



The CHURCH Series

Introduction

Introduction

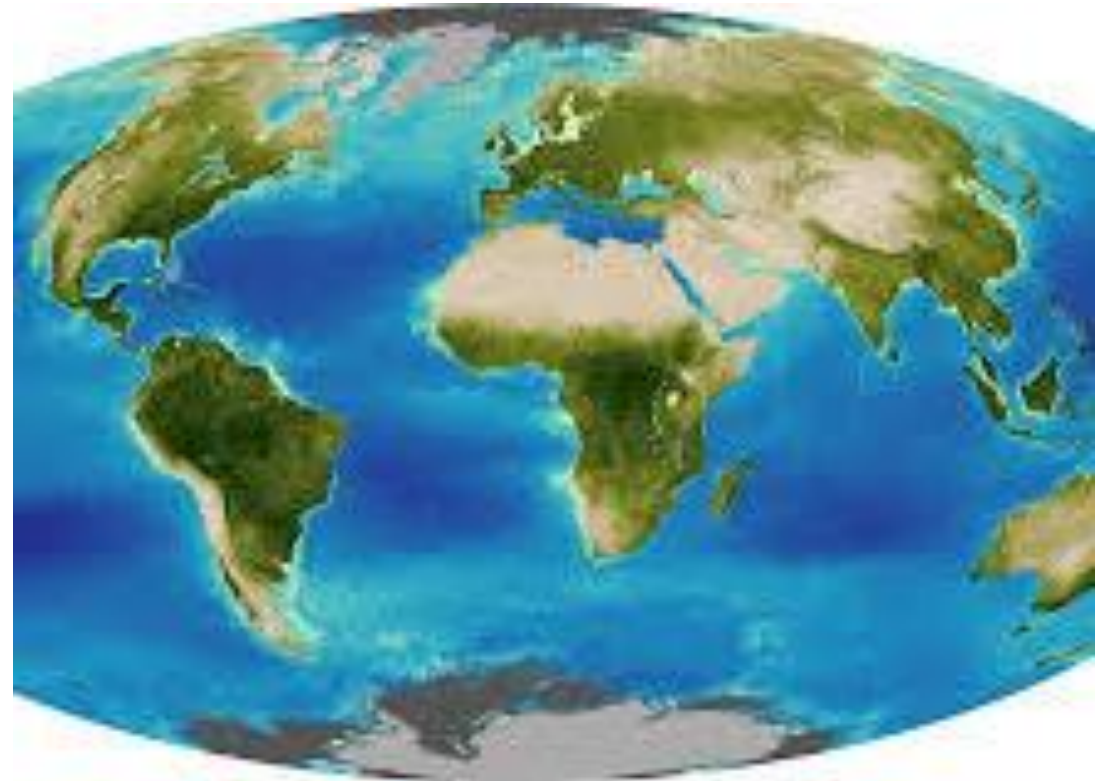
- We are now in 2024 and accelerating fast towards the year 3000!
- Many thought the year 2000 would witness computer glitches and a global digital apocalypse with the Y2K hysteria.
- The context of our world is one of wars, rumours of wars, global warming warnings, weather pattern changes, pestilences and famine.....



THE TIMES

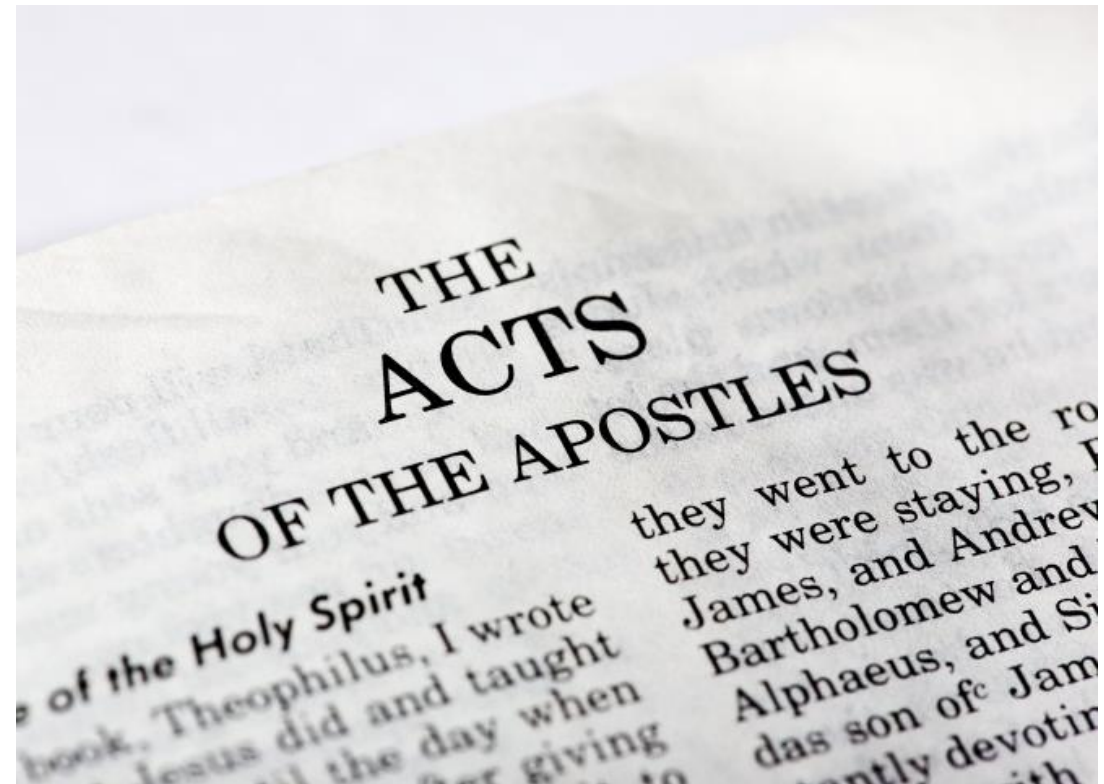
Intro...

