Crossroads International Church Singapore (7 July 2019) Dr. Rick Griffith

Title

New Covenant Bible Church, Cedar Rapids (27 June 2021) Message 53 of 66

NLT 40 Minutes

**Be Witnessing**

***Book of Acts***

Cartoon

Acts in 3 Minutes

**Topic:** Evangelism

**Subject:** Why should we be witnessing? To…

**Complement:** Be part of God’s plan to bring the kingdom message to all people.

**Purpose:** The listeners will see God’s sovereign direction of church expansion and share their faith this week.

**Attribute:** We worship our Sovereign God

**Reading:** Acts 1:1-11

**Song:** Sovereign, Hear the Call of the Kingdom, By Faith, The Church’s One Foundation

**Benediction:** Acts 1:8

**Video:** The Book of Acts in 3 Minutes (TheChurchatBrookHills.mp4)

# Introduction

### Interest: The Book of Acts in 3 Minutes [Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJIHgMR7LP0)—It’s not hard to witness to what you have seen—yet we often don’t feel that way about witnessing for Jesus.

Witness

(2 slides)

#### One pastor noted, “"When I was a kid, I would go up to someone's porch, ring the doorbell, and run like the dickens. I still do it, except now our church calls it 'outreach training.'"

Billy Graham

#### Some of us fear witnessing because we think we have to be a Billy Graham!

Ineffective Ways

Key Verse Acts 1:8

#### Others think of ineffective ways to witness.

Your Cup

### Need: How are you doing at witnessing to what Jesus has done in your life?

#### Acts 1:8 is the key verse of the book of Acts.

#### It reminds us that we also are witnesses.

### Subject: Why should we be witnessing? What reasons are there for you and I to seek a harvest? Why is evangelism important? Why missions?

Subject

Dr Luke

### Background: Helping us understand how to be witnesses today is Dr Luke. Half of the NT had been written by the time Dr Luke wrote Acts. The gospel had reached half the Roman Empire, but how? It was God’s work!

Map

### Preview: Today we’ll see three reasons we should witness for Jesus. Each is actually a stage of growth.

3 Reasons

### Text: We will survey the entire book of Acts.

(So back to our question: Why should we witness?)

# God has gone ahead of us so we can begin where we are (1:1–6:7).

MP

Jerusalem

1:1–6:7

Acts 1:8

(3 slides)

[God helps us first tell others about Jesus where it is natural without crossing cultures.]

## God began the kingdom expansion in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7).

### God began the Church right at home for the first believers (Acts 1–2).

#### Jesus prepared Jews to first reach Jews (Acts 1)— Jesus told them to stay in Jerusalem until the Spirit came, then he left.

#### The Spirit then gathered them to start the Church (Acts 2).

Acts 2

Tongues

##### First, tongues of fire appeared on their heads.

##### Then they spoke in at least 15 languages they had never learned.

Map

##### But it was Peter’s sermon that led 3000 to Christ that day.

Preaching

##### This began a series of 8 “progress reports” to show the expansion of this message through the book of Acts.

Progress Reports

### The Jews witnessed near Jerusalem amidst opposition (3:1–6:7).

Acts 3-6

(9 slides)

## We need our witness to overflow first in our own setting.

We need to witness

### I had to first be faithful in high school among my peers.

No Division 9:32-12:24

Cornelius

(2 slides)

Acts 14

(2 slides)

Peter

(5 slides)

Acts 11

(2 slides)

Acts 15

(2 slides)

### First allow the Spirit to lead you right where you live and work.

Subject

(2 slides)

(So why should we witness? God has gone ahead of us so we can begin where we are. But also…)

MP

Stoning

MPI

Acts 7

Acts 8

(3 slides)

# God gets the glory when we witness outside our comfort zone (6:8–8:40).

[God is honored when we share about him with those who are not familiar.]

## God expanded the kingdom message to Samaritans in Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:40).

### God used Stephen’s death to spread the kingdom northward (6:8–8:3).

### God used Philip to reach a sorcerer and Ethiopian official northward (8:4-40).

## Do you see how God has directed you through difficulty?

Difficulty

### Perhaps he used struggles elsewhere to bring you here outside the familiar (I feel like a stranger everywhere).

### God worked in me in Singapore where I my comfort zone became comfortable.

MP

Transition

(3 slides)

(Why else should we witness?)

# God will use us to spread the kingdom to the last unreached place (Acts 9–28).

[He promises that we will eventually witness in the final unevangelized place on earth.]

## God expanded the kingdom message to Rome to reach the end of their world (Acts 9–28).

Acts 9

(2 slides)

### God saved Paul to reach Damascus of Syria (9:1-31).

### God preserved the Church from division despite new Gentile believers (9:32–12:24).

#### God prepared the Jewish church to include Gentiles (9:32–10:16).

#### God involved Peter in Cornelius's conversion to confirm to the Jewish church that God was doing a new thing (10:17-44).

