

Introduction

Acts of the Holy Ghost

General Details

Writer

Luke is considered to be the writer of the book of Acts. Luke probably wrote Acts while he was at Rome or Caesarea. Acts 1:1-3; Lk.1:1-4; Acts 16:8-10; 20:6; Col. 4:14; II Tim. 4:11

Date

The book of Acts was written between A.D 61-64. Covers 3% of the Bible from the ascension of Christ, about A.D. 33, through the imprisonment of Paul in Rome, about A.D. 62.

Theme

The Acts of the Holy Ghost in the lives of the Apostles. (Acts 1:4-5)

Acts was written to provide history of the growth of the early church. Special emphasis is given on the importance of the day of Pentecost and on Believers being empowered to be effective witnesses for Jesus Christ. Acts 1:4-5; 2:1; 20:16; I Cor. 16:8

Luke was determined to remind his readers of what took place on the day of Pentecost and that they should be moving on in the Holy Ghost not away from Him.

Acts sheds much light on truths concerning the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, who empowers, guides, teaches, and serves as our Counselor and Comforter. We are enlightened and encouraged by the many miracles that were performed during this time by the disciples—namely Peter, John, Stephen, Philip and Paul.

Key Verse & Other Important Passages

Acts 1:8—But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Other Important Passages: 2:4, 38; 4:12-31; 5:32;6:3,5;7:51,55; 9:3-6,15,16;10:38; 44;11:15,16,24; 13:2,4,52; 15:8; 16:6,7,31; 19:2,6; 20:28.

Synopsis

Acts gives the history of the Christian church and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as the opposition to it. Although many faithful servants were used to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, Saul, whose name was changed to Paul, was the most influential. Before he was converted, Saul took great pleasure in persecuting and killing Christians. Saul's dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-31) is a highlight of the book of Acts. After his conversion he went to the extreme opposite of loving God and preaching His Word with power, through the Holy Ghost.

The disciples were empowered by the Holy Ghost to be His witnesses in Jerusalem (chapters 1-8:3), Judea and Samaria (chapters 8:4-11:18), Antioch (11:19-13:3) and to the ends of the earth (chapters 13:4-28). (21:17-26:32)

Understanding the Book of Acts

The transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant of grace and faith is seen in several key events in Acts. 3:25; 7:8

a. The change in the ministry of the Holy Ghost, whose primary function in the Old Testament was the external "anointing" but now to be within them.

Moses - Numbers 11:17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

Othniel Jud. 3:8-10, Gideon 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; Saul 1 Sam 10:6-10 2Ch 15:1

On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost came to dwell in the hearts of the disciples that were assembled together fulfilling the promise Jesus gave to them.

Luke 24:49—And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

John 14:16-*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

17-Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

b. The indwelling Spirit is the gift of God to those who have come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. You are not Baptized or indwelt with the Holy Ghost at new birth.

The infilling comes after you have received the gift of Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord, and then receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

John 14:17; Eph 1:13,14; Romans 8:9-11; I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2Co 6:16

2. Paul had a dramatic transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. Phil. 3:6,8,9; Acts 8:3; 9:17

3. Peter's vision of the sheet in Acts 10:9-15 is another sign of the transition from the Old to the New Covenant. The Unity of Jew and Gentile in one faith is provided. The "clean" animals symbolizing the Jews and the "unclean" animals symbolizing the Gentiles were both declared "cleansed" by God through the sacrificial death of Christ. No longer under the Old Covenant without the power to keep God's Laws, both are now united in the New Covenant of grace through faith in the shed blood of Christ on the cross.

B. God can take ordinary men and endue them with power through His Spirit.

1. God took a group of fisherman and used them to turn the world right side up. Acts 17:6

God took Saul of Tarsus a Christ-hating murderer and changed him into the greatest Christian evangelist the world has ever known, the author of fourteen books of the New Testament. God used persecution (Acts 8:1-9:4) to cause the quickest expansion of a "new faith" in the history of the world.

