



The Acts of the Apostles

Introduction

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16

KEY WORDS

Holy Spirit

Power

Witness

AUTHOR OF THE BOOK | Luke is the author of the book of Acts. The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are written as companion volumes. They are part one and part two of the work of Jesus.

DATE OF WRITING | The abrupt ending of the book indicates that it was written immediately after the events described in the book and prior to the death of Paul or the destruction of Jerusalem.

INTERESTING FACT | Luke and Acts make up 28% of the entire New Testament - more than all of the epistles of Paul combined.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS | To give an account of the teachings of the apostles and those who came after Jesus.

The book defends Paul and Christianity in the face of Jewish attacks.

To convey the historical movement of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.



IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

- The Book of Acts is a defense of the apostleship of Paul.
- Acts describes how God used Israel to bring the gospel to the Gentiles
- The Book of Acts relates to us the way in which the Holy Spirit worked and empowered the foundations of the church.

The book takes us through the gospel as it is preached in Jerusalem and to Judea and then north to Samaria and finally to the uttermost part of the world - to far off Rome.

Acts fills in the gap between the Gospels and the Epistles.

RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3).

The Gospels	Acts BRIDGES the Gap	The Epistles
End in Jerusalem with no church		Directed to churches throughout the Roman world
The gospel is given mainly to the Jews		Churches filled with Gentile believers
Ends in Jerusalem		Ends in Rome

Outline of Acts of the Apostles

Prologue (1:1–8)

I. The Witness to Jerusalem (1:9–8:3)

- A. The Anticipation of the Church (1:9–26)
- B. The Founding of the Church (2:1–47)
- C. The Growth of the Church (3:1–8:3)
 - 1. Apostles: Preaching, healing, and enduring persecution (3:1–5:42)
 - 2. Deacons: Praying, teaching, and enduring persecution (6:1–8:3)

II. The Witness to Judea and Samaria (8:4–12:25)

- A. The Gospel to the Samaritans (8:4–25)
- B. The Conversion of a Gentile (8:26–40)
- C. The Conversion of Saul (9:1–31)
- D. The Gospel to Judea (9:32–43)
- E. The Gospel to the Gentiles (10:1–11:30)
- F. The Persecution by Herod (12:1–25)

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 (18:23–21:16)
- E. Paul's Jerusalem and Caesarean Trials (21:17–26:32)

The Difference Between Judas and Peter

R.C. Sproul

The intercession of our Great High Priest is the foundation for our confidence when it comes to our perseverance. It also helps us make sense of the accounts of Peter and Judas, two of Jesus' disciples who experienced a serious fall. One disciple's fall away from Christ is seen as a final and full work of apostasy, whereas the other disciple's fall is not final and full because he is restored. And we see that their crime against Christ was very similar. Judas betrayed Jesus. And that same night, Peter denied Christ. These two men who had been disciples with Jesus during his earthly ministry committed treason against Him in his darkest hour. And there are further similarities in these two examples in that Jesus predicted both Peter's and

Judas' diabolical acts. But we recall that when Jesus said, "One of you will betray me," the disciples said among themselves, "Who is it, Lord? Is it I?" When Judas asked, "Is it I, Rabbi?" Jesus said to him, "You have said so" (Matt. 26:25). Jesus' final words to Judas were "What you are going to do, do quickly" (John 13:27). And He dismissed him from their presence.

When Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny him, Peter protested profusely. "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away," he said (Matt. 26:33). This brings to mind Paul's admonition, "Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12), because Jesus then turned to Simon and said to him in loving terms, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat" (Luke 22:31). Sifting wheat is not a laborious task that only the strong can perform. It may take time and it may be tedious, but it's not labor intensive. In using this metaphor, Jesus is cautioning Simon not to rely on his own strength, because it would be an easy thing for Satan to entice him to fall. Satan is stronger than Peter, and would have no trouble overcoming whatever strength Peter thought he had. Notice, however, that Jesus does not say to Peter, "What you are going to do, do quickly." Our Lord's words to Simon Peter were significantly different from what He said to Judas. He said, "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32).

Notice what Jesus doesn't say. He doesn't simply hope that Peter will be able to resist Satan, or that he will return, or that he will be able to strengthen the brothers. He expresses certainty that Peter will do these things. There was no doubt in Jesus' mind not only that Peter would fall, and fall abysmally, but also that Peter would be restored. Indeed, history testifies that Peter, in spite of this radical and serious fall, nevertheless endured to the end. He repented, he was forgiven, he was restored, and he endured to the end.

Food for Thought

What does Christ's ascension mean for you personally? (See Eph. 2:4–7; Col. 3:1–4; Heb. 7:25)