

The Book of Acts

RESOURCES

STUDY GUIDES BY SECTION



THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 1.1
Lesson 1: The Background of Acts
Section 1: Authorship

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

I. Authorship

A. Gospel of Luke

1. Explicit
2. Implicit

B. Early Church

1. Manuscripts
2. Early church leaders

C. New Testament

1. Clues
2. Luke

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do the passages Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1 point to the fact that Luke wrote both the gospel and the Book of Acts?
2. What conclusion does Dr. Bayer draw from the order, length, and number of years covered by the gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts?
3. What is the name of the early manuscript containing portions of Luke and John, probably copied between AD 175 and AD 200, and found in Egypt in 1952?
4. What is the name of the earliest known document listing the New Testament books that the Church considered canonical?

5. Summarize the evidence from the early Church about the authorship of Acts.
6. Was Luke an apostle?
7. What was Luke's profession?
8. What does the lesson mention about the style of Greek used in Luke and Acts?
9. What change do we observe in the form of narrating events, beginning in Acts 16:10?
10. According to Dr. Bayer, what conclusion can we draw about the person of Luke from the fact that Luke 1:1-2 speaks of things learned from "...those who were eyewitnesses"?
11. In what missionary journey did Luke begin travelling with Paul?
12. According to Dr. Bayer, when was Luke probably converted?
13. Indicate the evidence that each of these three manuscripts gives to support the Lucan authorship of Acts: Papyrus 75, the Muratorian Fragment, and the Anti-Marcionite Prologue.

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. Why is it important to identify the author of the book of Acts?
2. Is there anything you can learn from the person and life of Luke that is a good example for you?

THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 1.2
Lesson 1: The Background of Acts
Section 2: Historical Setting

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

II. Historical Setting

A. Date

1. After A.D. 70
2. Before A.D. 70

B. Original Audience

1. Theophilus
2. Broader Audience

C. Social Context

1. Roman Empire
2. Jews

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is Dr. Bayer's opinion about the date of composition of the Book of Acts?
2. What names are mentioned in Acts that are also mentioned in historical accounts written around 79 AD?
3. What arguments are used by Dr. Bayer to support his view about when Acts was written?
4. What is Dr. Bayer's view about the audience to whom Acts was written?
5. How did public works such as roads and buildings built by the Roman Empire help the spread of the gospel?
6. What was the attitude of the Roman Empire toward the Jewish religion and the Christian religion at the time Acts was written?
7. What was the attitude of the early Christians toward the Jewish leaders at the time Acts was written?

8. What is the name of the historian who wrote "Antiquities" around 79 AD?
9. At the time Acts was written, were some Gentile proselytes permitted to become members of the Jewish community?
10. How did the early Christian Church view Gentile believers in regards to their status in the Church?
11. Describe some the problems of the early Church mentioned in Acts and referenced in the lesson?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. How are our lives and theology influenced by our own governments and cultures? How can we discern whether this influence is good or bad?
2. What can we learn from the early church about relating to the social and political influences around us?
3. As you look at the problems the early church was facing, as described in Acts, which of those problems do you think are still the most common in our churches today?
4. As you look at most churches around your city today, what kind of people belong to them? What kinds of social and ethnic backgrounds are represented?
5. What can we learn from the situation of the early church in Acts about relating to people of different religions and different backgrounds? What should our churches look like today, in terms of bringing different people together in Christ?

THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 1.3
Lesson 1: The Background of Acts
Section 3: Theological Background

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

III. Theological Background

A. Old Testament

1. History
2. Israel

B. Kingdom of God

1. Jewish Theology
2. John the Baptist
3. Christian Theology

C. Gospel of Luke

1. Jesus
2. Apostles

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does Dr. Bayer compare Old Testament theology with the theology taught in the Book of Acts?
2. What is the Old Testament teaching about God's choice of Abraham?
3. How does Dr. Bayer compare Old Testament teaching about the Gentiles with the teaching of Acts about the Gentiles?
4. Summarize the attitude toward Moses expressed in the teaching in Acts.
5. Acts 7:36-39 says, "Moses...told the Israelites, 'God will send you a _____ from your own people.'"
6. Summarize the view of Acts toward the dynasty of David, as compared with the Old Testament view.

