Cyprus, which later causes division between Barnabas and Paul

Apostle Paul's
First Missionary Journey

AD 47-50



The Jerusalem Council (Ch. 15)

AD 50

Decided the fate of Gentiles in Christianity

Gave rise to Judaizers, a thorn in the side of the Church for most of the 1st Century – Many of Paul's Epistles are written to counter their claims

**Journey 2: AD 50-53...Opened up
the Ministry in Europe (15:40-
18:22)**

Apostle Paul's Second Missionary Journey

AD 50-53



**Lasted 3 years and covered nearly 3000 miles,
much of it on foot**

With Silas; Timothy joined them at Lystra (16:1)

**Gospel taken to towns and cities including Philippi,
Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth**

**There was much opposition but the Gospel was
extremely fruitful:**

Paul has the vision that calls him to Macedonia

Luke joins Paul and Silas and Timothy (16:10-18 first of the “we passages”; then 20:4-21:19 from Philippi to Jerusalem; 27:1-28:30 from Caesarea to Rome)

In Philippi, Lydia the seller of purple was converted

Paul casts the demon out of the slave girl and he and Silas wind up in prison where the Philippian jailer is converted

At Athens, Paul preaches his great sermon about the “Unknown God” on the Aeropagus

Paul writes 1 & 2 Thess. ~AD 50-51. Paul establishes Corinthian Church – stayed 1 ½ years

**Journey 3: AD 53-58...To Visit the
Churches established during first two
Journeys**

**Apostle Paul's
Third Missionary Journey
53 - 58 A.D.**



Paul is warned several times not to return to Jerusalem, but he went anyway knowing he was in grave danger

Paul writes 1 Corinthians AD 54-55, 2 Corinthians and Romans ~AD 57

Paul arrested in Jerusalem and then moved to Caesarea for his safety where he was imprisoned (AD 58-60) and finally appeals to Caesar as a Roman Citizen

Paul's journey to Rome AD60-62



Shipwrecked on Malta

ACTS 28:3-6



Arrived in Rome and held under house arrest (28:11-31)

Wrote Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians ~ AD 61 - 62

Wrote Philippians ~ AD 62

From EXTRA-Biblical sources:

Paul was released (AD 63 – 65)

Wrote 1 Timothy (Luke wrote Acts) ~ AD 63

Hebrews written ~AD 64

Arrested again in Rome AD 65-67

Wrote Titus AD 65, 2 Timothy AD 67

Executed – AD 67

Lessons from Part III

1. We learn that whatever the culture, the truth does not change but that it transforms
 - A. Gives us hope for our culture
 - B. Opposition will continue to the end of the age
 - C. Proper Christian response is boldness, humility, and holiness
2. Our Basic Reason for Living is on Display
 - A. We are here for **The Glory of God**
 - B. We have **Purpose in Him**
 - C. It demonstrates in vivid detail **That God is Sovereign**
In all things pertaining to human life

A New Testament Survey:
The Acts of the Apostles
John Andrews, Winter, 2017
Fellowship Bible Church

Introduction:

- I. **The author:** Luke, the same Luke that wrote the Gospel
- II. **Date:** Probably 62-63 A.D.
- III. **Recipients of the book:** (Read Acts 1:1): *"In the first book O Theophilus..."*
- IV. **The Context of Acts:** The world was ready for the gospel:
 - 1. A common _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. Roman _____
 - 4. Roman _____
 - 5. Messianic _____
- V. **Themes, Characteristics, and Literary Features:**
 - 1. **Themes:**
 - A. The Formation of the Church
 - B. The Transition of the Church from a Jewish sect to Christianity
 - C. The Expansion of the Church following the pattern - Acts 1:8 (key verse):
 - 2. **Characteristics:**
 - A. It is historical narrative in 3 Parts:
 - 1. Chapters 1-7: The Church established in Jerusalem
 - 2. Chapters 8-12: The Church in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria
 - 3. Chapters 13-28: The Church spreading to the ends of the earth.
 - B. There are 10 major speeches, 3 by Peter, 1 by Stephen, and 6 by Paul.
 - C. It has a very high literary quality.
 - D. The two books (Luke & Acts) make up 27% of the entire New Testament.
 - E. _____
 - 3. **Literary Features:**
 - A. It is a collection of Individual literary genres: Epics (hero stories), Adventure, Travel Stories, Conversion stories, and Miracle stories.
 - B. Journey Narratives
 - C. There is a consistently repeated pattern:
- VI. **How to understand Acts:**
- VII. **ACTS the book:**
 - 1. **Acts 1-7: The Gospel in Jerusalem**
 - A. Acts begins where Luke's Gospel ends, focused on Jesus (Acts 1:1-11):
 - 1. Jesus is presented as still alive and present with the disciples on earth.
 - 2. _____
 - 3. The Ascension:
 - i. Past:
 - ii. Present:
 - iii. Future:

