



## 9 studies in Acts

	Title	Passage	Sermon	Study
1	<b>The mission</b>	Study 1: Acts 1:1-11	<b>Apr 25</b>	<b>Apr 26-1</b>
2	<b>Preparing for the mission</b>	Study 2: Acts 1:12-26	<b>May 2</b>	<b>May 3-8</b>
3	<b>Enabling the mission</b>	Study 3: Acts 2:1-13	<b>May 9</b>	<b>May 10-15</b>
4	<b>Explaining Jesus' mission</b>	Study 4: Acts 2:14-41	<b>May 16</b>	<b>May 17-22</b>
5	<b>Living the mission</b>	Study 5: Acts 2:42-47	<b>May 23</b>	<b>May 24-29</b>
6	<b>Jesus powers the mission</b>	Study 6: Acts 3:1-26	<b>May 30</b>	<b>May 31-5</b>
7	<b>Suffering for the mission</b>	Study 7: Acts 4:1-31	<b>Jun 6</b>	<b>Jun 7-12</b>
8	<b>Mission minded</b>	Study 8: Acts 4:32-5:16	<b>Jun 13</b>	<b>Jun 14-19</b>
9	<b>Mission unstoppable</b>	Study 9: Acts 5:17-6:7	<b>Jun 20</b>	<b>Jun 21-26</b>



# ***Some helpful background to Acts***

Hello friends, it's so great that we get to study the Bible together in peace and freedom. Can I encourage you to make the most of Bible Study, to be regular, to be committed to the group of people you are going to open up the Scriptures with. Your presence and attitude can go a long way to encouraging others to live for Jesus. Please be purposeful with your attendance.

I am super excited that we get to spend 9 weeks in the books of Acts this term. You have may noticed from the front cover that we will be looking at Acts 1:1-6:7. The book of Acts is actually quite big (28 chapters) but the bit we are looking at is the first section of the book. We are going to be looking at where the **mission begins**, where the apostles receive the Holy Spirit and start to do their job of witnessing to the resurrected Jesus.

Acts is written by Dr Luke around 62-64AD. He's the same guy who wrote Luke's Gospel. In fact in study 1 you will find out that Acts is actually the continuation of Luke's Gospel, Luke is still writing for this guy called Theophilus so that he can be certain of the things he's been taught about Jesus. Luke's Gospel finishes with Jesus' ascension, Acts is the account of what happens after that.

Acts 1:8 is a key verse that helps us to understand the structure of the book. It says <sup>8</sup> *But 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.*" We find out in Acts 1 that the Apostles are to wait for the long awaited gift of the Holy Spirit but once they receive that gift they are to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. This verse and mission gives a structure to the book of Acts. We will finish our journey as the gospel has been witnessed to in Jerusalem and is about to go out further because of persecution.

It's worth talking about miracles and signs for a little bit, because you will come across them in your journey. Here is a quote from the commentary I will most heavily use (It's the Pillar New Testament Commentary—by David G. Peterson — \$66 on Kindle and \$110 bucks at Koorong). *"Signs and Wonders seem to accompany the planting of the gospel in new situations for a time, but Luke leaves the lasting impression that the work of God is advanced in the world essentially by proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. Although we should be open to the possibility that God can work miracles in any age, it is important to understand the reason for signs and wonders in the NT being especially associated with the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. We should not expect God to do the same things today, envisaging them as an aspect of 'the normal Christian life'...Evangelism without accompanying signs and wonders is in no sense incomplete. The gospel alone is sufficient to lead to faith in Christ and the salvation he has won for us."* p86-87.

**What do I hope you will get out of looking at Acts? I think I have two simple aims.**

- 1) You will be reminded of the absolute need to talk about the risen Jesus, with friends, family, workmates and neighbours.**
- 2) You will be encouraged to deeply love the people you go to church with, that you will be willing to share your lives together, and that this will build up the church and make outsiders want to live for Jesus.**

**I will be praying for you guys as you see the mission begin — in Christ, Simon**

# 1

# The mission

## Warm-up

Read Acts 1:1-11 and discuss the things that stick out to you.

## Investigate

### Read Acts 1:1-3

1. In these first few verses there are some helpful clues as to who wrote Acts and it's purpose.

Read Luke 1:1-4. We know that the doctor called Luke, who travelled with Paul wrote Luke's gospel. From what you have read in Acts and Luke so far who do you think wrote Acts?

