

## Acts - The Visual Bible

*"We are witnesses of everything He did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.*

*He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name." Acts 10:39-43*

The book of Acts, written by Luke, tells the beginnings of the early church after Christ Jesus' ascension into heaven. Acts is a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's people and in the church. Luke writes of the spread of the Gospel from its small beginning in a Jewish community to its rapid growth into many nations. Luke tells how all people need Jesus to be saved. He explains how the prophets of old testified about salvation through the promised Messiah and how those prophecies came true in Jesus.

Luke especially shows how people of every nation can be part of God's chosen people through faith in Christ. Luke is a gifted storyteller who chronicles the stories of the preaching of the apostles. Luke, like the other apostles, centers his writing on faith in Christ. He emphasizes how all people are justified without any merit or works of their own, writing that salvation comes only through the power of the Gospel. He says that we cannot save ourselves by our own good deeds, but only by coming to Jesus in faith.

Luke traveled the known world recording the ministry of the Apostles. Luke does not mention himself, even once, in any of his writings. As a doctor Luke knew the pains of illness and disease. He understood the miracle of childbirth. He had been present at the loss of loved ones. The knowledge of these experiences added depth to Luke's writing. The account of Acts reaches from Jerusalem to Rome during about a thirty year time span. Archeological findings have shown that Luke's writing is historically accurate in its details.

The Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell the story of the life of Christ and His ministry on earth. Acts begins with a summary of the Gospel of Luke and then tells what happened in the church after Jesus ascended into heaven. When Paul and Silas were in prison (Acts 16:25-34) the jailer asked what he could do to be saved. They told him, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." This gift is still for all people today. The Bible says Jesus is the only name by which we can be saved. Acts 4:22-23.

While He was on earth Jesus said, *"The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* John 14:25-27 NIV In the book of Acts Luke chronicled the amazing story of the early church when God gave the promised Holy Spirit.

Luke tells how the coming of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles great boldness to live their faith. Even though there was persecution, the message of the Gospel spread throughout the earth. The more that people tried to stop the good news of Jesus Christ the faster it traveled. In many countries today people are being persecuted for being a Christian and yet in those countries the message of Christ thrives in underground churches. The Book of Acts still continues today. Pray for Christians around the world.

*Dear Lord, strengthen Your church on earth. Pour out Your Holy Spirit to those who are weak and struggling. Raise up leaders who will turn to You for wisdom and guidance. Let the truth of Your word and the glory of Your name be revealed throughout the earth. Give us hearts of love for You and Your people. In Jesus' name, Amen.*