

Acts at Home

A 30-day journey through the Book of Acts

Introduction to Acts at Home

If the book of Acts were a research paper, its thesis statement would be Chapter 1 verse 8 – “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” Jesus says these words to His disciples as He ascends to heaven, leaving His followers and friends to figure out how they are supposed to accomplish bringing the message of the risen Jesus across the world. But it’s not really up to them, because the Holy Spirit is coming to give them the power, the courage, and the words to accomplish this task.

The book of Acts is the story of how Jesus’ followers took this message to the ends of the earth. It’s the story of the earliest days of the church and how this new community took shape in a hostile world. It’s the story of faithful men and women who gave their lives to tell others the story of Jesus. But more than this, it’s the story of the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the lives of people willing to say “yes” to Him. Acts is God’s story. He’s the hero. And the same God at work in Acts is at work today in and through the lives of people willing to say yes to Him.

Acts at Home is not a devotional, nor is it a commentary. What you have is a guide to help you process the word of God as you read it. We will provide some helpful information in the introduction, and the rest is up to you (and God).

The 28 chapters of Acts is broken up into 30 days’ worth of reading. Following each daily reading you will find a few questions designed to help you think about what you just read - what it means, what it teaches, and what it means for you here and now. Some of the questions will be very concretely about the reading itself. Some of the questions will be about you. These questions are patterned after a method called Inductive Bible Study.

What Is Inductive Bible Study?

Inductive Bible Study is a method of reading the Bible that helps to investigate the text and apply it to your life. It sounds hard, but it isn’t. Anyone can use the inductive method as they read by following three simple steps:

1. Observe.
 - a. Answer the question: *What does it say?*
 - i. This step is about looking at the facts.
 1. Ask yourself – Who, what, where, when, why, how?
 2. Make note of repeating words or phrases.
 3. Words that indicate a change in topic or time.
 4. Is there a cause and effect to what’s being said/done?
2. Interpret.
 - a. Answer the question: *What does it mean?*
 - i. This step is about figuring out what is being communicated.
 1. What’s the larger context of this passage?
 2. Are there other scriptures that might help me understand it?

3. What else do I know about the author, characters, setting?
 4. What do particular words mean?
 5. How does this passage connect to Jesus?
3. Apply
- a. Answer the question: *What do I do about it?*
 - i. This step is about taking action in your own life to live the truth of God's word.
 1. God isn't just about information...He's about transformation.
 2. Is there a change you need to make to be faithful to God's call?
 3. Is there sin you need to bring before God and ask forgiveness?
 4. Make a plan to implement whatever God is showing you.

The questions following each daily reading are patterned after the Inductive Bible Study method because it seeks not only to understand God's word but to aid in the process of life transformation, as long as we are seriously willing to think about how to apply it to our lives and take action.

What You Will Need

1. The Bible – hard copy, or the YouVersion Bible App on iPhone or Android, or Biblegateway.com. Use any translation you want!
2. Acts at Home reading guide and questions (this document). Feel free to print or use it on your device.
3. Pen
4. Time (10-15 minutes)

Acts Basic Information

Author: Luke. Acts is the 2nd half of Luke's double-work, which started with the Gospel of Luke. He likely wrote Acts sometime before 70AD, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans and the temple was destroyed.

Themes: The Holy Spirit – who He is and what He does. The birth of the church. Theology of Mission and inclusion of the Gentiles. Peter's development. Paul's conversion, call, and mission.

Outline of Acts

- I. **Beginnings in Jerusalem (1:1-26)**
- II. **Mission in Jerusalem (2:1-8:3)**
 - A. Early Witness to Jewish Populace in Jerusalem (2:1-3:26)
 - B. Early Persecution and Life of the Church (4:1-8:3)
- III. **Mission in Judea, Samaria, and the surrounding Regions (8:4-12:25)**
 - A. Peter's Testimony to the Samaritans (8:4-40)
 - B. Call of Saul (9:1-31)
 - C. Peter's Miracles and Mission to the Gentiles in Caesarea (9:32-11:18)
 - D. Spread of the Gospel to Gentiles in Antioch (11:19-30)
 - E. Death of Herod Agrippa I (12:1-25)
- IV. **Mission to the Ends of the Earth (13:1-28:31)**
 - A. Paul's First Missionary Journey and the Jerusalem Council (13:1-15:35)
 - B. Paul's Second Missionary Journey (15:36-18:22)
 - C. Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:23-20:38)
 - D. Paul's Return to Jerusalem (21:1-22:21)
 - E. Paul's Imprisonment in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome (22:22-28:31)

Blessings as you read. May the Lord speak powerfully to you through His word.

