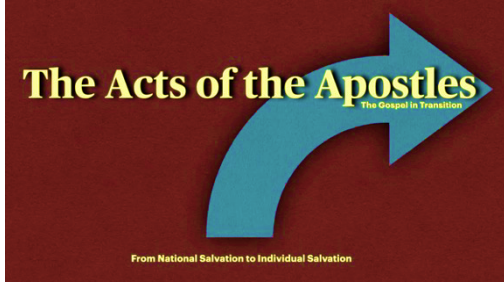


Session 2 | Acts 1:1-3 | Many Infallible Proofs



I. Introduction and Instructions to the Disciples

The Acts of the Apostles might also be titled The Acts of the Holy Spirit. We see the third person of the Trinity, moving and at work throughout the book. The name *Holy Ghost* (Or, Holy Spirit) is mentioned 84 times in Acts. It is unclear why the translators used the word "Ghost," except to say in 1611, the term was commonly used in the sense of a person's spirit and did not carry the same meaning as we use today when we think of a ghost. The Greek, *pneuma hagios* (*spirit holy*)

may have been translated as Holy Ghost to refer to the Third Person of the Trinity.¹

The book of Acts is the "indispensable link between the Gospels and the Epistles (letters)."² It is the only entirely historical book of the New Testament and the only record we have of the progress of the gospel proclamation that followed the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Acts is our only record of the expansion of the Gospel across the entire Mediterranean region. The Acts is our only record of the conversion and career of the apostle Paul and his church-planting mission.³ A keyword to notice is "Church." The Greek word for every use of the word church (with one exception in 19:37) throughout Acts is *ekklesia*, which means *assembly*. We will let the context determine its proper meaning each time the word *ekklesia* appears.



The word Gospel means "Good News." We will assume that there are two Gospels preached in the book of Acts.⁴ Both Gospels pertain to Jesus Christ, yet each is for a different dispensation; the Kingdom Gospel and the Individual Gospel of Grace. The first half of Acts concerns only the Kingdom Gospel. From Acts 13 onward, we will see both the Kingdom and Individual Gospel of grace preached.

The book moves from the primary focus from Israel's kingdom and the Law to the Body of Christ and grace, a transition from the Gospel of the circumcised (The Jews) to the Gospel of the uncircumcised (The non-Jews; or Gentiles, Greeks).

II. The Date of Writing and The Author



There is much debate on when Luke wrote The Acts. According to the Scofield Reference Bible, and the most probable dating, the book covers about 30 years, from A.D. 33 to A.D. 63. Which would mean *Luke wrote the book sometime after A.D. 63. The book begins with the apostle Peter's ministry, who eventually fades from the scene to the apostle Paul who takes the dominant role in the narrative. And the book ends abruptly at 28:31. What happened to Paul after the **two years** Luke recorded in 28:31?

¹ Ghost, n." OED Online. Oxford University Press, September 2020. Web. 7 October 2020.

² Hanna, Kenneth G., *From Gospels to Glory, Exploring the New Testament*. WestBow Press. Bloomington, IN. 2015.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ We should challenge this, as we should with all assumptions, as we study the book of Acts.

The standard evangelical position on the book of Acts is "Acts is the Church's standard textbook on the first three decades of its history and its ageless global task of evangelization."⁵ We should question this assumption, and we will.

*Nowhere in the Gospel of Luke or The Acts does the author mention his name. Early Christian tradition names Dr. Luke as the author. There is no reason to dispute that vehemently. Paul mentions *Luke* in Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:11 (Luke traveled with Paul), and Philemon 24. Was he a Jew or a Gentile? That, too, is debated, although he had a great understanding of the Septuagint (LXX)⁶, which may lean toward him being a Jew. If a Gentile, he was undoubtedly a God-fearer, as we will see in Cornelius when we get to chapter 10.

III. Acts 1:1-3 | Many Infallible Proofs and the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God

Verse 1—

The former treatise (a written work), that is, the Gospel according to Luke. **Theophilus** (See Luke 1:3), a Roman name meaning, *loved of God*. Some believe **Theophilus** is a representative name for all who believe in God, yet, the epithet *most excellent* (Luke 1:3) is often used in literature to distinguish a person from others with the same name. **Theophilus**, most likely a Gentile Christian with status (e.g. **most excellent**), was perhaps a patron who financed Luke's travels and published his writings. Or, maybe Luke is just dedicating the two-volume work to **Theophilus**?

All that Jesus began to do and teach. Not all Jesus taught, but what he **began** to teach. Other Gospels, inspired by the Holy Spirit, help fill in details of Jesus's teachings (cf. John 20:30).

