

ACTS

RISEN. REIGNING. REACHING.

Study Guide Acts 1:1-6:7

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Study One

Acts 1:1-11

1. Look at: Acts 1:1-3 and Luke 1:1-4, what is Luke's objective in writing?
2. In verse 1 Luke says about his Gospel: "*I wrote about all that Jesus **began** to do and teach*", what is the implication for what this second volume is about?
3. What does Luke teach about the resurrection (v.3)?
4. Why might it be important that the disciples wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit (v.5)? (See *Isaiah 2:2-3, Micah 4:1-2, John 14:15-26*)
5. What are the disciples hoping for in v.6, and what would their expectations have been for this? (e.g. *Ezekiel 37:19-28, Zechariah 9:9-17*)
6. How does Jesus respond, and what does this tell us about Jesus' kingdom (v. 7-8)?
7. Verse 8 sets the trajectory for the whole book of Acts as well as for the rest of Christianity, what is the role that Jesus gives to his followers?
8. Why are the words "to the ends of the earth" particularly significant? (See *Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 45:22-23, 49:6, 52:10*)
9. Luke is very careful to document that Jesus was taken up and hidden by a cloud. Why record this detail? (See *Exodus 19:9,16; 24:15-18; 34:5-7; 49:34-38; 1Kings 8:10-11/2 Chronicles 5:13-14; Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 9:1-8*)
10. What does Acts 1:1-11 teach us about Jesus?
11. Hows does this passage shape our understanding of God's word?
12. What is the significance of what Jesus says in this passage for the disciples, and how does this shape their lives?
13. What is the significance for us? How might it shape our lives?
14. How is our witness similar to and different from the witness of the apostles? (v.8)
15. How does the hope of Jesus' return encourage or motivate you?

Study Two

Acts 1:12-26

⚠ Trigger warning v.17-19 (Judas' death) ⚠

1. Why might it be significant that Luke lists the names of the 11 apostles in v.12?
2. What are they doing together as they wait for the Holy Spirit? (*Compare with Luke 22:45-46*)
3. Read Psalm 69 & 109 and Briefly summarise each Psalm. Who is writing? What is the main theme of each Psalm? (If you have time and inclination, explore how these Psalms are cited in other parts of the NT)
4. How are the disciples understanding and interpreting the scriptures? (Some say they are quoting and applying verses out of context, what do you think?)
5. How is their understanding of Judas' role shaped by the Scriptures and Jesus' teaching in Luke 22:14-22?
6. What do the disciples prioritise in the choosing of a replacement for Judas?
7. What do the actions of the disciples in choosing a 12th apostle to "*become a witness with us of the resurrection*" show us about the importance of the apostolic foundation and witness? (*See also Luke 22:28-30*)
7. Is their use of "lot casting" problematic? (*See Numbers 26:52-56, Joshua 18:8-10, Prov.16:33*)
8. What does relying on God after bringing something to God in prayer, look like in *our* normal practice?
9. What do we learn from the disciples about waiting in obedience?
10. What does being devoted to prayer look like for us?
11. How do we use the Scriptures to reflect on what is going on in our own lives/ situations?

Study Three

Acts 2:1-13

1. **Pentecost** is Greek for “50 days”. Read Leviticus 23:9-22 to understand the Jewish festival (Shavout/ Feast of Weeks) that is being celebrated 50 days after the feast of Firstfruits (which is celebrated **3 days** after Passover). Why might it be significant that God sends the Holy Spirit at the time of this particular festival? (*Hint: 1 Corinthians 15:20, Colossians 2:16-17*)
2. Think about the arrival of the Holy Spirit in wind and fire. Considering passages where we see these things described, why might it be important that it described this way? (*Wind: Genesis 1:1, 8:1, Exodus 14:21/15:10, Ezekiel 1:1-14, 37:9; Fire: Exodus 3:2-5, 14:24, 19:18, 24:17, 40:38; Wind and fire: Psalm 18:7-12; 1 Kings 19:11-12*)
3. Often wind and fire are also symbols of God’s Judgement. (*eg. Isaiah 66:15-16, Nahum 1:3,6, Jeremiah 4:11-13*) When the wind and fire come upon the gathered group of disciples what happens to them? What does this mean? (*See Ezekiel 36:23-29, 37-38; 37:27-28, Hebrews 12:18-24*)
4. What does the Holy Spirit enable the believers to do? (*See v. 4, 8 & 11*) (*If you want to go down the rabbit hole... What does the speaking in other tongues -v.4 mean... see also Acts 10:46, 19:6, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 12:27-13:1, 8; 14:1-25*)
5. Why would Luke emphasise that there are people from “every nation under heaven” in Jerusalem at this time? (*See Isaiah 66:18-20*)
6. How do the people from the nations respond to what they hear?
7. Luke again emphasises the different nations represented starting with “*Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia...*” Read Genesis 11:1-9 to help understand why this might be his starting point. How is Luke showing us that the *proclamation of the wonders of God* after the arrival of the Holy Spirit is a reversal of the Tower of Babel?
8. How does the Holy Spirit empower the witness of the apostles (and others gathered with them), and how does this relate to the expectation that Jesus raised in Acts 1:8?
10. How do the differing responses of the people (v.12-13) provide expectations for us on how people will respond to the gospel?
11. How does the Holy Spirit equip us to tell the *mighty works of God* to those around us?

