

ACTS



The Acts of the Apostles

Open Door Baptist Church

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An Overview of the Book of Acts

Some material taken for these studies come from various sources: (Sam Gipp, James Knox, Peter Ruckman, Ken Blue, Rick DeMichele, Craig Ledbetter, and J. Sidlow Baxter)

Author(s)

Time frame: the book covers a period from 30-61 A.D. The writer is Luke the beloved physician. Although he does not say he wrote the book of Acts, there are several considerations that settle this:

1. Both Luke and Acts are dedicated to “Theophilus” (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1); and then our writer refers to his “former treatise,” evidently referring to the “Gospel according to Luke.”
2. There is the similarity to the style of both Acts and Luke.
3. The pronoun “we” in such verses as in chapter 16:10,11 and 10:6, indicated that narrator, at least from chapter 16 on, was one of Paul’s travel companions (Col 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24). Silas and Timothy seem to be to be out of the running because of verses 16:9 and 20:4,5. There is no evidence to suggest that Titus was the author either. And since the style of writing is the same before chapter 16 as after chapter 16 it is obviously Luke.

Luke was the beloved physician of Col. 4:14, and a Jew, not a Greek as some would have you to believe, but goes contrary to scripture (Rom. 3:1,2)

Overview

The Book of Acts is a transition book. You will find it transitioning from Peter to Paul, Law to Grace, Jerusalem to Rome, Jew to Gentile. It picks up where the book of Luke left off with the commission to go and Christ’s ascension. It is the first complete book of the New Testament with having the testator (Christ) accomplished his work in the past tense (Heb 9:16). The book of Acts is the story of men and women who through the power of the Holy Spirit have taken the great commission seriously and are spreading the news of a risen Savior. At the start of this book you have the early formation of the church with a people who have nothing in their hands but the Old Testament books. There is still temple worship with the Mosaic Law observed and Christ is being

offered a second time to the Jews and is ultimately rejected with the stoning of Stephen. The key to understanding the book of Acts to understand that this book starts out with the highlights of the Apostolic Age (Jewish) and ends with the Church Age (Jews and Gentiles) doctrine. With no neat, clean dividing lines between law and grace, many false doctrines and religious groups get messed up in this wonderful book. The closer you get to the end of Acts you discover that God slowly shuts down the signs in one place after another where the Jews have rejected the message (Jerusalem – ch 7; Asia Minor – 13:45,46; European mainland – 18:6; Rome – 28:28). In 1 Cor. 1:22 the Jews required a sign, but by the time Paul comes to the end of his ministry he says there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (Rom. 10:12). And in fact when it came to the power to heal people (sign for Jews) Paul was not able to even help his friend Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20) at the end of his ministry. So Paul's ministry to the Gentiles really down plays the whole signs, wonders, living by sight and begins to emphasize living by faith and the written word of God (1 Cor. 1:21-24; Rom. 1:17; 10:17).

Theme

One of the main threads throughout the book is how the Holy Spirit works. There are over seventy references to the Holy Spirit, showing the importance of His leading and empowering in every aspect of ministry.

In chapters 1-7 it is very clearly Jewish with a second opportunity for them to receive Jesus Christ as Messiah and with Him bring in the Kingdom (3:19-20). This first half obviously does not represent Christianity or the Church (Body of Christ, the mystery revealed to Paul) for today. It is not until the after chapter nine that we see the shift from Jew to Gentile. The Apostles were called Christians first at Antioch (11:26;26:28, 1 Pet.4:16). The second half of the book explains step by step why the chosen people had been set aside and salvation sent to the Gentiles apart from them, and the commission of the 12 was halted and another Apostle was raised up to go to the Gentiles with the Gospel of the grace of God. It concludes with Paul's apostolic authority that give his epistles relevance and helps the church to begin to line up doctrinally correct. **The Theme** - always Jesus Christ (1:1; Acts 28:31)

The Book of Luke covered the life of Jesus Christ, His "passion," and his resurrection. The Book of Acts will cover the life that Jesus Christ lives through his disciples until His return for them in the clouds!

Key Verses, Word, Chapter, Phrase

The Book of Jude has 28 chapter, 1,007 verses, and 24,250 words.

Key Verse, and Phrase: verse.. 11:19,20 , here the Lord extends the border of the church to include the whole earth. Chapter 8, Stephen is stoned and Christ sits down on His throne and the Jews are set aside. Chapter 2 the Apostles are placed into the Body of Christ (Holy Spirit given) thus fulfilling Christ's prophecy.

Notables

The Jews rejected the Lord in the O.T. and then Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry, and here in the Book of Acts they reject the work of the third part of the Trinity.

The four opportunities for the Jews to receive their Savior were rejected and each time they grew in their animosity.

*Silence (2:40 – no opposition)

* Threatening (4:21)

*Prison (5:18)

*The Whip (5:40)

*Murder (7:59)

The way the Holy Spirit is received almost changes from chapter to chapter. The Kingdom of God used 7 times, Kingdom of Heaven... never.

Chapter 11, a terrific pattern for missionary work