



*Lifegroups*<sup>x</sup>

STUDY GUIDE

**THE  
BOOK  
OF ACTS**

FALL SEMESTER 2019

# SCHEDULE

## Reading by Week

- Week One (September 15–September 21) Chapters 1 & 2
- Week Two (September 22–September 28) Chapters 3, 4, & 5
- Week Three (September 29–October 5) Chapters 6, 7, & 8
- Week Four (October 6–October 12) Chapters 9 & 10
- Week Five (October 13–October 19) Chapters 11, 12, & 13
- Week Six (October 20–October 26) Chapters 14, 15, & 16
- Week Seven (October 27–November 2) Chapters 17, 18, & 19
- Week Eight (November 3–November 9) Chapters 20, 21, & 22
- Week Nine (November 10–November 16) Chapters 23, 24, & 25
- Week Ten (November 17–November 23) Chapters 26, 27, & 28

# OVERVIEW

## **The Book of Acts** *(written by Luke around 62 A.D.)*

### **Purpose:**

The key to the purpose of Acts is in the first verse, where Luke implies that the book is a continuation of his Gospel. The Gospel tells what "Jesus began both to do and teach," and Acts tells what the risen Lord continues to do and teach through the Holy Spirit.

### **Personal Application:**

Acts is a record of practicing Christianity under the power of the Holy Spirit. It teaches believers how to live together in meaningful Christian fellowship, sharing freely with one another (2:42; 4:32-35).

Conversely, Acts also shows that Christians inevitably will have disagreements (6:1; 11:1-3; 15:2, 7; 15:36-39), but God gives wisdom and grace to settle differences (15:12-22). Even though the early church had its share of strong personalities, there was still a willingness to listen and to submit to one another (15:6-14).

Probably the most prominent characteristic of the early Christians was their spiritual power. They fasted and prayed fervently (2:42; 6:4; 13:3), and their faith released the miracle-working power of God (3:16). Acts is about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Signs followed those who believed! (See Mark 16:17, 18.)

### **Christ Revealed:**

The Book of Acts consistently records key apostolic proclamations of the gospel of Jesus Christ:

- Jesus is presented as a historical figure, a Man empowered to perform signs and wonders (see 2:22; 10:38).
- Jesus' death can be attributed equally to human wickedness and to God's purpose. On the one hand, the Jews had "crucified" Him "by lawless hands" (2:23; 3:13-15; 4:10; 5:30; 7:52; 10:39; 13:28). On the other hand, Jesus had been "delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God" (2:23; 17:3).
- Jesus' resurrection fulfills OT prophecy and demonstrates that God had reversed the death sentence proclaimed against Jesus by raising Him from the dead (1:3; 2:24-32; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40, 41; 13:30-37; 17:31).
- Jesus has been exalted to a position of unique and universal dominion (2:33-36; 3:21; 5:31). From that place of supreme honor and executive power, Jesus had poured out the promised Holy Spirit (2:33), who bears witness to Him (5:32) and empowers believers (1:8).

- Jesus had been “ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead” (10:42) and will return in triumph at the end of the age (1:11). Meanwhile, those who believe in Him will receive forgiveness of sins (2:21; 3:19; 4:12; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38, 39) and “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:38). Those who do not believe in Him are destined for terrible things (3:23).

### **The Holy Spirit at Work:**

The power of the Holy Spirit through the church is the most striking feature in Acts. The work of the Spirit in this book, however, cannot be understood without seeing the relationship between Acts and the Gospels, which demonstrates an essential continuity. Both the public ministry of Jesus in the Gospels and the public ministry of the church in Acts begin with a life-changing encounter with the Spirit; both are essential accounts of the results of that event.

The power of the Spirit in Jesus’ life authorized Him to preach the kingdom of God and to demonstrate kingdom power by healing the sick, casting out demons, and setting the captives free (Luke 4:14-19; Matt 4:23). The same Spirit power in Acts 2 gave the same authority to the disciples. Jesus is the prototype of the Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered life (10:38); the Book of Acts is the story of the disciples receiving what Jesus received in order to do what Jesus did.

