

Book of Acts - Overview & Chapter 1

By Shannon Rants

The Book of ACTS is pure adventure, suspense, trials, imprisonments, death, miracles.

I. Zoom Out: Theological Themes

- A. Central focus: **Ch 1:8** (ESV Systematic Theology Study Bible)
- B. The inner workings of the Trinity
- C. The growth of the early church relied on the witness of Jesus' death and resurrection and the power of the Holy Spirit (ESV Systematic Theology Study Bible)
- D. Disciples of Jesus can expect trials, pain, and opposition

II. Zoom Out: Literary Purposes

- A. "The OT history of salvation pointed forward to the atoning life and death of Jesus. The early church... in Acts looks back to atonement of Christ." (ESV Literary Study Bible)
- B. "The book of Acts is the first chapters of God's kingdom on earth following the incarnate life of Christ." (ESV Literary Study Bible)
- C. To show the expansive witness of the church, (working toward) the fulfilling of the commission of Christ (ESV Story of Redemption)
- D. The Gospel of Jesus was not just for the Jews - multiethnic, multiracial church

III. Zoom In: Key Figures

- A. The Trinity
 - 1. 40 days to intentionally prepare and strengthen witness of the Gospel
 - **Ch. 1:3** - The proof of Jesus' resurrection
 - **I Corinthians 15:4-5** - The Risen Jesus appearing to 500+
 - 2. The "hangcliffer" - **Ch 1: 4-5** - **Jesus** asking them to wait on the **Father** for the **Holy Spirit**
 - 3. The Triune preparation for the spreading of the Gospel (Ch. 1:1-2:13)
 - Restoring the "Apostolic team" of twelve - **Ch. 1:21, 26**
 - Working within the culture: Language (Greek/Latin), use of Roman Empire transportation making travel easier, Dispersion of the Jews (network of synagogues to host apostles' ministry with knowledge of the OT and the Messiah) - (Delighting in the Trinity by Michael Reeves)
- B. Peter (ESV Archaeological Study Bible)
 - 1. He was the first disciple mentioned after the 40 days (symbolizing importance and restoration) **Ch 1: 13, 15**
 - 2. Importance of where Peter grew up and how that connects to his mission
- C. Paul
 - 1. The book of Luke ends with Christ's ascension and making his Risen appearance to the Disciples, so the Book of Acts opens with the Risen Christ and it ends with Paul's imprisonment in Rome.
 - 2. Saul vs. Paul

3. Towards the end of ACTS he is shipwrecked for 3 months but he does reach Rome! (the ends of the earth) and remains on house arrest - writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

IV. Reflect within: take personal ACTION

- A. Ron - "The book of Acts is not a closed book"; We don't have to wait to BE the church, we already are the church, the Bride of Christ, His beloved, His body reaching out to the world. (ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible)
- B. Ron's word of wisdom regarding Calling: "you may be in a season of waiting to help clarify your calling, strengthening your character and sharpening your giftedness."
- C. What is God stirring in your heart - right now? We have the fullness of the Holy Spirit available to us, ready to empower us to move the gospel forward.
 1. If he's having you wait - what is he teaching you as you wait? Take ACTION and Speak that out. (example)
 2. You may already have a burning, something the Spirit has already laid on our heart (give examples) **I Corinthians 12:27** Take a step of faith and speak it out, reach out, take ACTION
 3. **Isaiah 43: 1,10** - Reflect of what God has done and tell other people, be a witness of His greatness. Take ACTION - speak it out
 4. (Prayer Teams) Maybe discouragement has set it, maybe fear, etc... your ACTION would be to cry out to the Lord and ask His presence to comfort you. Don't do it alone. **James 4:8; 4:10**

Sources:

ESV Study Bible, 2008

ESV Literary Study Bible, 2020

ESV Archaeology Study Bible, 2018

ESV Systematic Theology Study Bible, tbd 2024

Delighting in the Trinity by Michael Reeves