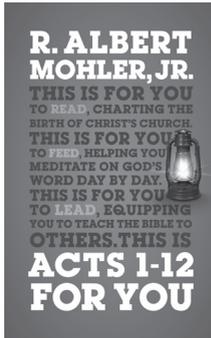




The church is born

ACTS 1-12

by R. Albert Mohler, Jr.



Acts 1-12 For You

If you are reading *Acts 1-12 For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Acts 1-12 For You*:

Study One → Ch 1	Study Five → Ch 7
Study Two → Ch 3-5	Study Six → Ch 8
Study Three → Ch 5	Study Seven → Ch 9-10
Study Four → Ch 6	Study Eight → Ch 11

Find out more about *Acts 1-12 For You* at:
www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

The church is born

The Good Book Guide to Acts 1-12

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CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Why study Acts 1–12?	5
1. Promises	7
Acts 1 v 1-26	
2. The Spirit-Fueled Church	13
Acts 2 v 1 – 4 v 4	
3. Church Challenges	19
Acts 4 v 5 – 5 v 42	
4. I See the Heavens Opened	25
Acts 6 v 1 – 7 v 60	
5. Beyond Jerusalem	31
Acts 8 v 1-40	
6. The Most Unlikely Conversion	37
Acts 9 v 1-43	
7. To the Gentiles	43
Acts 10 v 1 – 11 v 30	
8. The Apostle, the Angel, and the King	49
Acts 12 v 1-25	
Leader’s Guide	54

Introduction: Good Book Guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, moms and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That's why we've designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let's take a look at what is included:

- ☞ **Talkabout:** Most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here's the question that will do that. It's designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ↓ **Investigate:** The Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. The **Leader's Guide** contains **guidance for questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- 🗒️ **Explore more (optional):** These questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw; or occasionally look at a part of the passage that's not dealt with in detail in the main study.
- ➔ **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you'll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. 🗒️ **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ↑ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God's word—in line with his concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader's Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God's word.

Why study Acts 1–12?

The story of Jesus does not end with the resurrection of Jesus, or even with the ascension of Jesus.

This is why Luke decided (or, from the heavenly rather than human perspective, why Luke was inspired by God's Spirit) to write a second volume to follow his Gospel, to chronicle the events of the early church—what we call the book of Acts.

We might also call it “The Book of What Jesus Did Next.” In Acts 1 v 1, Luke states that his first book was about all that Jesus “began to do and teach.” The implication is that Acts is the record of what Jesus continued to do and to teach, by his Spirit, in his church.

The first twelve chapters of Acts include some of the most famous portions of Scripture: the ascension of Jesus; the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost; the first Christian martyrdom; the conversion of the church's arch-persecutor, Saul; and the coming of the gospel to the Gentiles. Behind each event the sovereign hand of God is at work, giving birth to his church, shaping his church, using his church, and growing his church.

We meet so many individuals in these chapters, but God is always the primary actor. He uses the most unlikely of people to spread the gospel, like the impetuous Peter or even the murderous Saul. But it is his work, through people. Acts reminds us that God is sovereign in our life and in his world, even when we don't understand what he is doing. We can be confident that the Lord is building his church and pursuing the good of his people—and we can feel privileged that he calls us to join him in this work.

These eight studies will chart the birth of the church—a church that still stands, that we are members of by faith, and that has the same mission as the one started in Acts: a task unfinished, of being Christ's witnesses “to the end of the earth” (Acts 1 v 8).

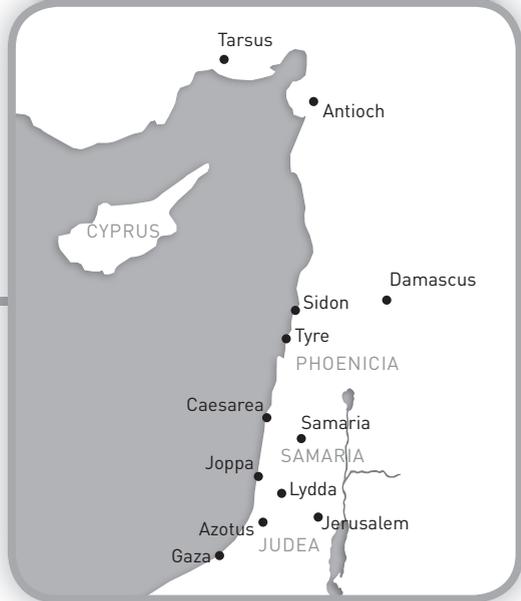


BIBLE TIMELINE

Where does the book of Acts fit into the whole story of God's word?

