



WNBS: Foundations & Formation

Study Guide on the Acts of the Apostles

I. Introduction to the Book of Acts- Chapters 1–2

Purpose and Authorship

The Book of Acts is the divine record of the birth, empowerment, expansion, and endurance of the New Testament Church. Written by Luke as a continuation of his Gospel, Acts documents the fulfillment of Christ's promises through the coming of the Holy Spirit and the global spread of the Gospel.

Key Purpose Themes:

- Fulfillment of Christ's Resurrection Ministry
- The Ascension and Promise of the Spirit
- The Birth of the Church
- Expansion from Jerusalem to Rome
- The Power of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8 – The Divine Outline of the Book

“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.”

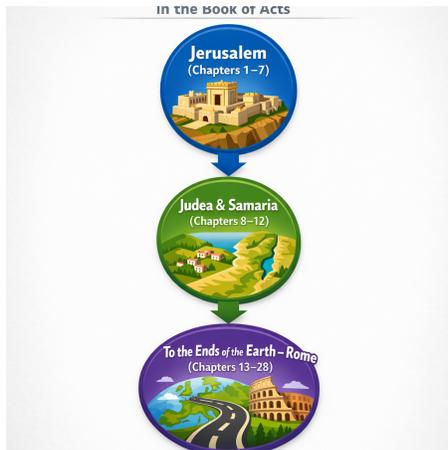
This verse provides the structural framework:

Geographic Expansion of the Gospel

- **Jerusalem** (Chs. 1–7)
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- **Judea & Samaria** (Chs. 8–12)
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- **To the Ends of the Earth (Rome)** (Chs. 13–28)

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This progression demonstrates:

- The intentional expansion of the Gospel
- The breaking of ethnic and cultural barriers
- The unstoppable nature of God's mission

II. The Resurrection Ministry and the Ascension — Chapter 1

A. The Resurrection Appearances

Jesus appeared over 40 days teaching about the Kingdom of God. The Resurrection was not symbolic it was bodily and visible.

Theological Significance:

- Validates Christ's authority
- Establishes apostolic credibility
- Grounds the Church in historical reality



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B. The Ascension (Acts 1:9–11)

Christ ascends physically into heaven.

From Resurrection to Mission

Resurrection → Teaching → Promise of Spirit → Ascension → Global Mission

The angels' declaration affirms:

- Jesus will return physically
- The Church lives between Ascension and Return

III. The Day of Pentecost — Chapter 2

A. The Coming of the Holy Spirit

The Spirit Descended:

- Sound of rushing wind
- Tongues of fire
- Speaking in known languages

This was not chaos it was divine authentication.

Purpose of Pentecostal Signs:

- Fulfillment of Joel's prophecy
- Public validation of divine empowerment
- Inclusion of all nations



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B. Peter's Sermon and the First Church

Led by Peter, the once fearful disciple now boldly proclaims Christ.

Structure of Peter's Sermon:

1. Explanation of the Spirit's outpouring (Joel)
2. Presentation of Jesus as Messiah
3. Confrontation of sin
4. Call to repentance

The Birth of the Church

Spirit Outpoured → Word Preached → Hearts Convicted → Repentance → Baptism → Fellowship

The First Church (Acts 2:41–47)

- Apostles' doctrine
- Fellowship
- Breaking of bread
- Prayer
- Signs and wonders
- Unity and generosity

Key Theme:

The Church is Spirit-formed, Word-centered, and fellowship-driven.

IV. The Power and Persecution of the Early Church — Chapters 3–7

A. The Healing at the Temple



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A crippled man is healed. Miracle leads to proclamation.

Miracles in Acts:

- Authenticate the message
- Point to Christ
- Invite confrontation

B. Growing Opposition

Religious leaders resist the Gospel.

Pattern of Persecution

Miracle → Preaching → Conviction → Opposition → Boldness → Growth

Persecution does not hinder the Church—it purifies and expands it.

C. The Martyrdom of Stephen — Chapter 7

Stephen becomes the first Christian martyr.

Themes:

- Israel's history of resisting God
- Christ as fulfillment
- Heaven opened
- Forgiveness in death

His death triggers dispersion and dispersion becomes expansion.



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V. Expansion into Judea and Samaria — Chapter 8

A. The Scattering of Believers

Persecution forces believers out of Jerusalem.

Divine Strategy:

What looked like defeat became divine deployment.

B. Ministry of Philip

- Preaches in Samaria
- Ethiopian eunuch conversion

Gospel Breaks Barriers

Jewish Believers → Samaritans → African Official → Global Inclusion

Acts demonstrates:

- No racial barrier
- No geographic boundary
- No cultural exclusion

VI. The Conversion of Saul — Chapter 9

A. The Persecutor's Background

Saul, later known as Paul, was:



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- A Pharisee
- Zealous for the law
- Determined to destroy the Church

He traveled toward Damascus with arrest warrants.