- B. Acts 1:12-2:47:
 - 1. Judas' fate and his replacement Matthias (1:15-26):
 - 2. Pentecost and Peter's sermon (2:14-47):
 - 3. The Church as intended: Acts 2:44-47:
- C. Opposition against the Gospel; the Spirit's power on display (3:1-7:60).
 - 1. Miraculous healings
 - 2. Ananias and Sapphira - a lesson in motivation:
 - 3. The Spirit's power
 - 4. Six men are chosen to serve the people to aid the Apostles
 - 5. The Apostles are arrested; Stephen is stoned to death (AD 31-33), a turning point in the spread of the Gospel...
 - 6. Another main character is introduced in 7:58, 8:1a

A key verse in Chs. 1-7 is Acts 4:12. Why?

Lessons from Part I:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

2. Acts 8-12: The Gospel in Judea and Samaria

- A. Acts 8:1: Why is this verse important for us today?
- B. In the book of Acts there are over 100 persons introduced, most minor in themselves but are included for Luke's purpose in telling the story.

Lessons from Part II:

- 1)
- 2)

3. Acts 13-29: The Gospel to the Ends of the Earth

- A. The main point of this part is that God's love is for all who will respond to the Gospel, it is not for any one race or ethnic group.
- B. Paul's 3 Missionary Journeys are chronicled in this section
 - 1. 1st Journey

The Jerusalem Council AD 50, Chapter 15:

- 2. 2nd Journey

3. 3rd Journey
- C. Paul arrested in Jerusalem. Later He was moved to Caesarea and imprisoned
- D. Paul's journey to Rome
 1. Shipwrecked at Malta
 2. Arrived in Rome – placed under house arrest
 3. From extra-biblical sources

Lessons from Part III:

1. We learn that whatever the culture, the truth does not change but that it transforms.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
2. Our basic reason for living is on display.
 - A. We are here for _____
 - B. We have _____
 - C. It demonstrates in vivid detail that _____
_____.

Some Remarks about the Outline: This is taken from Norman Geisler's book generally. It is a skeleton of an outline and that is good, because every writer, every Bible introduction to Acts, and every commentary gives an outline that is either way too detailed or the details are very different aspects of the book. The outline of a book will generally come from the author's theology and to avoid that, Dr. Geisler has given a brief outline that is intended to "not" interpret but rather to give a guide through the book as an outline should. I chose this outline for that reason. Many good outlines exist and I leave them to you to determine which works best for your purpose.

The Outline of ACTS¹

- I. The Formation of the Church – Jews (Ch. 1-7)
 - E. The First Days (Ch. 1-3)
 - 1. The Ascension of Christ (Ch. 1)
 - 2. The Descension of the Spirit (Ch. 2)
 - 3. The Expansion of the Church (2:43-4:4)
 - F. 1st Deliverance of the Church - *Peter and John*^{*2} (Ch. 4)
 - G. 1st Discipline in the Church – *Ananias and Sapphira* (5:1-55)
 - H. 1st Deacons in the Church (6:1-6)
 - I. 1st Martyr in the Church - *Stephen* (7:54-60)
- II. The Transition of the Church – Greeks (Ch. 8-12)
 - A. The 3 Conversion (8:1-11:18)
 - 1. Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-39) – a son of Ham^{**3}
 - 2. Saul of Tarsus (8:26-39) - a son of Shem
 - 3. Cornelius (Ch. 10) - a son of Japheth
 - B. The 2 Persecutions (11:19-12:25)
 - 1. Because of Stephen (11:19-30)
 - 2. Focused on Peter - To please the Jews (Ch. 12) (*this is a deviation from Dr. Geisler's statement, "Because of Peter"*)
- III. The Expansion of the Church – Romans (Ch. 13-28)
 - A. 1st Missionary Journey (Ch. 13-14)
 - B. 1st Church Summit (Ch. 15)
 - C. 2nd Missionary Journey (16:1-18:17)
 - D. 3rd Missionary Journey (18:18-28:16)
 - E. 1st Imprisonment (28:17-31)
 - F. 2nd *Imprisonment*

¹ Geisler, Norman L. A Popular Survey of the New Testament; Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI: pp 128-129

^{2*} Italics are changes to Dr. Geisler's original outline, primarily done to add some detail

^{3 **}Dr. Geisler wants us to see that the offspring of the three sons of Noah represent salvation is for all people groups (all that remained after the flood and all people came from these three men)