ACTS c. AD 30-44

- c.30 — Jesus ascends; Pentecost
- c.35 — Paul converted
- c.44 — Peter imprisoned; Herod Agrippa dies



1

Acts 1 v 1-26

PROMISES



talkabout

1. What is the hardest thing you have ever been asked to do?

- Did you back out or did you take it on? If the latter, were you successful, and why?



investigate



Read Acts 1 v 1-11

2. How does Luke describe what he recounted in “the first book”—the Gospel of Luke” (v 1-2)?

3. What did Jesus do after he had risen (v 3)?

DICTIONARY

Was taken up (v 2): ascended into heaven.

Apostles (v 2): the men chosen by Jesus to be witnesses to his resurrection and to teach with his authority.

John (v 5): John the Baptist (see Luke 3 v 1-17).

Restore the kingdom (v 6): bring about all God's Old Testament promises.

Jerusalem, Judea and

Samaria (v 8): see map on opposite page.

4. What did Jesus tell his apostles:

- they must do (v 4-5)?

- they must be (v 8)?

5. Imagine you were one of those first followers, in a city that killed your King and hates your message, hearing verse 8. How would you have felt?

6. After Jesus ascended back to heaven, what did the angels (the “two men ... in white robes”) most want his followers to know (v 10-11)?



explore more

optional

Jesus' ascension into heaven is essential to the Christian faith.

What do these passages teach us about the significance of the ascension? Philippians 2 v 6-11; Ephesians 1 v 20-23; Hebrews 4 v 14-16; 7 v 23-25



apply

7. What difference should it make to us to remember that “this Jesus ... will come in the same way as [the apostles] saw him go” (v 11)?

8. What part do we have to play in the “Great Commission” of verse 8?

- What happens if we forget about the role of the Holy Spirit in this? What difference does it make if we know we have received his power?

getting personal

Do you tend to seek to obey Christ without relying on the Spirit’s power, but rather on your own? Or do you tend to shrink back from witnessing about Christ because you feel powerless to do so?

How does verse 8 both encourage and challenge you? How do you need to change your attitude or your actions?



📌 investigate

▶ Read Acts 1 v 12-26

9. What did these Christians do while they waited for the Spirit (v 12-14)?

DICTIONARY

Peter and John...

(v 13): this verse names all the original disciples, except Judas the betrayer.

With one accord (v 14): in unity with each other.

Lots (v 26): dice used to make decisions.

10. What do verses 15-26 teach us about:

- what happened to Judas after he betrayed Jesus?

- the Old Testament Scriptures?

- the qualifications for being an apostle?



getting personal

Judas' life and death is a sobering reminder to all of us of the need to genuinely examine ourselves to see if we are truly trusting in Christ. None of us are above or beyond abandoning Christ. We must always be on guard against chasing after fleeting riches. Instead, we must walk each day in faith and repentance.

What things in your life most tempt you to betray Christ for the things of this world? How is knowing Christ better than those things?

What will obedience, and/or repentance, look like for you?

→ apply

11. How do these verses encourage us to rely on the Old Testament Scripture and the apostles' teaching (that is, the New Testament)?

- What would true reliance on their authority look like in our day-to-day-lives?

12. How will you encourage each other to take on the hard but Spirit-enabled challenge of taking the gospel message "to the end of the earth"? What will that mean for each of you this week?

↑ pray

Thank God:

- that Jesus is ascended and reigning.
- for the charge he gave to, and gives to, his church, to share the gospel throughout the earth.
- for the Spirit-given power to fulfill that commission.

Ask God:

- to show you your part in that commission, both as a church and as individuals.
- to help you rely on his Spirit as you seek to share Christ.
- to help you rely on the authority of the apostles in your daily lives (speak to God about any ways you need his help specifically to do this).

