



One Hope Community Church Acts Chapter 1

Theme of Acts: The Holy Spirit and the Birth of the Church

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).”

As you read this study, you can click on any Bible verse or use your Bible. The study is broken into two parts:

Personal Reflection

You can complete this section in one sitting or little by little during the week. Begin with prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit into your time. Spending time in the Bible, studying the original intent, meaning and cultural context helps you to understand how it applies to you now.

Further Study: with your small group or on your own

Complete this with your small group if you are in one; otherwise complete this section on your own to learn more about the reading of the week.

Song for the week: Song of Accent - Hillsong

<https://youtu.be/mkbbxP0rxt6E?si=xgQ8rV57BvMuHt6H>

Read Acts 1

Personal Reflection

Reading Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3 it is clear the same author wrote both books.

Tradition from the earliest days of the church is that Luke wrote both books. “Eusebius (AD 260-340), considered to be the Father of Early Church History, described Luke the Physician in these terms: ‘Luke, who was by race an Antiochian and a physician by profession, was long a companion of Paul, and had careful conversation with the other Apostles, and in two books left us examples of the medicine for the souls which he had gained from them’ (Bible Archaeology).” An Antiochian is a person who followed the theology of the Church at Antioch.

Luke was a doctor. Eusebius describes Luke’s books as “medicine for the soul.” What might he have meant by that?

How do you hope to have your soul ministered to as you read through Acts?

Do you have any questions about the Holy Spirit or the birth of the Church? Jot them down so that you can come back to them, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the answers to you as you study the book of Acts.

Luke was a companion of Paul and a doctor. In Paul's letter to the Colossians Luke is not listed as being part of the circumcised group therefore, it is assumed he was a Gentile. The name Luke is a Gentile name. "English form of Latin *Lucas*, from the Greek name Λουκάς (*Loukas*) meaning "from Lucania", Lucania being a region in southern Italy (Behind the Name)." *Optional, read these related verses: Acts 16:10-11, 2 Timothy 4:11, Philemon 1:23-24, Colossians 4:14, Colossians 4:10-11*

Luke was the only New Testament writer who was a Gentile; his focus in Acts was how the gospel spread first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, establishing the Church.

What can you identify that shows how detailed the Holy Spirit was in choosing Luke as one who would write Luke and Acts? (Consider who he learned from and where he was from.)

God cares about details. How does this truth inform you of God's care for the details in your life?

A disciple is someone who believes in Jesus and follows His teachings. The Greek word for apostle is *apostolos* which means "one who is sent." All apostles are disciples but not all disciples are apostles. *Optional, read this related verse: Matthew 28:19-20*

Read Hebrews 3:1, Mark 3:13-19, Acts 26:14-18. Who are the apostles listed in each of these verses? Who sent them to be apostles?

God sent His Son, Jesus, who performed miracles so that the people would "believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30-31)."

Jesus then sent the apostles the Holy Spirit to "testify about" Jesus. Just as Jesus' miracles pointed to who He is, the Holy Spirit gave power to the apostles to perform miracles to validate their message of a risen Jesus, that people would believe in Him and be saved. *Optional, read these related verses: John 15:1, Acts 1:8*

Can you identify any miracles in your life or the lives of those you know?

How do the miracles you witness today point to who God is?

How do miracles strengthen your faith and your relationship with God?

While Peter and Paul are the main apostles with others joining them in spreading the gospel, arguably, the Holy Spirit and the Church are the two main characters of Acts. It is through the Holy Spirit that the apostles are empowered to grow the Church in spite of opposition and persecution.

If you were to write down the story of your life, focusing on God as the main character, what stories would you write? How might your stories (testimonies) encourage others to believe?

Jesus talked about two baptisms, one of the Holy Spirit which was prophesied by John the Baptist and the other with water. The moment a person believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live in them and their spirit is born again into the kingdom of heaven. Baptism with water is an outward proclamation of the decision to believe in Jesus. *Optional, read these related verses: Acts 1:5, Mark 1:8, John 3:3-7, Acts 2:38*

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. What are some of the purposes of the Holy Spirit's baptism according to this verse?

Putting it into practice: Spend some time thanking God for the details around you which He created - flowers blooming, the sound of laughter, the smell of rain, whatever you notice. Then invite Him in to the details in your life. Where do you need His direction, wisdom, forgiveness, provision? End by asking Him to show you when He replies and thank Him for what He will do.

Further Study - with your small group or on your own

The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) tell the story of Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection. The 21 Epistles are letters written to various first century churches and people. Acts ties the Gospels to the Epistles.

Acts begins with Jesus' ascension followed by the Holy Spirit's arrival which aided in the spreading of the gospel first to Jerusalem then into Judea and Samaria then to "the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)." It follows first Peter's ministry and then Paul's; it is the only biblical book that tells of the first 30 years of church history as the gospel spread and churches were planted.

As a group, watch The Bible Project's **Book of Acts Summary: A Complete Animated Overview (Part 1)** for an overview of Acts 1-12 (it's just over 8 min long).

In Colossians 4:14 Paul sends greetings from Luke, who was learning directly from him. Paul wrote 23% of the New Testament. Adding up all the words he wrote, it is approximately 32,000 words. Luke wrote almost 38,000 words in just two books, which is 27% of the New Testament, more than Paul!

Read Luke 1:1-4 again. Why did Luke write to Theophilus? Why can we trust what Luke said?

Luke was a Gentile recording the Holy Spirit's activity and the birth of the church. Read Isaiah 42:5-7 and John 10:16. What was prophesied in Isaiah and what did Jesus say that fulfilled that? How do Luke's writings continue to help with the fulfillment of the prophecy?

Jesus remained with the disciples 40 days (Acts 1:3). Why might this have been important?

In Acts 1:3 it is clear Jesus continued to teach on the kingdom of God after His resurrection. In Acts 1:6-8 the disciples were still looking for Jesus to restore the kingdom of Israel. What was Jesus' reply?

God's kingdom rules over all, is eternal and not of this world. When Jesus was near people, the kingdom of God was near as He is God. When people believe in Jesus for their salvation, they are born again and enter the kingdom of God. *Optional, read these related verses: Psalm 103:19, Daniel 4:3, John 18:36, Matthew 4:17, John 3:1-7*

Jesus and Paul both taught about the kingdom of God, neither teaching about bringing the kingdom of God to earth but rather how people can enter it through belief in its ruler, Jesus. Just like the disciples in Jesus' day, people today are still looking to transform society and culture by bringing about the kingdom of God here on earth.

God already rules over all and the only way to enter His kingdom is through belief in Him. According to Jesus, our part is to be a witness for Him, just as Paul was. *Optional, read these related verses: Acts 1:6-8, Acts 28:25-31*

Read Matthew 22:37-39 and John 15:10-15. What is our part in the kingdom of God? How can you live out your part in His kingdom?

While it is not our part to bring God's kingdom to earth, as believers we can still have an impact on society and culture. What are some ways we can do that?

Jesus says that it is not ours to know the time or date of His establishing His kingdom on earth, but that He will come again. There will be a literal rule of Jesus on earth during His millennium reign on earth. *Optional, read these related verses: Acts 1:7, Acts 1:9-11*

Read Daniel 7:13-14 and Zechariah 14:9. The disciples would have known these verses, so it is no wonder they were wondering "WHEN?" As we wait, we are to do the same as the disciples and apostles did and live out Jesus' new commandment and spread the gospel. As a small group, how can you participate in the waiting for Jesus' return?

Is there anything from this week's personal reflection time which you would like to discuss more with your small group?