#### The Jerusalem church had to accept Gentile conversion because this change was from God (10:45–11:18).

#### The church at Antioch had the marks of a healthy international church (11:19-30).

#### God responded to Jewish rejection of Christ by judging Herod and prospering the church (12:1-24).

Acts 12

(2 slides)

### God expanded the Church in journeys to Turkey and Jerusalem approved grace (12:25–16:5).

Acts 13

(2 slides)

#### The first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas extended the kingdom message to Cyprus and Galatia (12:25–14:28).

Acts 14

(2 slides)

#### The Jerusalem Council decision not to require the Law for Gentiles was directed by God to expand the kingdom message through the Roman Empire (15:1-35).

Acts 15

(2 slides)

#### The second missionary journey of Paul and Silas strengthened Galatian churches and Barnabas and John Mark went to Cyprus due to a ministry conflict (15:36–16:5).

Acts 16

Key Decisions

### God extended the Church to the Aegean after keeping Paul from Asia (16:6–19:20).

Map Animated

#### Paul was called to Macedonia after Phrygia and Galatia but kept from Asia by the Spirit as God planned the kingdom message first to reach Europe (16:6-10).

God Reveals

#### The second missionary journey became the third as God led Paul and assistants to extend the church into Macedonia, Achaia, and Ephesus (16:11–19:20).

Acts 17-19

(6 slides)

### God extended the kingdom message to Roman rulers even in Rome itself (19:21–28:31).

#### Paul’s third journey had Luke and started no new churches but strengthened Aegean area believers, especially in Ephesus, until it ended in Jerusalem (19:21–21:16).

#### Paul's journey to Rome had three captivities where God extended the kingdom message to rulers in Rome as a sending base to the end of the world (21:17–28:31).

Acts 24-28

(9 slides)

## Our vision is to pursue God, pursue others, and practice His ways to the end of the age.

Pursue & Practice

### We will be witnesses as long as we exist—but we need to be more strategic, so God is moving us from Asia to MENA (Middle East/North Africa) to teach Arabs at JETS (Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary) as it has greater faculty needs.

JETS

(5 slides)

### We will ultimately succeed in the task of being his witnesses (Matt 24:14; Rev 5:9; 7:9).

Rev 5:9

Subject

(Why witness everywhere? To…)

# Conclusion

Main Idea

### Be part of God’s plan to bring the kingdom message to all people (Main Idea).

### Jesus said that his disciples WOULD be his witnesses to the uttermost part, so the issue for us is whether we will resist Jesus or join with Jesus in his sure strategy to bring the gospel to that last unreached person (restated MI).

### What is your role in God’s plan that he started in early church history?

#### Witness in your Jerusalem: *inside* your comfort zone.

Your   
Role?

Inside, Outside…

#### Witness in your Judea and Samaria: *outside* your comfort zone.

#### Witness to all the world: share until the uttermost part is reached.

Prayer

### Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### The Prison Epistles had just been finished.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### God wants us to have confidence that we can be his witnesses as the gospel spread in early church history due to his leading, not man’s planning or ingenuity.

### Main Points: Why witness everywhere? Because…

#### God has gone ahead of us so we can begin where we are (1:1–6:7).

#### God gets the glory when we witness outside our comfort zone (6:8–8:40).

#### God will use us to spread the kingdom to the last unreached place (Acts 9–28).

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Paul had likely just been freed from prison in Rome in AD 62.

# Questions

# Tentative Main Ideas

Text

# Illustrations That Apply

### Text

# New Testament Survey Notes

**Acts**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Universal Savior Proclaimed in Sovereign Kingdom Progress** | | | | | |
| **Jerusalem** | | **Judea and Samaria** | | **Uttermost Part** | |
| **1:1–6:7** | | **6:8–8:40** | | **Chapters 9–28** | |
| **Jews** | | **Samaritans**  **(mixed breeds)** | | **Gentiles** | |
| **AD 33-35**  **(2 years)** | | **AD 35**  **(a few months)** | | **AD 35-62**  **(27 years)** | |
| **Peter** | | **Stephen & Philip** | | **Paul** | |
| **Establishing Home Base** | | **Nearby Outreach** | | **Missionary Journeys** | |
| **Established**  **1–2** | **Expands**  **3:1–6:7** | **Stephen**  **6:8–8:3** | **Philip**  **8:4-40** | **Damascus**  **9:1-31** | **to Rome**  **10:1–28:31** |
| **Rome** | | | | | |
| **AD 62**  **(completed after Paul’s house arrest)** | | | | | |

**Key Word: Sovereignty II**

**Key Verse: “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).**

**Summary Statement: The reason to witness everywhere is because *God has directed the progress of the kingdom message* to all people since early church history.**

