

The Acts of the _____

We typically refer to the fourth book of the New Testament simply as “Acts,” but many Bibles ascribe the longer title “The Acts of the Apostles.” The name makes sense because the book focuses on the activity of the apostles (at least a few of them) as they perform miracles and preach the gospel throughout the world. Some have noted, however, that “Acts of the Apostles” may not be the most apt title. While the book does focus on the activity of the apostles, they are not the only ones active. In fact, we might argue they aren’t even the most active. After all, the activity of the apostles is empowered by the Holy Spirit, thus some have suggested we should think of the book as “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” It is the Spirit who comes upon the apostles, enables them to preach in all sorts of circumstances, gives them power to perform miracles, and is imparted to other Christians. Certainly, the Holy Spirit is a central character in the book of Acts. That reminds us though, of who sent the Holy Spirit. We should remember that this book is a sequel to Luke’s gospel, which is all about Jesus. Luke begins “Acts” with the ascension of Jesus, and the Lord’s promise to send the Spirit. While Jesus is no longer walking side by side with His apostles, He is just as active in Acts as He is in the gospels. Thus, one writer suggested Luke’s second volume is about the “Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus.” Of course, all of these are true. The titles appended to Biblical books help us identify them, but are not inspired titles. As we think about “Acts” however, it is good to remember the activity of the apostles, empowered by the Holy Spirit, sent by the Risen Lord Jesus!



Questions:

- Who was chosen to replace Judas as an apostle? _____
- What prophet does Peter quote from in his sermon recorded in Acts 2? _____
- “And they continued _____ in the apostle’s _____ and _____, in the _____ of _____ and in _____.” (NKJV)
- About how many men believed Peter’s sermon that was preached after healing a lame man at the temple? _____
- What was Gamaliel’s advice to the Jewish council? _____

- What did Stephen see just before being stoned? _____

- What city did Philip go and preach to? _____
- Which two apostles were sent to assist with the new Christians in Samaria? _____

- What passage was the Ethiopian Eunuch reading when Philip approached him? _____

- Who brought Paul to the apostles? _____
What does this man’s name mean? _____

“That You May Grow Thereby...”

A weekly Bible reading plan



Acts 1-9

The Church Begins

Overview

Following the four gospels, we find the book of Acts. This book serves as sequel to all the gospel accounts, but specifically it is the sequel to Luke. Addressed once more to Theophilus, Acts is “Volume 2” of Luke’s work. Luke concluded his gospel with Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. While that was the end of Christ’s physical presence on earth, it was certainly not the end of His story, or the story of His church. Thus, the sequel. Acts begins by briefly re-covering Jesus’ final days with the apostles; appearing to them and preparing them for what came next. In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells the apostles they will be receive power from the Holy Spirit, and then they will be His witness in Jerusalem and all Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth (which serves as an outline for the book of Acts). After this, Jesus ascends to Heaven, and the rest of the story begins. After receiving the Spirit, the Apostles begin their work of preaching in Jerusalem, and the Lord’s Church is established. From there the church grows, and the good news of Jesus is spread to the world!

Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: Acts 1-2
Tuesday: Acts 3-4
Wednesday: Acts 5-6
Thursday: Acts 7
Friday: Acts 8-9

“All nations shall flow to it...”

Isaiah 2 is one of the preeminent “church” prophecies of the Old Testament. The opening portion of the prophecy says:

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it.

While many Jews thought this meant one day all nations would bow to Israel, we learn in Acts 2 how this is truly fulfilled. On Pentecost, when the Apostles received the Holy Spirit and preached the first gospel sermon, we are told that, “...there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from **every nation** under heaven.” The messianic kingdom had begun!

Nations Present at Pentecost



Outline of Acts

The Church Begins (1-2)

Final Days with Jesus
Reception of the Holy Spirit
First Sermon and Start of the Church

Witnessing in Jerusalem (3-5)

Preaching in Jerusalem
Persecution Begins

Witnessing Beyond Jerusalem (6-12)

Stephen is Martyred
Saul persecutes the church
Christians scatter, taking the gospel with them
Saul is converted
Gentiles hear the gospel and obey

Witnessing to the Ends of the Earth (13-28)

Paul’s First Missionary Journey (with Barnabas)
Paul’s Second Missionary Journey (with Silas)
Paul’s Third Missionary Journey
Paul’s Arrest and Travels to Rome

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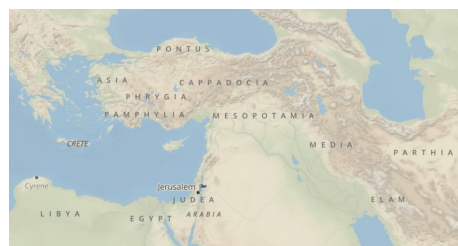
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