

- ...witnessing to the truth of Jesus as the Christ and proclaiming repentance and faith for the forgiveness of sins by the power of the Spirit.

Acts, thus, depicts the *continuing* ministry of Jesus Christ. Though he has ascended, the witness Jesus continues by the power of the Spirit through the spread of the gospel for the growth of the church.

Witnesses in **Jerusalem** (1-7), **Judea** and **Samaria** (8-12), and to the end of the **earth** (13-28, e.g. "Rome")

Witnessed by **Peter** (1-12) and **Paul** (13-28)



Who is this Jesus (certainty), and what shall we expect (confidence) now that he's gone?

The story of Jesus is not over because he has died—he rose (from the dead)!

ESV **Luke 24:21** But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.

The work of Jesus is not over because he is gone—he gave (his word and his Spirit)!

ESV **Acts 1:6** So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Why does this all matter to me?

Acts declares the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ and thus demonstrates to believers that Jesus keeps his promises:

ESV **Matthew 16:18** And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

ESV **Acts 9:31** So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. (See also, Acts 12:24)

Acts should thus encourage believers that the witness of Jesus Christ has flourished for nearly 2,000, having come to them, and will continue until he returns, as we faithfully do our part!

ESV **Matthew 28:18** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

ESV **Acts 14:21** When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. ²³ And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Have confidence. Do your part.

Sunday, May 24, 2026
Danny Capon, *Pastor*

ACTS—The Confident Witness of Jesus Christ
No. 1 | Introduction

Acts 1:1-2

Introduction

The book of Acts...

ESV **Acts 1:1** In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

What do we know about the book of Acts?

Basic details about Acts:

- It is the fifth book listed in the New Testament (NT), after the four Gospels.
- It is found, starting on page 909 (in our ESV Pew Bible), and has 28 chapters.
- It is unique in how it is often (literarily) categorized—it's not one of the four Gospels, but very clearly follows after them (Luke, especially); it's not one of the numerous epistles (letters), but it ends up serving as something of a narrative backdrop to their respective contexts.
- It is (most likely) written by the same man as the Gospel of Luke (see below), which together, then, make up 27% of the NT by word-count (compared to Paul's letters, which make up 23%, and John's books, which make up 21%).

"Acts is one of the longest books of the NT and contains 1,003 verses compared to 1,151 in Luke and 1,071 in Matthew....Acts has 18,374 words as compared with Luke's 19,404 words." (Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, p. 6) Note: It takes 2h, 15 min to read it through.

Additional details about Acts:

Who wrote the book?

Luke

"In the first book, O Theophilus, **I have** dealt with..." (v. 1)

- The book is technically anonymous—no author is named, though the author addresses himself as "I" (first person pronoun).
- He was a *sometimes* traveling companion of the apostle Paul—in much of the book, the author refers to primary, active individuals with "he," "she," or "they" (third person singular, or plural), but on four occasions includes himself by referring to "we" (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16).

ESV **Acts 16:6** And **they** went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷ And when **they** had come up to Mysia, **they** attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. ⁸ So, passing by Mysia, **they** went down to Troas.

⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."¹⁰ And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately **we** sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called **us** to preach the gospel to them. ¹¹ So, setting sail from Troas, **we** made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹² and from

there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. **We** remained in this city some days.

- Early church history (2nd century) testifies that Luke is the writer.
- Luke is specifically referenced in three of Paul's letters (Col 4:10-14; Phi 24; 2 Tim 4:11), that together indicate that he was likely a well-educated, Gentile physician (possibly from Antioch of Syria):

^{ESV} **Colossians 4:10** Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions - if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

What else did he write?

The Gospel of Luke

"In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with..." (v. 1)

- Acts is the second book, written by this human author (Luke) and written to the same individual (Theophilus), presumably with intentional continuity (i.e. a two-volume work, or Acts is a sequel work)—the Gospel of Luke seems to be clearly the first book he wrote.

^{ESV} **Luke 1:1** Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

- Acts, thus, *continues* the account begun in the first volume.

Who did he write Acts to?

Theophilus

"In the first book, **O Theophilus**, I have dealt with..." (v. 1)

- Theophilus, whose name means "loved of God," is indicated as the recipient of both Acts and the Gospel of Luke.
- He may have been a wealthy (Gentile) man of potentially high standing, who was a (new) believers in Jesus Christ and who may have funded the writing of the two books (Acts and the Gospel of Luke).
- Luke may have written (some or all of) Acts from Rome, just prior to Paul's martyrdom (thus, writing in 62/63 AD).
- The events covered in the book of Acts likely span about 30 years (so, from 33-63 AD).

Why did he write Acts?

"In the first book, O Theophilus, **I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up...**" (vv. 1-2a)

- He indicates that Acts, as the second book, is intentionally related to what he sought to do in his first book (the Gospel of Luke).

^{ESV} **Acts 1:1** In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with **all that Jesus began to do and teach**, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

^{ESV} **Luke 1:3** ...it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ **that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught**.

- He also demonstrates that what Jesus said (and did) near the end of the Gospel of Luke is intentionally reiterated (and picked up) by the apostles near the beginning of Acts.

^F
^{ESV} **Luke 24:44** Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.** ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." ⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, **he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.** ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.

^{ESV} **Acts 1:4** And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with¹ the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 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." ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, **he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.** ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Luke—The Gospel of Certainty

Becoming a witness who is certain of Jesus Christ

Acts—The Confident Witness

Being a confident witness of Jesus Christ

- He emphasizes the *continuing* ministry of Jesus (do and teach)...
- ...representatively, through his apostles...
- ...who needed to hear and heed (obey) his commands, and be personally convinced of his suffering *and* alive-ness...