Day 1

Read: Acts 1

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. What do you make of the disciples' question in verse 6?
3. How does Jesus answer their question in verses 7-8?
4. How would you feel if you were the disciples after verse 11? Being told to bring the message across the world, watching Jesus ascend into heaven, and then have mysterious messengers tell you to get to work?
5. Where do you see God at work in this story?

Day 2

Read: Acts 2

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. What did the coming of the Holy Spirit look like? What was the result of His coming?
3. What is the main point of Peter's sermon? Why does it matter?
4. Verses 42-47 give the first ever description of the church community. What were they doing? What words would you use to describe them? How can our church community look more like them?

Day 3

Read: Acts 3

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. What do you think is the purpose of the lame man's healing? What was the outcome?
3. Do you see God's grace in Peter's words? How so?
4. Peter calls Jesus "the Author of life" (author could also be translated as originator, head, or ruler). Read Colossians 1:15-23 and spend a moment meditating on Jesus the author of life and what He's accomplished for you.

Day 4

Read: Acts 4:1-31

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. This is a continuation of Acts 3 – Peter and John preaching after healing the beggar. Why did the religious leaders arrest Peter and John? Why was their preaching such a big deal to the religious leaders?
3. What characteristics/qualities do you see in Peter? Re-read verse 13. Where did Peter get it from?
4. What is at the heart of the apostles' prayer in verses 24-30? How does God respond?
5. Are you challenged or encouraged by the apostles in this story? How so? Do you pray bold prayers like the apostles? Why or why not?

Day 5

Read: Acts 4:32-5:11

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. How would you characterize the church as it's described in Acts 3:32-37?
3. What sin did Ananias and Sapphira commit and why was it so serious?
4. What would our church look like if we stopped worrying about material possessions and committed to one another the way the church did in these verses? How would your life look different?

Day 6

Read: Acts 5:12-42

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. Why did the religious leaders have the apostles arrested? What do you think made them so jealous?
3. What is Gamaliel's point in verses 35-40?
4. In verse 41, we are told the apostles rejoiced because they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor/disgrace/shame for Jesus' name. What does it mean to suffer for the name of Jesus, and why is it a good thing?
5. Re-read verse 42. Our culture isn't always the most accepting or tolerant of the gospel. What are some ways you can share the message of Jesus in the midst of hostility, like the apostles did?

Day 7

Read: Acts 6

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. What are the qualities that the apostles looked for in the people being appointed to serve? Why are these qualities important for serving God? Are they necessary?
3. What happens when we each serve according to our gifts and abilities?
4. Why was Stephen arrested?
5. When you speak gospel truth, like Stephen did, what response should you expect? What should your response be in return?

Day 8

Read: Acts 7:1-8:3

Dig In:

1. In his defense speech, Stephen basically outlines the history of the people of Israel. What stands out to you from what he says?
2. Re-read verses 51-53. What is Stephen's point? Does it challenge you personally?
3. Write down your reaction to verses 54-60. What are you thinking? How do you feel?
4. What does it take to withstand persecution?

Day 10

Read: Acts 9:1-31

Dig In:

1. Describe Saul. Describe Paul. How did this transformation happen?
2. Ananias was skeptical about Saul, and rightly so. What does Ananias do, and what did it take for him to do it?
3. What are the reactions to Saul after his conversion – from the believers? From the Jews? From the disciples in Jerusalem?
4. Saul's transformation is radical – from violently opposed to the followers of Jesus to **BOLDLY** proclaiming Jesus with nothing standing in his way. Now think about your own life. What sorts of things tend to stand in the way of experiencing the same sort of radical switch Saul made? People, thought process, fears... Write them down, or say them out loud, and then ask God to take remove those barriers from your life so you can experience Him in greater ways.

Day 11

Read: Acts 9:32 - 10:48

Dig In:

1. We have two healing stories in 9:32-43. In the first, Aeneas is healed by Peter using only words. The second is bringing a woman named Dorcas back to life. What is the outcome of these two healing miracles? Who gets the glory?
2. What stands out to you from chapter 10?
3. The main point of Chapter 10 is that you don't need to be Jewish to follow Jesus – all people and all nations are included in salvation and the church. How does God convince Peter of this point in chapter 10?
4. What prejudices or partialities do you see within Christianity? What are they? What can you do to make sure everyone knows that salvation is for EVERYONE, and the church is for EVERYONE?

Day 12

Read: Acts 11

Dig in:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. The group referred to as “the circumcision party/the circumcised” in verse 2 refers to Jewish Christians. Why do you think they are critical of Peter hanging out with non-Jewish people?
3. How did the Jewish believers attitude change by verse 18?
4. What is the Holy Spirit doing throughout this chapter?
5. What evidence do you see of the Holy Spirit in your life, or in the life of people around you?

Day 13

Read: Acts 12

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this story?
2. What does this story tell us about how Christians were perceived? Why was Herod so violent against them?
3. Was it wrong for Peter to escape from jail? Why or why not?
4. How and why did Herod die?
5. Think about the reaction of the people in Mary's house to the news that Peter had returned. Is there anything in your life that, at first, seemed impossible or hard to believe but turned out that it was true? Was God part of that process? How so?

Day 14

Read: Acts 13

Dig In:

1. In verse 3, God calls Barnabas and Saul to a mission, but before they said “yes”, they and the rest of the believers fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them. Why do you think this process is important? Why didn’t Barnabas and Saul just get up and go?
2. Starting in verse 13, Saul (now called Paul) Paul teaches about Jesus in the synagogue to Jewish people, and he shows how Jesus fulfilled the old testament scriptures and promises. What stands out to you from what he says? Why does he take this particular approach in his teaching?
3. What is the response to Paul’s teaching from the Jews? From the Gentiles?
4. Re-read verses 50-51. Why were the disciples so joyful, despite being kicked out of the city?
5. What tends to stand in the way of your joy? How can you change that?

Day 15

Read: Acts 14

Dig In:

1. The cities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe are relatively close to one another in the region of central Turkey. There's a lot of movement in this chapter. Does anything in this chapter surprise you?
2. How did the crowds react to Paul and Baranabas in verses 11-13? What was Paul and Baranabas' reaction to their reaction?
3. What happens after Paul is stoned? What does Paul do next?
4. This chapter is a snap-shot of how Paul's missionary journey was going. While he isn't stoned in every city, a pattern is shown to us. He heals people, preaches, many people believe, and some people oppose him. Does Paul's life or actions teach you anything about what it means to follow Jesus and live on mission? If so, what? How can you continue to live on mission during social distancing?

Day 16

Read: Acts 15

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. Acts 15 tells us about an event called The Jerusalem Council. Why was this council held?
3. What was the outcome of the Jerusalem council?
4. Why does the outcome matter?

Day 18

Read: Acts 17

Dig In:

1. What happened in verses 1-9? Why was there such opposition to Paul and Silas?
2. After hearing Paul's message, what step did the people in Berea take that led to their belief? Why is this step crucial?
3. Examining the scriptures is an important step to help discern truth. Do you agree? Why?
4. Spend a moment reflecting on Paul's sermon at the Areopagus. Is his message still relevant? Write down some of Paul's words that you think the world needs to hear today.

Day 19

Read: Acts 18

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. Verses 1-16 are very up and down for Paul. How would you feel if you were in his shoes? What would you do?
3. We meet Apollos in verses 24-28, and he seems to be wise and well taught, except for one detail – he only knows “the baptism of John.” This refers to John the Baptist, calling people to a baptism “of repentance” to prepare for the coming Messiah (Mark 1:4). Apparently, Apollos isn’t preaching the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:16), so Priscilla and Aquilla take him aside and teach him. Why do you think this seemingly small detail is such a big deal?

Day 20

Read: Acts 19:1-20

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. What were these 12 Ephesian men missing in their message and in their lives? What does Paul do about it?
3. Why did the Jewish exorcists start using the name of Jesus in their ritual? What do you make of the evil spirit's response to them in verses 15-16?
4. Take a moment to reflect on the power of Jesus name. When you hear the name Jesus, what words pop into your brain? What feelings pop into your heart?

Day 21

Read: Acts 19:21-20:6

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. What is Demetrius' problem with Paul and "the Way"? What does this tell us about the effect of the gospel in the city?
3. How do you think Paul felt seeing his friends dragged away? What did he want to do about it?
4. Through the last few chapters, the list of believers, churches, and leaders keeps growing. The gospel spread quickly throughout the world, and Paul had a big part in it spreading. What do you think it takes to do what Paul did (character, abilities, gifts, etc.)? What are some ways you can continue to share the message of Jesus with the people in your life?

Day 22

Read: Acts 20:7-38

Dig In:

1. What happened to Eutychus?
2. Miletus is about 30 miles south of Ephesus. Why does Paul ask the Ephesian elders to come to him in Miletus? What do you think the purpose of his message is?
3. Re-read verses 28-30. What are the “fierce wolves” trying to accomplish?
4. What are the “fierce wolves” you face in your faith today? How can you keep your guard against them?