Verse 2—

Until the day in which he was taken up, the phrase **taken up** could mean *taken up, on the cross*. It might refer to his death and resurrection, but the more natural reading⁷ is, it refers to his ascension since Luke uses the same phrase in Acts 1:11, 22.⁸ **Passion** means suffering. **After...had given commandments unto the apostles**, these commandments are popularly known as *The Great Commission*. These commandments are in all four Gospels: Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-19; Luke 24:45-49; John 21:15-17. The commandments were given by Jesus, to the apostles, **through the Holy Ghost**. These were Spirit-breathed commandments specifically for the apostles.

Many Christians, if not most, mistake these commandments as being "to us," but clearly, Acts 1:2 states these were commandments given **unto the apostles whom he had chosen** (For the choosing of the apostles, Luke is pointing back to Luke 6:12-16).

Verse 3—

To whom also he shewed himself alive...by many infallible proofs. This he did for **forty days**. Scripture records forty-days of multiple appearances, providing evidence of his resurrection from the dead: Acts 13:31; Matthew 28:9, 16-17; Mark 16:10-14; Luke 24; John 20-21:1; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7; I John 1:1. The Greek word for **infallible proofs** is *tekmerion*, which is "something plainly known." In other words, the fact that Jesus was alive was not mysterious; the living Jesus was seen with great **infallible proofs**.

It is important to note that Scripture records the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The tomb is often overlooked but is one of the critical parts of his *passion*. The burial provided proof that he was dead; he was not merely resuscitated. The claim that those who saw him were hallucinating is weak since he was seen by many over **forty days**--Some of these were public appearances.

Speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Suffice it to say (and we will develop the kingdom message as we move through Acts), the hope of the kingdom pertains to a future, physical, fraternal (only for Israel) dominion. During Jesus's life, the Jews who believed

⁵ Jensen, Irving L. *Acts: An Inductive Study*. Moody Press. Chicago, IL. 1968.

⁶ LXX: Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

⁷ If the plain sense makes common sense seek no other sense.

⁸ Mark uses the same Greek word for the ascension in Mark 16:19, as does Paul in 1 Timothy 3:16.



in Him expected Him to set up His kingdom there and then (even in Acts 1:6). But they had not fully understood His teaching that He must first go and then return (Luke 19:12). In the meantime, He would equip the apostles to carry out the mission of getting the nation ready for His return (Acts 1:8).

The kingdom is difficult to grasp and highly misinterpreted. Another assumption we will make along our study in Acts is, while the Church may be in the kingdom one day in the future; the future, physical, fraternal kingdom is for Israel. The Church is not kingdom related; instead, the Church exists, among other purposes, to 1) Glorify God (Ephesians 3:21). 2) Edify and build up (Ephesians 4:13-16). 3) Follow Paul in our freedom in Christ from Law and pleasing all men so they may be saved (1 Corinthians 11:1).

IV. Many Infallible Proofs

The fact of Christ's resurrection has been accepted throughout history as irrefutable due to all the evidence and "infallible proofs." Paul listed numerous facts of the resurrection. Let's look briefly at some proofs:

1. **The first proof is Jesus Christ himself.** Throughout his ministry, he anticipated his death and his resurrection. For example, in John 2:18-21, the Jews asked Jesus for a sign. He told them, "destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up." Verse 21 includes a note that he was speaking of his body. See also: Matthew 12:38-40; 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; 14:58; Luke 9:22; 18:33.
2. **The Empty Grave.** There are several theories of how Jesus could have revived in the tomb, not actually being dead, but we saw that was impossible. At Christ's burial, a large stone was rolled before the tomb, the tomb was sealed, and a guard was placed before it. It could only have been a superhuman feat, to remove his body, no man could have done it. How could his friends have done it in the presence of a Roman guard? And if they did remove the body, why strip him naked first? Why would they have taken the time to unwrap the body? Why would his enemies do that? That would cause the report of his resurrection to spread—his enemies wanted him in the tomb. If there is any evidence that is most adequate, it's the empty tomb. It is the one thing skeptics simply do not know how to deal with.
3. **The Transformation of the Disciples.** They had seen their master die. It was a horrific day. One day they were discouraged and dejected, and then suddenly their doubts fled! Then they saw him. It couldn't have been a hallucination involving over 500 people at once.
4. **Thousands of Jews Believed in Him.** As a result of Peter's eyewitness account in Acts 2:14-41.
5. **The Apostle Paul's Witness.** "Last of all he was seen of me also." (15:8). Everything the apostle Paul did and everything he preached began with that sudden change—when he saw the risen Lord. Everything Paul did, he attributed to the sight of the risen Christ.
6. **The Gospel Accounts.** Four different accounts describe the chain of circumstances from the empty tomb to his ascension (Mk 16:19; Lk 24:51).