**Application:**

**Is God extending his kingdom message through you?**

**How are you fitting into his overall purpose to spread the gospel throughout the entire earth?**

**Acts**

**Introduction**

**I. Title**: The Greek title (Pra,xeij ’Aposto,lwn *Actions/Deeds of Apostles*) was added to this volume about the middle of the second century AD in the Anti-Marcionite Prologue. More proper than the English title, “The Acts of the Apostles,” may be “Some Acts of Some Apostles” since the book is not an exhaustive treatment of the history of all the apostles, but only Peter and Paul. Perhaps an even more accurate title might be “Some Acts of the Holy Spirit”! The book of Luke is the companion volume to Acts in that both address Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: The Church Fathers from the latter half of the second century agreed that Luke, “the beloved physician” (Col 4:14), wrote Acts after writing Luke. Both books circulated together during the latter half of the first century until the beginning of the second century AD when Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were gathered together and circulated as a fourfold gospel (Bruce, 15). The tradition for Luke as author is strong:

1. The earliest evidence for Lukan authorship stems from the Anti-Marcionite Prologue (AD 150-180) and the Muratorian Canon (AD 160-200).

2. Others cite Luke as the author such as Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*; *ca.* AD 185) and Clement of Alexandria (*ca.* AD 155-216; cf. Hiebert, 1:248-49).

Luke's name appears only three times in the NT (Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 24). Since Paul lists his companions as Jews (Col 4:10-11) then Gentiles (Col 4:12-14), and Luke's name appears in the latter group, he evidently was a Gentile, confirmed by his brilliant use of Greek. Tradition says that he came from Syrian Antioch, never married, and died at age 84 (*TTTB*, 327).

B. Internal Evidence: Support for Luke as author is in Acts itself, especially when compared with Luke.

1. Luke and Acts had the same author since: (a) both are dedicated to the same man, Theophilus, (b) Acts 1:1 refers to “the first account,” which most naturally refers to Luke's Gospel, (c) The language and style of the two books are remarkably similar, and (d) both books share many common interests (see “Characteristics” below; cf. Guthrie, 100).

2. Acts has four first person narratives often called the “we-sections” (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1–28:16) that show the author as Paul’s traveling companion. Of his traveling companions, only Titus and Luke are not mentioned by name in these sections and Titus has never been seriously considered as a candidate for the authorship of Acts (Hiebert, 1:119ff.).

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: Acts is fairly easy to date, assuming that Luke wrote church history up to his time. It ends with Paul's two-year imprisonment (AD Feb. 60-Mar. 62; cf. Acts 28:30-31) and does not mention Nero’s persecutions (AD 64), Paul's ministry in the remaining years until his death (AD 62-68), nor the climactic destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). Therefore, the most likely date of composition is AD 62.

B. Origin/Recipients: No one knows for certain where Luke wrote this account, nor does the book itself give any hint. Suggestions include Rome (since this is the location of the story at the end of the book), Antioch, Ephesus, Asia Minor, and Achaia. He clearly wrote to Theophilus (1:1), a man whose name means “lover of God.” The title of “most excellent” for Theophilus (Luke 1:3) indicates that he was probably an official in some capacity and as a man of high social standing he may have funded the publishing of Luke and Acts.

C. Occasion: Theophilus apparently thought Luke the physician a great source to write an orderly account of the life of Christ and the early history of the Church. He was detailed, well educated, an excellent historian, well acquainted with Paul, and as a single man able to travel and interview eyewitnesses. Luke probably wrote at Theophilus' request, but in any event, he purposed to strengthen the wealthy Christian's faith by showing that his faith rested on firm historical fact (Luke 1:3-4). Perhaps even more significantly, Luke sought to explain to his wider Gentile audience that God directed the progress of the kingdom message, not human ingenuity and skill.

**IV. Characteristics**

A. Different opinions exist for purpose of Luke-Acts:

1. Conciliation: to solve an opposition between Peter and Paul to show that Paul's credentials are equal to Peter's in order to defend Paul's apostleship of his letters (Baur and Tübingen School cited by Liefeld, *EBC*, 8:801). This view is speculative.

2. Soteriological/Evangelistic: to present Christ to non-Christian Gentile readers as the perfect Son of Man who “came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10; *TTTB*, 328). This view really explains only a purpose for the Gospel of Luke.

3. Instructional/Edification: to confirm Theophilus and other Gentile believers in their faith (Luke 1:4; *TTTB*, 328; Hiebert, 1:132-135). Longenecker (*EBC*, 8:217) believes the primary purpose of the book is *kerygmatic* (instructional) in that Acts emphasizes the continued confrontation of men and women by the Word of God through the church (4:29, 31; 6:2, 4, 7; 8:4, 14, 25; 10:36; 11:1, 19; 12:24; 13:7, 44, 46, 48-49; 14:25; 15:35-36; 16:6, 32; 17:11, 13; 18:5, 11; 19:10).

