

ACTS

Author: Luke

Date: 63 A.D.

Though he does not mention himself by name, the author is undoubtedly Luke, a physician (Colossians 4:14) and frequent traveling companion of the apostle Paul. From 1:1-3, we learn Acts is the second historical account to Theophilus, the first being Luke's gospel (Luke 1:1-4). Luke is mentioned as a "fellow laborer" (Philemon 24) who was with Paul in his last days (2 Timothy 4:11). Luke often accompanied Paul on his travels beginning with his second missionary journey. By carefully noting the use of "we" and "they" in the book of Acts, we glean that Luke joined Paul at Troas (16:10-11), and remained at Philippi (17:1) until Paul later picked him up on his way to Troas (20:1-6). The book ends with Luke accompanying Paul to his imprisonment in Rome (28:16).

Acts begins with the resurrected Jesus giving His disciples the Great Commission before ascending to heaven. About ten days later, Luke records the outpouring of the promised Holy Spirit followed by a very orderly account of the first thirty years of the Christian church. Thus, Acts serves as a historical link between the Gospels and the epistles and was written to trace the development of the body of Christ over the one-generation transition from a primarily Jewish to a predominantly gentile membership. Throughout the book, there is emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit and the power of Jesus' Resurrection.

Acts is often called The Acts of the Apostles but it centers almost entirely on two of those apostles, Peter and Paul. The first twelve chapters deal primarily with Peter's ministry while the last sixteen focus on Paul's. Other key people in this book include John, James, Philip, Stephen, Barnabas, Cornelius and Timothy.

Theme: Jesus is both Lord and Christ (2:22-36; 10:34-43) and the way of salvation (4:12).

Key verse: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (1:8)

Outline

- I. The Witness in Jerusalem (1:1 – 8:4)
 - A. The Establishment of the Church (1:1 – 2:47)
 - B. The Progress of the Church (2:1 – 8:4)
- II. The Witness in Judea and Samaria (8:5 – 12:25)
 - A. Philip's Witness (8:5 – 8:40)
 - B. Saul's Conversion (9:1-31)
 - C. Peter's Witness (9:32 – 11:18)
 - D. The Witness of the Early Church (11:19 – 12:25)
- III. The Witness to the Ends of the Earth (13:1 – 28:31)
 - A. Paul's First Missionary Journey (13:1 - 14:28)
 - B. The Jerusalem Council (15:1-35)
 - C. Paul's Second Missionary Journey (15:36 - 18:22)
 - D. Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:23 - 21:17)
 - E. Paul's Arrest and Journey to Rome (21:18 - 28:31)