Day 23

Read: Acts 21:1-26

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. Why is Paul so stubborn about going to Jerusalem?
3. What does James tell Paul to do? Why does he tell him to do it?
4. Why are the Jewish people in Jerusalem so violent against Paul?
5. Do your traditions or customs, religious or otherwise, ever seem under attack? How do you respond? How should you respond?

Day 24

Read: Acts 21:27-22:30

Dig In:

1. What is your reaction to the mob scene in chapter 21? What are you thinking? How are you feeling as the events unfold?
2. What stands out to you from Paul's defense speech in chapter 22?
3. Why is Paul's citizenship an important issue – being both Jewish and Roman?
4. Have you ever been misunderstood, or as if people weren't really listening to you? What was that experience like? What is your best course of action when you feel you aren't being listened to appropriately?

Day 25

Read: Acts 23

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were two separate groups of Jewish leaders, each holding different beliefs about certain theological points. The Sadducees did not believe in a final day of resurrection of the dead, while the Pharisees did. In light of this, what do you make of Paul's comment in verse 6? Was it strategic? What was the outcome?
3. Do you think the commander/captain acted admirably in how he deals with the plot to kill Paul? Why or why not?
4. The action in this chapter is happening quite fast. Put yourself in Paul's shoes. How is he feeling? What is he thinking?
5. Re-read verse 11 again. God has a mission for Paul, to testify about Christ in Rome, the capital of the whole empire. Reflect on the call God has for you in this season of life. Do you feel secure in God's call, or fearful, or anxious, or excited?

Day 26

Read: Acts 24

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. What do you make of the legal proceedings Paul is subject to?
3. What is Felix' motive in speaking with Paul?
4. Can God use impure human motives to accomplish His purposes? Why? How?

Day 27

Read: Acts 25

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. Why do you think Paul's imprisonment and trial(s) was such a lengthy ordeal?
3. Do you trust Festus and Agrippa to do the right thing? Why or why not?
4. How do you think Paul is emotionally and spiritually able to endure all of this? What practices do you think help build up "spiritual resiliency?"

Day 28

Read: Acts 26

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. This is the 3rd time we've heard Paul's conversion story (see chapters 9 and 22). In this chapter, Paul is testifying before Agrippa after having been in prison for over a year. Is there anything different about this account of Paul's conversion than the previous two?
3. In verse 24, Festus tells Paul he is out of his mind. How does the Christian faith appear foolish to those who don't believe? What would you say to the accusation that "you're crazy for believing"?
4. Re-read verses 30-32. Now re-read Acts 23:11. How do these two passages connect? What do reconcile the Lord's call with Paul's circumstances?

Day 30

Read: Acts 28

Dig In:

1. What stands out to you from this chapter?
2. After reading all the events of this final chapter, was Paul's imprisonment, trial, and arduous journey to Rome worth it? Why or why not?
3. What do you make of the Jewish Romans reaction to Paul, especially in contrast to the angry mob of those in Jerusalem?
4. Re-read verses 25-28. Are encouraged by these words? Are you discouraged? What does this mean for you and your witness to Jesus?

The End, or the Beginning?

Thus, the Book of Acts ends with an unfinished story. No one knows for certain what happened to the Apostle Paul. Some say he was executed in Rome by Emperor Nero in the mid-60s AD. Some say he journeyed on to Spain at the end of the Mediterranean, the very ends of the world as he knew it. We simply don't know the end of Paul's story.

If the book of Acts were a research paper, its thesis statement would be Chapter 1 verse 8 – *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* Through the pages of this book we see how this call upon the followers of Jesus was carried out. Starting with a small group of confused disciples in Jerusalem, left alone without their leader to figure out how to carry on, the Holy Spirit comes and propels this message out into the world at an incredible rate. How does He do it? Through preaching, through miracles, through conversations, and the obedience of those who believed. But the Holy Spirit also used persecution, violence, civil unrest, and imprisonment...these negative human reactions to push the message out farther and farther from its epicenter, to the very ends of the earth.

But the story is not finished. It continues today – some 2000 years and many more miles away from its beginnings in mid-30s AD Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit is still at work in the lives of believers, propelling the message of Jesus out to the ends of the earth. He will not stop until every tribe, every nation, every people group, and every language hears the message. He will not stop until the trumpet sounds and the Risen Lord comes again to us on the clouds to set the whole of creation to rights. And if we follow the example of the faithful witnesses we read about in the Book of Acts, when our eyes close in death they will open again in glory and we will behold his face and hear the words, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.