

This weeks **Bible e-Study** starts us on the book of Acts.

Why might this book, **The Acts of the Apostles**, be misnamed?

⁸ *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* Acts 1:8

NUGGET – I can’t take credit for this idea, but someone once said, that the book of The Acts of the Apostles, is a book about *God’s Acts through* the apostles so it could be called The Acts of God – Through the Apostles!

Of course we all understand that to be true. But lets not forget that these men and the other followers of Jesus all participated in these ‘acts’. So for that reason we’ll stay with the name given! This book is a record of the Acts of the Apostles that God directed and chose for 1 reason:

- The things done by the apostles were done as a witness to Jesus Christ.

That’s what we learn in the nugget verse for today. Jesus Himself makes this statement as His last, final and parting words as He leaves this earth for His Father’s side in heaven. Final words are important words. And these words are for all of Christ’s followers to hear and heed.

Don’t miss those words about ‘receiving power’. Notice that power is *received*, not taken, made up or contrived. That power is given to us by the Holy Spirit. And by the way the Greek word used there for ‘power’ is *dunamis* – it’s the word we get the word ‘dynamite’ from. It’s explosive power. Power that goes out. It’s not power to sustain things or to just get by with. No, it’s power that is projected and has a purpose.

And again that purpose is to witness to the work of Jesus to the ends of the earth. Notice the progression of places Jesus mentions. It begins locally and moves outward.

Part of what we will read in Acts is how that progression was accomplished. We’ll read about the forces and dynamics that moved people to take the witness of Jesus Christ all the way to the ends of the known world of the time. Those same words of Jesus apply to us today. Let’s be mindful of that every time we leave our homes – that God’s Holy Spirit gives you *dunamis* to act as a witness to the work of Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION - Consider this when you leave your home.

1. Before walking out your door have a cross you can see somewhere to remind of the work of Jesus that God gives you the power to witness to.
2. Perhaps, take a moment or two before you leave the house, to write down a fresh bible verse and roll it up like a little stick of dynamite and tuck it in your pocket, purse or binder. See how God uses that in your day.

PRAY - Ask God to guide and grant you His power and guidance for your day. Pray for eyes to see where He may take you into new encounters that let you witness to the power of Jesus death and resurrection.

GOING DEEPER

This *Plan and Outline* of Acts is from the Concordia Self-Study Bible.

Plan and Outline†

Luke weaves together different interests and emphases as he relates the beginnings and expansion of the church. The design of his book revolves around:

- (1) key persons: Peter and Paul;
- (2) important topics and events: the role of the Holy Spirit, pioneer missionary outreach to new fields, conversions, the growth of the church, and life in the Christian community;

(3) significant problems: conflict between Jews and Gentiles, persecution of the church by some Jewish elements, trials before Jews and Romans, confrontations with Gentiles, and other hardships in the ministry;

(4) geographical advances: five significant stages (see the quotations in the outline; see also map of “The Spread of the Gospel”).

In addition to a threefold outline (as implied in 1:18: chs. 1–7; 8–9; 10–28) or a twofold arrangement (as below), a sixfold division is logical according to the six summarizing statements in Acts (6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:31)—each section covering approximately five years, and the first five statements alternating between summaries concerning the word and the church.

- 1) Peter and the Beginnings of the Church in Palestine (chs. 1–12)
 - a. “Throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria” (1:1–9:31; see 9:31)
 - i. Introduction (1:1–2)
 - ii. Christ’s postresurrection ministry (1:3–11)
 - iii. The period of waiting for the Holy Spirit (1:12–26)
 - iv. The filling with the Spirit (ch. 2)
 - v. The healing of the lame man and the resultant arrest of Peter and John (3:1–4:31)
 - vi. The community of goods (4:32–5:11)
 - vii. The arrest of the 12 apostles (5:12–42)
 - viii. The choice of the Seven (6:1–7)
 - ix. Stephen’s arrest and martyrdom (6:8–7:60)
 - x. The scattering of the Jerusalem believers (8:1–4)
 - xi. Philip’s ministry (8:5–40)
 1. In Samaria (8:5–25)
 2. To the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40)
 - xii. Saul’s conversion (9:1–31)
 - b. “As far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch”(9:32–12:25; see 11:19)
 - i. Peter’s ministry on the Mediterranean coast (9:32–11:18)
 1. To Aeneas and Dorcas (9:32–43)
 2. To Cornelius (10:1–11:18)
 - ii. The new Gentile church in Antioch (11:19–30)
 - iii. Herod’s persecution of the church and his subsequent death (ch. 12)
- 2) Paul and the Expansion of the Church from Antioch to Rome (chs. 13–28)
 - a. “Throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia” (13:1–15:35; see 16:6)
 - i. Paul’s first missionary journey (chs. 13–14)
 - ii. The Jerusalem conference (15:1–35)
 - b. “Over to Macedonia” (15:36–21:16; see 16:9)
 - i. Paul’s second missionary journey (15:36–18:22)
 - ii. Paul’s third missionary journey (18:23–21:16)
 - c. “To Rome” (21:17–28:31; see 28:14)
 - i. Paul’s imprisonment in Jerusalem (21:17–23:35)
 1. Arrest (21:17–22:29)
 2. Trial before the Sanhedrin (22:30–23:11)
 3. Transfer to Caesarea (23:12–35)
 - ii. Paul’s imprisonment in Caesarea (chs. 24–26)
 1. Trial before Felix (ch. 24)
 2. Trial before Festus (25:1–12)
 3. Hearing before Festus and Agrippa (25:13–26:32)
 - iii. Voyage to Rome (27:1–28:15)
 - iv. Two years under house arrest in Rome (28:16–31) ¹

¹Robert G. Hoerber, *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, "Lutheran edition of the NIV study Bible" --Foreword., electronic ed., Ac 1:1 (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1997, c1986).