

# Acts

■ A Study of Acts 1

LESSON

1

## DAY ONE

# Our Teacher

Read Acts 1:1-3 and Luke 24.

The first chapter of Acts is the bridge between the events of the Gospels (the life of Jesus) and the beginning of the Christian Church.

1. To whom is the Book of Acts written?
2. Read Luke 1:1-4. To whom is the Book of Luke written?
3. Why did Dr. Luke write these books? (See Luke 1:3-4.)

Read Luke 24. This closing chapter tells of the resurrection of Jesus and of several of His appearances to the disciples before He was taken up into heaven. This time spanned 40 days, during which Jesus dispelled His disciples' doubts about His resurrection and taught them further about the kingdom of God. This time with their Savior created a unity in spirit and purpose that erased the divisions that had developed among the disciples during the three years of Jesus' public ministry.

- Their doubts were replaced with confidence.
- Their preoccupation with position was replaced with unity.
- Their reluctance was replaced with obedient resolve.

Jesus was alive. Jesus *is* alive. He is the Messiah. This changes everything.

4. In Luke 24, what was Jesus doing when the two who met Him on the road to Emmaus finally recognized who He was?

5. In verses 27 and 45 of Luke 24, Jesus helped the disciples in a particular way. What did He do for them?

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus will do for you what He did for the early disciples. As we study the Book of Acts, depend on Him to be your teacher and guide.

6. Look up John 14:26, and write Jesus' promise that is found there.

## MEMORY CHALLENGE

# Acts 1:8

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

## DAY TWO

# Worth Waiting For

Read Acts 1, concentrating on verses 1-5.

Luke was Paul's friend (Colossians 4:14). Theophilus was Luke's friend. And God was Theophilus's friend. The name "Theophilus" means "brotherly friendship with God" or "God's friend." Jesus showed us that we could have a relationship with the Creator of the universe. We not only worship Him, but we can also talk to Him. In this chapter we see evidence of God's power and authority. The name "Theophilus," however, reminds us that God invites us to be His friend.

1. List several characteristics of good friendships. Are these characteristics true of your relationship with God?

*Friendship with Jesus!  
Fellowship divine!  
O what blessed sweet communion!  
Jesus is a friend of mine.  
—Joseph C. Ludgate*

2. Acts 1:3 tells us, *After [Jesus'] suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.* The following passages describe some of the events that convinced the disciples. List them.

Matthew 28:16-18

Mark 16:12-14

Luke 24:1-11

John 21:1-14

3. Can you remember a time when Jesus gave you a convincing proof that He is alive? Has there been an answer to prayer, a special time when you have sensed His presence or His protection? List a few details of that time. If you have never experienced one of those times, pray that God will provide a convincing proof for you.

Have you ever doubted that Jesus is alive? Thomas was a disciple who honestly doubted. He knew Jesus had been crucified and buried, but the other disciples told him they had seen Him on the Sunday following the Crucifixion. Thomas was not convinced. He needed proof.

4. Look up John 20:25. What proof did Thomas want?
5. A full week passed. Then Jesus appeared again and provided Thomas with the proof he needed. What was Thomas's response? (See John 20:18.)
6. List a few details of a time when you did not believe that Jesus was alive or were unconvinced of His presence in your circumstances.
7. Read John 20:29. What one word did Jesus use to describe those who believe even though they "have not seen"?
8. The same passage in John tells us why Jesus' miraculous signs are recorded. From verse 31, write this reason in your own words.

Three years earlier, Jesus called the disciples to follow Him. They had done so. However, the events of the past few days had turned their world into chaos. They had come to Jerusalem during a holiday, a feast time. Their entry into Jerusalem was triumphant, with people praising Jesus and shouting, "Hosanna to the King of kings!" Within hours the fickle crowds would be shouting a different message: "Crucify Him!" The disciples had to have been confused. They were certainly frightened and were fearful that they might be arrested as well.

Jesus knew they would need help and hope. The day before His death, He told the disciples what He was going to ask the Father to give them. They listened but did not comprehend what He was saying. He talked about sending a Counselor. When He appeared to the disciples following His resurrection, He spoke again of this Counselor, the Holy Spirit—this was the gift the Father would send them. However, in order to receive this gift, they still had to follow Jesus. His call remained the same. They had to be obedient. The traumatic events of the recent days had not invalidated Jesus' words or teachings. They were to follow Him just as they had done in the past.

9. In Acts 1:4, what were Jesus' instructions?
10. Can you think of a time in your life when you had to wait for what the Father had promised? What were the circumstances?
11. Why do you think the Father would have us to wait?
12. The following scriptures tell us about waiting before the Lord. Read the following verses, and then choose one to record in your own words: Psalm 27:14; Habakkuk 2:3; Proverbs 20:22.

### MEMORY CHALLENGE

Write out the memory verse, saying it aloud as you write.

### DAY THREE

# Witnessing

**Read Acts 1:6-8.**

1. Isaiah, the prophet, foretold the birth of the Christ child. This prophecy is found in Isaiah 9:6. In this verse we are told that He will be called by various names. What is the first title given?
2. In John 14:16-17 the Counselor is described as what kind of Spirit?
3. In verse 17, where does the Spirit live?
4. John 14:26 tells us that the Counselor also goes by another name. What is it?
5. What did Jesus promise His followers in Acts 1:8, and when would they receive what was promised?
6. What would the followers be able to do? (See Acts 1:8.)

