

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

BIBLE STUDY PART 1

3PS CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

Lesson One	Jesus Gives the Mission	Acts 1:1-11
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Purpose

Luke stated upfront his purpose in writing acts. He wanted to present an accurate narrative of the events surrounding Jesus' life on earth and the continuing influence of His ministry and message. Embedded within that purpose was an effort to defend the faith against assertions on the one hand that Christianity was a political movement against Rome and on the other hand that Christians were only a sect of Judaism. So, as we delve into this new study which I believe is very important as we are just coming through this Easter season commemorating the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To this day the church is yet alive and well and moving forward by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord bless us to come out of this study with new insight and determination to run for Jesus like never before.

May the Lord bless you abundantly,

Pastor Kermit Perry

Lesson One:
Jesus Gives the Mission
Acts 1:1-11

What do you think was the atmosphere of the people in Jerusalem and abroad after reports of Jesus' resurrection and being seen by so many?

Mission: a specific task with which a person or a group is charged

The Remembered Promise
Acts 1:1-5

1 In my first book I told you, Theophilus (loved by God), about everything Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. ³ During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

⁴ Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. ⁵ John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." **(NLT)**

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.

⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." **(NKJV)**

Discussion Question

1. What makes it difficult to wait for the Lord to prepare us to fulfill His purposes? What are the rewards of waiting?

The Resurrection Proclaimed
Acts 1:6-8

⁶ So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?"

⁷ He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **(NLT)**

⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.” ⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (NKJV)

Discussion Questions

2. What hinders believers from fulfilling their assignment to testify about Jesus’ presence in their lives?
3. What role does the Holy Spirit play in helping believers share the gospel?

The Preview of His Return

Acts 1:9-11

⁹After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. ¹⁰As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. ¹¹“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!” (NLT)

⁹Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Discussion Question

4. How can we as believers get caught gazing when we need to be obeying the Lord, meaning doing the great commission?

Apply the Text

Believers follow Christ and point others to Him through the power of the Holy Spirit. In obedience and love, believers are to share the gospel with others. Believers are to live in light of Jesus’ Lordship and anticipation of His return.

Memory Verse

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Lesson Two:
The Birth of the Church
Acts 2:1-4,41-47

The impact of the gospel is seen in the power, love, and unity found in the followers of Christ.

Pentecost: the second of the three great Jewish feasts, celebrated at Jerusalem yearly, the seventh week after the Passover, in grateful recognition of the completed harvest

The Spirit Given (Acts 2:1-4)

1 On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. **2** Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. **3** Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. **4** And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages¹ as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. **(NLT)**

1When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all¹with one accord in one place. **2**And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3**Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. **4**And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. **(NKJV)**

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the unity of purpose and focus critical for the church?
2. What's the connection between a focus on Jesus and unity in the church?

Devoted
Acts 2:41-42

⁴¹ Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.⁴² All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. **(NLT)**

⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. **(NKJV)**

Discussion Question

3. How does participation in these activities promote unity in the church? Can a church be unified without focusing on these elements?

We Are in This Together

Acts 2:43-47

⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— ⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. **(NLT)**

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Discussion Question

4. What does a consistent display of sincere adoration of God and grace toward others show about what a church believes about God?

Apply the Text

Every believer is to be a witness. Believers are enabled by the Holy Spirit to fulfill their God-given mission. To be spiritually healthy, believers need to be connected to other believers. In churches, believers can live life together, meet one another needs, and worship together. God's demonstration of Himself through believers can cause unbelievers to become curious about God and His Power.

Memory Verses

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 2:1-4 NKJV

Lesson Three:
Faithfulness in Persecution
Acts 5: 17-42
Background Scriptures
Acts 3-4

The Holy Spirit gives believers the courage to proclaim the truth.

A Prison Miracle
Acts 5:17-21 NKJV

¹⁷ Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, ¹⁸ and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹ But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰ “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.”

²¹ And when they heard *that*, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

Discussion Question

1. Has the Lord ever done anything miraculous in your life, if so how has that helped you in your walk with Him?

Apostles on Trial Again
Acts 5:22-32 NKJV

²² But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, ²³ saying, “Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!” ²⁴ Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. ²⁵ So one came and told them, saying, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!” ²⁶ Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. ²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, ²⁸ saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!” ²⁹ But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. ³¹ Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

Discussion Questions:

2. What motivated the religious leaders to silence the apostles?
3. How would you summarize Peter’s defense? Was Peters Defense convincing or convicting?

Gamaliel's Advice

Acts 5:33-42

³³ When they heard *this*, they were furious and plotted to kill them. ³⁴ Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. ³⁵ And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. ³⁶ For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. ³⁷ After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. ³⁸ And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."

