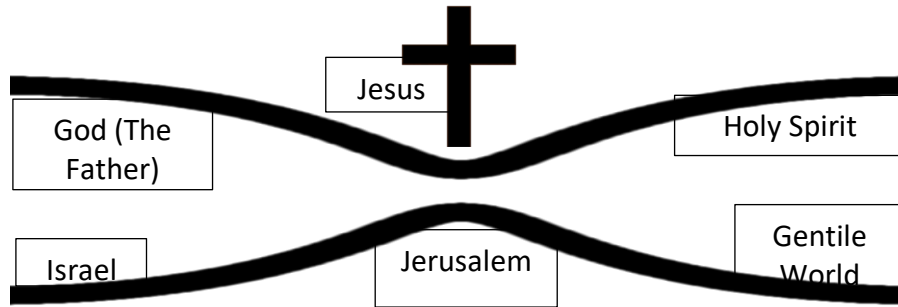


## 5 themes in Acts

### Theme 1) Part 2 of a pair Salvation history/ Geography

<p><b>Luke 1.3</b> I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent <b>Theophilus</b>,</p>	<p><b>Acts 1.1</b> In the first book, <b>Theophilus</b>, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning</p>
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Because of this, many of the themes will continue. Acts is also an explanation as to why a movement that was initially Jewish in Origin became so strongly Gentile<sup>1</sup>.



#### New Testament (96)

- Matthew (5)
- Mark (4)
- Luke (13)
- John (4)
- Acts (42)
- Romans (6)
- 1 Corinthians (3)
- 2 Corinthians (1)
- Ephesians (3)
- 1 Thessalonians (3)
- 2 Timothy (1)
- Titus (1)
- Hebrews (5)
- 1 Peter (2)
- 2 Peter (1)
- Jude (1)
- Revelation (1)

### Theme 2) The Age of the Holy Spirit

For Luke, the Holy Spirit is the driving force behind the spread of the Christian message, in Acts<sup>2</sup> and he places more emphasis on it than do any of the other evangelists. The Spirit is "poured out" at Pentecost on the first Samaritan and Gentile believers and on disciples who had been baptised only by John the Baptist, each time as a sign of God's approval.<sup>3</sup>

Some commentators suggest that given the central role that the Holy Spirit plays, a more fitting title for the book would be "The Acts of the Holy Spirit".<sup>4</sup>



### Theme 3) Structure

Acts follows two primary moves in the leadership of the church, which are also reflected in geography. Under the leadership of Peter, the Church is based in Jerusalem, and then moves to Rome, it moves from a Jewish focus to a Gentile Focus which is headed by Paul.

<sup>1</sup> An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity  
By Delbert Burkett

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?qs\\_version=NRSVA&quicksearch=Holy+Spirit&begin=51&end=51](https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?qs_version=NRSVA&quicksearch=Holy+Spirit&begin=51&end=51)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts\\_of\\_the\\_Apostles#Theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles#Theology)

<sup>4</sup> <http://acts1.frontlinechurch.com/introduction/key-theological-themes>

## 1) Petrine Christianity

- 2:1–8:1 – beginnings in Jerusalem
- 8:2–40 – the church expands to Samaria and beyond
- 9:1–31 – conversion of Paul
- 9:32–12:25 – the conversion of Cornelius, and the formation of the Antioch church

The Petrine church was focused on the transition from a community organised around the person of Jesus Christ into an early church structure. This transition included questions of who was in and who was out, and questions regarding the relationship between the Jewish structure and teachings and the new community.

- The Holy Spirit came at Shavuot (Pentecost) (2:1-47)
- Seven Deacons appointed (6:1–7)
- Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–39)
- Peter's vision of a sheet with animals<sup>5</sup> (10:9–23, 11:1–18)

## 2) Pauline Christianity

- 13:1–14:28 – the Gentile mission is promoted from Antioch
- 15:1–35 – the Gentile mission is confirmed in Jerusalem
- 15:36–28:31 – the Gentile mission, climaxing in Paul's passion story in Rome (21:17–28:31)

The Pauline church was concerned with the inclusion of Gentiles and the Split with Jewish Christianity, including the minimum standard question. It was marked by the missionary journeys.

### Theme 4) A Proper relationship with Power

Three power dynamics are displayed in the Book of Acts.

In the early Church and the Jewish Sanhedrin, there was persecution depicted, of which Saul would be the best-known example, but would include the martyrdom of Stephen.

The Roman Authorities have a mixed portrayal in Acts, at times positive, defending Paul from Jewish and Gentile rioters (Acts 17 and Acts 19) and at times negative including the imprisonment of Paul (Acts 22 onwards) and most significantly in the attribution to Jesus of the title Lord (Acts 10.36)

Within the Church itself, perhaps the best example is the council of Jerusalem which sees the mission to the Gentiles receive approval.

### Theme 5) Failure in a successful world

Reading the book of Acts makes it seem as though the spread of Christianity was inevitable, and that very quickly all the world would be Christian, and yet it very clearly wasn't It is worth noting some of the seeds of failure in Acts.

**Acts 17.34** But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

**Acts 14.19** But Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.



<sup>5</sup> Peter's vision of a sheet with animals, the vision painted by [Domenico Fetti](#) (1619)