

Acts – 28 Chapters

Title:

The Acts of the Apostles – referring to the things done and accomplished by the apostles. Some have suggested that a better title would be “the Acts of the Holy Spirit”. This is the 2nd volume in Luke’s two part work, continuing the story which began in the Gospel of Luke.

Author:

Written by Luke (same author of Luke’s Gospel), a doctor who was a travelling companion of Paul. Luke was a well-educated Gentile (native of Antioch). He has proven to be an excellent historian.

Occasion and Purpose:

According to 1:1-4 Luke carefully investigated the story of Jesus from eyewitnesses. His stated purpose is to give an orderly account so that the reader may know the certainty of the things that he had been taught. Because the sequel – book of Acts ends with Paul awaiting trial in Rome, Luke-Acts may have been prepared to explain and defend the legitimacy of Christianity and Paul’s ministry as an extension of Christ’s.

Themes: (note the similarity with the themes of Luke, Acts is a continuation of Luke)

1. **Proclaiming Jesus as the Savior from Sins** — Jesus is proclaimed as the One Who brings salvation. Proclamation is the primary means of communication. When preaching to Jews, the preaching begins from the authority of the Old Testament. When preaching to pagans, the preaching starts with creation and gets to the Scripture as quickly as is reasonable for communication. Salvation is from every evil and harm, but primarily from the greatest threat, which is alienation from God because of sin.
2. **The Universal scope of Salvation** — Salvation is for every nation without prejudice. It is not for every person, but for every person who believes. But the emphasis in Acts is that Salvation starts with the Jews, but is not limited to the Jews. It goes to the ends of the earth.
3. **The reality and ministry of the Holy Spirit** — Just as God was present in the earthly life of Jesus (empowering, leading, etc.) so also He is present in the church. The Holy Spirit gives the motivation, direction and power for the church to be witnesses to Christ. God’s Spirit works in the overtly supernatural events, but also in the seemingly mundane expansion of the witness and Kingdom.
4. **Prayer and Praise** — The early church prays for boldness of witness and perseverance under suffering. The church praises God in all situations. The early church’s model of prayer and praise is normative for all churches at all times.
5. **The Rightness of Christianity** — Christianity is good and right. It is commendable before Roman authorities five ways that Luke highlights:
 - a. It is true and reasonable – These things are historical and have not taken place in secret.
 - b. It is legal – It is the proper continuation of Judaism. Christians are found innocent in every case by the Roman authorities. The enemies stir up trouble, not the Christians
 - c. It is universal – It is for all nations
 - d. It is superior to all other religions
 - e. Nothing can hinder the spread of Christianity because its God is all powerful.

Summary:

Jesus, through the church empowered by the Spirit, is continuing to bring His salvation to the lost. This salvation is expanding to the ends of the earth, against much opposition. But God's chosen leaders are upright and successful in every confrontation.

Organization:

1:1-26 Preparation	1:1-5 Review of Jesus' previous history 1:6-8 Theme Statement 1:9-11 Ascension 1:12-14 Transition to disciples in Jerusalem 1:15-20 Vacancy left by Judas 1:21-26 Matthias chosen to replace Judas
2:1-6:7 In Jerusalem	2:1-47 Pentecost 3:1-4:31 Lame man healed and the Sanhedrin investigates 4:32-6:7 Blessing, purity, persecution and priorities of the church
6:8-9:31 To Judea & Samaria	6:8-7:53 Stephen Testifies 7:54-8:1 Stephen is Martyred 8:1-40 Philip Preaches 9:1-31 Saul/Paul is converted
9:32-12:24 To the Gentiles	9:32-11:18 Peter and Cornelius 11:19-30 Expansion to Antioch 12:1-24 Opposition in Jerusalem
12:25-16:5 To Asia Minor	12:25-14:28 Paul's First Missionary Journey 15:1-35 Jerusalem Council 15:36-16:5 Paul's Second Missionary Journey
16:6-19:20 To Europe	16:6-10 Paul receives a call to preach to Europe 16:11-40 At Philippi 17:1-9 At Thessalonika 17:10-15 At Berea 17:16-34 At Athens 18:1-18 At Corinth 18:18-23 Paul returns to Antioch via Ephesus 18:24-28 Apollos testifies to Ephesus and Corinth 19:1-20 At Ephesus
19:21-28:31 To Rome via Jerusalem	19:21-21:17 To Jerusalem 21:8-23:22 Paul is Arrested 23:23-26:32 In Caesarea 27:1-28:16 Paul's travel to Rome 28:17-31 Paul Preaches at Rome

Key Verses:

1:1-2, 1:8, 2:1-4, 2:14-36, 2:37-41, 2:42-47, 4:1-4, 4:8-13, 4:27-31, 6:1-4, 8:4-8, 9:3-16, 10:15, 10:34-43, 10:44-48, 13:32-39, 15:9-11, 19, 16:30-32, 17:2-4, 17:5-6, 22:19-21, 23:11, 24:11-21, 26:24-29, 28:30-31