⁴⁰ And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. ⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

Discussion Question:

4. How can opposition to the gospel produce courage in believers?

Apply the Text

Believers are to faithfully stand for Jesus when facing personal challenges. The truth of the gospel trustworthy and can be shared with confidence. Believers can rejoice when persecuted, realizing that the gospel is proclaimed in the process.

Memory Verse

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Acts 4:12 NKJV

Lesson Four:
Obedience to the Spirit
Acts 8:26-40 NKJV

Do opportunities to share the gospel message come through obedience?

Prompted by The Holy Spirit
Acts 8:26-29

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. ²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

Discussion Question

1. What are the means the Lord uses today to direct believers in carrying out the gospel mission? How do faith and obedience factor into those means?

Prepared to Share
Acts 8:30-35

³⁰ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;

And as a lamb before its shearer *is* silent,

So He opened not His mouth.

³³ In His humiliation His justice was taken away,

And who will declare His generation?

For His life is taken from the earth."

³⁴ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

Discussion Question

2. What questions could you ask today to initiate a conversation about spiritual matters with an unsaved friend or with someone you just met?

Focused on Salvation

Acts 8:36-40

³⁶ Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is water*. What hinders me from being baptized?” ³⁷ Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” ³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

Discussion Question

3. How would you explain the doctrine of baptism?

Obey the Text

Believers must recognize opportunities to share Jesus with others as directed by the Holy Spirit. Believers gain confidence to share their testimonies as they grow in their understanding of the Scriptures.

Salvation is available to all who are willing to receive Jesus.

Memory Verse

³⁵ *Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Acts 8:35*

Lesson Five:
Transformation through the Gospel
Acts 9:1-9, 15-20

God calls people to be His messengers, with the first step being a commitment to follow Christ.

The Confrontation
Acts 9:1-6

¹ Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵ So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Discussion Question

1. How would you characterize the confrontation between Jesus and Saul?

The Companions
Acts 9:7-9

⁷ And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought *him* into Damascus. ⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Discussion Question

2. Saul's traveling companions were prob from hearing Jesus' message to Saul. What does this detail teach us about the way God relates to His people?

The Lord Directing
Acts 9:10-14

¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ So the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹² And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

¹³ Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much ^l

harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

Discussion Question

3. How do we get to the point of obeying God in situations where our natural inclinations and reasoning say otherwise?

The Commission

Acts 9:15-20

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, Kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My names sake.” ¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. ¹⁹ So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. ²⁰ Immediately he preached ^ℓthe Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

Discussion Question

4. Why do new believers often display a passion for telling others about Jesus?

Apply the Text

God uses all kinds of people in kingdom work and does it in different ways. God calls specific individuals to focus on mission work. All believers can share with others who Jesus is.

Memory Verse

So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Acts 9:6

Lesson Six:
Salvation is for Everyone
Acts 10:9-16, 34-48
Background Scripture: Acts 10

The gospel message is meant for every person of every background, life experience, and heritage, do we believe that? What does this truth look like in real life?

The Visions
Acts 10:9-16 NLT

⁹ The next day as Cornelius’s messengers were nearing the town, Peter went up on the flat roof to pray. It was about noon,

¹⁰ and he was hungry. But while a meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

¹¹ He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners.

¹² In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds.

¹³ Then a voice said to him, “Get up, Peter; kill and eat them.”

¹⁴ “No, Lord,” Peter declared. “I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean.”¹

¹⁵ But the voice spoke again: “Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean.”

¹⁶ The same vision was repeated three times. Then the sheet was suddenly pulled up to heaven.

Discussion Question

1. In what way could the early church have been affected if God had allowed Peter to dismiss the heavenly vision?

The Declaration
Acts 10:34-43

³⁴ Then Peter replied, “I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. ³⁵ In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶ This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. ³⁸ And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

³⁹ “And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and

the dead. ⁴³ He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.”

Discussion Question

2. Since God is no respecter of a person nor shows favoritism, why is it that some believers today struggle with these things?

The Holy Spirit Moving

Acts 10:44-48

⁴⁴ Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God. Then Peter asked, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?” ⁴⁸ So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.

Discussion Question

3. How would you describe the significance of the Gentile believers’ baptism to the Jewish believers and other Gentiles who were present and heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God?

Apply the Text

Salvation is offered to all, regardless of heritage or race. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus alone. Believers can be advocates in the local church for new believers from different backgrounds.

Memory Verse

Then Peter replied, “I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. Acts 10:34