

Acts of Jesus – part 1 Introduction

Starting a new series this evening having been on a topical tangent. We will be coming back to preaching through books verse by verse.

We are going to start a Bible study series from the book of Acts.

1. The book of Acts is, according to J. B. Phillips:

“This is the Church as it was meant to be. It is vigorous and flexible, before it ever became fat and short of breath through prosperity, or muscle-bound by over organization. These men did not make acts of faith, they believed; they did not say their prayers, they prayed. They did not hold conferences on psychosomatic medicine, they simply healed the sick. By modern standards they may have been naïve, but perhaps because of their very simplicity, perhaps because of their readiness simply to believe, to obey, to suffer, and, if necessary, to die, the Spirit of God found that He could work in them and through them, and so they turned the world upside down!”

2. What is the book of Acts?

1. Unique book in the New Testament -- All the previous books are Gospels and all the following books are letters, Acts is neither, In fact it is the bridge between the two.

2. Partial fulfillment of: **Jn. 14:12** (I said partial because this process is still in full gear)

3. Part II in a 2-part series of writings by a first century doctor named Luke.

--He wrote more lines in the New Testament than any other writer including Paul.

--He wrote all those lines for the original reading of one individual named Theophilus.

Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1

--By all accounts, Luke is the only Spirit inspired writer of the Scriptures who was not Jewish.

4. This is a Part II, but in some respects, it isn't:

--In the book of Acts. The original (Luke) was so powerful--ending with the ascension of Jesus that the world can hardly wait for the sequel.

--Acts is not really the sequel—it is only the trailer to the real sequel. The real sequel is US!

--The world has seen part One now they desperately need to see part Two and that is up to us.

3. Acts paints a picture of a church that is quite different than most churches we're used to.

Spirit directed --- “Aren't all churches?” We are seeing a lot of the activity of the Spirit in our churches, but He is operating like a partner in a business instead of the out-right **OWNER**.

--For instance, Phillip travels to Samaria to preach and a city-wide revival breaks out and people are getting saved right and left so much so that Peter and John come down to check things out.

--Then what happened? Spirit told him “**Arise and go down to the road from Jerusalem to Gaza**”, and Phillip left a place where hundreds were coming to the Lord to go down and speak to one man.

--I would suggest to you that that wouldn't happen today -- we would've concluded that it was not the Spirit.

--A lot of what we do today is based on human reasoning instead of Spirit direction.

--They were led by and sensitive to the Spirit and this what made the difference.

--Our reaction is more education or improving of up-front personalities or the newest and greatest methods.

--Another example: Paul before he received the call to cross over to Macedonia said, [Acts 16:6-7](#)

--What kind of evangelism strategy is that? A Spirit led one!

--Another thing--have you ever noticed who gave the altar calls in Acts?

--Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost -- The crowd broke in and said, [Acts 2:37](#).

--Again, Peter speaks to Cornelius and his household and they break out into tongues before he could finish.

--Again, Paul and Silas having a worship service in a Philippian jail and the jailer rushes in after God demonstrates His presence and says "[Sirs what must I do to be saved?](#)"

4. Acts is a misnamed book – Called the “Acts of the Apostles” in most translations. I think it is misnamed.

--First, it covers the acts of really only 2 apostles (Peter, and Paul) and none of the others.

--The two most prominent figures besides aforementioned were not apostles but deacons (Stephen and Phillip occupy a full 2½ chapters of Acts)

--Even more than these, Luke’s own intro. to his book requires us to rename it: [Acts 1:1](#) (the implication being “[He ain’t finished O, Theophilus.](#)” In fact “[I’m about to tell you what He continued to do after His ascension](#)”

I think a better name for Acts would be “[The Acts of Jesus Christ](#)” – a name to which I think Paul would agree.

--Having well over ½ the book written just about him --- Paul says this about his ministry: [Rom. 15:18-19](#) (Notice: the same pair of words “word and deed” as we find here in [v. 1](#))

--Key word here in verse 1 is “[began](#)”

--Acts is what Jesus continued to do --- **still alive—still active**, He’s just changed bodies, from physical to spiritual.

--It is a brief intro. to Jesus’ work as He moves from the upper rooms of Jerusalem to the prisons of Rome.

--Today, how far has He moved? Moved into you and me and now He’s moving us into world that does not know Him.

--Acts has no real ending because it is still being written as Jesus works His acts through us--
What part will you play?