2. If the purpose of the gospel of Luke was that Theophilus might be certain about Jesus, what might be the purpose of Acts?

3. Read Luke 24:50-51. The gospel of Luke finishes with Jesus being taken up into heaven. Luke says that's where he finished in Acts 1:2. How does this help to fill out the purpose of Acts?

### Read Acts 1:4-8

3. In verses 4 and 5 what instructions does Jesus give his followers?

4. In verse 6 what do Jesus' disciples seem more concerned with?

5. In verse 7 Jesus says only the Father knows when everything will be restored. From verse 8 what are the disciples to focus on instead?

Verse 8 acts like a key verse to the direction of the rest of the book of Acts. The disciples of Jesus will receive the Holy Spirit and they will be Jesus' witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth. As we work through Acts this time we will get to the chapter 6 verse 7. That is where the gospel has gone to Jerusalem and is about to keep going out.

**Read Acts 1:9-11**

6. In your own words what happens in these verses?

7. What is the importance of the ascension?

8. What do you think is the implication of the what the two men say in verse 11?

**Apply**

As we continue to work through Acts we will see that the disciples have a special role to play in the gospel going out. They are eye witnesses of Jesus life, death and resurrection. But I also think all of us as followers of Jesus are meant to be witness to the world of the wonderful news of Jesus.

9. What is the future of this world?

10. What does that mean we should do with our lives?

11. Luke told Theophilus in his gospel, that he wrote it so that he could be certain. Do you honestly believe that Jesus died, rose again and one day will come back to judge the world? Explain your answer.

If you do believe this—does your life reflect this? Spend sometime reflecting on your life and some of the decisions you have made recently. Don't forget that we are saved by grace and called to live in response to that grace.

**Pray**

# 2

## Preparing for the mission

### Warm-up

Read Acts 1:12-26. What sticks out to you?

### Investigate

#### Read Acts 1:12-14

1. Last week we saw that the two men told the apostles to stop looking up into the sky and to get on with the job at hand—because Jesus will come back. How are they going with this?

2. How many apostles are present and what might be the significance of this?

#### Read Acts 1:15-20

3. In verse 15 we find out that on one of the days between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, Peter is with about 120 believers. Peter speaks up to address the issue of Judas. Why is it important to show that Judas is the fulfilment of scripture?

4. In verse 20 Peter quotes the verses from the Psalms, that he has in mind. Read Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8. These Psalms are about David and his enemies. If Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of the Psalms, how do you feel about the quoted Psalms also being about Judas?

#### Read Acts 1:21-26

5. Peter has established the need to replace Judas from Psalm 109:8. In verses 21 and 22 the requirements of this new leader are outlined. What are the requirements and why are they important?

6. After considering the requirements two men are put forward. The apostles can judge the outward requirements but they can't really tell the heart. How do they get Jesus to reveal the right replacement?

7. Casting lots is something that was common in the Old Testament and appears here in Acts, however it should be mentioned that it doesn't appear in the New Testament after this time. It appears that the disciples were very sure that Jesus would reveal to them who the appropriate replacement was and that is why they casted lots. What big event is about to happen in Acts that means that there is no longer any need for this kind of thing?

**Apply**

8. What comfort is there knowing that God is in control of all things and is always working a way towards salvation?

9. How prepared do you feel for the mission of Jesus? Explain your answer.

10. What things can you do to be better prepared for the mission of Jesus?

**Pray**

# 3

# Enabling the mission

## Warm-up

Read Acts 2:1-13. What sticks out to you?

## Investigate

### Read Acts 2:1-4

1. The day of Pentecost was celebrated 7 weeks and 1 day (50 days) after the Passover. It was an agricultural festival that celebrated God's goodness in the cycle of seasons and the fruitfulness of the earth. If Jesus died at the Passover does this timing fit with everything else that has been going on?
2. The Jews had to travel from all over for this festival, to present gifts and offerings to the Lord at the temple. What is significant about this?
3. Read 1 Kings 19:11. What do you think the wind (v2) represents in Acts?
4. Read Exodus 40:38. What does the fire (v3) represent in Acts? And why do think it rests on each of them?
5. The most common view is that it's the 120 followers of Jesus who are in the house. In verse 4 what do these people receive and what does it enable them to do?

