



# BASIC BIBLE STUDIES

workbook with commentary

## ACTS

*A Study of Conversions*

Book 1

"WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM,  
IN ALL JUDEA, AND SAMARIA"

Robert F. Harkrider

# Acts

## Book 1:

*A Study of Conversions*

“Witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria”

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**Basic Bible Studies**

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# INTRODUCTION

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## **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

What did the disciples do after the crucifixion of Christ? What was the early church like? What did the apostles preach that one must do to be saved? All of these as well as many other questions are answered in this book. Acts is truly one of the most important and exciting books of the New Testament which every sincere Bible student must study.

## **TITLE**

The title “The Acts of The Apostles” is misleading to the novice reader because the book does not contain ALL the acts of ALL the apostles. This work reveals only SOME of the acts of SOME of the apostles. However, when we learn what even one apostle preached we know it agrees with the message that all the other apostles preached because they were all inspired by the self-same Spirit (cf. 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:11-13).

## **PURPOSE AND CONTENT**

This book is sometimes called “the book of conversions” because it reveals how the apostles fulfilled the great commission which was given to them by Christ (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). They preached this message of salvation, and the many examples of conversion which are recorded provide a clear testimony how one becomes a Christian. The book of Acts is an inspired historical record of first century Christianity. Chapters 1-12 explain how the gospel was preached first “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria” (Acts 1:8). Chapters 13-28 reveal the spread of the gospel “unto the uttermost part of the earth” as it was accomplished primarily through the work of Paul.

Acts is a key book in studying and understanding the rest of the New Testament:

1. Acts furnishes the testimony of those who were personal witnesses of the life of Christ. We can see how they fearlessly bore witness and preached the gospel during the first 30 years or so after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
2. Acts gives us understanding about the church: its beginning, how to become a member, its organization, its mission and work, its growth, its reaction to persecution.
3. Acts reveals the work of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of redemption. It shows how the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit and later imparted miraculous gifts through the laying on of their hands. It shows how that through the preaching of the inspired word men were convicted of their sins and converted to the Lord.
4. Acts provides the record of what sinners were told to do to be saved. The same details are not repeated each time inspiration describes the different cases of conversion, but by comparing the details that are specified, one can thereby conclude the full message that must have been preached to all sinners. (See chart on Examples of Conversions, page 7)
5. Acts supplies the historical setting for most of the other books of the New Testament and thereby gives insight into a proper understanding of their messages.

### **AUTHOR AND DATE**

In the opening words of this book Luke is inferred to be the author of both the gospel that bears his name and of the Acts of the Apostles (cf. Acts 1:1-3). Both works are joined together in that they are: 1) addressed to “Theophilus” (cf. Lk. 1:1-4); and 2) they form a definite chronology which begins with the life of Christ and continues through to the fulfillment of the great commission.



Acts was probably written about AD 62 or 63 which would coincide with the approaching end of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. Luke was a companion with Paul at that time.

## **OUTLINE OF ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:**

### **BOOK 1: WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM, IN ALL JUDEA, AND IN SAMARIA, ACTS 1–12**

#### **PART 1: THE CHURCH IS ESTABLISHED, CHAPTERS 1–2**

1. CHRIST ASCENDS TO HEAVEN, AND MATTHIAS IS CHOSEN AS AN APOSTLE, 1:1-26
2. THE APOSTLES RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, 2:1-11
3. THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON AFTER CHRIST'S ASCENSION IS PREACHED, 2:12-47

#### **PART 2: THE EARLY DAYS OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, CHAPTERS 3–7**

1. THE FIRST MIRACLE AFTER CHRIST'S ASCENSION IS WORKED, 3:1-2
2. THE FIRST OPPOSITION ARISES FROM THE RULERS OF THE JEWS, 4:1-37
3. THE FIRST HYPOCRITES ARE EXPOSED, 5:1-16
4. THE FIRST PERSECUTION CAUSES THE DISCIPLES TO REJOICE, 5:17-42
5. THE FIRST SPECIAL SERVANTS OF THE CHURCH ARE SELECTED, 6:1-15
6. THE FIRST MARTYR FOR CHRIST IS STONED, 7:1-60

