

First Baptist Church of Progress Village
Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles
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Wednesday Bible Study
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I. SUMMARY

The book of Acts records the activity of the early church. It covers events from the Ascension of Jesus (AD 30) to Paul's ministry in Rome (AD 62). The content of Acts also fills in events between the Gospels and the Epistles.

The book is a valid and accurate history of the church. For thirty years the church grew exponentially from a small group of Jewish believers in Jerusalem to churches across the Roman Empire. Acts first gives the account of Peter's ministry and then Paul's.

- A. Acts provides the transition between Israel and the church.
- B. Acts is the only canonical, historical account of Christianity.
- C. Acts is a sequel to the four Gospels.
- D. Acts gives today's church insight into the early church.
- E. The nature of Acts is action.

II. AUTHOR

The post-apostolic church attributed the writing of Acts to Luke: Clement of Rome, the First Apology of Justin Martyr, the works of Irenaeus, and the Muratorian Fragment.

Luke (Acts 1:1; Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16)

- A. The preface connects Acts to the Gospel of Luke.
- B. The "we" passages show Luke's eyewitness participation in Acts (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16); and the use of the first-person perspective in Acts ("we" passages) indicates an eyewitness account (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16).
- C. Luke did not mention his own name in the book of Acts.
- D. Luke was a Greek physician and highly educated.
- E. The only Gentile author in the New Testament, and wrote more of it than even The Apostle Paul.
- F. Acts is the third-longest book in the New Testament; only Matthew and Luke are longer. Luke and Acts together consist of 30% of the New Testament.

III. DATE OF COMPILATION

- A. Compiled around AD 62
- B. Includes events prior to Paul's death but does not mention his death (AD 65-67).

- C. Does not reference the **destruction** of Jerusalem in AD 70.
- D. The time range of the book of Acts is about **33-35** years.

IV. AUDIENCE

- A. Luke wrote Acts to Theophilus, a Gentile Roman. The name means “**lover** of God.”
- B. Both Acts and Luke are addressed to “Theophilus” (Acts 1:1; Luke 1:3).
- C. Acts 1:1 refers to the author’s “former account” about Jesus.

V. GENRE

Narrative history with journeys and speeches.

Next week, Purpose and Significance of the Book of Acts.

This book is not an exhaustive account of the early church, but it gives emphasis to God’s design for what the church needed to know. Acts was written for a broad audience.