

# THE BOOK OF ACTS

“Can I Get a Witness - The Gospel to the Ends of the Earth”

Acts 1:8

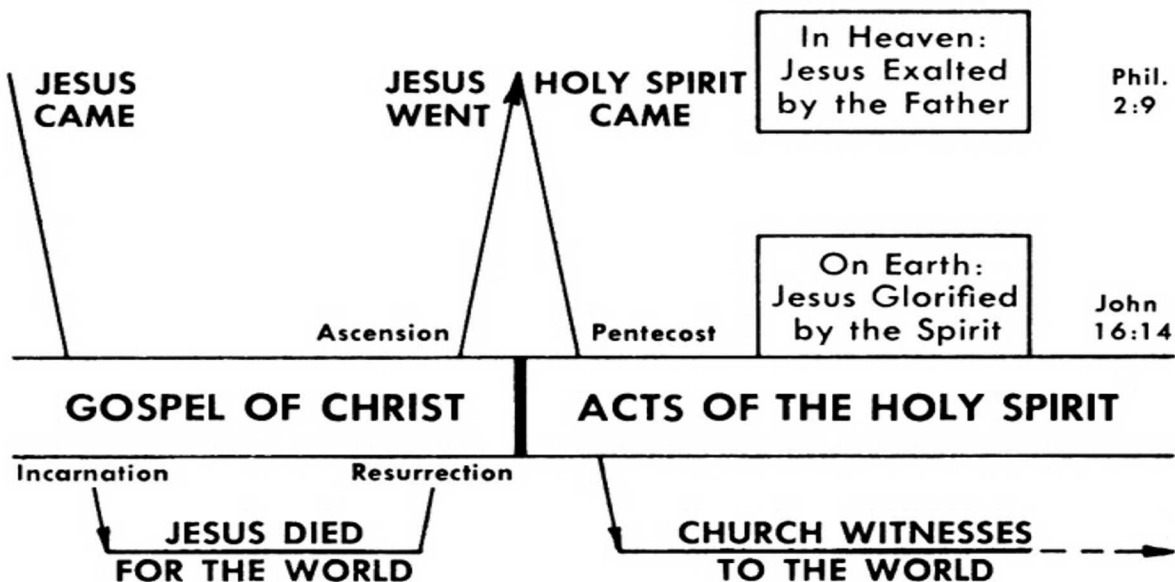
## AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

### ACTS OVERVIEW CHART

#### ACTS

	<b>The Church Established at “Jerusalem”</b> The church is . . . born tested purified strengthened CHAPTERS 1-7	<b>The Church Enlarged to “Judea and Samaria”</b> The gospel is . . . spreading multiplying changing lives breaking traditions CHAPTERS 8-12	<b>The Church Expanded to “the Ends of the Earth”</b> The witness is . . . extended received and rejected changing lives unifying Jews and Gentiles CHAPTERS 13-28
<b>Leaders</b>	The apostle Peter		The apostle Paul
<b>Emphasis</b>	Jewish evangelism	Transition	Gentile evangelism
<b>Time</b>	AD 33 (1:1-2:47)	AD 36 (8:1)	AD 40 (9:32) AD 46 (13:1) AD 57 (21:18)
<b>Scope</b>	City evangelism	National evangelism	Cross-cultural evangelism
<b>Theme</b>	In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus’s followers carry the good news of Christ to the world.		
<b>Key Verse</b>	1:8		
<b>Christ in Acts</b>	Jesus is the glorified, enthroned Savior, who continues His ministry in the world by means of the Holy Spirit working through His disciples until He returns (1:7-9).		

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## KEY THEMES IN ACTS

As you read and study Acts, look for these major themes. Think about how each story illustrates or adds to the themes below. Feel free to add some passages that give evidence for each theme.

- ✓ Witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ✓ The expansion of the church in the world.
- ✓ God planned the gospel to go to both Jews and Gentiles.
- ✓ The Apostles preached the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ.
- ✓ The message of Jesus Christ faced rejection and opposition.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit worked to authenticate the message and bring people to salvation.
- ✓ God sovereignly preserved His messengers.
- ✓ The message called for a response of repentance and baptism.
- ✓ Believers were marked by prayer, unity, obedience, and holiness.

## THE GEOGRAPHY OF ACTS

The story of Acts basically follows the same geographical areas that Jesus mentioned in Acts 1:8. The gospel starts in Jerusalem, spreads through Judea and Samaria, and makes it to Rome—the heart of the Roman Empire. The book of Acts can be divided geographically with the following outline:

- The Gospel in Jerusalem (chapters. 1–7)
  - The Ascension of Jesus
  - The Coming of the Holy Spirit
  - The Growth of the Church
  - The Death of Stephen
- The Gospel in Judea and Samaria (chapters. 8–12)
  - The Ministry of Philip'
  - The Conversion of Saul
  - The Conversion of Gentiles
  - The Deaths of James and Herod
- The Gospel to the Ends of the Earth (chapters. 13–28)
  - The 1st Missionary Journey
  - The Jerusalem Council
  - The 2nd Missionary Journey
  - The 3rd Missionary Journey

- The Journey to Rome

### **Summary of Conversions in Acts**

The student should be able to answer basic questions about each example of the main conversions discussed in Acts, and should be able to indicate what people did to be forgiven of sins.