4. Apologetic: to show that Christianity was not a politically subversive sect but rather a universal movement (cf. Pilate's three announcements of Christ's innocence in Luke 23:4, 14, 22; *TTTB*, 328; the tracing of the movement from a primarily Jewish to a predominately Gentile membership, *TTTB*, 353).

5. Ecclesiastical: to “trace the development and distinction of the Church over and against Judaism” (Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*, 60-62)

6. Historical Narrative: to preserve “the record of the origin and growth of the early church” (Fitzmyer cited by Liefeld, *EB*C, 8:800).

7. Kingdom: to explain how God has orderly and sovereignly directed the progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles to answer the natural questions of any Gentile unbeliever: (1) “How could a Jewish Savior be the Savior of the world?” (Book of Luke) and (2) “How does this 'little Jewish sect' relate to me?” (Book of Acts).

a. Luke answers question #1 by showing that Jesus was a *universal* Savior, not a Jewish Savior. Then he answers question #2 in that Christianity is not a Jewish sect but a divinely directed movement that *began* in Jerusalem but reached the center of the known world—Rome.

b. That this kingdom theme appears in Luke's Gospel is unquestionable as the phrase “kingdom of God” appears at least 27 times. In Acts it appears only eight times but the concept is throughout from the beginning (1:3, 8) to the end (28:31).

c. Sovereignty is emphasized in Luke through God's control of all events despite obstacles and in Acts with its emphasis on predestination (2:23; 4:28; 13:48).

d. Since Luke and Acts have the same author and the Gospel account has a strong kingdom emphasis, one would expect the same emphasis in Acts since it is a continuation of Luke's gospel. This emphasis does in fact exist.

e. Acts 1:8 shows how the expansion of the kingdom message (cf. 1:3, 6) would expand into three different people groups in three ever-widening geographic circles: the witness in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7), Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:40) and the uttermost part (Acts 9–28).

f. This purpose for Acts is seen in several “progress reports” of the expanding kingdom message (2:47; 6:7; 8:40; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31; also possibly 2:41; 4:31; 5:42; 8:25, etc.; adapted from Toussaint, *BKC*, 2:352).

g. This view includes all the views above (except #1 and #2).

B. The Book of Acts is significant for several reasons (Toussaint, *BKC*, 2:349):

1. While the Bible contains *four* accounts of the life of Christ, Acts provides the *only* narrative of the early Church. Thus, it links the Gospels with the Epistles and provides invaluable insights into how the first century Church operated.

2. The chronological arrangement of the material enables a more accurate background for understanding of the Pauline and General Epistles.

3. The early saints’ zeal, faith, joy, commitment, and obedience in Acts exhorts us today.

C. Interpretive problems come when establishing doctrinal beliefs based only upon the Acts narrative. A proper understanding of Acts recognizes it as a transitional book not intended to set norms for the post-apostolic age. For example, note the transitional nature of speaking in tongues in Acts:

**Speaking in Tongues in Acts** (Toussaint, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2:408, adapted)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Passage** | **Speakers** | **Audience** | **Related to Salvation** | **Purpose** |
| 2:1-4 | Apostles+ | Unsaved Jews at Pentecost | After salvation | Validate for Jews the fulfillment of Joel 2 |
| 8:14-17 | Samaritans | Saved Jews doubting God's plan (Peter+) | After salvation | Validate for Jews God's acceptance of Samaritans |
| 10:44-47 | Gentiles (Cornelius+) | Saved Jews doubting God's plan (Peter+) | At salvation | Validate for Jews God's acceptance of Gentiles |
| 19:1-7 | OT believers in Messiah | Jews needing gospel message confirmed | At salvation | Validate for Jews God's message through Paul |

D. Luke wrote with superb style and structure. Luke-Acts contains the best Greek syntax in the New Testament, using over 700 words found nowhere else in the New Testament.

E. The universal message of the gospel is stressed (1:8; 28:30-31). In fact, Acts records over 80 geographical locations—more than any other New Testament book.

F. A large emphasis is the Holy Spirit and his ministries (Acts 2; cf. Acts 1:8).

G. Assuming the author of Hebrews was a Jew, the combined Luke-Acts remains the only book in the Bible written by a Gentile.

H. Luke's two-volume work is very comprehensive. Luke and Acts together comprise 2138 verses, or 28% of the New Testament. Since Paul wrote only 2033 verses, Luke wrote more than any other author of the New Testament (*TTTB*, 329).

I. Sermons play a very important role in the chronology with 24 of the 28 chapters including a sermon or portion of a sermon.

J. The Gospel of Luke contrasts with Acts as such:

**Luke Acts**

Chapters 24 28

Verses 1150 988

Verses per Chapter 48 35

Time Period Covered 5 BC-AD 33 (37 yrs.) AD 33-62 (30 yrs.)

