



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

ACTS



Acts #2 – 1:12-26

Acts 1:14 – All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

Things going at the moment:

- **Celebration Dinner: Sacrificing the Fattened Calf** - To thank God for all he's done over the last year! All invited!
 - 4:30pm 25th March
 - In lieu of evening service
 - Please Contact Dylan and Averill for help with catering!
- **Morning service is the ordination of Pastor Matt!** Although he is not excited, we are excited for him and want to celebrate his ministry. Please try attend to support him!
- **Tri Church Summit Dates:** 25th –27th May. More info to come



THE BOOK OF ACTS (ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTES)

INTRODUCTION

Acts is unique among the NT writings, in that its main purpose is to record a selective history of the early church following the resurrection of Christ. It is the second part of a two-volume work, with the Gospel of Luke being the first volume. Both books are dedicated to a person named Theophilus, and Acts 1:1 explicitly refers back to Luke's Gospel.

AUTHOR

Both the Gospel of Luke and Acts are anonymous, but the earliest discussions attribute them to Luke. The name "Luke" appears only three times in the NT: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24. All three references are in epistles written by Paul from prison, and all three mention Luke's presence with Paul.

DATE

Some scholars date Acts c. A.D. 70. This assumes that Acts was written *after* the Gospel of Luke (Acts 1:1) and that Luke used the Gospel of Mark as one of his sources (Luke 1:1–2). (Early tradition has Mark's Gospel written after Peter's death, which most likely occurred in the mid-60s.) Others date Acts in the 70s or 80s. They hold that the primary purpose of Acts was to give an account of how and where the gospel spread, rather than to be a defense of Paul's ministry (thus accounting for the omission of the events at the end of his life). Thus the gospel spread to "the end of the earth" (1:8)—that is, to Rome, which represented the end of the earth as the center of world power. But a number of scholars date Acts as early as A.D. 62, basing their view primarily on the abrupt ending of the book. Since Acts ends with Paul in Rome under house arrest, awaiting his trial before Caesar (28:30–31), it would seem strange if Luke knew about Paul's release (a proof of his innocence), possibly about his defense before Caesar (fulfilling 27:24), and about his preaching the gospel as far as Spain (cf. note on 28:30–31), but then did not mention these events at the end of Acts. It seems most likely, then, that the abrupt ending is an indication that Luke wrote Acts c. A.D. 62, before these events occurred.

THEME

In Acts, believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ among both Jews and Gentiles, and in doing this they establish the church. In addition to this, Acts explains how Christianity, although it is new, is in reality the one true religion, rooted in God's promises from the beginning of time. In the ancient world it was important that a religion be shown to have stood the test of time. Thus Luke presents the church as the fulfillment and extension of God's promises.



KEY THEMES

The major themes of Acts can be placed under the general category of “witness,” as set forth in the thematic verse (Acts 1:8).

1. The witness is worldwide—Judea, Samaria, the “end of the earth.” [1:8](#)
2. The witness is inclusive of all kinds of people: Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, the physically handicapped, pagan mountain people, a prominent merchant woman, a jailer and his family, Greek philosophers, governors, and kings. [chs. 2–5; 8:4–40; 10:1–11:18; 14:8–18; 16:11–15, 25–34; 17:22–31; 24:24–27; 26:1–29](#)
3. The witness is guided by the providence of God, who preserves his witnesses for their testimony through all sorts of threats: murderous plots, angry mobs, storms at sea, and constant trials before the authorities, to name only a few. [4:5–22; 18:12–16; 19:23–41; 23:12–22; 24:1–23; 27:21–26](#)
4. On the other hand, faithful witnesses must be prepared to suffer, even to die for their testimony to Christ. [5:41–42; 7:54–60](#)
5. The power behind the witness is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is granted to all believers, both male and female, whom he empowers for witness. The Spirit guides witnesses in moments of special inspiration and is behind every advance in the Christian mission. [1:8; 2:1–13, 18, 38; 4:8; 7:55; 8:17; 10:44; 13:2–12; 19:6, 21](#)
6. In the early days, the witness was often accompanied by “signs and wonders,” the “wonders” being the miracles worked by the apostles, which served as “signs” pointing to the truth of the gospel. Miracles usually opened a door for witness. e.g., [ch. 3](#)
7. Effective witness demands the unity of the church. [2:42–47; 4:32–37; 5:12–14](#)
8. A key component of the witness is the resurrection of Jesus. For the Jews the resurrection demonstrated that Jesus was the promised Messiah. For the Gentiles it pointed to his role as judge and established their need to repent. [1:22; 2:22–36; 17:30–31](#)
9. Acceptance of the message borne by the witnesses depends both on human response and on the divine sovereignty behind the response. e.g., [2:47; 11:18; 13:48](#)
10. The OT Scriptures point to the death and resurrection of Christ, and the prophecies that point to Christ and to his followers must be fulfilled ([1:16](#)). (The numerous OT citations in the sermons of Acts illustrate this point.)
11. The witness to the gospel calls for a response. Most speeches in Acts end with some sort of invitation. Representative of this is Paul’s exchange with Agrippa II. [26:27–29](#)
12. The response called for is repentance of one’s sins in the name of Christ, which brings forgiveness of sins. e.g., [2:38](#)
13. Witnesses must always maintain integrity before the world. In [18:12–15; 23:29; 25:18;](#)



