

# Acts Introduction

## Why Study Acts?

- Inspirational, God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17), early Christian/church history, learn more about Paul

## The First Part

Luke 1:1-4 ESV ¶ Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us,<sup>2</sup> just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us,<sup>3</sup> it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,<sup>4</sup> that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

- A work of history, but also a work of literature
  - He changes style, he writes with intent and purpose
- “sacred history” → fulfillment of Scriptures; the story isn't over
- An apologetic, confirmation of truth – previous accounts of Jesus' life, eyewitnesses and servants of the Word sought out
- Catechetical – “that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught”

## The Second Part

Acts 1:1-3 ESV ¶ In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus **began** to do and teach,<sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.<sup>3</sup> He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

- The beginning – compare w Mark 1:1 : The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ...
  - This too is a beginning.
  - Luke wrote about the basis of the Gospel, how the Good News started; this is how the Good News now spread
- What is the Gospel?
  - Forgiveness, salvation, redemption, resurrection, new creation
  - But it is for ALL, Jew AND Gentile
    - And THIS was according to God's plan/prophesies
- But Why the Gospel AND Acts?
- Two parts of a single work – Both about Jesus! (before Ascension and after)
- Scroll length restrictions
- Theophilus knew about Jesus, but who are Christians and what is the Church?

## The Name of the Work

- Probably wasn't given a name by Luke, but referred to as “The Memorandum of Luke” (Tertullian), “The Acts of all the Apostles” (Muratorian Canon), “The Acts of the Apostles” (anti-Marcionite prologue to Luke (late second century?) and Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. 3.13.3))
- Acts of the Apostles vs. Acts of the Holy Spirit or even Acts of Jesus (“What Jesus Continued To Do and Teach”)

## Who wrote it?

- Luke never gives his name, but he makes his presence felt as an author

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- “We” passages in Acts (e.g. 16:9-10) help to identify author as a companion of Paul (see Col. 4:14; Phm. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11)
- Unanimous testimony of the early church: Luke the physician

## Date of Composition

- Written after the Gospel of Luke
  - Other Gospels already existed at the time of the Gospel of Luke
- Pre-A.D. 70 (The Destruction of Jerusalem)
- Emperor Nero (54-68); Persecuted Christians 64-65
- Paul’s death (sometime after 64?)
- Likely written around 62-64

## Important Big Ideas as We Begin...

Luke writes with pastoral concern – church history is helpful and important

Essential task of the church is mission

No racial/ethnic discrimination in the church

The guiding role of the Spirit in the church and its mission

The church is raised up and directed by God

He believes in the ultimate triumph of the Gospel

The Word of the Lord abides forever (1 Pet. 1:25; Isa. 40:8)

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Colossians 4:14 ESV Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas

Philemon 1:24 ESV and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

2 Timothy 4:11 ESV Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

“We” Passages

Some people mentioned by name in Acts: Mark, Aristarchus

Date of composition

Relationship to other Gospels

Other gospels already around, written pre 70 AD

Nero (54-68)

Paul's death somewhere around 66

The Fall of Jerusalem doesn't seem to be hinted at

Luke writes

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