



RECOGNIZE THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Theme: God uses Acts to explain the church's founding and to encourage us to be active in it.

I. _____ of Acts

A. _____

Luke understood that _____ the gospel is more important than anything else. He made himself _____ to God, and God used him in _____ ways.

B. _____

Luke probably wrote in AD ____ or ____.

C. Literary _____

Acts contains literary features, including _____.

Luke used Jesus' _____ (Acts 1:8) and the corresponding order of events to give _____ to his narrative.

II. _____ of Acts

The book outlined the _____ and _____ of the church.

Acts legitimized taking the _____ to the _____.

Acts proved that the church was the _____ through which God would accomplish His _____ on earth.

III. Key _____ in Acts

A. Jesus is _____

Jesus didn't _____ His church when He left the earth. Instead, He worked through the Spirit to _____ His church as He had promised.

B. Jesus is _____ with His church

Luke emphasized that all believers have the _____ and that all believers share a _____ with Jesus.

C. Jesus' gospel is _____

Luke showed that the Spirit uses the gospel to _____.



Time with God

Read each passage and answer the questions to spend personal time with God.

MONDAY

Read Matthew 16:17, 18; 28:19, 20.

Who is building the church, meaning the body of believers?

Acts records the beginning and growth of the church. What does Christ expect us to do as part of His church?

THURSDAY

Read Acts 7:54–56.

What did Stephen see just before he was stoned to death?

Acts presents the truth that Jesus is alive and well and active through His Spirit in the church. Finish this sentence: Because Jesus is alive and active in the church, I will . . .

TUESDAY

Read Acts 9:10–15; 10:34, 35.

To whom does God offer salvation? Are any people groups excluded?

Ask God how He might want to use you to reach people groups around the world with the gospel.

FRIDAY

Read Acts 2:42–47.

What did the early church do as a result of their oneness with each other and with Christ?

How might you build your spiritual relationships with your fellow church members?

WEDNESDAY

Read Acts 1:4–8.

The church is God's means of working in the world today. What did Christ say the Spirit would help the church do?

Since the church is God's program for today, how should you view your part in your church?

SATURDAY

Read Acts 2:40, 41.

What happened when Peter preached the gospel?

What should you expect to happen if you are faithful in sharing the gospel with others?

Tough Questions Answered



Why does God rely on people to be His witnesses ?



Heaven resounds with angels' joyful voices. They love Jesus and perfectly obey His commands to do His will on earth. They are powerful too. In the future, the archangel Michael and the good angels will battle Satan and his fallen angels. Michael will succeed in kicking Satan and his followers out of Heaven (Rev. 12:7–10)! So why didn't Jesus send His angels to earth to be His witnesses? It seems they could do a much better job than humans have done so far.

An angel will come to earth as God's witness during part of the Tribulation (Rev. 14:6, 7). Until that time, however, Jesus chose to use people so they might reap the benefits of sharing the gospel around the world. Nothing brings joy in this present life like witnessing to a person who responds and trusts in Jesus as his or her Savior. Jesus wants us to know that joy on earth!

After believers get to Heaven, Jesus will give a crown of rejoicing to those who dedicated their lives to sharing the gospel (1 Thess. 2:19, 20). Those who earn that crown will use it to bring glory to God for all eternity. That might not sound like a big deal now, but in Heaven bringing glory to God will be our greatest desire. A crown of rejoicing will be a prized possession because it will be a physical reminder of God's power to save souls. Earn your crown of rejoicing!

Perhaps the greatest privilege gained from witnessing is the opportunity to live forever with those who trusted Christ as a result of our witness. Consider how thankful you will be in Heaven to those who were instrumental in your salvation. This privilege and the opportunity to earn a crown should motivate you to witness every day!

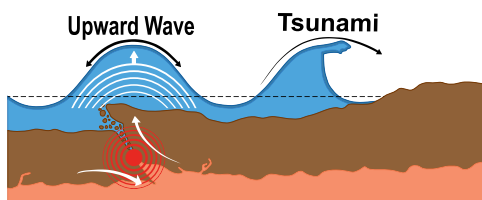
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A First-century Tsunami



On December 26, 2004, a colossal earthquake with over a 9.1 magnitude shook Indonesia and triggered a tsunami that killed nearly 240,000 people. The devastating waves traveled 11,500 miles east to Peru and nearly 14,000 miles around Africa to Nova Scotia, Canada. The waves brought destruction and despair around the world.

During the first century A.D., the Holy Spirit arrived and triggered a wave of power that still reverberates nearly 2,000 years later. The Spirit came to live in believers. Christ has been building



His church through Spirit-empowered believers ever since. The results, though, couldn't be more different than those of tsunami waves. Countless souls have been rescued from eternal death and given the hope of eternal life.

Memory Verse Review



Memory Verse—Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 serves as an outline for how the book of Acts was written and how the gospel spread to the known world of the first century. At Pentecost, the church exploded into existence in Jerusalem as many believed the good news of Jesus Christ. Then believers carried the message throughout the regions of Judea and to Samaria. As the Holy Spirit continued to empower believers, the gospel spread to various countries, bringing many people into a right relationship with God. The gospel is still spreading today.

1. How often do you think of the power of the Holy Spirit in you?
2. Why is He in you? What does He want to empower you to do?
3. Talk to God about His plans to do the work on the church through His Spirit in you.

Measuring Growth



Luke wrote the narrative we know as Acts to document the beginning and spread of the early church. By reading his book, we learn how the Holy Spirit worked to expand the good news about salvation through Christ from a small group of disciples huddled in Jerusalem to the countless number of believers from all nationalities spread all over the globe today. The spread of the gospel didn't end with the last words of Acts. It continues today in our church, our families, and our neighborhoods.

Look for the following indicators you actively participate in Christ's plan to build His church.

1. I take seriously my responsibility to be part of Christ's building plan.
2. I see the local church as central to becoming equipped to serve the Lord.
3. I depend on the Holy Spirit when I serve the Lord.

Additional Memory Verses—Luke 24:46–49.