

# Church – The Beginnings, Part 1

## The Foundations – The Book of Acts

Acts 1:1-3 | 10/23/2016

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### Acts 1:1-3

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus **BEGAN** both to **DO** and **TEACH**, <sup>2</sup> until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, <sup>3</sup> to whom He also presented Himself **ALIVE** after His suffering by many **INFALLIBLE PROOFS**, being **SEEN** by them during **FORTY** days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

### Luke 1:1-4

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in **ORDER** a **NARRATIVE** of those things which have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as those who **FROM THE BEGINNING** were **EYEWITNESSES** and ministers of the **WORD** delivered them to us, <sup>3</sup> it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things **FROM THE VERY FIRST**, to write to you an **ORDERLY ACCOUNT**, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> that you may know the **CERTAINTY** of those things in which you were instructed.

### Facts of Acts:

1. The Book of Acts is sequel to the Gospel of Luke.
2. **Luke, the Physician, is the Writer** ... commissioned by Paul the Apostle (on Paul's Missionary Team). Luke is **NOT** a Gentile, but a Jew (Israeli).
3. **Luke wrote both his Gospel account and the Book of Acts** of the Apostles account in a Historically accurate narrative, "in order" → sequential order of events. The other Gospels were not written in such a strict order of sequence of events.
4. **Luke investigates** everything thing that is written in, both Luke and Acts, by interviewing living witnesses. He is the consummate researcher, historian, and reporter.
5. **Accuracy** is Luke's goal: <sup>4</sup> that you may know the **CERTAINTY** of those things in which you were instructed. (Luke 1:4)
6. **Legality** → It seems that both were written in such a way as to be presented in Court of Jurisprudence as a Well Researched Defense. Some have suggested that Paul the Apostle needed this research to present to the Judge regarding his case before Nero. In this case, it would stand up in court, even today.

### Impact and Value of the Book of Acts:

1. It gives us an **Accurate History** (snippets) of the beginnings of the Early Church. How did it begin? How did this new Faith spread? Who were the main leaders, etc.?
2. It shows us **Patterns and Precedence** of what the early church did under various circumstances, such as under persecution. What patterns of gathering, of worship, of spreading the gospel, of community, of how they related to each other and toward "outsiders" – which patterns continued and which patterns faded away?

3. It is **NOT For Doctrinal Foundations**. Since, this is History of “what actually happened” and not teachings about **WHY** things happened or **WHY** the early church did certain things, etc. we cannot use the Book of Acts as the Primary Source for Foundation for Doctrines.

Example: The Deity and Personhood of the Holy Spirit is incidentally mentioned in Acts 5. Yet, we can find ample foundational scriptural passages that teach on the Deity and Personhood of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the New Testament Epistles (Romans thru Jude). Therefore, I should not look to the Book of Acts as my determining factor for Foundational Christian Doctrines.

Thus, Acts is about “what has happened” while the church was starting and growing during a transition stage from the Old Testament into the New Testament (New Covenant) in Christ. It is the historical account of the transition from Judaism into Biblical Christianity. It was **NOT** meant to be a Doctrinal Thesis, such as the Book of Romans.

In Acts 2:42 – it says that those 3000 new Christians – “**steadfastly devoted themselves the Apostles Doctrine (or Teachings)...**” → thus, their foundation was not the book of Acts, but the Apostle’s Doctrine (or Teachings), which, today, is found in the books of Romans thru Jude, in the New Testament. Therefore, when we want to know what is Doctrinally Sound beliefs and practices for the Christian, we need to look in Romans thru Jude, first.

4. Acts is a continuation of History written in the Gospels. Again, it is not, primarily, used for Doctrinal Foundations. The Gospels are useful to reveal who Jesus Christ is, along with His Birth, Life, Earthly Ministry, Suffering (Crucifixion, Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension). The Gospels are used as a foundation to expose our sinfulness and our need of a Savior. They are **Evangelistic** in nature. The apostle John wrote: “**these things were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (i.e.: the Messiah), the Son of God, and that by believing you may have Life in His Name.**” John 20:31
  - a. The 4 Gospels were written to show an accurate Picture of Jesus Christ. He is the Foundation of the Faith, so that lost sinners might be saved.
  - b. Acts was written to show how the Gospel of Christ impacted lives and became the Church of the Living God in Christ. The Gospel of Christ bore fruit that is the Church.
  - c. Romans thru Jude are the Doctrines/Teachings of the Apostles – the Doctrinal Foundations of the Church
5. Many **INFALLIBLE PROOFS** → For 40 Days ... Jesus showed Himself as alive **AFTER** His Crucifixion and Burial. The Empty Tomb, the Resurrected Messiah of Israel was what the early church proclaimed. We do not follow some dead Religious Leader that Founded some religion. We follow the Crucified and Resurrected Messiah of Israel, the Son of God, God the Son, who is the Savior of the World, for lost sinners, like you and me. No other “Faith” can claim this. We have **HOPE** that is **GUARANTEED**.

#### **Just to see if you were listening ...**

A certain event occurred that is recorded in the book of Acts, should I base my beliefs on that event?

If not, then, what books should I use to validate, verify, and/or evaluate (test) to see if that is something that I should use as a basis of some sort of doctrine?

**Why** is this so important, today?