



North Christian Church

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Self-Guided Study

Topic

The Book of Acts – Overview

Background

- Author: Luke (same as writer of Gospel of Luke), a physician
- Audience: addressed to Theophilus; applicable to all
- Date of Writing: ≥ 63 AD
- Theme: **Acts 1:8** *“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*
- Purpose: the progress of the Gospel from Jewish roots to Gentiles; an historical account of the early Church; defense against Jewish and Gentile opposition
- Key Characters: The Apostles Peter and Paul

Critical Thinking Questions

- Since the same writer of the Gospel of Luke wrote Acts, is there evidence of a transition? (cp. Acts 1:1-3)
- What was Luke’s relationship to Paul? (cp. “we” in Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16)
- How might Luke’s personal presence with Paul lend credibility to either or both Apostles?
- In what way(s) does Acts provide background or substance to Paul’s letters?
- Were any other books in the Bible written during the span of time covered in Acts? Why would this be important to know?
- Is this book historical or theological overall? Why does that matter?
- How does Luke use speeches in Acts to move the book along? What do speeches add to the narrative?
- Does Acts record successes or failures in the early Church, or both?

- Why has this book been called “The Acts of the Holy Spirit” by some?
- How often is the Holy Spirit mentioned in this book?
- How does this book differ in style, length, purpose from the Gospels and/or the epistles?

Reading Outline

- Read the entire Book of Acts
- Do NOT stop for doctrinal contemplation
- If you do not understand a verse, just press on through
- Look for style, purpose, “big-picture” themes, sweeping thoughts
- Remember that there are no chapter breaks in the original language (those have been placed by man)
- Have FUN while reading and do not get frustrated...EVER!
- ALWAYS keep the Gospel reality at the forefront of your mind (eg: remember God’s ultimate purpose for authoring the Bible – to reveal His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ)

Post-Reading Questions/Conclusions

- Have you ever read straight through the Book of Acts before?
- Why is the Book of Acts so lengthy?
- How has this exercise proved different?
- Were you able to “see” the big-picture?
- Were you able to “see” the Messiah by keeping the Gospel at the forefront of your mind?
- Were you able to see the ministry of the Holy Spirit come alive in the early Church?
- What common struggles did you notice?...specifics aside.
- Would you agree that the Book of Acts is the “bridge” between the Gospels and the epistles?
- If you were to recommend to a friend that they read this book, how would you state your case and what would be the primary things you’d say to convince them to do so?

Useful Resources (furnished upon request)

- Maps: Paul’s, Philip’s, and Peter’s journeys; geographic reach of Acts
- Timelines: harmony of the Gospels, Acts, and remaining books of NT; Paul’s life
- Pictures: of places mentioned in Acts (eg: Rome)