

SESSION ONE

Acts 1:1-5 (NRSVUE): *In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus **began** to do and teach ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*

In the original Greek, the Book of Acts is known as **Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων** (Práxeis Apostólōn). Praxeis means: “deeds, mighty acts, wondrous acts. Apostolon means: “apostles or messengers.”

“The story of Jesus doesn’t end with Jesus. It continues in the lives of those who believe in him. The supernatural does not stop with Jesus. Luke makes it clear that these Christians he wrote about were no more spectators of Jesus than Jesus was a spectator of God – they are in on the action of God, God acting in them, God living in them. Which also means, of course, in us.”
- Eugene Peterson

Map of the Region

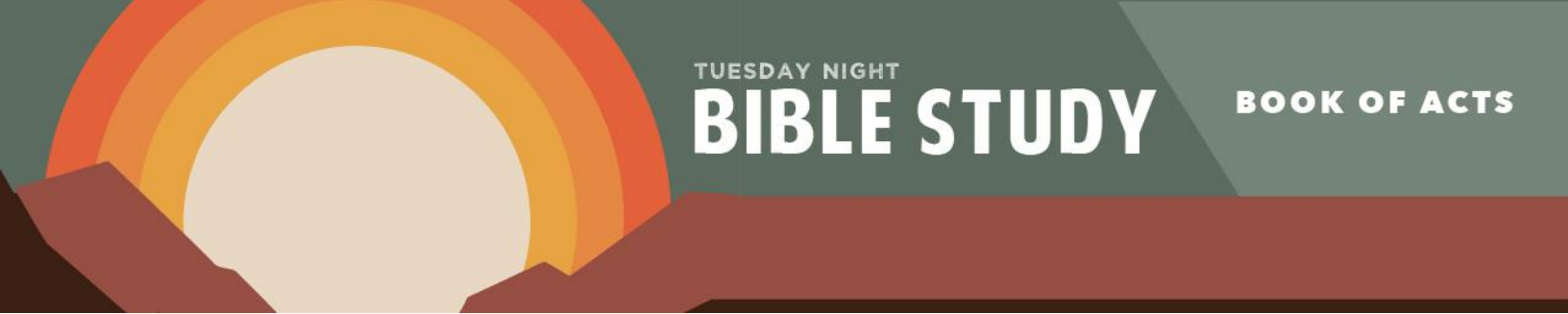


Events Related to the New Testament before 70 C.E.

Date	Event	Roman Emperor
B.C.E.		
44	Parthian invasion	
40–4	Herod the Great appointed "King of the Jews" in Judea by Romans	Augustus Caesar (30 B.C.E.–14 C.E.)
20	Temple rebuilt by Herod	
Between 8 and 4	Jesus born	
4 B.C.E.–39 C.E.	Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great) tetrarch of Galilee	
4 B.C.E.–6 C.E.	Herod Archelaus (son of Herod the Great) ethnarch of Judea	
C.E.		
18–36	Caiaphas high priest	
26–36	Pontius Pilate procurator of Judea	Tiberias (14–37)
27–29 (?)	Ministry of John the baptizer	
Sometime between 27 and 33	Ministry of Jesus	
Sometime between 30 and 33	Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus	
Sometime between 33 and 45	Illumination of Paul	
37–44 (?)	Herod Agrippa, king of Judea, imprisons Peter	Caligula (37–41)
41–49	Jews banished from Rome	Claudius (41–54)
About 47–56	Missionary activity of Paul	
About 49	Jerusalem Council	
56	Paul arrested in Jerusalem	
Between 60 and 63	Paul under arrest in Rome	
About 62	James, brother of Jesus, martyred	
Mid-to-late 60s	Peter and Paul martyred in Rome	Nero (54–68)
64–65	Christians persecuted under Nero after Rome burns	
66–73	Jewish revolt against Rome; Christians flee Jerusalem	
70	Jerusalem captured; Temple destroyed	Vespasian (69–79)



LUKE	ACTS
3:22 The Spirit descends on Jesus after prayer.	2:1-13 The Spirit fills the apostles after their prayers.
4:16-30 Jesus' ministry begins with a sermon involving fulfillment of Scripture and rejection of Jesus	2:14-40 The church's ministry begins with a sermon involving fulfillment of Scripture and rejection of Jesus.
4:31-8:56 The fulfillment is illustrated by preaching and healing. Conflicts illustrate rejection.	2:41-12:17 The fulfillment is illustrated by prophecy and wonders. Persecutions illustrate unbelief.
10:1-12 The mission of the 70, which foreshadows the Gentile mission of the church.	Chapters 13-20 The missionary journeys of Paul to the Gentiles.
9:51-19:28 Jesus makes a journey to Jerusalem, which is a passion journey under divine necessity, and is not understood by the disciples	19:21-21:17 Paul makes a last journey to Jerusalem, which is a passion journey, under divine necessity, and is not understood by Paul's friends.
19:37 Jesus receives a good reception, and people praise God for what they have seen.	21:17-20 Paul receives a good reception, and God is glorified for the things done among the Gentiles.
19:45-48 Jesus goes into the temple with a positive attitude to it.	21:26 Paul goes into the temple with a friendly attitude toward it.
22:54 A mob seizes Jesus	21:30 A mob seizes Paul.
22:26; 23:1; 23:8; 23:13 The four trials of Jesus (Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod Antipas, Pilate)	Chapters 23, 24, 25, 26 The four trials of Paul (Sanhedrin, Felix, Festus, Herod Agrippa)
23:16,22 Pilate says he will release (<i>apolyso</i>) him.	26:32 Agrippa says, "This man could have been released" (<i>apolelysthai</i>)
Chapter 24 Jesus' ministry ends on the note of the fulfillment of Scripture.	Chapter 28 Paul's ministry ends on the note of the fulfillment of Scripture.



Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the word “church,” what is the first image or word that comes to mind?
2. Jesus did not tell the disciples to build a church, create an organization, or start a movement. Jesus told them to be witnesses. What do you think is the difference between being a witness and simply sharing information about Jesus? How would you define the word *disciple*?
3. Jesus entrusted his work to the disciples. What do you think it means for the church to be the presence of Christ in the world today?
4. Why do you think the Holy Spirit can sometimes be the hardest person of the Trinity for people to understand or talk about?
5. What are some things that can distract or prevent people from noticing the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives?