

Brookland Baptist Church
Bible Study
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Lecture I

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The Book of Acts
Acts 1:1-3

Introduction:

The book of Acts, also, literally called “*the deeds of the Apostles,*” is the historical book of the New Testament, because it records the story of the early church and the changed men and women who changed the world. We see the work of the Holy Spirit embolden men and women to be courageous in proclaiming the Gospel.

We know that something phenomenal took place - Consider this: When last we saw the disciples, they were running scared and abandoning their Lord (*Matthew 26:56*). Fleeing, denying, disillusioned, and crying, these men seemed the least likely candidates to be boldly proclaiming the Gospel. Yet, that’s what happened. Peter, James, John, and the rest had been transformed from cowardly to courageous, argumentative to articulate, and selfish to selfless. Then they were joined by Paul, whom God also miraculously transformed.

The book of Acts, written by Luke, picks up where Luke’s Gospel left off, providing details of the birth and early years of the church that Jesus had promised to build. Together the two books, Luke and Acts, form a seamless account of how the followers of Jesus “*turned ... the world upside down*” (*Acts 17:6 NLT*) by taking the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ “*to the ends of the earth.*” (*Acts 1:8 NLT*)

Acts 1:1–2 – “*Dear Theophilus: In my first book I told you about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he ascended to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions from the Holy Spirit.*”

Luke’s opening statement ties this volume to his *first book*, the Gospel of Luke. That book was also addressed to *Theophilus*, whose name means “*one who loves God.*” While some scholars

have argued that this is a general term for all believers, it is more likely a proper name. When addressing **Theophilus in Luke 1:3**, Luke called him **“most excellent.”** A proper name with a title indicates that this was probably a real person, someone who belonged to the nobility, possibly as a high-ranking Roman official.

Whether or not Theophilus was a believer, he had apparently learned some of the facts, but he may have needed further clarification. Luke set out to explain the entire gospel story to Theophilus, telling him *about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he ascended to heaven after giving His chosen apostles further instructions from the Holy Spirit.* The translation **“began to do and teach”** shows that the books of Luke and Acts give the accurate account of the beginning of all that Christ was to do on earth. The book of Acts would show the continuation of His work on earth through His church and His body.

The following verses provide a bridge between the events recorded in Luke’s Gospel and the events marking the beginning of the church. Before he **“ascended to heaven,”** the resurrected Christ taught His disciples for forty days. In that short period, he gave those **“chosen apostles”** the instruction that would radically change their lives and, through them, the world. The fact that the apostles had been chosen by Christ (**Luke 6:12–16**) is an extremely important point. His whole mission depended upon them. They were to be the first who would carry His message to the world after His departure. If they failed, His mission would fail; if they succeeded, His mission would succeed. He had to concentrate upon them; to drill His commandments into them so that they in return could teach His commandments.

Acts 1:3 – **“After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”**

“After his suffering” refers to Jesus’ crucifixion. During the days after Christ rose from the dead, **he showed himself** to many of His followers. Christ showed himself and (as if more were needed) also **gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.** The word **“proofs”** (*tekmēriōis*) means **positive proof; infallible proof; convincing proof; sure signs and ways.** **The infallible, positive proofs and appearances went on for forty days.**

It demonstrated that Jesus' resurrection had not been sleight of hand or illusion, with Jesus being merely a ghostly presence. Instead, these were solid, visible, and undeniable proofs of the fact that Jesus was alive.

These proofs would form the heart and soul of the forthcoming witness of the church. The apostles, and the church behind them, would spread the truth of Christ because they had seen him after he rose from the grave! If Jesus had not truly risen from the dead, then nothing that proceeds from this point on in the book of Acts (*or the New Testament for that matter*) would make any sense or make any difference in people's lives. (*1 Corinthians 15:13–14*)

Jesus Appearances after His Resurrection

Jesus Appearance:	Scripture Reference:
1.) Mary Magdalene	Mark 16:9–11; John 20:10–18
2.) The other women at the tomb	Matthew 28:8–10
3.) Peter in Jerusalem	Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
4.) The two travelers on the road	Mark 16:12–13; Luke 24:13–35
5.) Ten disciples behind closed doors	Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–25
6.) All eleven disciples (including Thomas)	Mark 16:14; John 20:26–31; 1 Corinthians 15:5
7.) Seven disciples while fishing on the Sea of Galilee	John 21:1–14
8.) Eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee	Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 16:15–18
9.) A crowd of 500	1 Corinthians 15:6
10.) Jesus' brother James	1 Corinthians 15:7
11.) Those who watched Jesus ascend into heaven	Mark 16:19–20; Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:3–9

Five Results of The Resurrection:

- 1.) The Resurrection demonstrates that what Jesus predicted about Him being raised was true. (*Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; John 2:19*)
- 2.) The Resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God. (*Romans 1:4*)
- 3.) The Resurrection testifies to the success of Christ's mission of salvation. (*Romans 4:25*)
- 4.) The Resurrection entitles Jesus to a position of glory. (*1 Peter 1:11*)
- 5.) The Resurrection proclaims that Jesus is Lord. (*Acts 2:36*)

During Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances, the main subject of Jesus' remarks was *the kingdom of God*. Throughout the Gospels the kingdom was always on Jesus' lips, for this unified His teachings and activities (*Luke 13:18–21; 17:20–37*). When Christ came to earth, he brought God's kingdom, but it was not an earthly kingdom. The promised kingdom is present now only in part. The New Testament writers confirmed that through His death and resurrection,

- Christ bound Satan (*Colossians 2:15; 1 Peter 3:22*),
- provided forgiveness and holiness to sinners (*Romans 3:21–26; Hebrews 9:11–12; 10:10*),
- and is now enthroned as Lord over all (*Acts 2:33–36; 5:31; Ephesians 1:20–22*).