

## **THE BOOK OF ACTS – INTRODUCTION**

**Author:** Luke (a Gentile physician)

**Original Audience:** Theophilus (meaning one who loves God). He may have been one of Luke's patrons who helped to do finance the books writing. More likely, Theophilus was a Roman Acquaintance of Luke's with a strong interest in the new Christian religion.

**Date:** Between A.D 63 and 70

**Purpose:** To give an accurate account of the birth and growth of the Christian church

It is the sequel to the Gospel of Luke.

**Location:** Key places include Jerusalem, Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, Antioch, Cyprus, Pisidian, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Phillipi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Caesarea, Malta, Rome

### **Themes:**

#### *The Beginning of the Church*

- Acts is the history of how Christianity was founded and organized and solved its problems.
- The community of believers began by faith in the risen Saviour Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, who enabled them to witness, love, and serve.
  - As we may face problems in our culture or even in our church, the Book of Acts gives important remedies for solving them

#### *The Holy Spirit*

- The church did not start or grow by its own power or enthusiasm.
- The disciples were empowered by God's Holy Spirit, which was the promised Counselor and - Guide sent when Jesus went to heaven.
  - The Holy Spirit's work demonstrates that Christianity is supernatural.
  - At this time the church was more focused on the Holy Spirit's power and less focused on the problems

#### *Church Growth*

- Acts presents the history of a dynamic, growing community of believers from Jerusalem to Syria, Africa, Asia, and Europe.
- In the first century, Christianity spread from believing Jews to non-Jews in 39 cities and 30 countries, islands and provinces.
  - How do we fit in to God's plan for spreading the Gospel?

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

### *Witnessing*

- Peter, John, Philip, Paul, Barnabas, and thousands more witnessed to their new faith in Christ
- By personal testimony, preaching, or defense before authorities, they told the story with boldness and courage to groups of all sizes
  - Witnessing is beneficial to us because it strengthens our faith as we confront those who challenge it.

### *Opposition*

- Through imprisonment, beatings, plots, and riots, Christians were persecuted by both Jews and Gentiles
- The opposition became a catalyst for the spread of Christianity
- Growth during times of oppression showed that Christianity was not the work of humans, but of God
  - God can work through any opposition
  - When persecution comes, realize that it has come because you have been faithful witness and you have looked for the opportunity to present the Good News about Christ.

### **SOURCES:**

1. Life Application Study Bible – NIV
2. Life In The Spirit Study Bible- NIV
3. The Jeremiah Study Bible -NKJV