7. Psalm 72:8 and 17 indicate that _____ would rule from sea to sea.
8. According to Dr. Bayer, Luke wanted his readers to understand that Jesus fulfilled special roles regarding key people from the Old Testament. Summarize how Jesus fulfilled the roles of Abraham, Moses, and David.
9. According to Dr. Bayer, how does Luke interpret the way the kingdom of God expands?
10. What do we learn about the coming of the kingdom from the Parable of the Ten Minas in Luke 19:12-27?
11. What do we learn from Acts 1:3-8 about the coming of the kingdom, according to Dr. Bayer?
12. In Acts 17:24-27, what part of the biblical narrative is emphasized by Paul in his teaching in Athens?
13. What were the various general views of the Messiah himself when Acts was written?
14. What were the various views of the Messiah's coming when Acts was written?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. How should the Old Testament's view of world history inform our own thinking about current history as Christians in the modern world?
2. In what ways do we currently participate in God's kingdom? What is our role in the process of kingdom building? How could you do more to expand the kingdom of God?
3. How should we change our thinking and priorities in light of the fact that God's kingdom expands as people receive and trust in Jesus as the Messiah?
4. What can you learn from the errors of many followers of Jesus regarding the way that the kingdom of God would be established? In what ways do we make similar mistakes today? How can we avoid these errors?
5. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study?
6. Read Acts 2:14-41 and answer the questions:
 - a. How would you describe Peter's speech? Check any of the answers you consider applicable.
 - Didactic
 - Practical
 - Confronting
 - Exegetical
 - Topical

- Passionate
- Evangelistic
- Organized
- Logical
- Other: _____

b. What do you think? Which of the following statements describe some of the purposes of Peter's speech?

- Testify to the calling and authority of the apostles.
- Explain that the phenomenon of speaking in tongues had been prophesied in the Old Testament.
- Explain that the ascended Jesus had poured out the Holy Spirit.
- Call the Jewish people to repentance for crucifying Jesus.
- Preach about Christ so that people would believe and be saved.
- Show that the Old Testament prophesied that the Gentiles would also be included in the plan of salvation.

c. Which of the following statements best represents Peter's attitude toward the Old Testament Scriptures expressed in his speech in Acts 2?

- He quotes from it and teaches from it, but does not consider it authoritative.
- He quotes it as authoritative, teaches from it, and considers that its prophecies are being fulfilled.
- He considers the Old Testament a uniquely Jewish history that no longer applies to us in the Christian era.

d. Which of the following theological themes from the Old Testament do you find in Peter's speech in Acts 2?

- The Creation
- The Fall
- Redemption
- The blessings and miracles of the "last days"
- The promises to David and his descendant
- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- The inclusion of the Gentiles
- The Covenant

e. How would you summarize the message of Peter's speech in Acts 2?

THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 2.1
Lesson 2: The Structure and Content of Acts
Section 1: Rhetorical Strategy

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

I. Rhetorical Strategy

A. Stated Purpose

1. Historical Account
2. Gospel Message

B. Reliance on Authority

1. Words
2. Deeds

C. Structural Pattern

1. Summary Statements
2. Church Growth

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to Dr. Bayer, what was Luke's purpose in writing Acts?
2. Dr. Bayer says that critics have often taught in recent centuries that the historical accounts in the Bible are "_____."
3. What evidence does Dr. Bayer give to show that Luke intended to write real history?
4. What unusual phrase is used in Acts 28:7 that recent archeological studies have shown to be an official title used at that time?
5. Dr. Bayer says that Acts is "a sort of _____ or didactic history."
6. According to Dr. Bayer, since Luke was not an apostle, what did he include in Acts to give greater authority to his account?
7. In the first century, were writers prone to make inaccurate historical reports of speeches?

8. To what degree did Luke edit the speeches he records in Acts?
9. What story in Acts 13:7-12 teaches us that Luke appealed to deeds to support the authority of the gospel message in Acts?
10. How does Dr. Bayer explain the literary structural pattern of the Book of Acts?
11. What is the focus of all the main sections of the Book of Acts, according to Dr. Bayer?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. Why is it important to understand Luke's purposes in writing Acts? What can we learn from his example? How does it help us interpret Acts correctly?
2. Why is it important to believe that Acts records real history? How would it affect you if you believed that it was not real history?
3. Why is it important to understand the structure of the Book of Acts? How does it help you understand the message of the book?

THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 2.2
Lesson 2: The Structure and Content of Acts
Section 2: Content

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

(NOTE: It is not necessary to write down and remember the exact references for each section of Acts as you take notes.)

II. Content

A. Jerusalem

B. Judea and Samaria

C. Ends of the Earth

1. Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch
2. Cyprus, Phrygia, and Galatia
3. Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia
4. Rome

REVIEW QUESTIONS

(Note: It is not necessary to write down and remember all the references mentioned in the video, but you should be familiar with those that are mentioned specifically in the review questions.)

1. Explain the difference between internal growth and external growth, as Dr. Bayer uses the terms.
2. Explain the difference between internal tension and external opposition, as Dr. Bayer uses the terms.
3. Name the main geographical areas in order, as expressed in Acts 1:8, to refer to the expansion of the Church?
4. Describe the signs of internal growth in the church at Jerusalem in the first main section of Acts, according to Dr. Bayer.
5. Mention signs of the internal tension in the church at Jerusalem in the first main section of Acts, according to Dr. Bayer?

6. Mention signs of external growth in Judea and Samaria, in the second main section of Acts, according to Dr. Bayer.
7. Mention signs of external opposition in Judea and Samaria, in the second main section of Acts, according to Dr. Bayer.
8. Mention signs of internal tension in Antioch of Syria, in the third main section of Acts, according to Dr. Bayer.
9. Mention signs of internal growth in Acts 15.
8. What reason is given for Paul and Barnabas parting company as they began the second missionary journey?
9. What was Paul's position on the Gentiles keeping the laws and traditions of the Jews?
10. How free was Paul to preach the gospel while he was in prison in Rome?
11. List the geographical areas that Paul evangelized on his missionary journeys.

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. What kinds of growth should we expect from our own congregation? How can we achieve these kinds of growth?
2. What can we learn from the tensions and conflicts in the early Church? Does it encourage you or discourage you to know there were so many conflicts? Why?
3. Do you think there are more or less conflicts in our churches today than there were in the early church? Explain your answer.
4. What are the most common causes of conflicts in our churches today? What can we do to avoid them or resolve them?

THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 2.3
Lesson 2: The Structure and Content of Acts
Section 3: Modern Application

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

III. Modern Application

A. Literary Character

1. Selective
2. Episodic
3. Implicit

B. Discontinuities

1. Different Time
2. Different Circumstances

C. Continuities

1. Same God
2. Same Goal
3. Same Gospel

Conclusion

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the three aspects of the literary character of Acts described by the author?
2. In what ways was Luke "selective" in his writing of Acts?
3. What does Dr. Bayer mean when he says that Luke's writing in Acts is "episodic"?
4. What does Dr. Bayer mean when he says that, in the Book of Acts, Luke teaches in an "implicit" way?
5. What is the difference between "argumentative" discourse and "narrative" discourse, as Dr. Bayer explains?

6. What are the possible signs that would enable us to infer that an example of something narrated in Acts should be followed as a good example?
7. Summarize Dr. Bayer's teaching regarding the office of apostle, and whether it still continues today.
8. Summarize Dr. Bayer's teaching regarding the meaning of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and whether it is a guideline for what we should experience today.
9. Summarize Dr. Bayer's view concerning whether we should still follow the pattern in Acts of meeting in homes.
10. What argument does Dr. Bayer give to show that the fact that they shared properties and resources in the early Church (Acts 2:44-45) is not necessarily normative for us today?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. Give an example of something that God clearly approves or something God clearly disapproves in the narratives of the Book of Acts. What can we learn from this example?
2. Give an example of an inappropriate application that you may have been making previously from your reading of Acts, because you were not taking into account the special time and circumstances of the original context. What have you learned in this lesson to help you avoid mistaken applications?
3. What mistakes do you see in your own church context regarding improper application of the Book of Acts? How could you help avoid these errors?
4. In what ways can you participate in the spread of the gospel and the expansion of the Church, even across cultural boundaries?
5. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study?
6. Read Acts 7:1-53 and answer the questions.
 - a. How would you describe Stephen's speech? Check any answers you consider applicable.