B. The Damascus Road Encounter

Light from heaven.

Voice of Jesus:

“Why are you persecuting Me?”

Transformation

Persecutor → Encounter → Blindness → Surrender → Commission → Apostle

Key Truth:

To persecute the Church is to persecute Christ.

Paul’s conversion proves:

- **No one** is beyond grace.
- God transforms enemies into missionaries.

VII. The Gospel to the Gentiles — Chapters 10–12

A. The Conversion of Cornelius

A Roman centurion receives a vision.

Simultaneously, Peter receives a vision about clean and unclean animals.



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Inclusion of the Gentiles

Cornelius Prays → Peter Receives Vision → Spirit Directs → Gospel Preached → Spirit Falls → Baptism

Theological Impact:

- Salvation is not ethnic.
- God shows no partiality.
- The Church becomes multiethnic.

B. The Church at Antioch

Antioch becomes:

- First missionary-sending church
- First place believers are called Christians

Leadership Development:

- Barnabas encourages growth
- Paul teaches extensively

VIII. The Missionary Journeys — Chapters 13–21

A. First Missionary Journey

Sent out by the Holy Spirit.

Mission Pattern



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Call → Sending → Preaching → Opposition → Converts → Church Established → Elders Appointed

Themes:

- Rejection by some
- Joy among Gentiles
- Church planting model

B. The Jerusalem Council — Chapter 15

Led by apostles including James.

Issue:

Must Gentiles follow Mosaic Law?

Decision:

Salvation is by grace not law.

Doctrinal Clarification

Question → Debate → Testimony → Scripture → Conclusion → Unity

Acts affirms:

The Church resolves tension through Spirit and Scripture.

C. Subsequent Missionary Journeys

Paul:

- Strengthens churches
- Faces imprisonment



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- Writes epistles
- Endures persecution

Cities reached:

- Asia Minor
- Greece
- Ultimately Rome

IX. Arrest, Trials, and Journey to Rome — Chapters 22–28

Paul is arrested in Jerusalem and tried before governors and kings.

Sovereign Protection Pattern

Arrest → Trial → Testimony → Appeal to Caesar → Shipwreck → Arrival in Rome

Even shipwreck cannot stop divine purpose.

X. Major Theological Themes in Acts

1. The Holy Spirit

The Spirit:

- Empowers
- Guides
- Convicts
- Sends
- Protects



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Before Pentecost:

- Temporary empowerment

After Pentecost:

- Permanent indwelling

2. The Church

Acts reveals:

- Doctrine-centered community
- Shared resources
- Courage under persecution
- Structured leadership
- Global mission

3. Persecution as Catalyst

Every wave of opposition produces expansion.

Persecution Expansion

Pressure → Prayer → Boldness → Growth

4. Divine Sovereignty

God directs:



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- Visions
- Dreams
- Appointments
- Geographic expansion

Acts is not random history it is guided history.

XI. Character Studies

Peter

- From denial to bold proclamation
- Leader in Jewish outreach
- Instrument in Gentile inclusion

Paul

- From persecutor to missionary
- Suffering servant
- Church planter
- Theologian

Stephen

- Defender of truth
- Martyr with forgiveness

XII. Practical Application for Today

The Modern Church Should:



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1. Be Spirit-empowered
2. Remain Word-centered
3. Embrace multiethnic unity
4. Expect opposition
5. Prioritize global mission

XIII. Comprehensive Color Overview Flow Chart

- Acts 1–2: Promise & Power
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- Acts 3–7: Growth & Persecution
↓
- Acts 8–12: Expansion Beyond Jerusalem
↓
- Acts 13–21: Missionary Movement
↓
- Acts 22–28: Witness in Chains, Gospel Unchained



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XIV. Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. How does Acts redefine what it means to be empowered by the Spirit?
2. What role does persecution play in spiritual growth?
3. How does Paul's conversion shape our understanding of grace?
4. In what ways should modern churches model the Acts community?
5. How does Acts challenge cultural and racial barriers in ministry?

XV. Concluding Summary

The Book of Acts is the divine continuation of Christ's work through His Spirit-filled Church. It demonstrates:

- Resurrection power



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- Ascension authority
- Pentecostal empowerment
- Doctrinal clarity
- Missionary expansion
- Sovereign preservation

It begins in Jerusalem and ends in Rome not with closure, but with momentum.

The final image of Acts is Paul preaching boldly under house arrest.

The message is clear:

**The messenger may be chained.
The Gospel never is.**