

Acts – A summary:

In the Preface to Gordon Keddie's commentary he refers to three key areas that the Book of Acts demonstrates for us, namely:

1. The history of the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. The setting out of the doctrine of the church.
3. The striking "evangelistic impulse that bursts out of every page".

Acts – Relevance for us today:

"Here, most personally and immediately are our own 'roots' as the followers of Jesus."

Gordon Keddie - *You are my Witnesses*



"It is both thrilling and wonderful... to think that Jesus did not leave this world and return to the Father's glory without first making arrangements for the on-going work of the gospel here below. What

makes it thrilling is that He did not entrust that work to angels or divine beings but to ordinary men like the Apostles and through them to ordinary people like ourselves. There is a real sense therefore in which we can say that the ministry of Jesus never ends, and is being continued to today in the lives and witness of all Christian believers through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the church. What a great privilege and enormous responsibility we have therefore in being part of the body of Christ in the world."

Peter Williams - *Church on the Move*

Acts – Three Essentials to begin:

There are three "essentials" that occur at the beginning of "mission unstoppable". They set the scene for the rest of the story!

1. The promise of the Holy Spirit (1 v 4 - 8)
2. The ascension of the Lord Jesus (1 v 9 - 11)
3. The necessity of corporate prayer (1 v 12 - 14)

Acts – Useful Commentaries:

In addition to those written by Peter Williams & Gordon Keddie which are mentioned above, other good Commentaries include those by John Calvin, Richard Lenski & Joseph Alexander.



"Learning Together"

An introduction to the

Acts of the Apostles



"The Acts of the Apostles is the companion volume to Luke's Gospel. Both Books are addressed to Theophilus (see Luke 1v3 & Acts 1v1). Some would like to rename the Book, 'the Acts of the Holy Spirit', because, as they point out, the Holy Spirit is mentioned sixty-one times! But this might give the impression that Jesus's work is over & He ceases to be central. Rather, Acts tells how the ascended Jesus continued to work through His Spirit-empowered apostles & people."

Rodger Crooks - *One Lord, One Plan, One People*

Acts:



The writer of the Book is Luke, a physician and of remarkable ability. In his book, *Church on the Move*, Williams says, "It is difficult to see what we owe to Luke. Without his help we should know little, if anything, of the origin and progress of the church, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the organisation of the church and its methods of evangelisation. Also, in a more general way, Acts serves as a link between the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament."

Acts: Contents:

Calvin describes The Acts as "a vast treasure". Peter Williams' book is called "Church on the Move" and the IBS Study booklet calls the Book, "Mission Unstoppable!". The NIV Study Bible refers to it as "a bridge that ties the church with each succeeding age". All of these descriptions are helpful to us in getting to grips with what the Book is going to tell us.

"Luke, in his Gospel, shows what Christ began to do on earth; Acts shows what He continued to do by the Holy Spirit through the disciples.

The ascension of our Lord is the closing scene in Luke.

It is the opening fact in Acts.

The Gospels set forth the Son of Man, who came to die for our sins.

Acts shows the coming of the Son of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospels tell of the crucified and risen Saviour. Acts portrays Him as the ascended and exalted Lord & Leader.

In the Gospels we hear Christ's teachings. In Acts we see the effects of His teachings on the Apostles.

Acts is not a record of the acts of all of the Apostles, as no extensive accounts are given of any of the Apostles except Peter & Paul! It records the acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. His name is mentioned

about seventy times. Look for some of the Holy Spirit in every chapter of this Book."

H. Mears - *What the Bible is all About*

Acts: Timeline



30AD Ascension of Christ

Pentecost and beginnings of the New Testament Church

Acts 1 - 8

32AD Martyrdom of Stephen

Missionary journey of Philip and conversion of the Ethiopian

34AD Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

Acts 9

35AD Paul visits the Jerusalem church for the first time

Acts 10 - 11

44AD James is martyred

Peter is miraculously freed from prison

Acts 12

47AD Paul begins his first missionary journey with Barnabas (& for a time, John Mark)

Acts 13

49AD Paul begins his second missionary journey with Silas (& later, Timothy & Luke)

Acts 16

52AD Paul begins his third missionary journey with Timothy & Titus (& others joining them at various points)

Acts 19

56AD Paul imprisoned in Caesarea

Acts 22

59AD Paul imprisoned in Rome

Acts 27 - 28

61AD Paul makes his final travels

Not recorded in Acts

64AD Great fire at Rome - many Christians put to death

Not recorded in Acts

64AD or **67AD** both Peter & Paul are martyred

Not recorded in Acts

All dates are approximate