- Didactic
- Practical
- Confronting
- Exegetical
- Analytical
- Evangelistic
- Organized
- Passionate
- Logical

b. What do you think? Which of the following statements describe some of the purposes of Peter's speech?

- Defend himself
- Call the Jews to repentance
- Preach about Christ so that they might believe and be saved
- Explain that the Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in Christ
- Show the sins of Old Testament Israel in rejecting God's messengers
- Show that Jesus was a descendant of David
- Explain the inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of redemption

c. Which of the following statements best represents Stephen's attitude toward the Old Testament Scriptures expressed in his speech in Acts 7?

- He quotes from it and teaches from it, but does not consider it authoritative.
- He quotes it as authoritative, teaches from it, and considers that its prophecies are being fulfilled.
- He considers the Old Testament a uniquely Jewish history that no longer applies to us in the Christian era.

d. Which of the following theological themes from the Old Testament do you find in Stephen's speech in Acts 7?

- The Creation
- The Fall
- Redemption
- The blessings and miracles of the "last days"
- The promises to David and his descendant
- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- The inclusion of the Gentiles
- The Covenant

e. How would you summarize the message of Stephen's speech in Acts 7?

THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 3.1
Lesson 3: Major Themes of Acts
Section 1: The Holy Spirit

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

Introduction

I. The Holy Spirit

A. Before Pentecost

1. Timing
2. Purpose

B. Day of Pentecost

1. Significance
2. Tongues
3. Results

C. After Pentecost

1. Samaria
2. Caesarea
3. Ephesus

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were the Jews expecting, at the time before the events of Pentecost in Acts 1-2, regarding the work of the Messiah?
2. How did Jesus correct the error of His disciples with regard to the timing of the restoration of the kingdom?
3. According to Dr. Bayer, with what kind of power was the Spirit associated in the Old Testament?
4. Summarize the significance of the celebration of the Jewish Pentecost.

5. How does Dr. Bayer understand the gift of tongues experienced on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2?
6. How does Dr. Bayer view the manifestations of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 in regards to the normal experience of all Christians in our day?
7. Dr. Bayer argues that the experiences of the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 were meant to _____ the final stage of the kingdom of God.
8. How was Peter viewed in regards to his education and speaking ability?
9. Explain Dr. Bayer's interpretation of the dramatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit in Acts 8, 10, and 19. What was the significance of these events? Do they set a pattern for all believers today? Why or why not?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. How does Jesus' teaching about the restoration of the kingdom affect you personally? How does it encourage you? How does it affect your priorities? What does it mean for evangelism? In what ways do you experience the effects of the kingdom in your life?
2. In what ways have you experienced the empowerment of the Holy Spirit? What were the results? Would you like to experience more of His power? What can you do to experience it?
3. What is your opinion? What is the gift of tongues? Why did God give this gift? Has anyone ever tried to pressure you to speak in tongues? How should you respond to such pressure?
4. What is your opinion? Did the experiences of Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 set a pattern for all believers today? Defend your view.
5. Thinking of the ministry of the Holy Spirit today, what do you think we should expect as normal experiences for all believers?

THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 3.2
Lesson 3: Major Themes of Acts
Section 2: The Apostles

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

II. Apostles

A. Unique

1. Requirements
2. Foundational Time

B. Authoritative

1. Function
2. Blessings
3. Miracles
4. Revelation

C. Varied

1. Strategies
2. Settings

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to tradition, what became of most of the apostles?
2. What were the requirements of an apostle, according to Acts 1:21-26?
3. How did Paul meet the requirements of an apostle?
4. Summarize Dr. Bayer's perspective regarding the possibility of apostles today.
5. What does the Greek word for "apostle" ("apostolos") mean literally?
6. According to Dr. Bayer, what was the key function of miracles throughout the Bible?
7. According to 2 Corinthians 12:12, what marked an apostle?

8. Explain the authority of the apostles in terms of their function, God's blessings on their ministries, the miracles they performed, and the revelation they received and provided.
9. What were some of the strategies that confirmed the apostles' message?
10. In what settings did the apostles preach the message of the gospel? That is, what channels did they use?
11. What was the name of the new apostle appointed to replace Judas?
12. What differences distinguish the apostles from other missionaries sent out by Christ, according to Dr. Bayer?
13. What was Gamaliel's advice regarding the apostles?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. In what way do the apostles still serve as the foundation of the church?
2. Do you agree with Dr. Bayer's perspective regarding the possibility of apostles today?
3. Why is it important to establish whether apostles still exist today? Have you heard of those who claim to be apostles today? Did you believe them? What difference does this make in their ministry? What are the possible problems this might cause?
4. Do you consider yourself to be "sent by God" to preach His message? How are you fulfilling that call?
5. What can we learn from the different ways and different places the apostles preached the gospel throughout the Book of Acts? In what new ways could you begin to share the message with others?

