

## Acts Chapter 1: 1-14

### INTRODUCTION

Evangelism is at the forefront of Christian thinking at the moment. A study of Acts puts things in perspective. It wasn't all simple and straightforward then but there are principles which will help us today.

**Acts is about mission.** It is concerned with people chosen for a mission, what that mission was and how they were led to accomplish it. The people were ordinary, the mission was not. The driving force was none other than the Holy Spirit of God.

**Acts is a historical narrative.** We see how the first Christians struggled, triumphed, prayed, suffered ill-treatment and still went on. Written as a sequel to Luke's Gospel, Acts records the God-directed expansion of the church. In Acts, Luke tells us what Jesus continued to do, so that, within 20 years, the Good News was 'established' from Jerusalem to Rome. How this amazing growth came about is the core of these studies.

**Acts is a real life story.**

**Acts is an unfinished story.** Whether the author did not intend to write more or whether something prevented him we shall never know. But in God's providence it raises questions. Is the mission complete? How can we share the message of Jesus today?

In describing the phenomenal growth of the Jesus movement, Luke wanted to show where it had sprung from, what it was doing for people and how it was God's plan for the completion of the salvation story begun in ancient Israel. Reflecting on the past we gain insight into the present and a new vision for the future. We can see how we would like things to be and begin to move that way.

**Read Acts 1: 1-14**

## Questions for discussions

- **If you had been one of the disciples with Jesus on the day of his ascension, how would you have felt? Tick two or three things from the list below which indicate your feelings or add your own response.**

a) Thrilled to be with the others again listening to the risen Jesus?

b) Worried about what would happen next?

c) Wondering why Jesus had to leave you?

d) Sad that you would not see Jesus again?

e) Challenged about the mission entrusted to you?

1) Hoping Jesus would come back soon?

g) Not sure whether it was all really happening?

h) \_\_\_\_\_

- **If you were wanting to start a new movement, what would you look for? Underline these things in the list below. Then put a circle around those items or conditions with which the apostles started. (You may like to add to the list.)**

• dynamic leadership • confidence • an absent leader • devoted followers

• fearfulness • campaign manager • good punchline • ungifted manpower

• lack of power • trained team • good advertising • crowd-pulling events

• bad publicity • attractive image • clash with authority

• \_\_\_\_\_

**At that time, what was the apostles' greatest asset?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What was their biggest problem?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What were they told to do about it?**

\_\_\_\_\_

- **What were the disciples expecting? (Acts 1:6) Does this surprise you? What do you think they should have been expecting? Why?**
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- **Luke calls the disciples 'apostles' (v.2) or envoys, people sent out with a special message and, like ambassadors, carrying the authority of the sender. What gave these first apostles their unique apostleship? Tick which you think and add your own ideas:**

a) They had known Jesus personally.

b) They had seen, heard, and in some cases touched, the risen Jesus.

c) They had been personally chosen and called by Jesus.

d) They were commanded by Jesus to preach the gospel.

e) \_\_\_\_\_

- **What else did the apostles need in order to fulfil their mission?**
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- **Which of the above factors could you say also apply to you?**
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- **What did Jesus mean when he said to his disciples, "Go and be my witnesses"? Do we all have to become preachers or missionaries? (Read Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 24:47, Acts 1:8 and see also Ephesians 6:15, 1 Peter 3:15.)**
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- How much of Acts 1:8 applies to us? As a group, discuss your hopes.

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- If you had been there, how would you have acted when Jesus was taken away into heaven? What would have been your reaction to the angel's message?

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- What do you know about the backgrounds of those who gathered to pray in the Upper Room? (You might like to split into smaller groups to look at the following passages and use them to compile lists of words which would describe those first disciples: Mark 1:14-20, 2:13-17, 3:13-19; Luke 8:1-3; John 1:35-51.) What encouragement do you get from the diversity of people Jesus chose?

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- Jesus' mother and brothers were in the group, despite earlier misunderstanding and opposition to his ministry (see Mark 3:21 & 31-35 and John 7:3-5).  
How does that encourage you as you seek to witness to your family and friends?

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