Luke’s terminology in describing people’s experience with the Holy Spirit in Acts is fluid. He is more interested in conveying a relational dynamic than in delineating a precisely worded theology. Note the different ways Luke describes people’s encounter with the Spirit, which are all essential equivalents of Jesus’ promise that the church would “be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (1:5; see its immediate fulfillment in 2:4).

- They were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (2:4; 9:17)
- “They received the Holy Spirit” (8:17)
- “The Holy Spirit fell upon [them]” (10:44)
- “The Holy Spirit had been poured out on [them]” (10:45)
- “The Holy Spirit came upon them” (19:6)

Three of these five instances record specific, special manifestations of the Spirit in which the people themselves participated. Those on the Day of Pentecost and the Gentiles of Cornelius’ house spoke with other tongues (2:4; 10:46); the Ephesians “spoke with tongues and prophesied” (19:6). It is generally agreed that there was also some type of manifestation because Simon “saw” that the Holy Spirit had been given (8:18).

It can be rightly said that the Book of Acts is about the acts of the Holy Spirit who fills and empowers us.

# GROUP EXPECTATIONS

- Be faithful in **attendance**.
- Come **prepared**.
- eXemplify **humility** by not interrupting or being argumentative.
- Things shared are **confidential** and not to be shared outside the group without permission.
- Passionately **participate** in the discussion.  
If you're shy, pick out a couple items ahead of time that were meaningful to you.  
If you're talkative, please share while remembering to allow others the opportunity to speak.
- Commit to **pray** for one another
- Be **authentic**. It's okay to be real, imperfect people serving a perfect God. Integrity is the art of being the same person everywhere you go...No phonies.



# HOW TO BEGIN EACH READING

- Pray before you begin, asking Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what He has to say to you.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)*

- Be eXpectant that God is going to speak to you and reveal new truths.

*Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. – Mark 11:24 (NKJV)*

- Read/study daily, allowing yourself time to hear God speak to you through His Word.

*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. – Joshua 1:8 (NKJV)*

- Read and meditate on the passage before consulting a commentary. This allows Holy Spirit the freedom to personally teach before the commentary influences you.

- Keep a notebook to write down what the Holy Spirit teaches you and what you hear Him saying to you through the Word. Use these notes both for your own personal reflection and for sharing in the group discussion.

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. – John 14:26*

# WEEKLY APPLICATIONS

## Personal Study/ Meditation Questions

Please use these questions as a guide to help you dig into God's Word as you read each week. Note: There may not always be an answer for all of these questions.

- Who are the main people?
- What is happening in the passage? Try to imagine yourself as one of the characters.
- What does it say about who Jesus is and how He works?
- What does it say about who Holy Spirit is and how Holy Spirit works?
- What are the main commands? Are there any consequences listed for obeying or not obeying?
- Are there any promises? If so, is the promise conditional?
- Which verses do you feel led to memorize and declare over your life?
- What is Holy Spirit revealing or asking you to do through His Word today?
- Ask yourself, "How does this reading apply to my life right now?"

## Group Discussions

**Facilitator:** Divide the lesson into smaller sections for reading aloud. Divide by chapter or scene. Use the questions below to stimulate discussion, if needed.

**Participants:** Please feel free to use the answers to your "personal study/meditation questions" to participate in the conversation.

- What did we learn about who God the Father, Jesus the Son, and Holy Spirit are and/or how each works?
- What truth or lesson was either newly revealed to you or has Holy Spirit eXpanded your understanding of?
- What impact have these scriptures had on you as you studied this week?
- What verses have you memorized this week?
- How have you eXpanded in your spiritual growth?
- How might you eXtend what you've learned to impact your life or others?
- How has the eXchange of ideas in this group helped you?



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Service Times: Sundays @ 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.