Acts this is illustrated by the many remarks from the authorities about the Christians giving no evidence of any wrongdoing.	26:31–32
14. Christian witnesses continue the ministry that Christ “began” (1:1). This is illustrated throughout Acts with the many implicit parallels between the experiences of the apostles and those of Christ: his miracles, the forebodings of his journey to Jerusalem, the cry of the angry Jewish mob for his death, and his trial before the governor and the king.	20:36–21:16 (cf. Luke 9:22 ; 13:31–34 ; 18:31–34); 21:36 ; 22:21 (cf. Luke 23:18); 24:1–26:32 (cf. Luke 23:1–25)
15. Faithful witness brings great results. Acts is all about the victory of the Christian gospel. The witness brings results among both Jews and Gentiles. The book ends on this note, with Paul bearing his faithful witness to “all” who came to him in Rome.	4:4 ; 11:20–21 ; 13:48–49 ; 17:4 ; 18:6–11 ; 21:20 ; 28:30–31

PURPOSE, OCCASION, AND BACKGROUND

Luke’s stated purpose for both of his books is provided at the beginning of the first (Luke 1:1–4). He had a historian’s interest in providing an “orderly account” of “the things that have been accomplished among us.” One would assume the latter statement applied both to the ministry of Jesus (the gospel) and to that of the early church (Acts). Dedicating the work to Theophilus, he wanted him to have “certainty” (a firm foundation) for what he had been taught. The exact nature of Luke’s purpose depends on how one identifies Theophilus. He evidently had already been instructed in the Christian way and may have been a new convert or a seeker on the verge of commitment. Since “Theophilus” means “lover of God,” it is also possible that Luke is challenging the devotion of his readers rather than addressing his book to just one of them.

Luke probably had a number of purposes for writing Acts. These are best determined through the emphases or themes found throughout the book.

HISTORY OF SALVATION SUMMARY

After his ascension (1:9; cf. Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:9–10) Jesus sends the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28–32) to empower the apostles as witnesses (Acts 1:8), to spread the message of the gospel (Isa. 52:7), and to draw to himself people from the nations (Matt. 28:19).



THE SETTING OF ACTS

c. A.D. 30–60

The book of Acts records the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, thus fulfilling the risen Christ's words to his apostles in Acts 1:8.





#2 ACTS 1:12-26

REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion by reflecting on the ideas in this week's message. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who have missed the sermons on Sunday
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?

DIG INTO THE WORD

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

In this passage we see the disciples navigating through the awkward space between the ascension of the resurrected Jesus, and the promised Holy Spirit.

And in this space of waiting on God's promise, they seek God's will for the replacement of Judas: **(1) IN PRAYER, (2) UNDER SCRIPTURE, AND (3) WITH COMMUNITY.**

Acts 1:12-26

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶ "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." ¹⁸ (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰ "For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

"May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it';

and



“Let another take his office.”

²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” ²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

OTHER TEXTS:

The Will of God:

Ephesians 1:11 *In him [Christ] we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.*

1 Thess. 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

Prayer:

James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

Scripture:

Psalms 119:105: *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

Community:

Proverbs 12:15 *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.*

Proverbs 15:22 *Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.*

Proverbs 19:20 *Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.*

1 Kings 12: *The foolishness of King Rehoboam*

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. DISCUSS: How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?



2. UNDERSTANDING: Do you remember the three types of God's will Mike mentioned on Sunday? [**Leaders Notes:** (A) *God's Sovereign Will or His Will of Decree which is unbreakable and shall come to pass;* (B) *God's General will or His Will of Command or Disposition which is what he finds intends for his creation yet does not enforce in the same way;* and (C) *God's Specific Will or His Will of Direction or Guidance.*]
3. DISCUSS: What have been your experience with discerning the will of God for you?
4. IN PRAYER (v14 and v24-25):
 - a. Has there been time's in your life when you've found God has responded clearly to your prayer for direction?
 - b. DO you get frustrated with God's silence at times? Do you think this might be due to a lack of deep consistent prayer? If not, what do you think God is trying to teach you?
 - c. James 1:5 tells us to ask God for wisdom. If we have been invited to ask, we should receive that invitation with joy! Where do you need to ask God for wisdom today?
5. UNDER SCRIPTURE (v20):
 - a. Does the bible have authority over your life and faith or is it just a religious tool for you to use at your leisure?
 - b. Are there parts of the word you don't want to obey? What are they? What would it look like to submit yourself to God's will in that?
6. WITH COMMUNITY (v15):
 - a. This massive decision to replace Judas was done in community. Proverbs repeatedly tells us that the definition of wisdom is the willingness to seek out and heed godly wisdom (see verses above). Are you willing to seek wisdom when you need it? IF not, why not? Is there anything in your life you'd like to bring to the group tonight?
 - b. But not all wisdom is godly. Sometimes we just find voices in our lives to tell us what we want to hear, not what God wants us to hear. Where have you built an echo chamber to hear your own desires justified? Is there some voices you need to remove from your life?
7. IN FAITH:
 - a. And finally, when we don't have a strong sense of God's direction but must make a decision, we must make the decision in faith, trusting that God will be with us instead of fearing that we are ruining God's plan for us. What does it look like to make directions in faith?