God will do the same through us-changing our hearts, empowering us by the Holy Ghost, and giving us a passion to spread the good news of salvation through Christ. If we try to accomplish these things in our own power, we will fail. Like the disciples in Acts 1:4,8, we are to wait for the empowering of the Spirit, then go in His power to fulfill the Great Commission (Mat.28:19-20; Mk.16:15-20).

3. Christ worked and taught "through the Holy Ghost." While He was on earth in the flesh. Christ was totally dependent upon the Holy Ghost. He had to surrender Himself and make Himself available to the Spirit.

4. The Holy Ghost gives to the disciples the power to witness the Word of God that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. Acts 1:1,2; Luke 3:16-17; Luke 4:14

Through the power of the Holy Ghost Jesus taught fishermen that He could fill ships with fish to the sinking point with broken nets (Luke 5:1-11)

Luke 5:10 *And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*

Here are a few scriptures showing the words revealed to the disciples, Lk.6:20-49; 8:4-17;9:22-23;12:22-50;14:27;18:31; 19:10; 21:28,36; 22:19-20;31-32,40,46,69; 24:6-7,32

Luke 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Luke 8:18—Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Matt. 16:18

The four gospels showed us how the foundation of that house was laid;

The book of Acts shows us how the superstructure began to be raised,

1. All the promises of God are made good,

a. The great promises of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and his wonderful operations, in the apostles no longer weak-headed and weak-hearted, able now to bear (John 16:12-15) as bold as lions and face those hardships of which they once trembled as lambs.

The Holy Ghost makes the preaching of the Word mighty to the pulling down of Satan's strong holds,

2Cor. 10:4—(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

The word preached without the power of the Holy Ghost can be preached in vain. The commission granted to the apostles was executed, and power to witness was exerted and souls were saved and miracles happened, restoring sick bodies to health and dead bodies to life, miracles of judgment, striking rebels blind or dead; and much special miracles in imparting spiritual gifts to them.

Acts 19:11—And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

Romans 1:11—For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Acts 13:11—And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

1Tim. 1:20—Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

b. The proofs of Christ's resurrection in the gospels are abundantly confirmed in Acts,

Acts 1:3 *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

Christ called His disciples to be His witnesses through the power of the Holy Ghost, as fishers of men, and enclosing multitudes in the gospel net, as lights of the world, and salt of the earth, so here we have the world enlightened by them; the day-spring from on high we find shining more and more. The corn of wheat, which fell to the ground, springs up and bears much fruit; the grain of mustard-seed there is here a great tree; and the kingdom of heaven, which was then at hand, is here set up. Christ's prediction of the persecution which preachers of the gospel should be afflicted was abundantly fulfilled, with extraordinary supports and comforts in their afflictions.

1 Kings 8:56—Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

2. Every Holy Ghost filled believer is a member of the Christian church which is the tabernacle of God among men,

Acts gives us an account of the framing and rearing of the tabernacle of God among men.

3. The book of Acts reveals the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ 1:2-9

Acts 1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

The Command & Promise of Power to Witness

Christ gave and taught His commandments to those whom He had *chosen*, so that they in turn could teach other's His commandments. Acts 1:1-8; 2:39 All chosen believers are commanded to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost to be witnesses.

A. "Ye shall Receive Power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you"

1. The Apostles with Power 2:43; 4:33; 5:12;

2. Peter and John with Power 2:14-41; 3:1-4:20; 5:15-16; 8:14, 17; 10:44

3. Stephen with Power 6:8

4. Philip with Power 8:5-13; 39-40

5. Paul with Power 13:9-11, 47; 14:10,20; 16:18,26; 19:6,11-12; 20:9-12; 26:18; 28:5-9

B. "Ye shall be Witnesses unto Me"

1. Jerusalem 1:1-8:3

2. Judea and Samaria 8:4-11:18

3. Antioch 11:19-13:3

4. Paul's three missionary journeys 13:4-21:16

5. Paul in Jerusalem 21:17-26:32

6. Paul on his way to Rome 27:1-28:31

God's Pattern for Soul Winning

Acts 14:22—Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Four essentials to success in soul winning:

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Acts 14:1 *And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.*

SUCCESSFUL SOUL WINNERS WORK TOGETHER.

