

# Acts

## Original Historical Setting

**Author:** Luke

**Written:** ~60-64 A.D.

**Audience:** First to Theophilus (and possibly Roman officials) and then to Greek Gentiles

**Occasion:** The Book of Acts provides a condensed history of the early Church. As such, it also seems to have possibly been able to serve as a legal brief in defense of the Apostle Paul who was awaiting trial.

### **Timeline:**

~30-35 AD – Pentecost and early Church in Jerusalem

~35-47 AD – The Church grows in Judea and Samaria

~47-49 AD – Paul's first missionary journey

~50-53 AD – Paul's second missionary journey

~53-57 AD – Paul's third missionary journey

## World Events that occur simultaneously

14-37 AD – Tiberius Caesar is Roman Emperor

37-41 AD – Caligula is Roman Emperor

37-44 AD – Herod Agrippa I rules in Judea

41-54 AD – Claudius is Roman Emperor

52-60 AD – Felix is Procurator of Judea

54-68 AD – Nero is Roman Emperor

60-62 AD – Festus is Procurator of Judea

## Features and Structure

**Acts 1:8** provides a useful way of organizing the book.

The Apostles proclaim Jesus in Jerusalem (**CH 1-7**)

The Apostles proclaim Jesus in Judea and Samaria (**CH 8-10**)

The Apostles go to the ends of the earth (**CH 11-28**)

## Genre/Literary style

A historical narrative written in excellent (Koine) Greek

## Key text(s)

**1:8** – Go to Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and ends of the earth

**2:21** – Call on name of the Lord to be saved

**5:29** – Obey God rather than man

**17:23** – The unknown god you worship, Him I proclaim to you

**20:35** – it is more blessed to give than receive

## What to look for

- Notice how Luke includes summaries of early important sermons and speeches, giving examples of a variety of speakers (Peter, Stephen, Paul), audiences (Jewish, Greek, Christian), and circumstances (friendly, hostile).
- This historical narrative is not only the pivotal point between Christ's ministry and work on the cross and the building of His Church, it also provides the background to many of the letters that Paul wrote that comprise much of the New Testament.
- Notice how Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the Apostles as they boldly and effectively proclaim the Gospel to Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria, and the rest of the world.

## Interesting facts

- The historical details in this book are so accurate that they have led archaeologists to the discovery of numerous ancient sites.
- In the second century Irenaeus used the title "Acts of the Apostles" although many suggest a more appropriate title to be "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" or "The Acts of Jesus Christ" based on **Acts 1:1 and 1:8**.
- The distance Paul travelled to get to Rome for His trial was about 2,130 miles (1,920 by sea and 210 by land).

## Memory Verse: Acts 20:24