

ACTS

Luke wrote the book of Acts as well as the book of Luke. Acts continues the story of the good news of life in Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts the story moves from Jerusalem to other nations. It tells about the Holy Spirit coming to the believers in Jerusalem. And it tells about the teaching and work of Peter and Paul. They were followers of Jesus and leaders of the new church. People from many nations became believers.

The book of Acts has six main parts. Each part tells about a new step in the spread of the good news about Jesus. Each part is marked by words similar to "God's word spread and grew."

First, the church is established in Jerusalem. For the first time the Greek language is used in the church. This allowed for the message of the good news to spread throughout the Roman Empire.

Second, the message of the good news spread to Galilee and Samaria.

Third, it became clear that the message about Jesus was also for people who were not Jews.

Fourth, messengers of the good news went west into the Roman part of Asia.

Fifth, the message went from Asia into Europe.

Sixth, the last part of the book tells how the message of good news spread to Rome. Rome was the capital city of the Empire. The good news of God's kingdom is reaching all nations.

Jesus Is Taken Up Into Heaven

¹Theophilus, I wrote about Jesus in my earlier book. I wrote about all he did and taught ²until the day he was taken up to heaven. Before Jesus left, he gave orders to the apostles he had chosen. He did this through the Holy Spirit. ³After his suffering and death, he appeared to them. In many ways he proved that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days. During that time he spoke about God's kingdom. ⁴One day Jesus was eating with them. He gave them a command. "Do not leave Jerusalem," he said. "Wait for the gift my Father promised. You have heard me talk about it. ⁵John baptized with water. But in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶Then the apostles gathered around Jesus and asked him a question. "Lord," they said, "are you going to give the kingdom back to Israel now?"

⁷He said to them, "You should not be concerned about times or dates. The Father has set them by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other."

⁹After Jesus said this, he was taken up to heaven. The apostles watched until a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰While he was going up, they kept on looking at the sky. Suddenly two men

dressed in white clothing stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. But he will come back in the same way you saw him go."

Matthias Is Chosen to Take the Place of Judas Iscariot

¹²The apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives. It is just over half a mile from the city. ¹³When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Peter, John, James and Andrew were there. Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew were there too. So were James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They all came together regularly to pray. The women joined them too. So did Jesus' mother Mary and his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers. About 120 of them were there. ¹⁶Peter said, "Brothers and sisters, a long time ago the Holy Spirit spoke through David. He spoke about Judas Iscariot. What the Scripture said would happen had to come true. Judas was the guide for the men who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷But Judas was one of us. He shared with us in our work for God."

¹⁸Judas bought a field with the payment he received for the evil thing he had done. He fell down headfirst in the field. His body burst open. All his insides spilled out. ¹⁹Everyone in Jerusalem heard about