PRAY

Pray together for God's will for our church and for each other.



HELPFUL NOTES

NOTES ON KEY TEXTS

Acts 1:1–2:13 Preparation for Witness. Acts opens with the account of the Spirit's descent at Pentecost. Chapter 1 relates the preparation for that event, which occurs in 2:1–13.

Acts 1:12–26 Matthias Replaces Judas. The remainder of ch. 1 focuses on two events preparatory to Pentecost: the gathering of the band of followers to pray for the coming gift of the Spirit (vv. 12–14) and the selection of Matthias to replace Judas (vv. 15–26).

Acts 1:12 A Sabbath day's journey was the maximum distance one could travel on the Sabbath without it being considered work, according to later Jewish tradition. The rabbis set the limit at 2,000 cubits (about 0.6 miles or 1 km).

Acts 1:14 The women likely included those who ministered to Jesus' followers (Luke 8:2–3), traveled with them from Galilee (Luke 23:55), and witnessed the crucifixion and empty tomb (Luke 23:49, 55–56; 24:2–11). Jesus had four brothers—James, Joses, Judas, and Simon (Mark 6:3).

Acts 1:15 In Acts 1–15, Peter is the spokesman for the apostles.

Acts 1:16 The Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David's one of the clearest affirmations in Scripture that the Bible is the inspired word of God. The Holy Spirit "spoke" through David's mouth in the sense that David's written words were inspired by the third person of the Trinity (God the Holy Spirit) foretelling events that took place a thousand years later (see v. 20; cf. Ps. 69:25; 109:8).

Acts 1:18 this man acquired a field. That is, the field was acquired indirectly by Judas, through the agency of the chief priests. As Matt. 27:3–7 records, Judas brought the 30 pieces of silver back to the chief priests and elders. The chief priests then purchased the potter's field with Judas's money, with the same effect as if Judas had himself made the purchase. he burst open. The two accounts of Judas's death are complementary retellings of the same event, each focusing in different ways on the same details. Both accounts involve: Judas's remorse, the purchase of a field with his ill-gotten money, its reputation as "the Field of Blood," and Judas's gory death (for the location of "the Field of Blood," see note on Matt. 27:7–8). The main difference is that Matt. 27:5 speaks of Judas hanging himself, while Acts speaks of his body falling headlong and bursting open with all his entrails spilling out. One possible explanation suggests that the field overlooked a cliff, and as Judas hanged himself, the rope (or the branch) may have broken, with his body falling headlong over the edge of the cliff onto jagged rocks below. Others have suggested that Judas's body may have remained hanging for some time decaying and decomposing ("swelling up," ESV footnote), eventually falling to the ground and bursting open in its decomposed condition. In either case, there is no reason to see the two accounts as contradictory, since they focus on complementary details of the same event. In both accounts the effect of Satan's control over Judas's life is clear, demonstrating the general principle



that Satan brings total destruction and disgrace to the person who comes under his control, for “he was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).

Acts 1:20 Judas’s death was the fulfillment of Ps. 69:25, and his place among the disciples was now empty. Let another take his office. The selection of Matthias (Acts 1:26) as the twelfth apostle was a direct fulfillment of prophecy (cf. v. 16; Ps. 109:8), carried out under the direction of the Lord. The addition of this new twelfth apostle would complete the new nucleus for the people of God, parallel to the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel in the OT. Though these 12 would remain the core group of the apostles (see Luke 22:30; 1 Cor. 15:5; Rev. 21:12, 14), a few more later became “apostles,” including at least Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14) and James, the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19). However, apostles were not replaced from this point onward: in Acts 12, James the brother of John was not replaced after his execution.

Acts 1:23–24 Two men, Joseph and Matthias, met the necessary requirements to be considered for apostleship. The group turned the matter over to the “Lord” (v. 24; that is, the Lord Jesus, who had chosen all the other apostles), praying that he would make his choice known.

Acts 1:26 The lots were probably marked stones that were placed in a pot and then shaken out (cf. 1 Chron. 26:13–16). This does not imply that people should cast lots to make their decisions today, for there is no such command in any NT letter or in any of Jesus’ earthly teachings. The appointment of a twelfth apostle was a unique situation, a choice that was made by Jesus himself. In the rest of the NT, the elders and deacons and other church leaders are chosen according to decisions made by human beings, whether by an apostle or by others in the churches (see Acts 6:3–6; 14:23; 15:22; 2 Cor. 8:19; cf. 1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9).

REFERENCE:

Developed with the help of the following:

- ESV Study Bible, Crossway.