<b>People</b>	<b>Hear</b>	<b>Believe</b>	<b>Re-pent</b>	<b>Con-fess</b>	<b>Bap-tism</b>	<b>Result</b>
Jews (Acts 2)	verses 14-41	(v36)	v38		verses 38,41	Remission (v38)
Samaritans (Acts 8)	verses 5,12	verses 12,13			verses 12,13	Saved (Mark 16:16)
Treasurer (Acts 8)	v35	v37		v37	verses 38,39	Rejoicing (v39)
Saul (Acts 9,22)	9:6				9:18 22:16	Sins washed away (22:16)
Cornelius (Acts 10,11)	11:14	10:43	11:18		10: 47,48	Saved (11:14)
Lydia (Acts 16)	16:13f				16:15	
Jailer (Acts 16)	16:31f	16:31, 34			16:33	Rejoicing (16:34)
Corinthians (Acts 18)	18:8	18:8			18:8	

### **POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE TIME OF ACTS**

The highest official in the Roman Empire was the Emperor (also called Caesar). Here are the Caesars during the book of Acts and the time of their reign.

- ❖ Augustus 31 BC-AD 14
- ❖ Tiberius AD 14-37
- ❖ Caligula AD 37-41
- ❖ Claudius AD 41-54
- ❖ Nero AD 54-68

### **THE MINISTRY OF ACTS**

The book of Acts also tells us about the ministry of Jesus' followers. The book starts by describing Peter's ministry to the Jews and then focuses on Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. At the end of each major section, Luke summarizes how the ministry is progressing.

### **PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS**

#### **Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:4–14:28)**

As you read this section, keeping some notes about what happened in these locations may be helpful.

- Antioch (in Syria) – 13:1-3
- Salamis and Paphos (on the island of Cyprus) – 13:4-12
- Perga (in Pamphylia) – 13:13

- Antioch in Pisidia – 13:14-52
- Iconium – 14:1-6
- Lystra (in Lycaonia) – 14:6-20
- Derbe (in Lycaonia) – 14:20-21
- Lystra → Iconium → Antioch (in Pisidia) – 14:21-23
- Perga → Attalia → Antioch (in Syria) – 14:24-28

### **Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)**

As you read this section, keeping some notes about what happened in these locations may be helpful.

- Antioch (in Syria) – 15:36-40
- Through the regions of Syria and Cilicia – 15:41
- Derbe → Lystra – 16:1-5
- Mysia → Troas – 16:6-10
- Samothrace → Neapolis → Philippi – 16:11-40
- Amphipolis → Apollonia → Thessalonica – 17:1-9
- Berea – 17:10-14
- Athens – 17:15-34
- Corinth – 18:1-18
- Cenchreae – 18:18
- Ephesus – 18:19-21
- Caesarea → Antioch (in Syria) – 18:22

### **Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23–21:17)**

As you read this section, keeping some notes about what happened in these locations may be helpful.

- Antioch (in Syria) → Galatia and Phrygia – 18:23
- Ephesus – 19:1-41
- Macedonia (Philippi) – 20:1-2
- Greece – 20:3
- Philippi → Troas – 20:6-12
- Assos → Mitylene → Samos → Miletus – 20:13-38
- Cos → Rhodes → Patara → Tyre – 21:1-6
- Ptolemais – 21:7
- Caesarea – 21:8-14
- Jerusalem – 21:15-17

## **Paul's Journey to Rome (Acts 21:17–28:31)**

As you read this section, keeping some notes about what happened in these locations may be helpful.

- Jerusalem – 21:17–23:30
- Antipatris → Caesarea – 23:31–26:32
- Sidon → Myra → Cnidus → Fair Havens – 27:1-12
- Sea Voyage – 27:13-44
- Malta – 28:1-11
- Syracuse → Rhegium → Puteoli → Rome – 28:11-31

### **THINK ABOUT APPLICATION**

How do you think Luke wanted his readers to respond to this story? Look for hints that could point to the following:

- A sin to avoid.
- A promise from God to trust.
- A command from God to obey.
- An example to follow or avoid.
- A truth to learn about God or the church.
- Are there any attitudes/actions that you think Luke was trying to produce or avoid in his readers?
- How do these attitudes/actions show up in the culture?
- How do these attitudes/actions show up in the church?
- How do these attitudes/actions show up in your own life?
- What can you praise God for in this story?
- What steps can you take to obey God?

### **How Do I Apply This?**

What opportunities for sharing the gospel can you take advantage of in the days to come? This question should ring through your mind as you page through the book of Acts. In virtually every chapter, apostles such as Peter and Paul powerfully present the gospel to individuals and groups of people. The apostles portrayed in Acts shine with evangelistic zeal, showing a striking transition from the often misguided disciples of the Gospels. Clearly, the apostles' faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus produced a noticeable change in their hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Too often, our own lives do not reflect that sort of change. We struggle with fears over how others will react to our faith or with breaking out of our own

