

Overview of the Book of Acts

Luke and Acts

The “Gospel of Luke” and the “Acts of the Apostles” are both parts of the same story with one following directly after the other. The two parts, or books, were written by Luke as a narrative that is an orderly account of the story of Jesus and his first followers. Both were addressed to a man named Theophilus.

The Gospel According to Luke

The Book of Luke is referred to as a “gospel” because it contains the good news of the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and what that means to the world. Luke opens his telling of the gospel in the following way:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. Luke 1:1-4, NIV

The Acts of the Apostles

Sometimes referred to as the “Book of Acts” Luke’s second writing opens with Jesus saying farewell to the apostles before returning to heaven to sit in his rightful place as King. Before leaving them Jesus commissions the Apostles with the task of taking the good news of the salvation of Jesus Christ and spreading it throughout the world.

He tells them that the Holy Spirit will provide them with the ability to accomplish this task.

The rest of the book is a record of how the Holy Spirit worked through the Apostles

in telling everyone about Jesus. The opening verses of the book again refer to Theophilus:

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. Acts 1:1-2, NIV

In his final words to the Apostles before he returned to heaven Jesus outlined what would happen next. He said to them,

“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:7-8, NIV

Lessons from the Book of Acts

Jesus Ascends to Heaven (Acts 1:1-11)

- [Great Commission & Ascension of Jesus](#)

The Gospel Spreads to the Jews (Acts 1:12-9:31)

- [Sermon at Pentecost](#)
- [The First Church](#)
- [Peter & John Heal a Man Who Could Not Walk](#)
- [Ananias and Sapphira](#)
- [The First Deacons](#)
- [The Stoning of Stephen](#)
- [Simon the Sorcerer](#)
- [Philip Teaches the Man from Ethiopia](#)

- [Saul \(Paul\) Becomes a Christian](#)
- [Dorcas is Raised from the Dead](#)

The Gospel Spreads to the Gentiles (Acts 8:4-12:25)

- [Cornelius Becomes a Christian](#)
- [The Antioch Church](#)
- [Peter's Miraculous Escape from Prison](#)

Paul Spreads the Gospel and Plants Churches in Asia and Greece (Acts 13-21:14)

- [Paul's 1st Journey- Lystra](#)
- [Paul's 2nd Journey-Macedonian Vision](#)
- [Lydia Becomes a Christian](#)
- [A Jailer Becomes a Christian](#)
- [The Noble Bereans](#)
- [Paul Preaches in Athens-Mars Hill](#)
- [Priscilla and Aquila](#)
- [Paul in Ephesus](#)
- [Eutychus Falls from a Window](#)

Paul, the Prisoner, Spreads the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome (Acts 21:15-26:31)

- [Paul Goes to Jerusalem](#)
- [Paul's Nephew Uncovers a Plot](#)
- [Paul's Trial](#)
- [Paul's Shipwreck](#)
- [Paul Writes Letters from Prison](#)

Other Online Resources:

- (Above) Humorous video outlining the Book of Acts (from <http://youtu.be/MJIHgMR7LP0>)
- Outline of the Spread of Christianity (6 parts of the Book of Acts) at <http://www.simplybible.com.au/f750.htm>
- Outline of Paul's Missionary Journeys at <http://www.simplybible.com.au/f757.htm>
- Video cartoon tracing Paul's Missionary Journeys on a map (3 minutes and 19 seconds). Find this video at <http://youtu.be/Hy4K1pP408Y>
- Background Information on the Book of Acts at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/>
- Free-to-download online illustrations of stories in the Book of Acts at <http://distantshores.org/resources/illustrations/sweet-publishing/acts>