Content Life of the Christ Life of the Church

Kingdom Message from… Jews to Gentiles Jews to Gentiles

K. Acts provides the framework of Paul’s missionary journeys. These enable us to understand the historical context of the epistles:

**Paul's Missionary Journeys in Acts**

(Furloughs in parentheses)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Area*** | ***Acts Reference*** | ***Dates*** | ***Yrs.*** | ***Letters*** | ***Men with Paul*** |
| 1 | Galatia | 12:25–14:28 | April 48-Sept. 49 | 1.5 | Galatians | Barnabas, Mark |
|  |  |  |  | (.5) |  |  |
| 2 | Aegean | 15:36–18:22 | April 50-Sept. 52 | 2.5 | 1, 2 Thess. | Silas, Timothy, Luke |
|  |  |  |  | (.5) |  |  |
| 3 | Ephesus  &  Aegean | 18:23–21:16 | Spring 53-May 57 | 4 | 1, 2 Cor., Romans | Timothy, Luke, Titus, Erastus, Aristarchus, Sopater, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, Trophimus, Sosthenes |
|  |  |  |  | (0) |  |  |
| \* | Jerusalem, Caesarea | 21:26–26:13 | May 57-Feb. 60 | 2.8 | None | Timothy, Luke |
|  |  |  |  | (0) |  |  |
| \* | Rome | 27:1–28:31 | Feb 60-Spring 62 | 2.2 | Eph., Col., Phil., Philem. | Timothy, Luke |

\* These were imprisonments rather than missionary journeys.

L. Contrasting the beginning and the end shows the progress of the gospel in Acts:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Acts 1** | **Acts 28** |
| ***AD*** | 33 | 62 |
| ***Church*** | Non-existent | Thriving |
| ***Composition of believers*** | 100% Jewish | Mostly Gentiles |
| ***Location*** | Jerusalem | Rome |
| ***Central Figure*** | Peter (narrow ministry) | Paul (broad ministry) |

**Argument**

Luke's Gospel is written *from* a Gentile mind *to* the Gentile mind to confirm Theophilus' faith (Luke 1:3), but also to answer how the Jewish Savior could be a Savior for Gentiles. Luke continues this universal emphasis in Acts, tracing the progress of the kingdom message from its reception by Jews in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7) to Judeans and Samaritans (6:8–8:40) to Gentiles toward the uttermost part of the Roman Empire (Acts 9–28) to encourage believers that the responsibility for the growth of the Church is God's work, not man's. This divine responsibility for the task is clearly stated in Acts 1:8 as the key verse, which affirms that God gives the power to witness rather than people earning it.

However, Luke also notes how the early *church* was faithful to the task. This serves to encourage all believers everywhere to be faithful witnesses to their own locale (their “Jerusalem”), immediately outside this area (their “Judea and Samaria”), and throughout the globe (their “end of the earth”). Thus, Luke's purpose is to show both the divine and human roles in world evangelism, although God ultimately takes final responsibility for his Church (cf. Matt. 16:18).

Acts 1:8 has the preceding threefold outline where each section ends with a summary statement (“progress report”) to show the extent the kingdom message traveled up to that point (i.e., 6:7; 8:40; 28:31). Five more “progress reports” (2:47; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20) end subsections within the major sections (adapted from Toussaint, *BKC*, 2:352).

**Synthesis**

**Universal Savior proclaimed in sovereign kingdom progress**

**1:1–6:7 Jerusalem**

1–2 Established

1 Preparations

1:1-5 Transition from Luke

1:6-8 Outline for Acts

1:9-11 Ascension

1:12-26 Prayer/Matthias

2 Church born

2:1-13 Spirit comes

2:14-41 Peter's sermon

2:42-47 Fellowship (Underlined numbers = progress reports)

3:1–6:7 Expands Opposition:

3:1–4:31 Temple beggar External

4:32–5:11 Barnabas/Ananias/Sapphira Internal

5:12-16 Healings reach immediate area

5:17-42 Peter's escape External

6:1-7 Food distribution Internal

**6:8–8:40 Judea and Samaria**

6:8–8:3 Stephen—cause

6:8–7:1 Jerusalem: Seized for miracles/preaching

7:2-53 Indicting sermon

7:54–8:3 Results

7:54–8:1a Martyrdom

8:1b-3 Persecution: scattered in Judea and Samaria

8:4-40 Philip—effect

8:4-25 Samaria—Simon the sorcerer

8:26-40 Judea—Ethiopian eunuch

**9–28 Uttermost part**

9:1-31 Damascus—Paul

9:32**–**12:24 Antioch/Samaria Gentiles

9:32–11:18 Peter—Samaria Gentiles (Cornelius)

11:19-29 Barnabas/Saul—Antioch

12:1-24 Peter escapes vs. Herod dies

12:25–16:5 Galatia

12:25–14:28 #1—Paul, Barnabas, minus John Mark

15:1-35 Jerusalem Council

15:36–16:5 #2 begins—Paul, Silas, plus Timothy

16:6–19:20 Aegean area

16:6-10 Macedonian call

16:11–19:20 Macedonia, Achaia, Ephesus

16:11–18:22 #2 ends—3 plus Luke

18:23–19:20 #3 begins—confirms Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus

19:21–28:31 Rome

19:21–21:16 #3 ends—Aegean strengthened

21:17–28:31 Captivities (people reached in parentheses)

21:17–23:22 Jerusalem (Jews, commander, Sanhedrin)

23:23–26:32 Caesarea (Felix, Festus, Agrippa)

27:1–28:30-31 Rome (ship passengers, Malta inhabitants, Romans, Nero?)