Once when I was in high school, I asked a friend to accompany me for a day at the lake. We traveled across I-94 in Michigan pulling a small boat behind my dad's station wagon. About halfway to the lake, we entered an area of highway repairs that closed all but one lane of traffic in each direction. An underpass and a curve in the road prevented me—and the driver of a large truck I was behind—from seeing the construction signs, and we did not realize that the traffic up ahead had come to a stop. By the time we had finally seen the stopped cars, it was too late. The truck plowed through the stopped cars, pushing them off to the sides in all directions. I followed the truck and fortunately hit no one. We stopped and helped people get out of their wrecked vehicles. Amazingly, there were no serious injuries.

The police came and took my statement. He recorded everything I had seen and told me I might be called as a witness. He then asked my friend for her statement. She said she had nothing to add. Later that day I asked her why she had not told her story to the police. She explained that when the truck brake lights came on, she shut her eyes and did not open them again until we had come to a stop. She had nothing to share with the police simply because she had not seen anything.

Witnessing consists of two components: first you observe, and then you tell about it. If you do not observe what has taken place, you cannot witness about it. Jesus calls us first to observe what He is already doing. In Acts 1:8 He tells His disciples that they will have the opportunity to watch what He is about to do in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. They might get the opportunity to tell about what they had seen and heard, but first they would have to observe.

7. Name two or three times you have observed God at work.
8. Once you have seen God at work, it is difficult to refrain from talking about it. Peter and John had seen God at work. Write down their responses found in Acts 4:20.

God is often at work when we do not even realize it (see 2 Kings 6:15-17). We are more likely to pray that God will empower us to witness to others, when we ought first to pray that He empowers us to see what He is already doing. Take a moment to pray that the Holy Spirit will “open your eyes” so that you might see how He is already working in your life.

9. List two areas in your life in which you will begin (or continue) to wait on God and to look for how He is working in those situations.

## MEMORY CHALLENGE

Personalize the memory challenge. Write it out as if it were directed toward your life and your circumstances.

## DAY FOUR

# Stand in Awe

Read Acts 1:9-13.

1. In Acts 1:9, as Jesus was telling His disciples they would receive power after the Holy Ghost came upon them and they would be witnesses, something dramatic happened. What was it?

My family and I took a summertime trip to the mountains. We drove through Rocky Mountain National Park and stopped at one of the visitors' centers. From here my daughter and I climbed a path to one of the peaks. When we reached the top, we stood in awe, gazing at half a dozen other peaks that were higher still. I felt like applauding God's creation or crying over the sacredness of the beauty.

We took pictures, but they could not fully capture the scenery or the emotions. I feel the same must be true of this passage in Acts in which Jesus was taken up to heaven. I can hardly imagine how the disciples felt. It would appear that they simply stood in awe.

2. In Luke's first book written to Theophilus, we find the approximate location of where Jesus was taken up into heaven. What area does Luke 24:50 say that location is near?
3. Acts 1:12 tells us the specific location. What is the name of the hill?
4. What was Jesus doing when He was taken up into heaven? (See Luke 24:51.)
5. Acts 1:10 says that an unusual thing happened while the disciples were looking up into the sky after Jesus. What happened?

6. Who do you think the two men were?
7. Luke 24:4 describes what happened to the women who came early Sunday morning to the tomb of Jesus and found the stone that sealed the grave rolled back. When they did not find the body of Jesus in the tomb and were wondering about it, what happened?
8. Who were the two men? Do you think they might be the same two who appeared in Acts 1:10?
9. Compare the messages from the two men (Luke 24:5-7; Acts 1:11). Do you find anything similar in the two messages?
10. After Jesus was taken into heaven, what did the disciples do (Acts 1:12) that was in obedience to Jesus' instructions (verse 4)?

## MEMORY CHALLENGE

Thank God for the truth found in this week's memory verse.

## DAY FIVE

# Peter Speaks Up

**Read Acts 1:13-17.**

The rapid-fire events of Jesus' death, His resurrection, the 40 days of fellowship, and His ascension to heaven had lifted the hearts of His followers. Their despair had turned to joy. Their discouragement had turned to excitement. Their apprehension had turned to expectancy. The disciples had heard the words of Jesus, and in radical obedience they waited. Jesus would keep His promise!

1. Verse 13 of Acts 1 lists the people who were present when the followers returned from the Mount of Olives and went to an upstairs room. Compare the list to the list of apostles found in Matthew 10:2-4. What names do you find in the Matthew list that are not mentioned in the list found in Acts?

As they waited, the disciples were active. They went to the Temple, they prayed, they ate together, and they talked. Only a few of Jesus' followers stayed with Him through the Crucifixion. However, in the weeks that followed, Jesus' appearances and the excitement of the disciples resulted in many becoming believers. These joined in on Jesus' command to wait for the gift of the Father.

2. How large had the group grown? (See Acts 1:15.)
3. Who spoke before the group of believers?
4. Who was the subject of the speech?
5. What was the charge that Peter leveled against Judas? (See verse 16.)



5. God often works through very ordinary means. After asking for God's guidance, how did the group go about choosing Judas's replacement? (See verse 26.)
6. Are you facing any significant problems or decisions? Take a few minutes to follow the example of the early believers.
- Face the problem and acknowledge the surrounding circumstances.
  - Read the Scriptures to see if they provide any guidance.
  - Use your best judgment, and consider what you think would be the right or best thing to do.
  - Ask for God's help. Trust that He can guide you both before and after the decision is made.

### **MEMORY CHALLENGE**

Write out the memory verse as a prayer for others.