- As Christians, we hold the belief that JESUS is the answer for the world today.
- We have just finished close to 8 months on teachings and Bible Studies on CHRIST.
- The spiritual reality is that the CHURCH and JESUS in the world are one and the same.
- This series of Bible studies are going to open our eyes to the truth about the Church.



Book...

- The core text for our current series is The Book of Acts.
- You will be required to read the whole book during this series
- You will be given passages to memorise as part of your study.
- We will have a well-grounded overview of the whole book so that you can fully understand its context and contents.



Date

- Acts, also known as the Acts of the Apostles, is the second volume of a two-part work by Luke.
- He is the physician and a companion of the Apostle Paul.
- The first volume is the Gospel of Luke. The authorship of Luke is supported by early church tradition
- Evidence of Luke's authorship is seen through a common style, language, and theological themes.
- Acts is generally dated to around AD 62-70, because it does not mention the fall of Jerusalem (AD70)



Purpose

- The key element of the purpose of Acts is seen in the first verse:
- *“An account of what Jesus began to say and do”*
- This book chronicles the continuation of what our Lord began in the Gospels and continued through the Holy Spirit in Men.



Purpose...

- The purpose of Acts is also to document the birth and expansion of the early Christian church from Jerusalem to the ends of the Roman Empire.
- It serves as a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles.
- It shows how the teachings and work of Jesus Christ continued through the apostles by the power of the Holy Spirit.



Themes...

- **The Holy Spirit:** He has a central role in empowering the apostles and guiding the early church.
- **Witness and Mission:** The spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).
- **Growth of the Church:** The establishment and growth of Christian communities, despite persecution and opposition.



Themes...

- **Unity:** The inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in the church, emphasizing the universal nature of the Christian message
- **God's Sovereignty:** The unfolding of God's plan through the actions of human agents and historical events.



Theology...

- The Book of Acts highlights the fulfilment of Jesus' promise that His disciples would be His witnesses to the ends of the earth.
- It underscores the work of the Holy Spirit as the driving force behind the church's mission and growth.
- Acts also addresses significant theological questions regarding the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God,
- the nature of the church, and the continuity of God's salvation plan through history.



Leading Figures...

- **Peter:** A leading figure in the early chapters, particularly in Jerusalem.
- **Paul:** The primary figure in the latter half of the book, known for his missionary journeys and theological contributions.
- **Stephen and Philip:** Early deacons who played significant roles in spreading the Gospel
- **James:** The leader of the Jerusalem church who played a crucial role in the Jerusalem Council.



Context...

- The Book of Acts is set within the vast and diverse Roman Empire, which provided a unique context for the spread of Christianity.
- The empire's extensive road networks, relatively peaceful conditions (Pax Romana),
- and common languages (Latin in the West and Greek in the East) facilitated travel and communication,
- aiding the missionary efforts of the apostles.



Context..

- Christianity began as a sect within Judaism, and the early chapters of Acts reflect this close connection.
- The apostles initially preached in synagogues and adhered to Jewish customs.
- However, as the Gospel spread to Gentile regions, the church faced the challenge of
- defining its identity apart from traditional Jewish practices, a central issue addressed in Acts.



Speeches...

- One-third of Acts consists of speeches, which are crucial for understanding the theological messages. Key speeches include:
- **Peter's Sermons:** At Pentecost (Acts 2), in Solomon's Portico (Acts 3), and before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4).
- **Stephen's Defence (Acts 7):** A recounting of Israel's history leading to his martyrdom.
- **Paul's Sermons:** In Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13), Athens (Acts 17), and his defences before Roman authorities (Acts 22-26).



"We" Passages

- Certain sections of Acts (e.g.,
- Acts 16:10-17;
- 20:5-15;
- 21:1-18;
- 27:1-28:16)
- use the first-person plural "we,"
- suggesting that the author, Luke, was a companion of Paul and an eyewitness to these events.



Central...

- **The Role of the Holy Spirit**
- Acts underscores the essential role of the Holy Spirit
- in empowering the apostles, guiding decisions,
- and validating the spread of the Gospel through signs and wonders.



KEY...

- **Universal Salvation**
- Acts emphasizes the inclusivity of the Gospel,
- breaking down barriers between Jews and Gentiles
- and affirming that salvation through Jesus Christ is available to all.



Important...

- **Continuity and Fulfillment**
- Acts portrays the early church as the continuation and fulfillment of God's promises to Israel,
- with Jesus as the Messiah
- and the church as the new people of God.



Conclusion...

- The Book of Acts is a rich and dynamic narrative that provides invaluable insights into the early Christian movement,
- its challenges, growth, and the central role of the Holy Spirit.
- It highlights the transformative power of the Gospel
- and the faithfulness of God in advancing His kingdom through His people.
- Acts continues to inspire and instruct believers in living out their faith and participating in God's mission today



conclusion

HOMework – Memory Verse

- *⁴ And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me;*
- *⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*
- *⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”*
- *⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*
- *⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be ^[c]witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:4-8*

