

A Tour Through the Divine Library  
(The Acts of the Apostles)

Introduction

-NT letters should be read against the backdrop of the book of Acts (1 Thess. 2:14-16 → Acts 17:1-8)

I. General Introduction to Acts

-Title/Author: The Acts of Jesus Christ / the Holy Spirit through the Apostles; Luke, companion of Paul; physician; author of Luke/Acts (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1; 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16; Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24)

-Date: ~ AD 63

-Purpose: provide a record of the spread of the gospel and the founding/growth of the church throughout the Roman Empire with attendant mounting opposition to the gospel during the first three decades after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension

-Structure:

- I. The Apostolic Witness in Jerusalem (chs. 1-7)
- II. The Apostolic Witness in Judea and Samaria (chs. 8-12)
- III. The Apostolic Witness to Points Beyond (chs. 13-28)

II. General Overview of Acts

-The Church in Jerusalem (1:1-8:3)

-The Church in Samaria (8:4-12:25)

-The Church in Points Beyond (Uttermost Parts of the Earth) (13:1-28:31)

III. Prominent People and Themes in Acts

-People: Peter (chs. 1-12, 15); John (chs. 1, 3, 4, 8); James, the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve (chs. 1, 12); James, the brother of the Lord (not the son of Alphaeus mentioned in 1:13) (chs. 15, 21); Paul (chs. 7-9, 11-28); Stephen (chs. 6-8); Philip (not one of the twelve mentioned in 1:13) (chs. 6, 8); Barnabas (chs. 4, 9, 11-15); Timothy (chs. 16-20); Silas (chs. 15-18); Apollos (chs. 18, 19); Luke (chs. 16, 21, 27, 28); Cornelius (ch. 10); Felix and Festus (chs. 23-26); Herod Agrippa I (ch. 12); Herod Agrippa II (chs. 25, 26).

-Themes:

- The Holy Spirit: Pentecost (the advent of the Spirit); personality (5:3, 32 8:29 10:19 11:12 13:2 15:28 16:6 20:23, 28 21:11), deity (5:4; 28:25), activity (4:8, 31; 8:39; 11:12; 13:2, 4; 16:6-8)
- The Resurrection of Christ (1:21. 22; 2:24-32; 3:15, 26; 4:2, 10, 33; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 31, 33, 34, 37; 17:18, 32; 23:6; 24:15; 26:23)
- The Centrality of Preaching: *passim*
- Character of God: righteousness (17:31), goodness (14:17), glory (7:2, 55), accessibility (17:27), justice (17:31), faithfulness to keep His promises (1:26; 3:17, 18; 12:5; 17:26; 27:22, 31, 32)

#### IV. Christ in Acts

-In the activity of building the church (1:1, 4, 5, 7, 8; 2:33; 9:4-6; 11, 12, 15, 16; 16:7; 18:9, 10; 22:18; 21; 23:11; 26:14-18)

-In the preaching of the apostles (1:1; 4:2; 5:42; *passim*)

#### V. Practical Lessons in Acts

→The Acts of the Apostles is a compelling testimony to the initial fulfillment of Christ's promise to build His church, against which the gates of hell will not prevail.