**Outline**

**Summary Statement for the Book**

**The reason to witness everywhere is because *God has directed the progress of the kingdom message* to all people since early church history.**

# We should witness to our own area first because God began the kingdom message expansion in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7).

## The Spirit established the Jerusalem church by preparing the believers and Spirit baptism to teach us to trust the Spirit for witness (Acts 1–2).

### Believers wait for the Spirit so they could witness until Christ’s return and prepared by prayer and leadership replacement (Acts 1).

#### Luke ties this account to his gospel by summing up Christ's ministry until his command to wait for baptism with the Holy Spirit (1:1-5).

#### Rather than focus on Israel’s restoration, Jesus commanded his disciples to witness everywhere starting in Jerusalem (1:6-8).

#### Jesus ascended to heaven with the promise of his return to the Mt. of Olives to exhort witnessing until he comes again (1:9-11).

#### The apostles and 120 believers prepared for the coming of the Spirit by prayer and by replacing Judas with Matthias (1:12-26).

### The Spirit baptizes the 120 believers into the new Church and empowers Peter to bring 3000 more Jews into the faith, teaching and fellowship (Acts 2).

*Progress Report #1: “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (2:47b).*

## The Spirit expands the Jerusalem church to nearby towns by miraculous healings despite both external and internal opposition (3:1–6:7).

### External opposition of the Sanhedrin after Peter and John heal a beggar enables witness to this highest religious body in Israel (3:1–4:31).

### Internal opposition from Ananias and Sapphira’s deceit backfires to cause a fear of God needed for church growth (4:32–5:11).

### Miraculous healings by the apostles expand the church beyond Jerusalem to people from nearby towns who bring others for healing (5:12-16).

### External opposition of the Sanhedrin again persecutes the apostles so God could provide escape from jail and joy from suffering for Christ (5:17-42).

### Internal opposition regarding food distribution is squashed by delegating seven managers to show God's commitment to his Church (6:1-7).

*Progress Report #2: “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (6:7).*

# We should witness outside our own locale because God expanded the kingdom message in all Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:40).

## God uses Stephen’s martyrdom by the Sanhedrin to incite persecution that brings the kingdom message throughout Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:3).

## Philip witnesses in Samaria to crowds and Simon the sorcerer and in Judea to an Ethiopian eunuch as God’s plan to witness in these two areas (8:4-40).

*Progress Report #3: “Philip, however, appeared at Azotus [in Judea] and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea [in Samaria]” (8:40).*

# We should witness to all the world because God expanded the kingdom message to Rome to reach the end of the known world (Acts 9–28).

## God saves Saul who preaches even beyond Judea and Samaria in Damascus of Syria as God's tool to reach Jews and especially Gentiles (9:1-31).

*Progress Report #4: “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord” (9:31).*

## God protects believers in Samaria and in Gentile cities of Caesarea and Antioch despite Jerusalem church racism as he is committed to the uttermost part (9:32–12:24).

### Peter reaches Gentiles in Joppa, Lydda, and Caesarea [all in Samaria] despite racist Jerusalem believers as God’s kingdom message is for all (9:32–11:18).

### The Gentile church in Antioch alleviates famine in the Jerusalem church to show God's blessing on its ministry (11:19-29).

### God avenges Herod's murder of James and imprisonment of Peter at Jerusalem in Peter's miraculous escape and Herod's death by worms (12:1-24).

*Progress Report #5: “But the word of God continued to increase and spread” (12:24).*

## God expands the church to Asia Minor in Paul and Barnabas’s two missionary journeys and the Jerusalem Council approves witness to Gentiles (12:25–16:5).

### The first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas extends the kingdom message to Cyprus and Asia Minor (12:25–14:28).

### The Jerusalem Council decision not to require the Law for Gentiles is directed by God to expand the kingdom message through the Roman Empire (15:1-35).

### The second missionary journey of Paul and Silas strengthens Asia Minor churches and Barnabas and John Mark go to Cyprus due to a ministry conflict (15:36–16:5).

(Note: Second Missionary Journey = Acts 15:36–18:22)

*Progress Report #6: “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew in numbers” (16:5).*

## God extends the church to the Aegean area after keeping Paul from Asia so he can first evangelize Macedonia and Achaia (16:6–19:20).

