

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS

## THE AUTHOR

### The Holy Spirit

Whenever beginning a study of biblical text it is important to remember that the ultimate Author of that text is the Holy Spirit.

Biblical inspiration is ***Verbal Plenary Inspiration***.

2 Peter 1:19-21 - When Peter says "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation," it means that there is no part of Scripture that came from a human source. The writers of Holy Scripture spoke as the Holy Spirit "moved," or guided, them. That is ***Verbal Inspiration***.

1 Corinthians 2:10-16 - Paul further defines the nature of ***Verbal Inspiration***. Where some have wrongly described biblical inspiration as the Holy Spirit "moving" the thoughts, or ideas, of the apostles, Paul makes it clear that the Holy Spirit gave them the actual words that were written on the page. ***Verbal Inspiration*** doesn't mean that the ideas were inspired but that Scripture is ***Word for Word Inspired!***

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - This passage also emphasizes the Verbal nature of biblical inspiration in the Greek word translated "inspiration." The literal definition of that word is ***"God Breathed."*** So, Paul literally said "All Scripture is breathed out by God." That is, what the biblical writers wrote was spoken to them by God directly by the Holy Spirit moving them to use God's own words.

These passages, along with others like 2 Peter 1:3, also so that biblical inspiration is Plenary - meaning "entirely" or "completely." That is, ***"All Scripture,"*** from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, is entirely - completely - inspired. We don't pick and choose which parts we "think" are inspired. We take all of it as the inspired word of God!

### Luke - The Human Writer

The same human writer as the Gospel of Luke

Both The Gospel of Luke and Acts are addressed to the same person - Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).

The style and vocabulary of both Luke and Acts are very similar. There are about fifty words unique to Luke and Acts not used elsewhere in the New Testament.

Luke was a traveling companion of Paul and uses first-person plural pronouns in the sections where he was with the apostle (Acts 16:10; 20:4-6; 28:16; cf. Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24).

## THE DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The book ends with Paul in Roman imprisonment. The most likely date of writing would be while Luke was with Paul at this time ***in Rome, between AD 62-64.***

## THE PURPOSE

## **Luke wrote a two part history of the church.**

Part 1: The Founder and Head of the Church - the Gospel of Luke.

Part 2: The Establishment and Growth of the Church - the Book of Acts

The Gospel of Luke focuses on the work of Jesus, ***the Son of God***, to fulfill the Old Covenant and prepare for the New Covenant.

The Book of Acts focuses on the work of ***the Holy Spirit of God*** to enable the apostles for taking the gospel of Christ to the entire world.

## **Key verses in each chapter of Acts**

1:8; 2:38; 3:19; 4:19-20; 5:29; 6:1; 7:55; 8:26; 9:9; 10:34-35; 11:22; 12:2-3; 13:2; 14:8; 15:2; 16:14; 17:23; 18:8; 19:24; 20:28; 21:23-24; 22:16; 23:6; 24:25; 25:10; 26:28; 27:20; 28:30

## **Key points in each chapter of Acts**

Acts 1 - The ascension of Christ; the appointment of Matthias as an apostle.

Acts 2 - The baptism of the Holy Spirit and establishment of the church.

Acts 3 - Healing of the lame man and Peter's second gospel sermon.

Acts 4 - Peter and John arrested; the benevolence of the Jerusalem church.

Acts 5 - Ananias and Sapphira lie to God; apostles arrested, tried, and released.

Acts 6 - The Hellenist widows neglected; seven chosen to serve the church.

Acts 7 - Stephen's sermon and martyrdom.

Acts 8 - Philip preaches Jesus in Samaria; the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch.

Acts 9 - The conversion of Saul of Tarsus; Peter heals Aeneas and raises Dorcas.

Acts 10 - Peter's vision and preaching the gospel to the gentile household of Cornelius.

Acts 11 - Peter's defense of taking the gospel to gentiles; beginning of the church at Antioch.

Acts 12 - The apostle James killed by Herod; Peter imprisoned and freed by an angel; Herod eaten by worms.

Acts 13 - Paul and Barnabas selected as the first missionaries; preaching in Cyprus and Pisidia.

Acts 14 - Preaching in Iconium and Lystra.

Acts 15 - The Jerusalem counsel regarding Judaizers; Paul and Barnabas go separate ways.

Acts 16 - Conversion of Lydia and the Philippian Jailor.

Acts 17 - Preaching in Thessalonica and Paul's sermon on Mars Hill.

Acts 18 - The Corinthian church established and Apollos taught the way more

completely.

Acts 19 - Twelve Ephesians "re-baptized"; the riot at Ephesus.

Acts 20 - The Troas church meets on Sunday; Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders.

Acts 21 - Paul's journey to Jerusalem; Paul arrested in Jerusalem.

Acts 22 - Paul's defense to the multitude and claim of Roman citizenship.

Acts 23 - Paul's defense before the Sanhedrin; Paul sent to Caesarea.

Acts 24 - Paul's defense before Felix.

Acts 25 - Paul appeals to Caesar.

Acts 26 - Paul's defense before Agrippa.

Acts 27 - Paul's journey to Rome and shipwrecked along the way.

Acts 28 - Paul reaches Rome and spends two years under house arrest.

## **BASIC OUTLINE OF ACTS**

Our study will follow an expanded version of this basic outline from Acts 1:8.

- I. THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED IN JERUSALEM (1-7).**
  - A. THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM WITH POWER (1-2).**
  - B. The growth of the church in Jerusalem (3-7).
- II. THE CHURCH SCATTERED THROUGHOUT JUDEA AND SAMARIA (8-12).**
  - A. The church extended geographically (8-9).
  - B. The church extended racially (10-12).
- III. THE CHURCH SPREADS TO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE WORLD (13-28).**
  - A. First missionary journey (13-14).
  - B. Second missionary journey (15-18:22).
  - C. Third missionary journey (18:23-21:14).
  - D. Paul in the hands of the enemy (21:15-28:31).

