



Midweek Study

God's Amazing Book

Journey Through the New Testament

EMPOWERED FOR WITNESS

A Quick Look at the Acts of the Apostles

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in *Jerusalem*, and in all *Judea* and *Samaria*, and to the *end of the earth*.”
(Acts 1:8)

	Acts 1 – 7	Acts 8 – 12	Acts 13 – 28
Spread of the Church	The church witnessing in Jerusalem	The church witnessing in all Judea and Samaria	The church witnessing to all the earth
The Gospel	Proclaimed in the city (across the street)	Proclaimed in the provinces (across the states)	Proclaimed in the world (across the seas)
Focus	Power and progress of the church	Expansion of the church	Paul's three journeys and trials
People Addressed	Jews	Jews and Samaritans	Jews and Gentiles (Hellenists)
Key Person	Peter	Philip	Paul
Approximate Time	2 years (c. A.D. 33-35)	13 years (c. A.D. 35-48)	15 years (c. A.D. 48-63)
Development	Triumph	Transition	Travels and trials

Source: Daniel Akin, "Acts" handout, www.danielakin.com

No book of the New Testament is more appealing as it beckons the church today to look at the church as it was at the beginning... It is thrilling narrative, striking characterization, and dynamic achievement. – Ralph Turnbull

Luke depicts the birth and growth of the early church through about thirty-three years, almost two generations. He begins with the ascension of Christ and ends with the imprisonment of Paul in Rome. Along the way he describes the earliest days of the church in Jerusalem, the church's beginning efforts to reach beyond the Jewish community, and three missionary journeys across Asia Minor and into Greece.

Fast Facts on Acts

1. Who? Dr. Luke, a personal assistant of the Apostle Paul.

2. When? 61-63 AD

3. Why? To show the young church in action.

4. Key Phrase:
Birth of the Church

Other Facts

- Paul killed 65-67 AD under Nero Persecution in Rome (this dates Acts before 65, b/c his companion Luke never mentioned Paul's death.

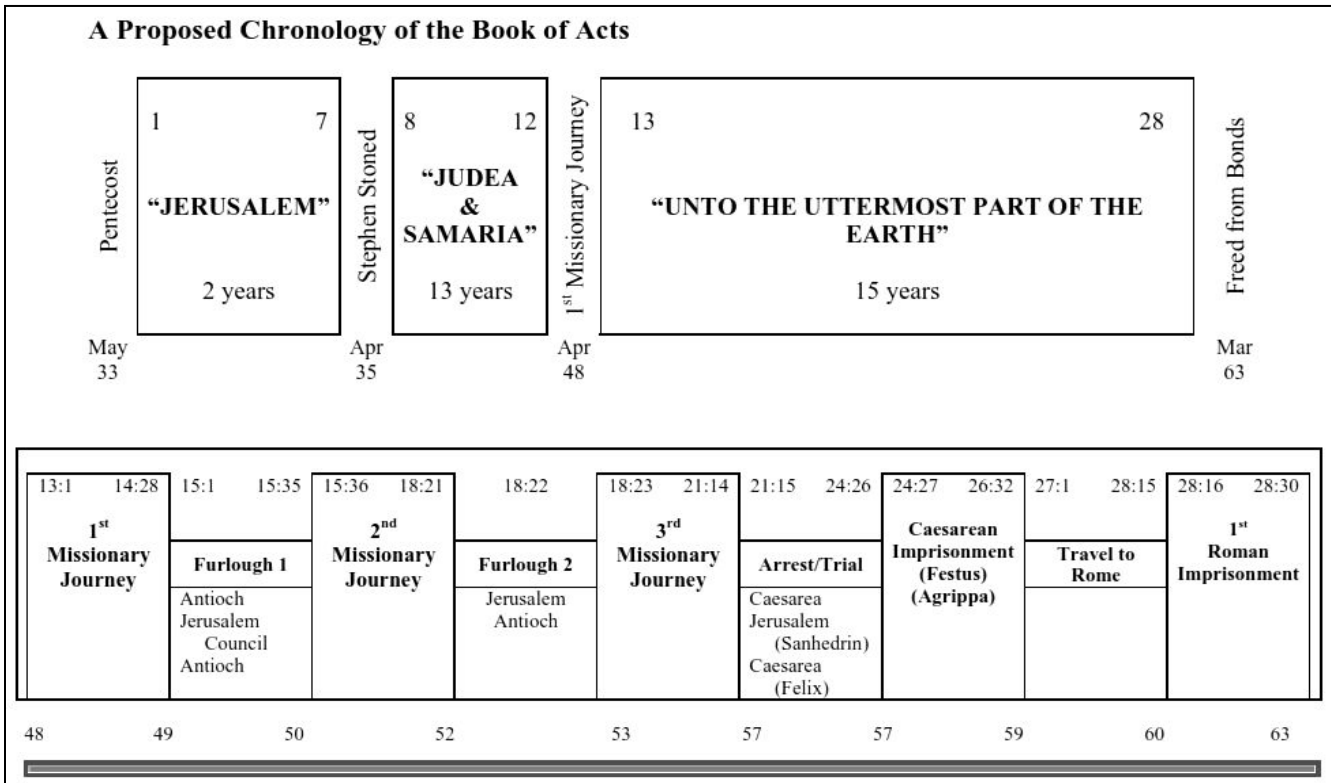
- The word "witness" used 30x (same Greek word for "martyr")

- Time Span? (30 years – from Pentecost to Paul in Rome)

- God's way to witness (Acts 20:20)

- God's power to witness (Acts 1:8)

1. Acts is invaluable as the background history for most of the Epistles. Without it the Epistles would be quite difficult to understand, and the history of the early church would be a vague patchwork. There are certain problems in harmonizing the events in Acts with the information about Paul in his epistles, but these events generally fit well together.
2. HISTORICAL ACURACY - Luke includes about eighty geographical references and mentions over one hundred people by name in Acts. His precision in citing locations (e.g., provinces, cities, specific sites) and titles (e.g., consul, tetrarch, proconsul, Asiarch) was once challenged by critics but is now verified by archaeological evidence.
3. The Holy Spirit is mentioned over fifty times in Acts, more than any other New Testament book.
4. Acts is the only unfinished book in the Bible, as the history of the Church still continues to this day.
5. Acts records many Church firsts, such as the first martyrs, the first deacons, the first pastors, the first missionaries, and the first Gentile converts.
6. Almost every chapter in Acts refers to prayer, and every chapter shows the result of prayer.
7. Acts is ***descriptive*** of the first century Church, but also ***prescriptive*** for today's church.



Source: Daniel Akin, "Acts" Handout, www.danielakin.com

Applications:

- 1) Trust Jesus, as Head of the Church, to direct the mission's strategy for advancing the gospel both locally and globally.
- 2) Seek to be like the apostolic church in many respects, but not in all respects. [Example: There will never be another Day of Pentecost, but the principle of waiting to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to share the gospel can still be followed.]
- 3) God is no respecter of persons. He wants everyone saved. We must not practice selective evangelism.
- 4) Trust God if He leads us away from ministry that seems to be fruitful. [Example: Phillip; "but the Spirit forbade me"]
- 5) When God says to go global, don't be content with just local ministry.
- 6) Trust God when things don't go as you think they should. [Example: God allowed James (inner circle disciple of Jesus) to be martyred, but miraculously released Peter from Jail.]