### Paul is called to Macedonia after Phrygia and Galatia but kept from Asia by the Spirit as God planned the kingdom message first to reach Europe (16:6-10).

### The second missionary journey moves to the third as Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy extend the church into Macedonia, Achaia, and Ephesus by divinely directed events (16:11–19:20).

#### The end of the second missionary journey extends the church into Macedonia and Achaia (16:11–18:22).

##### Luke helps Paul plant churches in the Macedonian cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (16:11–17:15).

##### Paul plants churches in Athens and Corinth in Achaia and then leaves Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus while he returns to Antioch (17:16–18:22).

#### The third missionary journey begins by confirming churches in Galatia, Phrygia, and Ephesus with miracles and exorcisms (18:23–19:20).

*(Note: Third Missionary Journey = Acts 18:23–21:16)*

*Progress Report #7: “In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (19:20)*

## God extends the kingdom message to Roman rulers after Paul’s third missionary journey leads to his trip to Rome as a prisoner (19:21–28:31).

### Paul’s third journey has Luke and starts no new churches but strengthens Aegean area believers, especially in Ephesus, until it ends in Jerusalem (19:21–21:16).

### Paul's journey to Rome has three captivities where God extends the kingdom message among rulers to Rome as a sending base to the end of the world (21:17–28:31).

#### Paul's Jerusalem captivity spreads the gospel to his own Jewish people, a Roman officer, and a new Sanhedrin with Roman protection to Caesarea (21:17–23:22).

#### Paul's Caesarean captivity extends the kingdom message to Governor Felix, Porcius Festus, and King Agrippa II all under Roman support (23:23–26:32).

#### Paul's captivity in Rome extends the gospel to Gentile passengers and Malta dwellers en route to Jews and Gentiles unhindered in Rome (Acts 27–28).

*Progress Report #8: “For two whole years Paul stayed there [in Rome] in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (28:30-31).*

**Be Witnessing**

***Acts***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The reason to witness everywhere is because God has directed the progress of the kingdom message to all people since early church history.

# We should witness to our own area first because God began the kingdom message expansion in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7).

## The Spirit established the Jerusalem church by preparing the believers and Spirit baptism to teach us to trust the Spirit for witness (Acts 1–2).

## The Spirit expands the Jerusalem church to nearby towns by miraculous healings despite both external and internal opposition (3:1–6:7).

# We should witness outside our own locale because God expanded the kingdom message in all Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:40).

## God uses Stephen’s martyrdom by the Sanhedrin to incite persecution that brings the kingdom message throughout Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:3).

## Philip witnesses in Samaria to crowds and Simon the sorcerer and in Judea to an Ethiopian eunuch as God’s plan to witness in these two areas (8:4-40).

# We should witness to all the world because God expanded the kingdom message to Rome to reach the end of the known world (Acts 9–28).

## God saves Saul who preaches even beyond Judea and Samaria in Damascus of Syria as God's tool to reach Jews and especially Gentiles (9:1-31).

## God protects believers in Samaria and in Gentile cities of Caesarea and Antioch despite Jerusalem church racism as he is committed to the uttermost part (9:32–12:24).

## God expands the church to Asia Minor in Paul and Barnabas’s two missionary journeys and the Jerusalem Council approves witness to Gentiles (12:25–16:5).

## God extends the church to the Aegean area after keeping Paul from Asia so he can first evangelize Macedonia and Achaia (16:6–19:20).

## God extends the kingdom message to Roman rulers after Paul’s third missionary journey leads to his trip to Rome as a prisoner (19:21–28:31).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will see God’s sovereign direction of church expansion and share their faith this week.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: It’s not hard to witness to what you have seen—yet we often don’t feel that way about witnessing for Jesus.

### Need: How are you doing at witnessing to what Jesus has done in your life?

### Subject: Why should we be witnessing?

### Background: Half of the NT had been written by the time Dr Luke wrote Acts. The gospel had reached half the Roman Empire, but how? It was God’s work!

### Preview: Today we’ll see three reasons we should witness for Jesus. Each is actually a stage of growth.

### Text: We will survey the entire book of Acts.

(So back to our question: Why should we witness?)

# God has gone ahead of us so we can begin where we are (1:1–6:7).

## God began the kingdom expansion in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7).

### God began the Church right at home for the first believers (Acts 1–2).

#### He prepared Jews to first reach Jews (Acts 1).

#### The Spirit then gathered them to start the Church (Acts 2).

### The Jews witnessed near Jerusalem amidst opposition (3:1–6:7).

## We need our witness to overflow first in our own setting.

### I had to first be faithful in high school among my peers.

### First allow the Spirit to lead you right where you live and work.

(Why else should we witness?)