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CHAPTERS 8–12**

1. THE CONVERSION OF THE SAMARITANS, 8:1-25
2. THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH, 8:26-40
3. THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS, 9:1-43
4. THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS, THE FIRST GENTILE CHRISTIAN, 10:1-48; 11:1-18
5. ANTIOCH IS THE FIRST CHURCH WITH BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES, 11:19-30
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**PART 1: THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY, CHAPTERS 13–14**

**PART 2: TROUBLE OVER CIRCUMCISION IS RECONCILED AT JERUSALEM,  
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**PART 3: THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY, CHAPTERS 15:36–18:22**

**PART 4: THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY, CHAPTERS 18:23–21:17**

**PART 5: THE VOYAGE TO ROME, CHAPTERS 21:18–28:31**

# LESSON 1

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## ACTS 1:1–11

### PART 1: THE CHURCH IS ESTABLISHED AS THEY WITNESS IN JERUSALEM, 1:1–7:60

#### 1. CHRIST ASCENDS TO HEAVEN, AND MATTHIAS IS CHOSEN AS AN APOSTLE, 1:1-26

##### A. The Book Of Acts And The Book of Luke Are Joined Together, 1:1-3

v. 1 - We know nothing of certainty in proving who is this Theophilus. The name was common in the first century. Some suggest that this was a man personally known by Luke and that he may have been the Theophilus who at one time was high priest (A.D. 37-41), or perhaps this was some other man who held a position of honor. However, since this name is found only twice in the New Testament (Lk. 1:3; Acts 1:1), it is questioned that a specific individual is intended. Since the Greek word “Theophilus” literally means “friend of God” or “lover of God,” it is widely believed that Luke used this name to personify anyone and all who rejoice in the contents of his inspired writing about the life of Christ and the early church.

v. 2 - The book of Luke concluded with the great commission being given to the apostles and the ascension of Christ (cf. Lk. 24:46-53; Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16). Acts begins where Luke ended.

**v. 3** - After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples many times over a period of forty days (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-8; Luke 24; John 20; Matt. 28). By “many infallible proofs” (i.e., incapable of error) they were convinced that He was the same Jesus who had been crucified.

Since Pentecost was observed fifty days after Passover, and Jesus was with His disciples for forty days, we conclude by this chronology that ten days passed between His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

## **B. Christ Gives Final Instructions To the Apostles, 1:4-11**

### **1. Wait In Jerusalem For the Promise Of The Father, 1:4-5**

**v. 4** - They were to wait in Jerusalem for the power from on high (Luke 24:49). It is important to observe that the Holy Spirit baptism was a “promise” made to the apostles. It was never commanded of all believers, nor can we read that anyone prayed for it, or that any man administered Holy Spirit baptism upon another. Instead, the Holy Spirit came directly from heaven as a witness from God. It was called “baptism” because the apostles were “overwhelmed” or “immersed” with supernatural power (cf. v. 8; Acts 2).

**v. 5** - John had baptized in water, but the baptism these apostles were to receive would be different from John’s (Matt. 3:11-12). By this heavenly witness (i.e., “baptism of the Holy Ghost”) the apostles were empowered to be the ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20; Matt. 18:18) and to preach that Jesus had authority to save all who believe on Him. They also preached that He had authority to condemn all who reject Him, i.e., “baptism of fire,” (John 3:36; 2 Thess. 2:7-9).

## 2. "You Shall Be Witnesses," 1:6-8

v. 6 - The apostles still retained the misconception that Christ would restore an earthly Davidic kingdom (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-14). At His birth the angel declared that Jesus came to fulfill this prophecy and to reign over the house of Jacob (Lk. 1:32-33). Jesus had taught that the nature of His kingdom was spiritual (cf. Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36) and that entrance into it would be by a spiritual birth (John 3:3-5), but neither the Jewish nation nor even His disciples understood His message.

v. 7 - Just as they had not comprehended all the other spiritual truths when Jesus told them (e.g., Matt. 16:21-23), they manifest their misunderstanding now about the nature of His kingdom. But Jesus avoids further confusion about the kingdom because He knew that soon they would understand. For the time being, He simply reminded them to leave the matter to God. It was the Father's business, and not their concern, to set the "times" (i.e., periods of considerable length) and "seasons" (i.e., points for particular events). The kingdom would be established as promised by God, but it was not a matter of important concern to them as to when that would be. It was more necessary that they wait for the power which was to come upon them and that they fulfill the work Christ had called them to do.

v. 8 - They would receive "power" with the coming of the Holy Ghost. Jesus had promised that this "Comforter" would guide them into all truth (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; John 16:7-11; 16:13). This promise helps us to identify when the kingdom was established:

- Mark 9:1 - The kingdom would come with power
- Acts 1:8 - Power would come with the Holy Ghost
- Acts 2:1-4 - The Holy Ghost came on Pentecost

Therefore, when the Holy Ghost came, power came, and the kingdom was established, Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:13-14.