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<https://wycliffe.org.au/pray/>

<https://www.biblesociety.org.au/blog/pray-with-us/>

Study Four

Acts 2:14-41

1. In v.14 Peter begins to answer the question asked in v.12. This unprecedented sign from God needs explanation. How does he explain?
2. Read Joel 2:28-32, how does the passage from Joel make sense of what they are seeing?
3. What is Peter saying about the times they/we are living in?
4. How does Peter understand God's sovereignty in v.22-23? Can you think of other places in Scripture that teach of God's sovereignty over world events and human responsibility for evil deeds? (eg. *Genesis 50:20*)
5. In v.24-32 Peter defends the resurrection of Jesus. What are his arguments/ evidences?
6. What does it mean that Jesus is at the *right hand of God*? (See *Matt 22:44, 26:64; Mark 12:36, 14:62; Luke 20:42, 22:69* as well as *Ps 16:11, 17:7, 98:1, 139:10 & Romans 8:34*)
7. What is Peter saying about Jesus in v.33-36?
8. How does the crowd respond in v.37?
9. What is Peter's final exhortation to his hearers in v.38-40?
10. Who is the message of salvation through Jesus for?
11. What can we learn from the way Peter speaks to the people and what he includes in his message for our own instruction and for the way we should speak about Jesus?
12. What does a positive response to hearing the message of Jesus look like?

Spend time praying for unreached people groups
<https://joshuaproject.net/global/countries>

Study Five

Acts 2:42-47

1. What is the response of people to the message of salvation in Jesus?
2. What things now characterise the life of the new believers?
3. Why is the *apostle's teaching* so important? (*Acts 1:8, 21-22*)
4. The Old Testament Law spends a lot of time outlining how God's people ought to live as a people who care for one another (*eg. Deut. 4:5-8; 14:27-15:5, 24:19-21*) why is it significant that the new believers just seem to live this out naturally/automatically?
5. What do the actions and priorities of the new believers show us about the work of the Spirit?
6. It is important that we remember that what we are reading is descriptive rather than prescriptive, however, does it challenge us about how we care for one another in our church? (Also, what does it tell us about how our society has been shaped by Christianity?)
7. What does living in this way show about Jesus? (*See John 13:34-35*)
8. What things do you value about church community?
9. What does it look like for **us** to be *devoted to the apostle's teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer*?

Study Six

Acts 3:1-4:4

If you were to highlight the most important things about Jesus to a friend what would you say?

Having just described Peter's proclamation of the reign of the risen Lord Jesus and the inauguration of the last days, followed by a summary of the activity of the transformed new community of those who belong to the Lord Jesus, Luke zeroes in on one particular incident to highlight the significance of the preceding events. Luke has referred to the signs being done by the apostles, to activity in the temple courts, and to their devotion to prayer. Now, he selects one particular time of prayer and one particular sign accomplished through two specific apostles in the temple courts.

(Alan J Thompson, Acts Commentary: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/acts/>)

1. In the light of Isaiah 35:3-6 and Luke 7:20-23, what is Luke conveying through the event in v.1-11 about Jesus and the time of salvation history they are in?
2. What does this sign, done in the name of Jesus show about the apostles?
3. What do we learn about the temple and Jesus' role in bringing people into God's presence?
4. How does Peter respond to the astonishment of the people?
5. Look at all the titles that Peter uses for Jesus. What is he teaching about Jesus through the use of these titles?

Christ (v.6) / Messiah (v.18, 20) (Anointed) *Psalm 18:50, 20:6, 89:19-29, Isaiah 61:1*

Servant (v.13, 26) *Isaiah 42:1, 52:13, 53:11, Ezekiel 34:23-24*

Holy and Righteous One (v.14) *Psalm 97:12, Isaiah 5:16*

Author of life (v.15) *Genesis 2:7, Job 33:4, Psalm 119:25*

Prophet like Moses (v.22) *Deuteronomy 18:15-18*

6. Why does Peter emphasise the importance of the name of Jesus? (*Genesis 12:2, Psalm 29:2, Proverbs 30:4, Luke 24:45-47, Philippians 2:9-10, 1 John 3:23*)
7. What does Peter urge his listeners to do in response to Jesus, and what is promised for those who do as he urges?
8. How do people respond? (4:1-4)
9. In 4:1 the temple guard, and the priests are noted, and in v.5 the elders are mentioned. What have these people been doing in Matthew 27:62-66 & 28:11-15? What is their biggest concern? Why are Peter and John arrested?
10. What things from this passage encourage you, and how have you been challenged?

