

THE BOOK OF ACTS

INTRODUCTION: The book of Acts is called in the King James Bible “The Acts of the Apostles.” This also could be called “The Acts of the Holy Spirit,” for the book of Acts is the work the Holy Spirit did through God’s people in the early church.

AUTHOR: Luke. This is the same Luke who was used by the Lord to pen the Gospel of Luke. In the book of Acts he continues his account of Christianity begun in the book of Luke. Notice in Acts 1:1 the words, “former treatise.” In the “former treatise,” or the gospel of Luke, he tells what Jesus **BEGAN** both to do and teach. In the book of Acts he tells what Jesus **CONTINUED** to do and teach through His people. Though our Lord went back to Heaven, He left His work in the hands of godly men who were to continue what He began.

THEME: The theme of the book of Acts can be summarized, “The Continuation of Jesus’s Ministry by His People.”

I. THE KEY VERSE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS IS ACTS 1:8. In fact, this verse outlines the entire book of Acts. Since the job of the church is to carry the Gospel, Acts 1:8 tells the church where she is to carry the gospel

1. In Jerusalem. This covers chapters 1—7. In these chapters the church stayed in Jerusalem. They did not take the Gospel outside Jerusalem until they had filled the city (Acts 5:28) with the Gospel of Christ and until they had gone to every house (Acts 5:42) with the Gospel.

2. In Judaea and in Samaria. In Acts 8—12 we have the carrying of the Gospel throughout Judaea and Samaria. Up through chapter 12 no missionaries were sent out, no one was sent overseas, no one was sent to another country. Before they went to Judaea and Samaria they filled Jerusalem. Before they went around the world they were to fill Judaea and Samaria.

3. Unto the uttermost part of the earth. This covers chapters 13—28. Now that the gospel has filled Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria, it can go to the uttermost part of the earth. This is real foreign missions. The church that sends missionaries around the world but not around the block, across the ocean but not across the street, is not a real missionary church. The real mission program is to fill the city, then fill the state, then fill the country, then fill the uttermost parts of the earth.

Hence, Acts 1:8 is an outline of the entire book of Acts. (Teacher, talk to the pupil about what he is doing to fill his own area with the Gospel. God is simply telling us here that we are to begin where we live. Our Jerusalem is our own area, our own town, our own family. God is saying we should win the ones closest to us first, then those in nearby areas, then those farther away, until we get the Gospel around the world. That means that the pupil in school is to spread the Gospel first to people in school. The member of the family should win his own family first. We are to start where we are and carry the Gospel of Christ.)

II. WE ARE TO CONTINUE DOING WHAT JESUS DID. The Bible is full of Scriptures that tell us that we are to continue being and doing what Jesus was and did when He was on earth. He has gone back to Heaven, the Great Commission means. In Mark 16:15 He tells us, “Go.. .preach the Gospel to every creature.” In Matthew 28:19, 20 we are told, “Go.. .and teach all nations.” Then He says, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Notice we are to teach them what He commanded us. He just commanded us to go, teach, and get people baptized. Hence, before He goes back to Heaven, He tells us that He wants us to do what He did. When we finish getting someone saved and baptized, we are to tell him to continue doing what Jesus did. In other words, I am to get

someone saved and baptized and then teach him how to get someone saved and baptized, that he may teach him how to get someone saved and baptized, that he may teach him how to get someone saved and baptized. The book of Acts is simply a continuation.

There are many Scriptures that teach us that we are to do what Jesus did.

1. We are to have the same mind that Jesus had. Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."
2. We are to be what Jesus was on earth. I John 4:17, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world."
3. We are here in Christ's stead. II Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled, to God."
4. We are to do the work that Jesus did while He was here. John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."
5. We are to love as He loved. John 15:12. "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."
6. We are to follow Him. John 20:21, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."
7. We are to do what He did ~1st J~ humble as He was, love as He loved. serve as He served. John 13:15. "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

In other words, we are representatives of Jesus. Each of us is to be a "little Jesus on earth, doing what He would do if He were here, teaching what He would teach, preaching what He would preach, etc."

III. WE ARE TO CONTINUE RUNNING THE RACE. (Teacher, liken the book of Acts to the second leg in a relay race. A man runs the first leg of a relay race. He then gives the baton to another. In the mile relay, a person runs one lap around the track; he then gives the baton to the second fellow; he runs the same lap, does exactly what the first person did, stays in the same lane, and comes back to the same place; he gives the baton to another who runs the same race, etc. Jesus had ministered on earth for 3 1/2 years. He said to His people, "Now I am going back to Heaven. I want the work that I have done to continue. I want the teachings that I have taught continued." He gives to us the continuation of what He began to do and teach.)

IV. TWO GREAT PERSONS IN ACTS. Acts is basically centered around two great men—Peter and Paul. Peter was given the ministry to circumcision. Paul ministered to the uncircumcision. The word "circumcision" was a word for the Jews. The word "uncircumcision" was another word for the Gentiles. In other words, Peter was given to the Jews and Paul was given to the Gentiles. The book of Acts is basically built around the ministries of these two great men and their carrying out of the Gospel of Christ according to the will of God.