· Unified spirits working together for the salvation of souls.

"They both went together"

"So spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and the Greeks **believed**"

A unity of sincere love for all ministers of the Lord;

UNIFIED IN SPIRIT AND IN FAITH!

All God's servants should be: serving together & working together.

Eph 4:1-6- v.3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...

THE DESIRE OF OUR LORD HAS BEEN, AND STILL REMAINS, THAT WE BE ONE WITH ANOTHER AS HE IS WITH THE FATHER.

John 17:21 *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* (17:11; 17:22,23)

FAITHFULNESS IN THE BODY

1. We must speak the Word that men might believe.

Ro 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

2Co 2:17 *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*

2. We must go to where the multitudes are.

The servant of God is to speak the truth in love.

The servant of God has to both contain the witness of His Spirit, and to speak the witness of His Word.

3. Let the Word exhort us:

1Co 4:2 *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

1Co 4:17 *For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.*

Col 1:7 *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

1Th 5:24 *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*

2Ti 2:2 *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

FULLNESS IN THE BODY

"Filled with joy" & "Filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 13:52; Col. 2:9

Eph 1:23 *Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Eph 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

FOLLOWING THE VOICE OF THE LORD

When facing opposition, a servant must carefully discern what is best for the furtherance of the Gospel, and the glory of God.

The time(s) to stand firm against opposition will reap greater results.

Other time(s), leaving an area will bring in greater harvest.

It is vital to be Holy Ghost filled to hear what the Spirit is directing you to do.

Ac 16:6 *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,*

Mt 10:23,24—But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come 24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. Letting the Lord instill that truth to you, will greatly empower your place in the ministry

- Shall we fear suffering?

IV. A Fact Every Servant of the Lord must Never Forget :

The Servant of the Lord will Suffer Persecution

Acts 14:22—Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Acts 20:23,24; 21:13

1Thes. 3:3—That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

2Tim. 3:12—Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

V. Outline of Acts

The key verse of Acts is 1:8 and the key word is "witness." Acts consists of the details of two main MISSIONS or crusades of the early Christian Church.

1. Home Missions (featuring Peter) Ch. 1-12

2. Foreign Missions (featuring Paul) Ch. 13-28

1. **Home Missions** - Peter is the focal apostle throughout Chapters 1-12. Peter is also joined by the "other apostles" (Christ's original twelve disciples minus Judas Iscariot and with the addition of Matthias). Apostle John and Deacons Stephen and Philip are particularly prominent in these chapters. (Covered in *Sections 1 & 2* of our study of Acts.)

2. **Foreign Missions** - Paul is the focal apostle throughout Chapters 13-28. Barnabas and his nephew John Mark accompanied Paul on the First Missionary Journey (12:25). Because of a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, Paul is accompanied by Silas instead of Barnabas during the Second Missionary Journey. Paul's companions during his Third Missionary Journey included Timothy and Titus. These two men are mentioned in the epistles Paul wrote during this time. Luke also accompanied Paul on the return trip to Jerusalem, as indicated by the "we-section" of Acts. As the writer of Acts, Luke identifies the times in his writing when he was a first-hand witness of an account. He identifies himself in each of these passages by using the pronoun "we." (Acts 20:6) (Covered in *Section 5* of our study of Acts.)

(The Two major sections of Acts and the ministries of Paul and Peter have many similarities as well as differences. See Addendum, Chart 1 for a more detailed look at this study.)

We will organize our study of the Book of Acts into seven sections:

General information about Acts. (This current section.)

The Apostles at Jerusalem (1-7)

The Gospel Spreading (8-12)

The First Missionary Journey (13:1-15:35)

The Second Missionary Journey (15:36-18:22)

The Third Missionary Journey (18:23-21:14)

Paul's Journey to Rome (21:15-28:31)

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