

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 24TH–25TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Luke's name only appears in the Bible three times, but we know he was a member of the missionary team that traveled extensively with Paul during his time in Rome.

- He was Greek and a physician.
- He also authored the Gospel of Luke.
- The only non-Jewish contributor to the Bible.

DATE OF AUTHORSHIP

Acts was written around 64 AD or between 95–100 AD.

- Most scholars believe the earlier date because the Neronian fire, Paul's death, and the sack of Jerusalem are not mentioned. Also, **massive persecution began in 64 AD. This explains Acts' abrupt ending.**

WHO IS THEOPHILUS?

Some say Luke used this name symbolically because it means **lover of God**.

- Many believe he was a Roman officer who had become a Christian.
- Most likely he was an educated, affluent, and influential Greek who was curious about the gospel but knew little of Jesus or the Church.

THE PURPOSE OF ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts was written to a diverse audience. It tells of the birth of the Church and the work and imprisonment of Paul, and we see the shift of salvation being offered to the entire world.

- Acts addresses **Jesus' desire to save all people, our mission, the power of the Spirit, God's provision, and loving people.**

SEEING AND FEELING (ACTS 1:1–5)

LUKE GETS OFF TO A FAST START

Immediately, we learn some key ideas in Acts: the command to be a witness, the role of the apostles, and the significance of the Holy Spirit.

- Ironically, the launching pad of the Church was the ascension (physical exit) of Jesus. Now, **His followers were responsible for the propagation of the truth.**

"AFTER HE HAD SUFFERED..."

Luke connects Acts to the Gospels by reminding the reader that before Jesus was glorified and ascended, He had to suffer for the sins of humanity.

- **We learn from Jesus that honor and reward only come through love, dedication, and sacrifice.**

40 DAYS OF "CONVINCING PROOFS"

The time from Jesus' resurrection until His ascension was 40 days. In that time, He **proved He had a resurrected body**, He continued to **teach the disciples**, He **prepared them for the infilling of the Spirit**, and He **commissioned them to continue the work He started**.

THE FIRST COMMISSION WAS TO WAIT (VS. 4–5)

Jesus speaks of the coming Holy Spirit several times in John. Jesus teaches the disciples that they cannot do ministry until they are filled with the Spirit. Fortunately, this infilling was prophesied (Joel 2) and promised.

- **Simply put, we can only win spiritual battles if the Spirit of God fills us.**

"BAPTIZED" WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Throughout Acts we will see various reactions when people receive the Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 says we receive the Spirit when we believe, but **we can only be full of the Spirit when we actively live in relationship with Him.**

- **Prayer, study, listening, and obedience are the road to being full of the Holy Spirit.**

WITNESSES (ACTS 1:6–8)

STILL NOT QUITE THERE

"Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" showed that the guys were still thinking through a political lens.

- Many people wrongly believe that Jesus came to restore governmental systems. **Jesus came to teach and expand the Kingdom of God** (Luke 17; Matthew 24).

WE ARE TO ALSO TRUST HIS TIMING

Jesus clearly tells the disciples that it isn't "for [them] to know times or periods...set by His own authority." Jesus will correct all things, but **His timing is to be trusted, and His process is to be followed.**

- **We must humble ourselves and put our faith in God's understanding** (Proverbs 3).

WE JUST NEED TO KNOW OUR POWER SOURCE

We don't have to know how and when things are going to work out, we just need to trust. What **we MUST know is where the wisdom, patience, and power come from that give us the ability to live the way we are designed to.**

WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE WITNESSES

The Holy Spirit isn't given to us just for our salvation and blessing. **The Spirit is who equips and uses us to touch the hearts of people around us with the truth.**

- **Christians are not to be passive in faith. We are to grow in our love for truth, Christ, and other people.**

THE ASCENSION (ACTS 1:9–11)

ASCENDING INTO HEAVEN

After the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20), Jesus "was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took Him out of their sight." This is linked to the concept of the cloud and God mentioned many times in the OT.

- As the disciples were awestruck, "two men" (angels) announced some future plans.

RETURNING IN THE SAME WAY?

Many thoughts and emotions must have been running through the minds of the men watching the ascension. Knowing they were sad and afraid, the angels assured the disciples that Jesus will **"come in the same way that you have seen Him going into Heaven."**

- The same Jesus would eventually return.
- Zechariah 14:4 and Acts 1:11 tell us that Jesus will return at the Mount of Olives. Ezekiel 43–44 seem to indicate He will also walk through the eastern gate (Beautiful Gate) that was walled up by Suleiman in 1540 to prevent His return.
- Jesus will then destroy the rebellious armies of the Antichrist at Armageddon (Revelation 16; 19).

WHY DID JESUS LEAVE?

While on earth, Jesus was flesh and only in one place at one time. **God being with us in Spirit allows everyone on earth access to intimacy and relationship with Him.**

- Jesus' physical departure means **we must live by faith and turn our attention and effort upward and forward.**

PRAYER (ACTS 1:12–14)

NEAR THE CITY CENTER

The disciples (men and women) returned to the upper room where they were told to wait on the Holy Spirit. More than likely, this was the same room as the Last Supper.

- **We must be careful to not idolize biblical locations. Jesus didn't regard location. The heart was the focal point** (John 4).

ORDINARY PEOPLE CALLED TO THE EXTRAORDINARY

There were 500 people in the upper room in the beginning, but it dwindled down to 120. The 11 disciples, the female followers, and Jesus' family were all normal people.

- **What differentiated the 120 from the 380 was prayer. Those consistent with Christ became part of an extraordinary experience.**

IT BEGINS WITH PRAYER

It is by no accident that one of the most important events in human history is also a moment of prayer and submission.

- If we will **be humble and make spending time with Jesus a priority through prayer and study, we will experience amazing things as we anticipate eternity!**

POSSESSING VS. FULL OF THE SPIRIT

- We receive the Holy Spirit when we give our lives to Jesus, but **to be full and overflowing**, we must **pray, read the Bible, listen**, and obey Jesus and His Word.
- There are many Christians who may be saved but are lacking the freedom, power, and maturity Jesus desires for us.

SACRIFICE AND RESPONSIBILITY

- **Christianity is sacrificial.** Through suffering and refinement, we understand Jesus more, mature, and experience His glory and honor.
- We also have a responsibility to be full of the Spirit because **we're incapable of spiritual victory and the ability to impact others without the Spirit overflowing.**

TRUST AND CONVERSATION

- It all begins with **humility and submission**. If we will learn to **trust** God's ways more than our own, we will see amazing results.
- We must also **intentionally have a prayer life**. Without consistent communication with Jesus, we cannot live in Him. **Praise, repent, pray for others, then your needs.**

ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY LIVES

- All of this leads to ordinary people like us experiencing extraordinary things.
- In a world that is broken, mundane, and lacking in any power to make permanent and positive change, **we should desire to be people who live extraordinary lives with depth and purpose through Jesus!**