THE BOOK OF ACTS
STUDY GUIDE 3.3
Lesson 3: Major Themes of Acts
Section 3: The Church

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

III. The Church

A. Necessity

1. Physical Limitations
2. Temporal Limitations

B. Preparation

1. Teaching
2. Officers
3. Hardships

Conclusion

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Summarize why the apostles needed to delegate others to preach the message of the gospel, as explained by Dr. Bayer?
2. What event made the apostles especially aware of the fact that not all of them would survive until Christ returned, according to Dr. Bayer?
3. In Ephesians 2:19-20, the apostles and prophets are called the _____ of the Church.
4. In Acts 2:42, we read that the early believers dedicated themselves to the "apostles' _____".
5. Have all Christian churches agreed that there are two biblical offices in the Church (i.e. - elders and deacons)?
6. In Acts 6, they chose men full of the Spirit and wisdom to help with what task?
7. In Acts 14:23, we read that Paul and Barnabas appointed _____ in each church.
8. In the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), who made the official decision?

9. In Acts 14:21-22, Paul and Barnabas told the disciples that they must enter the kingdom of God "through many _____".

10. Who was the leader of the church in Jerusalem when Acts was written?

11. In Acts 20, what did Paul tell the Ephesian elders about his future?

12. In Acts 20:28-31, Paul tells the Ephesians that what group would arise from among them?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. What can we learn from the way the apostles prepared the early church with their teaching, by preparing leaders, and by warning of coming hardships?

2. How can you make sure you are submitting to the teachings of the apostles?

3. How is your church carrying out the mission of expanding the kingdom of God? What can your church do to improve its efforts? In what ways can you personally help your church expand the kingdom of God?

4. Who are the leaders of your church? How can you show more respect and appreciation for them?

5. How can you help train and develop more leaders for your church?

6. Have you personally experienced any kind of hardship because of your faith? Explain how it happened and how you responded.

7. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study?

8. Read Acts 17:16-34 and answer the questions.

a. How would you describe Paul's speech? Check any answers that are applicable.

- Didactic
- Practical
- Confronting
- Exegetical
- Analytical
- Evangelistic
- Organized
- Passionate
- Logical

b. What do you think? Which of the following statements describe some of the purposes of Paul's speech?

- Defend himself
- Call the Jews to repentance
- Preach about Christ so that they might believe and be saved
- Explain that the Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in Christ
- Show the sins of Old Testament Israel in rejecting God's messengers
- Show that Jesus was a descendant of David
- Explain the inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of redemption

c. Which of the following statements best represents Paul's attitude toward the Old Testament Scriptures expressed in his speech in Acts 17?

- He quotes from it and teaches from it, but does not consider it authoritative.
- He quotes it as authoritative, teaches from it, and considers that its prophecies are being fulfilled.
- He considers the Old Testament a uniquely Jewish history that no longer applies to us in the Christian era.

d. Which of the following theological themes from the Old Testament do you find in Paul's speech in Acts 17?

- The Creation
- The Fall
- Redemption
- The blessings and miracles of the "last days"
- The promises to David and his descendant
- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- The inclusion of the Gentiles
- The Covenant

e. How would you summarize the message of Paul's speech in Acts 17?

f. How would you compare Paul's speech in Acts 17 with Peter's speech in Acts 2 and Stephen's speech in Acts 7? Check any answer that you consider applicable.

- All three are almost exactly the same.
- Paul focuses more on creation and less on the life of Jesus.
- Paul makes greater use of the Old Testament and focuses on the Messiah.
- Paul focuses more on repentance.
- Paul quotes their own writers and focuses less on the Old Testament.
- Paul does not mention sin or repentance.
- Paul does not mention the resurrection.

g. What factors do you think influenced Paul to make his speech different from Peter in Acts 2 and Stephen in Acts 7?

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