



Introduction to the Book of Acts

Acts 1:1-3

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(Acts 1:1-3)

The **BEST** way to **STUDY** Scripture is the way **GOD WROTE** it, **ONE** book at a **TIME**.

Author - **LUKE** is the author of **LUKE** and Acts.

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

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

- He was a **PYSICIAN** and **HISTORIAN**
- He was a friend and **CO-WORKER** of **PAUL**
- He is the only **GENTILE** to **WRITE** a **NT** book

PROOF OF LUCAN AUTHORSHIP: The “WE” Sections, Early church fathers’ writings, Author uses the largest vocabulary of all NT writers (as would be expected of a physician).

Date - It appears **LUKE** wrote Acts from **ROME** around **AD 61** during **PAUL’S** first **ROMAN IMPRISONMENT**.

Note things that are omitted in Acts that would naturally be in a book of early Church history had they already happened.

- **JAMES’** martyrdom in **AD 62** (Jesus’ 1/2 brother)
- **NERO’S** persecution after the **BURNING** of **ROME** in AD 64
- The **RELEASE, RE-ARREST** and martyrdom of **PAUL** in AD 67
- The **DESTRUCTIONS** of **JERUSALEM** in AD 70
- (The events of Acts cover roughly **THIRTY** years.)

Recipient - Theophilus means “**LOVER** of **GOD**.”

Theories of who he was vary and include that he was:

- A **SEEKER** who was **NOT** yet **SAVED**
- A **NEW CONVERT** to **CHRISTIANITY**
- **SYMBOLIC** for **ALL LOVERS** of God

Theophilus may have been a high-ranking Roman official. Luke wanted him to have the full story on Christianity. Luke portrays many Romans showing rulings by Romans that Jesus and Christianity were no threat to the empire.

Title - Rather than “The Acts of the Apostles” some suggest:

- “The Acts of the **HOLY SPIRIT** Through the **APOSTLES**”
- “The **ONGOING** Acts of **JESUS** By His **SPIRIT** Through the **APOSTLES**” “Holy Spirit” 50 x.

2 Precautions - Acts abounds with **TRANSITIONS**: from the ministry of **JESUS** to the **APOSTLES**; from the **OLD COVENANT** to the **NEW**; and from **ISRAEL** as God’s witness **NATION** to the **CHURCH**. Therefore, we must be careful about building **DOCTRINE** based **SOLELY** on what **HAPPENS** in the **TRANSITION** period of Acts. **DOCTRINE** should be **VALIDATED** by the **LATER** teaching of the **EPISTLES**. (One example: from no believers indwelt, to some indwelt believers, to all being indwelt.)

Luke 1:1- Luke’s **WRITING** style is **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE** Mock writes that “**NARRATIVE** reveals truth **INDIRECTLY**” whereas “**DISCOURSE** reveals truth **DIRECTLY**.” (a letter, sermon or speech)

Not every recorded **EVENT** or **ACTIVITY** in Acts **HAVE** God’s **ENDORSEMENT**.

See Stott's comment on the fact that not all practices in Acts are normative for NT Christianity. For example, common property, visible charismatic signs, temple worship.

Purpose – **LUKE** 1:1-4 includes his purpose for **ACTS**. (See printed text above)

I. Luke's Purpose Was **HISTORICAL** - Luke 1:1-4

Luke sought to write a trustworthy **HISTORICAL COMPILATION** of **CHRISTIANITY** from Jesus' **BIRTH** until **PAUL'S** first **ROMAN IMPRISONMENT** in AD **61**.

Luke is qualified to write this account, and he portrays this, yet without arrogance. For an example of his mastery, see the early verses of Luke 3.

The **NT's** layout reveals the **IMPORTANCE** of Acts.

- **FOUR** biographies of Jesus' life, death, resurrection
- **ONE** history book of the early Church
- **TWENTY ONE** epistles (**LETTERS**) of doctrine
- **ONE** book of prophecy

See Ivor Powell's statement on the indispensable value of Acts. If we had to eliminate one of the 27 NT books, Acts would be the last.

Acts is the **ONLY** God-inspired **SEQUEL** to the **GOSPELS** that also helps us make better **SENSE** of the **NT EPISTLES**.

Acts shows how in God's **PROVIDENCE** and His **SPIRIT'S POWER**, Christianity's leading missionary used the **PROTECTION**, **ROADS**, common **LANGUAGE**, and **PEACE** of the **ROMAN EMPIRE** to plant **REPRODUCING** churches in key **CITIES** in Syria, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia Minor.

II. Luke's Purpose Was **EVANGELISTIC**

1) Luke's labor was an **ACT** of **OBEDIENCE**

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV) ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 - **ALL** of the Great Commission **APPLIES** to **ALL CHRISTIANS**.

(v.20) Both **EVANGELISM** and **DISCIPLESHIP** are vital for **EVERY** believer.

2) Luke's labor was an **ACT** of **LOVE** - Luke 1:3-4

Luke gave this effort for the **BENEFIT** of **ONE** man