

# ACTS

## Chapter 1, What are we supposed to do with the teachings of Jesus?

### Week One

Acts, more than a title, records the actual lives of those who brought the gospel message to the world. We find the struggles and challenges the disciples faced as a group and as individuals, prohibition of public speaking, imprisonment for public speaking, shipwrecks, beatings, miracles, and the rapid growth of the “Way”. “ἡ ὁδός simply, of the Christian religion (cf. Buttman, 163 (142)), Acts 9:2; Acts 19:9, 23; Acts 24:22.”<sup>1</sup> We find in Acts verse 9:2 that ‘Way’ has been spelled with a capital W indicating the use of the word as referencing the early Christian Church. People who followed and practiced the “Way” of Christianity. Out of sixteen English Bible translations only four have not used a capital w.

### Time Spent

Jesus spent 3 years walking with and teaching the disciples, but what were they expected to do with these teachings? What we will learn from Acts is what is still expected of all who follow in Jesus’ ways, the church represents the body of Christ, See 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 4:12, and we all have a calling to serve.

### Who is it we are to Teach?

Did Jesus teach only believers, walk only with believers, converse only with believers, love only believers? Let’s first look at a few verses from Paul before we proceed, that we may establish a pattern and direction that leads us to the fullness and understanding of what the early years of the church experienced.

Romans 12:2, NKJV; And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

If we are not to be conformed to this world are we to refrain from associating with non-believers? Not at all, study and ponder the following. Unfortunately today we find many churches who very seldom work beyond the walls of their own churches.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11, NKJV. 9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3598/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

What is the lesson we are to walk away with? To whom do we preach, and to whom do we hold accountable? Luke 6:32; “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.” So as we read of associating with sexually immoral people, covetous, extortioners and the like, who is it we are to turn away from, expel them from our presence, and why? It is those who are within the church and conduct their lives as the worst of hypocrites. There has always been more damage done to the reputation of the church from within the church.

### **Sharing with the lost**

Share with those outside of the body of Christ, God loves them and wants them to love Him back and to be obedient and repentant. We must evangelize, Romans 10:14-15, NKJV. “how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without someone preaching? And how shall they preach unless they have been sent?”

As the Father has sent me I am sending you. John 20:21. This is the call of every believer, we are to reinvest what God gives us, God works it, if we work it out. As Romans begs the question, “and how shall they hear without someone preaching? So working it out is what Paul addresses in Philippians 2:12 when he says to work out your own salvation. This does not imply that we are capable of working out our own salvation, no, God works salvation into us, we in turn are to take the fruit of our salvation and share the hope with others. This is what the book of Acts will teach us.

Our journey through the Acts of the Apostles will identify all of these preceding issues, questions, and more. We are being made into a new creation, within our very own person, we are not who we once were, we will now live a sacrificial life by surrendering to God’s desires for His creation. Paul says I have made myself a bondservant of Christ Jesus, NKJV, Romans 1:1.

Does this sacrifice indicate a losing of life? We know from history all that came to Jesus’ disciples, the martyrdom they underwent for their steadfast faith. We far too often fail to understand the importance of death, that which is the first death to the flesh of man, to put on the new man to be raised anew in righteousness. The sinful nature is to be put to death, the benefit of living to the Lord is the strength and power we have in Him. The hope and prayer here as we go through the Book of Acts is that we shall all grow in understanding and wisdom, seeing more of the life we are called too.

### **The History behind the Writer.**

Who wrote the Book of Acts? We need to look at the man who took upon himself the burden or chore of recording the acts as he did. Luke does not appear as one of the twelve disciples, instead he comes to be known as a fellow worker of Paul, Philemon 24, and Colossians 4:14, and second Timothy 4:11. He is however the author of the gospel of Luke and of Acts. We know nothing of Luke's family, religious practices, where he is from, we do know he was the only gentile writer of the New Testament, See Colossians 4:10-14.