### Read Acts 2:5-11

6. Verse 5 tells us that there are in Jerusalem God fearing Jews from every nation under heaven (every nation known to them). Remember this is for the Festival of Pentecost. But why do they gather into a crowd?



7. Galileans were like the 'Bogans' of the day. From verses 7 to 11 what is amazing about what they are doing?

**Read Acts 2:12-13**

8. What are the two responses to the followers of Jesus declaring the praises of God in different languages?

**Apply**

9. What do you think is the significance of the Spirit being given here? Remember Acts 1:8.

10. Do you think speaking in different languages will always accompany someone getting the Spirit?

11. God promised that the Holy Spirit would come and help his people to do mission. Read Matthew 28: 18-20. What is the great comfort on offer here? When do you particularly need to remember this?

**Pray**

# 4

# Explaining Jesus' Mission

## Warm-up

Read Acts 2:14-41. What sticks out to you?

## Read Acts 2:14-21

### Investigate

1. Last week we saw that some of the people thought that the followers of Jesus had too many scooners (wine really). How does Peter address this?

2. What do you think is the significance of the Joel quote?

## Read Acts 2:22-35

3. What is the point that Peter is making in verses 22-24?

4. Peter seems to refer to parts of the OT to show the original audience and us that what happened to Jesus was all a part of God's plan. Peter quotes from Psalm 16 in verses 25-28 but he also explains the reference in verses 29-32. What is Peter's explanation? Does it make sense to you?

5. In verse 33 Peter explains that Jesus is now at the right hand of God because he was raised from the dead. What other important information is revealed in verse 33, that would help the original hearers to understand the speaking of tongues thing?

## Read Acts 2:36-41

6. How do the people respond to the news that Jesus whom they crucified is now Lord and Messiah?

7. How does Peter tell the people to respond?

8. The people listening to Peter would have almost been exclusively Jewish. But who is the promise for?

### **Apply**

9. Do you believe that Jesus' death and resurrection were all a part of God's carefully orchestrated plan to rescue the world?

10. What is the significance of the Spirit coming?

11. How do we get the Spirit? And how will we know that he is working in our lives?

### **Pray**

# 5

# Living the mission

## Warm-up

Read Acts 2:42-47. What sticks out to you?

## Investigate

**Read Acts 2: 42-43**

1. What did these early believers devote themselves to?
2. Why was everyone filled with awe in verse 43?
3. Why don't you think we see wonders and signs at church today?

**Read Acts 2:44-45**

4. What did the believers have in common? What do you think this means?
5. How did they help each other?

**Read Acts 2:46-47**

6. How often did they meet together?
7. What do you think it means that they broke bread together? And why do you think they ate with glad and sincere hearts?

8. These verses are a beautiful picture of Christian community. What was God adding to their community daily? And why do you think this was so?

### **Apply**

As you think about Church@6, do you think we reflect the early church? Maybe break your response into strengths and growth areas. Spend a few minutes thinking this through by yourself and then share your answers.

Strengths?

Growth Areas?

It is good to think about the strengths and growth areas of Church@6 and hopefully your leader will anonymously give this info to the 6pm leadership team. But at a personal level what changes can you make to your own life, so that you are better at building up the body and welcoming in new believers? Spend a few minutes thinking this through and then share one or two things.

Remember we can help each other to do these things.

### **Pray**

# 6

# Jesus powers the mission

## Warm-up

Read Acts 3:1-26. What sticks out to you?

## Investigate

### Read Acts 3:1-10

1. How long had this man been crippled? What would be the implication of this for his legs?
2. What does the man ask Peter and John for? What does he actually get?
3. Who is the one who really heals the man? Explain your answer.
4. How do the people respond to this miracle?

### Read Acts 3:11-16

5. Who do the people think healed the crippled man?
6. Who is the one who really does heal?
7. In these verses Peter also reminds the people of their response to Jesus. Describe their response.

### **Read Acts 3:17-26**

7. The Jews were responsible for Jesus' death (but remember this was God's plan to offer salvation to everyone who would believe). What does Peter call the Jews to do in verse 19?

8. In verse 22 Peter mentions that Moses spoke about Jesus' coming. Read Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Jesus is a prophet that came from the Jews. What is the warning about not listening to Jesus in verse 23?

9. In verse 25, Peter says that Jesus is the way that the promise to Abraham is fulfilled. All people are blessed if they believe in Jesus. Jesus first went to the Jews with this message. This message is very much for the Jews but who else will it be for?

