

## When we look at Acts, we find the following key words.

**Jesus** 76x

**Spirit** 60s + x

**‘Word’** over 40x - usually in context means preaching but can also include the words and deeds that the witnesses did.

**Believers** 28x

**‘Power’** 14x often in conjunction with witness.

**Heal, healed or healing** mentioned 14x, sometimes in conjunction to witness and power.

**‘Witness’**. 13 x mentioned as witness or witnesses.

**Summing up the message of the book of Acts?** we can say the following.

It’s all about the risen King Jesus, who gives the Spirit to empower believers in Jesus, to show the love of Jesus by words and works of power, such as healing & miracles, and thereby witnessing that King Jesus is very much alive!!

### **So, let’s be aware of the 5 Ps of Acts**

**Power/Presence** - of Holy Spirit. Depending on & walking in the Spirit.

**Priesthood** - The importance of the community of believers and fellowship and each person’s role within the church

**Prayer** – and worship. The importance and power of our prayer and worship.

**Persecution** – What do we stand for? Perseverance in the face of it. We will face greater persecution ourselves.

**Preaching** – Sharing the good news of Jesus and his Kingdom rule

As we travel through this book let the words of a Graham Kendrick song be our prayer.

**This is our God, The Servant King, He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering, Of worship to The Servant King**

## **The book of Acts** (we don’t know what it was originally called!)

(a commentator has suggested it could be called “The Teaching and Acts of Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit through His Body”)

Today we start to explore the story of how Jesus’ ‘Kingdom movement’ exploded out of the land of Israel and started fulfilling Jesus’ commission to go to the ends of the earth, a mission that continues through the church today!

### **We’ll start by looking at the AUTHOR, GENRE, TIMELINE & STRUCTURE.**

**AUTHOR** - The church has more or less agreed that a companion of Paul called Luke was the writer. Although he is not mentioned in the book, he is mentioned elsewhere esp. in 2 Timothy, where Luke is Paul’s companion in Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> imprisonment in Rome.

- Acts is a gathering of true ‘stories’ from the Apostles, Paul, and other key people. The writer includes himself from Acts 16 onwards recording his own witness recollection by using the word ‘we’.
- Traditional sources tell us that Luke was from Antioch in Syria
- He probably was the best educated NT author (apart from Paul), he uses Hellenic (Greek) poets and sources. He also has a knowledge of Hebrew texts and ideas and can explain them well.
- He is usually thought to have been Gentile, but this is not necessarily the case, as there many Greeks who developed a love for the God of Israel and there were many Hebrews who took Greek ways of life.
- He was most likely a physician (Col 4 v4) and could have even been a released slave.

### **Luke ch1** (This passage shows how Luke gathered the stories and records them)

**1** Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled<sup>[a]</sup> among us, **2** just as they were **handed down to us** by those who **from the first were eyewitnesses** and **servants of the word**. **3** With this in mind, since **I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning**, I too **decided to write an orderly account** for you, most excellent Theophilus, **4** so **that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught**.

**GENRE -** It's a written narrative/history in the Greek style. *Histories are always written from a particular perspective, which doesn't mean to say they aren't true.* **John 21** says 'Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written'.

The book of Acts is part 2 of Luke's retelling the story Jesus and the spreading of Kingdom Gospel message. (*Part 1 being The Gospel according to Luke*)

The books Luke and Acts together form about 27% in the New Testament.

Acts is divided into.

- 28 chapters
- 1006 verses
- 18450 words in Acts. depending on the translation!
- It takes about 2.5 hours to read through at a reasonable pace. It is the second longest book in the New Testament, after Luke's gospel, which has 19,428 words.

**TIMELINE.** Both parts of Luke's books cover about 60 to 70 years! Roughly 30 – 35 years each.

**Luke** – Starts with John the Baptist's birth being foretold and ends with Jesus' ascension (30 -35 years)

**Acts** – Starts with Jesus ascension up to Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> house imprisonment in Rome (30 – 35 years)

So be aware as you read, sometimes the timeframe is shortened because of the need of the narrative and many years can be totally left untold. As John ch21 v25 says 'there aren't enough books in the world to tell all Jesus did.'

**STRUCTURE.** Is based around Jesus' words in Luke 24 (*the two people on the road to Emmaus*) & Acts 1 <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup>He told them, "This is what is written: The **Messiah will suffer** and **rise from the dead on the third day,** <sup>47</sup>and

**repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations,** beginning **at Jerusalem.** <sup>48</sup>**You are witnesses of these things.** <sup>49</sup>**I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."** (*Jesus' death, resurrection- ascension was the core message that Jesus' witnesses were to carry empowered by the Spirit. This is our core message today!*)

**Acts 1 v 8** - <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."**

**Basic structure of the whole book 1<sup>st</sup> breakdown is:**

**Ch 1 to 12** - relates to Jesus commission in 1v8 to bear witness to him in **Jerusalem, Judea & Samaria**

**Ch 13 to 28** - relates to '**the very ends of the earth**' (in those days all roads led to Rome or from Rome!)

**Acts 1 emphasises being witnesses:** *which means we need to be diligent to understand the truth & message we are to be witnesses to.*

**2 – Acts is narrative with theology embedded throughout.**

**Definition - *Theology is the study of religious belief from a religious perspective, with a focus on the nature of divinity.***

*The word 'theology' can be broken down into two words that come to us through Latin and before that from Greek. Those words are **Theos** = God & **logia** (from the root word logos - a word). Hence the **words of God** or **God's words***

So, if you read God's word and God discloses himself to you through it and you try to live it out you are doing proper **Theology!**

A quick way to understand key points/arguments in a document/book is to check which words or concepts occur most frequently (*you can ignore, simple words like **and** or **the** etc*)