### **What was the attraction for Luke?**

What drove Luke, what went through his mind as he recorded all we will read. Can we understand Luke's conviction to record and research the facts, was it a strong interest because of the miracles, the mannerisms and character of Jesus, the promises of a better life? We can only speculate but surely Luke had an interest in this one called Jesus. Look here as to the manner in which Luke opens his gospel,

1 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

There appears to be a solid and sincere interest in studying Jesus and relating the findings to Theophilus. Notice the last sentence, "of those things in which you were instructed". Who instructed Theophilus? Was it the disciples? Was it Jesus? While most commentary focuses on Theophilus as the "most excellent" there is no indication as to who taught him and why these issues are of such importance to him. One of the largest oddities appears to be that we have powerful records and two men working together, who we have no history, yet are bringing to the world the most important lessons mankind will ever need, who is Jesus.

If Luke was not a disciple of Jesus and not a Jew how did he know of the wo from the very beginning? We just read in verse 1:3 of the Gospel of Luke, "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first," Luke must have had means to follow Jesus and the disciples, to not be run off or question what he was writing. Somehow Luke knew and understood what was taking place.

"Luke-Acts may be addressed to Christians, but there is a universal aspect to the work. In addition, Luke justifies his work for Theophilus by reference to earlier similar writings,

his trustworthy sources based on careful research.”<sup>2</sup> Luke heard others and read their accounts then he would carefully study and research the truths. Luke being a physician his attention to details is exemplary, short, to the point, and well vetted.

### **Theophilus or the World?**

Who was Acts addressed to if not the world? We find the answer to this question in the Scripture itself, Luke 1:3, Acts 1.1. NKJV, “Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write a careful account for you, most honorable Theophilus,”. We find here Luke was specifically writing to Theophilus (means “God-lover.”, he recognized that others were busy recording what they heard and witnessed and performed during the infant years of Christianity, the church. This particular Theophilus remains a mystery as there are numerous others with the same name. It is believed he was a prominent individual within the local society.

As you study commentary on Luke and read numerous opinions, there is much out there about him we cannot substantiate. When or if you read parts of other’s writings on Luke try not to go further than what the Bible teaches, what he has accomplished in itself should be recognized as fulfilling the need we have as we study the history and those living in the early church times.

### **Acts 1-3**

**1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.**

It seems in our inability to fully grasp all that comes from the Godhead we often stumble on the same question many have asked before us and will no doubt do after us. Luke writes “After He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen”. We find a sharing of the Godhead here in that it is said “through the Holy Spirit,” did Jesus need the Holy Spirit to give the commands? When I was on chaplain services we were taught that there comes an end to our service with patients, meaning we were not the fix all we may think we are, when that time comes we need to soberly think of who we need to call upon. Jesus’ life has changed and He must return to His former estate, but the Spirit will be present.

Do not miss what else was said, “apostles whom He had chosen.” Andrew ran to find his brother Simon to tell him, we have found the Messiah, John 1:41, as though Jesus

---

<sup>2</sup> THE ANCHOR Bible Dictionary: Volume 6

Published by Double Day, A division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Groups Inc.  
Page V 5:11, 1540 Broadway, New York, New York 10036

was lost. It has always seemed a backwards expression when people say I found Jesus, "I looked high and low and I found Him, Jesus is right over there." Again, Jesus has never been lost but we have and it is us who need to be found and saved. If Luke were standing there, as we could picture him, how did he decide to write of the Holy Spirit, how close had he listened to Jesus that he would know of this power? Next he relay's the message of the risen Jesus after having suffered many infallible proofs. More than five hundred witnessed Jesus after His death and resurrection, these truths were recorded while many of these people were still alive, and there was no dispute, many infallible proofs. This is an enormous amount of people who saw Jesus alive, yet today many just brush it off as an old story, not true or alarming, some have even gone as far as to claim a mass trance, everyone was put under a spell. This is how important discounting Jesus is to evil.

### **Effectual calling, or irresistible grace**

John 17:18 Sent them into the world. How does this look. Do we go out to share the Word only with other believers? Matthew 7:6, NKJV, "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."

1 Corinthians 10:13; No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.