### **Apply**

10. I think one of the things going on in this passage, is that the Jews are getting a second chance to see who Jesus is. Through Peter healing the cripple they get to see Jesus' power again and they get another chance to respond to Jesus. Have you really seen who Jesus is? And are you really trusting in him with your life?

11. What are the consequences of rejecting Jesus? How does this motivate you to encourage Christians and to tell people about Jesus?

### **Pray**

# 7

# Suffering for the mission

## warm-up

Read Acts 4:1-31. What sticks out to you?

## Investigate

**Read Acts 4:1-12**

1. Why were the religious leaders disturbed by what Peter and John were saying? What didn't the Sadducees believe in?
  
2. In verse 7 the religious leaders ask Peter by what power or name he performed the miracle of healing the crippled man. We saw in the last study that it was Jesus. What new information do we find out about Jesus in verses 10-12? What enables Peter to speak so boldly? (see verse 8)
  
3. Why is Peter's message and mission so important? (see verse 12)

**Read Acts 4:13-22**

4. Why are the religious leaders astonished?
  
5. Why do you think the religious leaders want to stop this message from spreading?
  
6. How do Peter and John respond when commanded not to talk about Jesus anymore? Do you think this is the right answer? (explain your answer)



**Read Acts 4:23-31**

7. Verses 24 –30 are basically a prayer to God. The prayer references Psalm 2 (please read if you have time). Psalm 2 is an acknowledgment of God’s power and rule but also how the rulers of the earth rise up against the Lord and his holy one. What do the people ask for, in the end of the prayer?

8. How does God answer their prayer?

9. Why are there a lack of signs and wonders today?

**Apply**

10. How often do you pray that you would boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus, even in the face of opposition?

11. I am assuming you answered ‘not very often to the above question’. Why is that the case?

**Pray that we would boldly proclaim the gospel together.**

## Warm-up

Share a high light and low light of the week. Pray that God would help you to understand the word.

## Investigate

- For these studies we will be using a modified version of the Swedish Method.

**Read Acts 4:32—5:16**

<sup>32</sup> All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.<sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all<sup>34</sup> that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales<sup>35</sup> and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.<sup>36</sup> Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"),<sup>37</sup> sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet. **5:**<sup>1</sup> Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.<sup>2</sup> With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.<sup>3</sup> Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?<sup>4</sup> Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."<sup>5</sup> When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.<sup>6</sup> Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.<sup>7</sup> About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.<sup>8</sup> Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price."<sup>9</sup> Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."<sup>10</sup> At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.<sup>11</sup> Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.<sup>12</sup> The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade.<sup>13</sup> No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.<sup>15</sup> As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.<sup>16</sup> Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

1. What stood out to you as you read the passage?

2. What questions does the passage raise for you?

3. What do you think is the key verse/s in the passage?

4. How does this passage point to Jesus?

5. How does this passage apply to you?

**Pray for one thing from the passage and one thing from general life.**

**Warm-up**

Share a high light and low light of the week. Pray that God would help you to understand the word.

- For these studies we will be using a modified version of the Swedish Method.

**Investigate**
**Read Acts 5:17-6:7**

<sup>17</sup> Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.<sup>18</sup> They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.<sup>19</sup> But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.<sup>20</sup> "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life."<sup>21</sup> At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin--the full assembly of the elders of Israel--and sent to the jail for the apostles.<sup>22</sup> But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported,<sup>23</sup> "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside."<sup>24</sup> On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.<sup>25</sup> Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people."<sup>26</sup> At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.<sup>27</sup> The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest.<sup>28</sup> "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."<sup>29</sup> Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!<sup>30</sup> The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead--whom you killed by hanging him on a cross.<sup>31</sup> God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins.<sup>32</sup> We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."<sup>33</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.<sup>34</sup> But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while.<sup>35</sup> Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men.<sup>36</sup> Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing.<sup>37</sup> After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.<sup>39</sup> But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."<sup>40</sup> His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

<sup>41</sup> The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.<sup>42</sup> Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.**6:**<sup>1</sup> In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews<sup>1</sup> among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.<sup>2</sup> So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables."<sup>3</sup> Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them<sup>4</sup> and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."<sup>5</sup> This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.<sup>6</sup> They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.<sup>7</sup> So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

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