Study Seven

Acts 4:5-31

1. The scene in v.5 is not unlike Matthew 26:57, yet Jesus' disciples, and Peter in particular (*See Matt 26:69-74*) behave very differently. How has Jesus prepared the disciples for this moment (and others to come)? (*Matthew 10:16-20, Mark 13:9-11, Luke 21:12-19, Acts 1:8*)
2. What does Peter emphasise about Jesus when he is questioned?
3. Read Psalm 118:19-26, What does this Psalm tell us about salvation?
4. How has Jesus himself already used this Psalm to teach the Pharisees and leaders of Israel about himself? (*Matthew 21:33-44, Mark 12:10-12 and Luke 20:9-18*)
5. Jesus' name (*Yeshua*) literally means "salvation" (*Matthew 1:21*). Briefly describe how Jesus has achieved salvation for his people. Why is the resurrection so important for salvation?
6. Why might Peter's decisive statement in v.12 have been challenging for the elders, teachers of the law and the high priest?
7. How is this same message received today?
8. How do the leaders respond to the disciples and the sign they have done in Jesus name?
9. In v.19-20 Peter and John openly declare that they will not do as the leaders are telling them. What do we learn about obedience to human authority and obedience to God's authority?
10. What is the immediate response of the wider group of believers to Peter and John's imprisonment and release?
11. What stands out about their prayer?
12. Look briefly at Psalm 2, how do the believers understand this Psalm? How might it have encouraged them? How does it encourage you?
13. What challenges do you face in speaking boldly?

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<https://vom.com.au>

Study Eight

Acts 4:32-5:16

⚠ Trigger warning 5:5,10 (sudden death) ⚠

1. Verses 32-37 are very similar to Acts 2:42-47. What does this way of living show about the fellowship of believers? What is empowering this way of life? (v.33)
2. What does it mean to be “of one heart and of one mind”? (See: *Ephesians 4:11-16, Philippians 2:1-8, 1 Peter 3:8, 4:8-11*)
3. What might this look like in our church?
4. What we see in 4:34-37 sets up what we will see in 5:1-11. How does Barnabas’ attitude compare with Ananias and Sapphira?
5. What is the problem with what Ananias and Sapphira have done?
6. What do we learn about God’s holiness and justice?
7. In our eyes, it may seem that God’s response is very severe. Are Ananias and Sapphira offered a chance to repent? Why do you think God responds this way in this particular time and place?
8. The judgement for sin hasn’t changed, but it is counterbalanced by God’s radically merciful grace. Where can we see this reflected in Scripture?
8. In Chapter 4 we saw external threats to the message of salvation, in this chapter we see internal threats. How might the behaviour of people within the fellowship of believers sabotage gospel witness?
9. How might we struggle with similar temptation?
10. How can we encourage one another in the fight against sin and temptation?
11. How are the Apostles carrying on the ministry of Jesus in v.12-16?
12. Luke frequently tells us that believers were “added” or “believed” (2:41,47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7), what does this tell us about the spread of the gospel?

Study Nine

Acts 5:17-42

1. What motivates the high priest to arrest the apostles? (v.17, 28; see also 2:23,36; 3:13-15; 4:10)
2. There are a number of verses that talk about the Apostles “teaching” (v.21, 25, 28, 42), why would their teaching put them in opposition with the temple leaders? What does this show about Jesus’ authority compared to the authority of the temple leaders?
3. How does what happens in v.18-26 and also in v.34-39 give us hope in the light of opposition to the gospel?
4. In the interaction between Peter and the apostles and the High Priest and the council in v. 27-33 what things stand out to you? *(In light of the High Priest’s comment in v.28, see Matthew 27:25, and remember John 11:47-53, 18:12-14; also note Acts 1:8 with relation to v.32)*
5. How do we make a distinction between antagonising/provoking and being faithful to the truth? How might this affect the way we speak to people about Jesus?
6. In v.29 Peter and the apostles say “We must obey God rather than human beings” (see also 4:19). Have you had to make this choice? Why do we find this so hard to do? What helps us to choose to obey God? (Luke 12:4-5)
7. The apostles are flogged and ordered not to speak in the name of Jesus, and yet “*They left... rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name*” (v.41). What enables the disciples to respond so confidently to what has been done to them and to do what they have been prohibited from doing?
8. Have you ever suffered persecution or rejection for being faithful to Jesus?
9. How is it possible to rejoice while suffering disgrace? (See Romans 8:31-39; 1Peter 3:13-18)

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Study Ten

Acts 6:1-7

1. As we have seen in our reading of Acts so far, Luke chronicles both external threats to the church and internal ones, what is the danger in this passage?
2. How do the apostles deal with this challenge?
3. What is needed for the unity of the believers, for them to feel cared for and for the spread of the gospel?
4. What criteria for leadership do the believers emphasise?
5. What might be indications that someone is “filled with the Spirit”?
6. How do we encourage one another in growing in faith and wisdom?
7. What things do the apostles prioritise for their own ministry?
8. What things might distract us from what is *important*? How can we keep our true focus?
9. What happens as the apostles keep their focus on what Jesus has commanded them to do?
10. What ways do you contribute to the life of the fellowship of believers?
11. How can we encourage one another to serve each other in love, and be dedicated to God’s word and to prayer?
12. How has your study of the beginning of Acts challenged you, and how have you been encouraged to participate in taking the good news about Jesus to the ends of the earth.

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https://lowermountains.elvanto.com.au/posts/lmap_mission_links_prayer_updates/