

Acts Lesson 1 ➤ Jesus Ascends to Heaven ➤ Acts 1:1-11

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

The Appearance of Jesus

➤ They reviewed the resurrection evidence

Acts 1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.

➤ They received their royal education

Acts 1:3 He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them,

The Assignment from Jesus

➤ Wait for power

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

➤ Witness with power

Acts 1:6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."

The Ascension of Jesus

➤ The departure

Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

➤ The destination

Acts 1:2 until the day he was taken up to heaven,

Jesus in heaven – at God's right hand

Mark 16:19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.

Hebrews 1:3 After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus in heaven – interceding for believers

Romans 8:34 Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Hebrews 7:25 He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Jesus in heaven – welcoming believers home at their deaths

Acts 7:55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Jesus in heaven – preparing a place for believers to live

John 14:2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

Jesus in heaven – bearing the marks of his death

Revelation 5:6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.

Jesus in heaven – glorified and sovereign

Revelation 1:12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Jesus in heaven – pouring out the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

The Angels' Announcement about Jesus

➤ The parting was painful

Acts 1:10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going,

➤ The promise is powerful

Acts 1:10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Jesus will come in the clouds for the church

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Jesus will come as conqueror with the church

Revelation 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

1. Flood your mind with kingdom education; maintain an expertise in kingdom principles and promises; be fluent in kingdom language and discourse.
2. Be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit; keep your spiritual life full to overflowing; live daily in the leading and energizing of the Holy Spirit.
3. Stay focused on your mission as a witness for Jesus; prize the good news of Jesus above every other message; seize every opportunity to preach.
4. Jesus is your King! Live your life loving him and longing for the day when you will see him face to face when he comes for you.

Acts is a second book

► Luke's first book – addressed to Theophilus

↳ Luke's Gospel was an investigative book

Luke 1:1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

↳ Luke's Gospel was an incomplete book

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

► Luke's further book – also addressed to Theophilus

1. Internal evidence in Acts points to authorship by one of Paul's close travel companions who refers to himself in first person rather than by name (16:10 forward).
2. Luke fits that description and is referred to by Paul in three letters as having been present with him in Rome.

Colossians 4:14 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

Philemon 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. 24 And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

2 Timothy 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

3. External evidence from early church writers affirms the authorship of the gospel and Acts by Luke; that tradition is firmly attested from Irenaeus (180AD) forward.
4. As author of Acts, Luke depended on historical information from others (for the first portion of the book) and his own eye-witness experience (for the second portion).

↳ Luke was an ear-witness

Acts 16:8 Paul and his companions passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

↳ Luke was an eye-witness

Acts 16:10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Acts is a spiritual book

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

► Acts is a history book

1. Acts chronicles the first thirty-two years of the life of the early church (30AD to 62AD), satisfying the most stringent rules for good historiography.
2. Luke was eye-witness to much of the activity reported and had abundant first-hand access to additional eye-witnesses.
3. Luke's record is intentionally chronological, as is attested by the Pauline epistles, and is written with great attention to detail (both dull and dynamic).
4. Luke accurately references government officials, public edicts, geography, legal procedures, nautical terms, environmental events, and citizenry customs.

► Acts is a holy book

1. Acts is divinely inspired and inerrant Scripture, and is therefore intended for use in the formation of doctrine and the communication of principles.
2. Acts teaches us about the priority of prayer, the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, and the urgent mission to take the message of Jesus to the world.

28	Jesus spends three years in public ministry (28-30)	
29		
30	JESUS is crucified, is resurrected, is ascended to heaven, and sends the Holy Spirit (30).....	AC.1
	The Jerusalem Church suffers Jewish persecution, including the stoning of Stephen (30-33).....	AC.3-8
31		
32		
33	Philip the deacon/evangelist ministers in Samaria (33).....	AC.8
	Saul is converted on the Road to Damascus and begins preaching immediately (33).....	AC.9
34		
35	Saul visits Jerusalem for the first time after his conversion (35).....	AC.9:26, GA.1:18
	Peter ministers to Jews and Gentiles (35-46) while Saul ministers in Cilicia and Syria (35-46).....	AC.3-9
36		
37		
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46	Saul and Barnabas minister at the church in Antioch, Syria (46-47).....	AC.11-13
	Saul visits Jerusalem again, with Barnabas, to bring an offering to the Jews during the famine (46).....	AC.11:30,12:25
47	Paul leaves Antioch for his FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY , with Barnabas, to Cyprus and Galatia (47-48).....	AC.13-14
48	Paul returns to Antioch in Syria (48).....	AC.14:26
49	Paul attends the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem to discuss circumcision.....	AC.15:4, GA.2:1
	Paul writes the letter to the GALATIANS (49)	
	Paul leaves Antioch for his SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY , with Silas, to Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaia (49-50)...	AC.15-18
50	Paul writes the letters to the THESSALONIANS (50)	
	Paul spends two years in Corinth (50-52).....	AC.18
51		
52	Paul returns to Antioch, perhaps making a visit to Jerusalem on his way (52).....	AC.18:22
	Paul leaves Antioch for his THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY and stays in Ephesus for three years (52-55).....	AC.19
53		
54		
55	Paul writes 1 CORINTHIANS (55-56)	
	Paul travels through Macedonia, Illyricum, and Achaia (55-57), writes 2 CORINTHIANS from Macedonia.....	AC.20; 2CO.7:5
56		
57	Paul writes the letter to the ROMANS (57) from Corinth during his third visit at the end of his third missionary journey	
	Paul returns to Jerusalem where he is arrested (57).....	AC.21:15-AC.23
	Paul is imprisoned in Caesarea for two years (57-59).....	AC.23-26
58		
59	Paul's voyage to Rome begins (59).....	AC.27
60	Paul arrives at Rome (60).....	AC.28
	Paul spends two years under house arrest in Rome – where the Book of Acts ends (60-62).....	AC.28:30
	Paul writes the letters to COLOSSIANS , PHILEMON , EPHESIANS , and PHILIPPIANS from Rome (60-62)	
61		
62	Paul visits Spain to preach the Gospel (62-65?)	
63		
64	Paul writes 1 TIMOTHY and TITUS from Nicopolis (?) or elsewhere or from Rome prior to his second Roman imprisonment.	
65	Paul imprisoned again in Rome (62-65?)	
	Paul writes 2 TIMOTHY (65?) from Rome while awaiting trial and execution.	
	Paul is executed in Rome under Nero (65)	