

HOW TO STUDY

ACTS

Who wrote Acts?

Luke, “the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14)

When was Acts written?

Probably before AD 70

What Acts is:

Acts is the account of the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

What Acts isn't:

A comprehensive handbook of church practice.

Overview of Acts:

1:1–6:7 — Description of the early church in Jerusalem. Very clearly Jewish in origin.

6:8–9:31 — Gospel goes forth from Jerusalem to Samaritans. Paul (Saul) converted.

9:32–12:24 — Description of the first outreach to Gentiles. Cornelius and Peter.

12:25–16:5 — Geographical expansion to Gentile world; Paul in leadership.

16:6–19:20 — Westward expansion into Gentile world, even Europe. Jews continually reject Gospel.

19:21–28:30 — Description of Paul and the Gospel's move to Rome. Paul on trial.

How we should read Acts:

- Keep the main point in sight—Acts is about how the church went from being Jewish to becoming primarily Gentile.
- Remember that it is the Holy Spirit who was behind all of it.
- Don't copy everything you see, or think that everything today has to be the same as back then. Precedent is not necessarily normative. Look at the broader intent of the passage.
 - Example: visions
- Don't dismiss everything difficult or strange and relegate it to “back then.”
 - Example: mass conversions

What are some of the main themes of Acts?

- The Holy Spirit — the One who enabled the spread of the Gospel
- Preaching — bold, direct, Spirit-empowered, convicting proclamation of God's Word
- Responses to preaching — Only two responses
- Rejection by and of Jews — God's chosen people continue to resist the Holy Spirit
- Repentance — turning from death to life
- Persecution — opposition to Christ by those who loved the darkness
- Signs and wonders — healings, tongues, exorcisms, resurrections
- Apostles — carrying out the great commission with all authority
- The Lord Jesus — Christ the King's conquest and dominion spread by the preaching of His death and resurrection