

LIFE TOGETHER IN THE SPIRIT

Acts 1:1-12

Acts is ... "A kind of vast treasure" - John Calvin

"Live in that book, I exhort you; it is a tonic, the greatest tonic I know of in the realm of the Spirit."

D. Martin Lloyd-Jones

Overview of the Book of Acts

The Book of Acts is a continuation of the gospel written by the physician Luke. Acts is the historical bridge from the four Gospels to the Epistles. It covers the work of the Spirit of God in the growth and expansion of the body of Christ. Acts also records the early transition of the church from Jewish followers to an increasingly Gentile membership.

Acts can be divided according to Jesus' command: in Acts 1:8 ... *you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, (Acts 1:8-4; a two year period from 33-35 A.D.) and in all Judea and Samaria, (Acts 8:5-12; a thirteen year period from 35-48 A.D.) and to the ends of the earth.*" (Acts 13-28; a fourteen year period from 48-62 A.D.). Acts is the historical bridge from the four Gospels to the Epistles. It covers the work of the Spirit of God in the growth and expansion of the body of Christ. Acts also records the early transition of the church from Jewish followers to an increasingly Gentile membership.

The Holy Spirit of God at work in and through the Church is at the forefront of Acts. However, Peter is the dominating person in chapters 1-12; Paul in chapters 13-28.

Date of authorship: Prior to 62 A.D. Lack of mention of: Paul's trial (62 A.D.); Nero's persecutions (64 A.D.) Paul's death (68 A.D.); The destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.). Absence of these events identifies the book's completion date.

Acts is a historical record of the Holy Spirit's work in the early church during a time of transition. Acts is not primarily a theological treatise. What 1st century believers experienced has been written for our help. How we interpret this narrative is important.

Interpreting and applying the narrative passages in the book of Acts: The experiences and interactions in Acts provide clear direction and instruction for believers in 2012. However the wise believer will read and study the book with discernment.

Some events in Acts are specifically for those in that moment: The baptism of the Spirit for those believing in Jesus, but absent at Pentecost (Acts 19:1-7).

Some actions demonstrate general principles to be applied in different ways: The priority of worship in the early church without setting specific service times, hymn selection, etc.

"What happened to others in former times has been recorded for our instruction. Not everything...recorded in the Acts as having been done or experienced is meant to be replicated in our lives:...For example: are we to make local church elections by drawing lots (Acts 1:23-26)? ...Are we to expect at our conversion to see a bright light and hear an audible voice (9:3)?..." Stott p. 8

To interpret the principles of Acts wisely... "we have to look for teaching on the issue, first in the immediate context (within the narrative itself) then in what the author writes elsewhere, and finally in the broader context of Scripture as a whole" Stott, p.8.

Resources for: [Survey of the New Testament](#) by Robert H. Gundry; [Talk Thru the Bible](#) by Wilkerson and Boa; [NIV Life Application Study Bible](#); [The NIV Application commentary- Acts](#) by Ajith Fernando; [The Spirit, The Church, and The World](#) by John Stott