### **3. The Ascension of Christ, 1:9-11**

**v. 9** - A cloud received Him out of their sight, just as Daniel had prophesied in a night vision about this occurrence. From Daniel's viewpoint in a vision Christ "came with the clouds," but from the apostles' earthly viewpoint they saw Him "go into heaven." It was at this time that Christ was given "dominion, glory, and a kingdom" (Dan. 7:13-14; Eph. 1:22-23).

**vv. 10-11** - These two men are angels (cf. Mk. 16:5; Lk. 24:4; Jn. 20:12). They promised that Christ would return and that He would come in like manner as they had seen Him go (cf. Rev. 1:7). This is a promise none should ignore! (cf. 2 Pet. 3:1-13; 1 Thess. 5:1-3; 2 Thess. 1:7-9)

# EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION

..... <i>Matthew 28:18-19</i> .....			..... <i>Mark 16:15-16</i> .....		
PREACHING	BELIEVED	REPENTED	CONFESSED	BAPTIZED	SAVED
<b>Pentecost</b> Acts 2:14-41		<b>Repented</b> v. 37-38		<b>Baptized</b> v. 38-41	<b>Remission of Sins</b> v. 38-41
<b>Samaritans</b> Acts 8:5-13	<b>Believed</b> v. 12			<b>Baptized</b> v. 12-13	
<b>Eunuch</b> Acts 8:35-39	<b>Believed</b> v. 36-37		<b>Confessed</b> v. 37	<b>Baptized</b> v. 38	<b>Rejoiced</b> v. 39
<b>Saul</b> Acts 9:1-18				<b>Baptized</b> v. 18	<b>Sins Washed Away</b> v. 22:16
<b>Cornelius</b> Acts 10:34-48	<b>Believed</b> v. 43			<b>Baptized</b> v. 48	<b>Remission of Sins</b> v. 43
<b>Lydia</b> Acts 16:13-15				<b>Baptized</b> v. 15	
<b>The Jailer</b> Acts 16:25-34	<b>Believed</b> v. 34			<b>Baptized</b> v. 33	<b>Rejoiced</b> v. 34
<b>Corinthians</b> Acts 18:8	<b>Believed</b> v. 8			<b>Baptized</b> v. 8	

PREACHING	FAITH	REPENTANCE	CONFESSION	BAPTISM	SALVATION
Romans 10:14,17	Hebrew 11:6  John 6:28-29; 8:24	Luke 13:3  Acts 17:30	Romans 10:10  Matthew 10:32-33	Galatians 3:27 1 Peter 3:21	2 Timothy 2:10 Matthew 7:21-23

# STUDY QUESTIONS FOR ACTS 1:1–11

## LESSON 1

### ANSWER QUESTIONS GIVING SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

1. To whom is this and a “former treatise” addressed?

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2. The former treatise was of the life of Christ until when?

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3. How were the disciples convinced of Christ’s resurrection?

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4. About what things did Jesus teach them after His resurrection?

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5. Why were they commanded to wait in Jerusalem?

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6. What question did they ask of Jesus?

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7. Jesus promised they would receive “power” when?

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8. In what places would they be witnesses of Christ?

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9. How did they see Him ascend?

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10. What was promised concerning the return of Christ?

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## TRUE OR FALSE

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The disciples were only deceived into thinking Christ arose.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus commanded Holy Ghost baptism for all believers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The apostles were promised power when the Holy Ghost came.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jesus indicated they would be witnesses only to the Jews.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Christ will return in the same manner as He ascended.

## RESEARCH

What is the “former treatise” referred to in Acts 1:1, and how do these two books relate to each other?

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## THOUGHT QUESTION

How can we determine when the Kingdom of Christ was established?

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