

The Book of Acts

Growth of the New Testament Church

Introduction

2

- The Author was clearly a companion of Paul. By eliminating other companions, Luke is identified.
- Note in Acts 1:8 that the author mentions his “former treatise” and the recipient “Theophilus”. These point us to Luke 1:3
- Luke was a physician (doctor) and he often mentions medical terms (Acts 1:3; 3:7; 9:18, 33, 13:11; 28:1-10) Ryrie Study Bible.

Introduction

3

- Luke probably wrote this while with Paul in Rome. He must have written it before the burning of Rome (A.D. 64). Luke neither mentions Paul's martyrdom (A.D. 68) nor Jerusalem's destruction (A.D. 70).
- The theme is the spread of Christianity from Pentecost until Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (about 30 years).

The Recipient of the Book

4

- Theophilus
 - His name means, “friend of God” or “lover of God”.
 - He is the same person that Luke addressed as the recipient of the Gospel of Luke.
 - Easton’s Bible Dictionary points out that he was probably a Roman.
 - In Luke 1:3, Luke addresses him as “most excellent”. He must then have been a person of rank, maybe a Roman officer.

Connection to Luke's Gospel, v.1-5

5

- His Gospel told of what Jesus **DID** and **TAUGHT**, v.1
- Once Christ ascended, the Holy Spirit gave them commandments, v.2
- Jesus showed Himself alive after His passion, v.3
 - His “passion” was His suffering on the cross for us.
 - Luke mentions, “infallible proofs” or plainly known proofs.
 - They saw Him 40 days. Jesus spoke of the coming Kingdom.
- The believers were to wait in Jerusalem, v.4
- They would be baptised in the Holy Spirit, v.5

Being baptised in the Spirit is not the same as water baptism. In **Matthew 3:11**, John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize you with (or in) the Holy Spirit and with (or in) fire. Jesus does the baptising, not the Holy Spirit. At the moment of salvation, Christ immerses the believer in the Holy Spirit. Right then, the Holy Spirit indwells and seals the believer eternally. The believer then is able to be filled with the Spirit, as the conditions for filling are met. Jesus will baptise unbelievers in fire on Judgment Day. The baptism on Pentecost was unique as they were already believers. Remember, Acts is a transition book between OT and NT.

Baptised with the Holy Spirit

6

The Promise of Power, v.6-8

7

- The disciples asked Jesus to explain His calendar, v.6
- Jesus said that the Father did not want them to know the details on His calendar, v.7
- Jesus explained what they DID need to know, v.8
 - They would receive power to witness
 - It would be after the Holy Spirit arrived upon them.
 - Their witness was to begin in Jerusalem.
 - Next, they must witness in their state of Judaea.
 - Then, move on to Samaria and to the rest of the world.

The Apostles were the first ones directly sent out as Christ's witnesses. However, as we will learn later in this book, they were certainly not the ONLY ones to witness for Christ. In Acts 8:3-4, we read that persecuted men and women scattered to save their lives and went everywhere preaching the Word. The word "preaching" means to announce glad tidings. The Thessalonian believers (1Th 1:8) sounded out the word of the Lord to all the areas around them. We may confidently affirm that witnessing is the duty of EVERY Christian.

Was the command in Acts 1:8 just for the Apostles?

8

Christ's Ascension to Heaven, v.9-11

9

- While Jesus spoke to the disciples, He was lifted up and hidden from their sight by a cloud, v.9
- As they gazed at the clouds, two men stood nearby dressed in white, v.10
- The men asked why the Galileans were gazing into heaven.
 - They promised that this same Jesus which they saw taken up, would come again in like manner (Rapture, 1Th 4:16-17; Revelation, Re 1:7).
 - Both the clothing and the message of these “men” indicate that they were angels sent from God.

Prayerful Waiting, v.12-14

10

- The disciples returned to Jerusalem, v.12
 - Their walk was a Sabbath Day's journey.
 - That is about 2000 paces, about 1.5 km.
 - The day the Lord ascended must have been a Sabbath Day.
- Luke names the eleven disciples, v.13
- The disciples, the women, Jesus' mother and brothers ...
 - All continued with one accord, unanimous.
 - They were all praying and supplicating (i.e., asking)
 - By this time, Jesus' four brothers had believed (Mt 13:55).

Peter's Challenge to Replace Judas, v.15-22

11

- Peter stood up to speak to the 120 present.
 - At least 17 were men (11 disciples, 4 brothers, 2 men voted on), not including the men from whom the two were chosen.
 - Peter applied David's prophecy, v.16. He believed the Holy Spirit inspired David.
 - He may have been thinking of **Psalm 41:9**.
 - Peter described Judas' death, v.17-19.
 - Matthew says he hanged himself. Luke says he fell and smashed.
 - It must have been over a cliff and the rope must have broken.

Peter's Challenge to Replace Judas, v.15-22

12

- Peter quoted from Psalm 69:25; Psalm 109:8, v.20
- He suggested they choose a replacement, v.21-22
- The candidate must be ...
 - A man who had travelled with them during all of Jesus' ministry, v.21
 - A man who had been with them since John's baptism, v.22
 - A man who had witnessed the risen Christ, v.22

Choice of Matthias, v.23-26

13

- Two candidates were chosen, v.23
 - Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus
 - Matthias
- They prayed for God's direction, v.24-25
 - They acknowledged God's omniscience
 - They sought for God's choice
- They cast lots and Matthias was chosen, v.26
- Matthias was numbered with the disciples.

Ryrie Study Bible states, “Two names were written on stones and placed in an urn. The one that fell out first was taken to be the Lord’s choice.”

BDB Lexicon defines lots as, “an object used in casting or drawing lots, which was either a pebble, or a potsherd, or a bit of wood. The lots of several persons concerned, inscribed with their names, were thrown together into a vase, which was then shaken, and he whose lot fell out first upon the ground was the one chosen.”

Casting of Lots

14

Applications for us today

15

- **God wants each of us to be witnesses for Him.**
 - If you know the Lord, you CAN be a witness.
 - The easiest way is to hand out tracts to people you meet.
 - Invite people to church.
 - Ask God to give you opportunities.
 - When God gives you an opportunity, do not put it off. You may never see the person again.
- **Making decisions**
 - Before you make decisions, search the Bible for guidance.
 - Pray and ask God to give you wisdom.