

Acts

Timeline of writing: 60-62 AD

Timeline of events: Jesus' ascension to Paul under house arrest in Rome 30–60 AD

Context for Acts:

- Jesus was crucified on Friday, raised on Sunday, and remained for 40 days. (1:3)
- Prior to going into heaven, He promises the Holy Spirit would come to them (1:4). This happens on Pentecost, 50 days after Passover (2:1-4).
- This is the birth of the church

Theological significance:

The book of Acts is more than just a history of the early church. The sovereign plan of God, to spread the message of the Gospel through the world (1:8), is chronicled over twenty-eight chapters. The simple preaching of the gospel brings multitudes into the family of God. In these chapters the modern church sees a blueprint for making God known. Regardless of culture, geography, economic status, ethnicity, background, or any other label – God's message can be simply shared. When necessary, evidences are shown to back the message. A model of apologetic evangelism is seen throughout this book.

God's plan revealed through Acts:

- The book of Acts chronicles the first generation of the church age.
- The Gospel is spread from Jerusalem (1-7), to Judea and Samaria (8-12), and to the ends of the earth (13-28).
- The promised Holy Spirit is now available to all who believe. The hope of the Gospel is available for both Jew and Gentile.
- Suffering, persecution, victory, and blessing are all experienced by the church, in carrying out the great commission of Jesus (Matt 28:18-20)

How to Interpret:

- Utilize basic interpretive principles (OICA)
 - Observation, Interpretation, Correlation, Application
- Use this book to develop or sharpen your view of God, man, sin, salvation, etc.
 - When reading Acts, allow the text to answer “why would God...” type questions.
 - Rely on the text itself, not your memory of the events and teaching discussed.
- Place a heavy emphasis on context (time, location, audience, situation, etc.)
 - Recognize the unique context of the 1st century church
 - Use a Bible atlas to understand the geography
 - Pay attention to the audience when sermons/speeches/teachings are given
 - Remember the chapters are not independent of one another. Know what has happened prior to your particular passage.
- Keep in mind how the passage can apply to you today, you are not just reading history

Analyze and apply a passage:

- Acts 15:1-35
 - What has happened previous to the passage?
 - What is the location of the passage, any travel?
 - What is the occasion/purpose for any speeches?
 - What four specific things are chosen and why?
 - What was the response to the speech?
 - How can this apply to me?