

“Acts” of the Holy Spirit

The New Plan

Lesson 1

Acts 1

Acts is a fast-paced, action adventure book which chronicles the birth and growth of the early church from the Jewish center of Jerusalem to the Gentile capital Rome. In addition, it is a bridge-like sequel to the Gospels that precede it and background for the epistles that follow. But most of all, Acts is a tribute to the transforming power of God, as evidenced in the Apostles' lives. Their change from fearful weaklings to irrepressible dynamos of power gives us hope and encouragement for today.

Read Acts 1:1-11

1. What did Luke deal with in his first book? What was the last thing Jesus did on earth? (1:1-2)

2. Now Luke gives us a more detailed account of the 40 days Jesus appeared on earth.
 - 2.A. What was Jesus doing? (1 :3)

 - 2.B. What command did the risen Lord give his Apostles in verse 4?

 - 2.C. Why do you think they needed to wait? What are the implications for us? Can you share an experience in “God’s waiting room”?

3. Jesus said He had talked to His followers about this “gift” previously. One occasion is recorded in John 16:5-16. Read this passage.
 - 3.A. Why was it good for Jesus to physically leave them? (John 16:7)

 - 3.B. What are some of the ministries of this "Counselor"? (John 16:8, 13, 14; John 14:16-18, 26)

3.C. Can you recall a specific experience when the Holy Spirit ministered to you in one or more of these areas? If so, which ones? Please share.

4.A. With Jesus vindicated as the Messiah by His resurrection, the Apostles' question in Acts 1:6 is natural. What was the question? What kind of kingdom do you think they had in mind?

4.B. In 1:7, Jesus did not deny that He would one day establish that kingdom. However, who did He say would determine its timing? (See also Mark 13:32)

5.A. In the meantime, while waiting for the kingdom to be established, what were Christ's followers to be doing? Who would be their source of strength and power? (1:8)

5.B. In your opinion, what is a "witness"? Have you ever been someone's "witness"? If so, what did you do? In what ways can we be a "witness" for Christ? Discuss.

5.C. (*Challenge Question*) List the places where the Apostles would be witnesses in 1:8. Look at the map. Do you see any significance in the order? What can you learn about missions and/or evangelism from this list?

Note: Acts 1:8 is actually an outline of the book.

Acts 1:1 through 6:7 describes the believers' witness in Jerusalem.

Acts 6:8 through 9:31 describes the believers' witness in all Judea and Samaria.

Acts 9:32 through 28:31 describes the believers' witness to the ends of the earth: Rome.

6.A. What happened in verse 9? Who joined the Apostles as they watched Jesus ascend and what question did they ask? (1:10-11a)

6.B. What assurance is given the Eleven in 1:11b? (See Revelation 1:7; Luke 21:25-27; and Zechariah 14:3-11 for interesting insight concerning this event.)

7. According to the account in Luke 24:50-52, what was the emotional state of the Apostles after the ascension? What did they do as a result?

After Jesus' ascension, the eleven Apostles walked less than a mile back into Jerusalem to await the promised "gift."

Read Acts 1:12-26

8.A. Where did they go? How many believers were present? (1:12, 13, 15)

8.B. What were they all doing as they waited? (1:14) Have you ever prayed with others toward a common goal? If so, describe the experience. What did you learn?

9.A. What information concerning Judas do we learn from Acts 1:18-19 and Matthew 27:3-10.

9.B. During these ten days of waiting, Peter raised the issue of a replacement for Judas. (1:15-17, 20) What did Peter say was the specific qualification for apostleship. (1:21-22)

9.C. How did the apostles go about choosing a replacement? (1:21-23, 24-25,26)

Note: The practice of "casting lots" was common in the Old Testament (Proverbs 16:33), but this is the only time the Apostles did this in the New Testament. The name of each candidate was written on a stone which was placed in a vessel and shaken. The first to fall out obtained the office.