# God gets the glory when we witness outside our comfort zone (6:8–8:40).

## God expanded the kingdom message to Samaritans in Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:40).

### God used Stephen’s death to spread the kingdom northward (6:8–8:3).

### God used Philip to reach a sorcerer and Ethiopian official northward (8:4-40).

## Do you see how God has directed you through difficulty?

### Perhaps he used struggles elsewhere to bring you here outside the familiar (I feel like a stranger everywhere).

### God brought Asung and Nim through trials to where they don’t feel comfortable.

(Why else should we witness?)

# God will use us to spread the kingdom to the last unreached place (Acts 9–28).

## God expanded the kingdom message to Rome to reach the end of their world (Acts 9–28).

### God saved Paul to reach Damascus of Syria (9:1-31).

### God preserved the Church from division despite new Gentile believers (9:32–12:24).

### God expanded the Church in journeys to Turkey and Jerusalem approved (12:25–16:5).

### God extended the Church to the Aegean after keeping Paul from Asia (16:6–19:20).

### God extended the kingdom message to Roman rulers even in Rome itself (19:21–28:31).

## Our mission is to love God, love the church, and love the nations to the end of the age.

### We will be witnesses as long as we exist.

### We will ultimately succeed (Matt 24:14; Rev 5:9; 7:9).

(Why witness everywhere? Because…)

# Conclusion

### Be part of God’s plan to bring the kingdom message to all people (Main Idea).

### Main Points: Why witness everywhere? To…

#### God has gone ahead of us so we can begin where we are (1:1–6:7).

#### God gets the glory when we witness outside our comfort zone (6:8–8:40).

#### God will use us to spread the kingdom to the last unreached place (Acts 9–28).

### What is your role in God’s plan that he started in early church history?

#### Witness in your Jerusalem: *inside* your comfort zone.

#### Witness in your Judea and Samaria: *outside* your comfort zone.

#### Witness to all the world: share until the uttermost part is reached.

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

7 July 2019

Message 53 of 66

**Be Witnessing**

***Acts***

**Introduction**

### How are you doing at witnessing to what Jesus has done in your life?

### Why should we be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

# God has gone ahead of us so we can begin where we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1:1–6:7).

## God began the kingdom expansion in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7).

### God began the Church right at home for the first believers (Acts 1–2).

### The Jews witnessed near Jerusalem amidst opposition (3:1–6:7).

## We need our witness to overflow first in our own setting.

# God gets the glory when we witness outside our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ zone (6:8–8:40).

## God expanded the kingdom message to Samaritans in Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:40).

### God used Stephen’s death to spread the kingdom northward (6:8–8:3).

### God used Philip to reach a sorcerer and Ethiopian official northward (8:4-40).

## Do you see how God has directed you through difficulty?

# God will use us to spread the kingdom to the last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ place (Acts 9–28).

## God expanded the kingdom message to Rome to reach the end of their world (Acts 9–28).

### God saved Paul to reach Damascus of Syria (9:1-31).

### God preserved the Church from division despite new Gentile believers (9:32–12:24).

### God expanded the Church in journeys to Turkey and Jerusalem approved (12:25–16:5).

### God extended the Church to the Aegean after keeping Paul from Asia (16:6–19:20).

### God extended the kingdom message to Roman rulers even in Rome itself (19:21–28:31).

## Our mission is to love God, love the church, and love the nations to the end of the age.

# Conclusion

### Be part of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to bring the kingdom message to all people (Main Idea).

### What is your role in God’s plan that he started in early church history?

Download this sermon PPT and notes for free at BibleStudyDownloads.org/resource/new-testament-preaching/

Listen to this message online at cicfamily.com/sermon-listing/

**Acts**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Universal Savior Proclaimed in Sovereign Kingdom Progress** | | | | | |
| **Jerusalem** | | **Judea and Samaria** | | **Uttermost Part** | |
| **1:1–6:7** | | **6:8–8:40** | | **Chapters 9–28** | |
| **Jews** | | **Samaritans**  **(mixed breeds)** | | **Gentiles** | |
| **AD 33-35**  **(2 years)** | | **AD 35**  **(a few months)** | | **AD 35-62**  **(27 years)** | |
| **Peter** | | **Stephen & Philip** | | **Paul** | |
| **Establishing Home Base** | | **Nearby Outreach** | | **Missionary Journeys** | |
| **Established**  **1–2** | **Expands**  **3:1–6:7** | **Stephen**  **6:8–8:3** | **Philip**  **8:4-40** | **Damascus**  **9:1-31** | **to Rome**  **10:1–28:31** |
| **Rome** | | | | | |
| **AD 62**  **(completed after Paul’s house arrest)** | | | | | |

**Key Word: Sovereignty II**

**Key Verse: “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).**

**Summary Statement: The reason to witness everywhere is because *God has directed the progress of the kingdom message* to all people since early church history.**

**Application:**

**Is God extending his kingdom message through you?**

**How are you fitting into his overall purpose to spread the gospel throughout the entire earth?**