



# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

How God Turned a Band of Nobodies into a Movement for Everybody

*How did a handful of ordinary people become ten thousand followers of Jesus in the year following his public execution? How did his movement gain so much momentum, especially as ten of the eleven charter members were crucified, burned, or stoned to death? How did ten thousand Christians become one million by the second century, and 3.3 billion today?*

*Written in the middle of the first century, The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of how Christianity spread like wildfire across the Roman Empire and beyond. For 25 weeks we will journey through Acts in pursuit of the truth behind history's most consequential movement.*

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## Group Discussion Guide: Week 1

### Acts 1:1-8

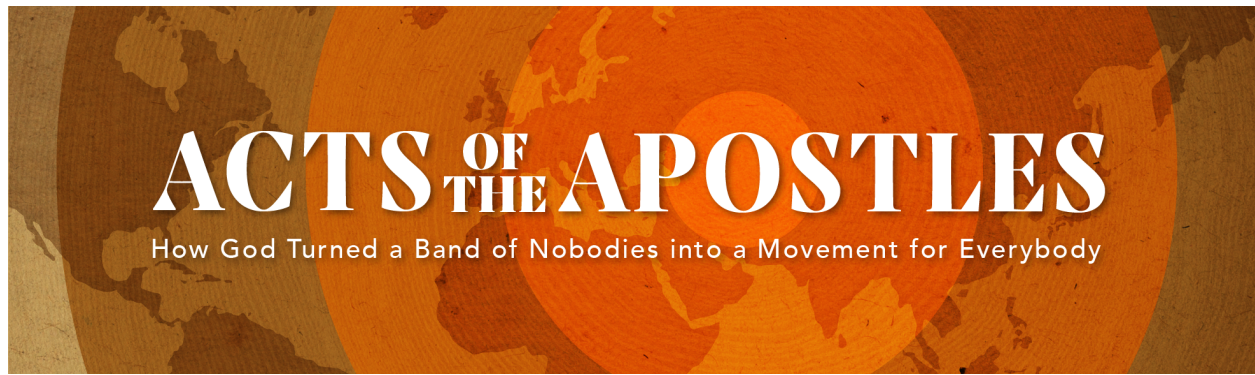
Who is Luke, and how does his upbringing, career, and relationships with the apostles influence his work in Luke and Acts of the Apostles?

- Optional Read Luke 1:1-4 and Colossians 4:18
- Luke was the only Gentile (non-Jewish) author of Scripture
- Luke wrote two Bible books - the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, which together make up about 28% of the New Testament
- Luke was a close friend and associate of the Apostle Paul, serving for several years alongside the Apostle Paul and stuck with him through thick and thin - through all the dangerous journeys, the many arrests, the trials, and even the imprisonments
- Luke was a physician, which suggests that he was a man who valued observation, research, and factual evidence. Paul introduced Luke as a doctor in his letter to the Colossians...
- Luke was a remarkable historian who went to great lengths to get the story straight:

After the ascension, Jesus spent 40 days with his disciples teaching and pouring into them. Jesus mentored his disciples. Who has mentored, or poured into you?

#### Personal Answer

In Acts 1 we see three concepts Jesus focused on before he ascended into heaven.



## **1. Jesus taught about The Kingdom of God.**

The Kingdom of God is [Present](#) (Mark 1:15)

[The Kingdom is at hand, it's not something that will come in the future, or at the end, it is here and now.](#)

The Kingdom of God is our [Prayer](#) (Matthew 6:10)

[When Jesus taught his disciples to Pray it was Kingdom centered. When we pray our prayers should focus not only on our needs, but the Kingdom as a whole. Prayer can be our entry into viewing the world through God's eyes.](#)

The Kingdom of God is our [Priority](#) (Matthew 6:33)

[God and His Kingdom, not any earthly nation or ruler, should be our priority. If we make Jesus and His mission the priority, then the rest will fall into place.](#)

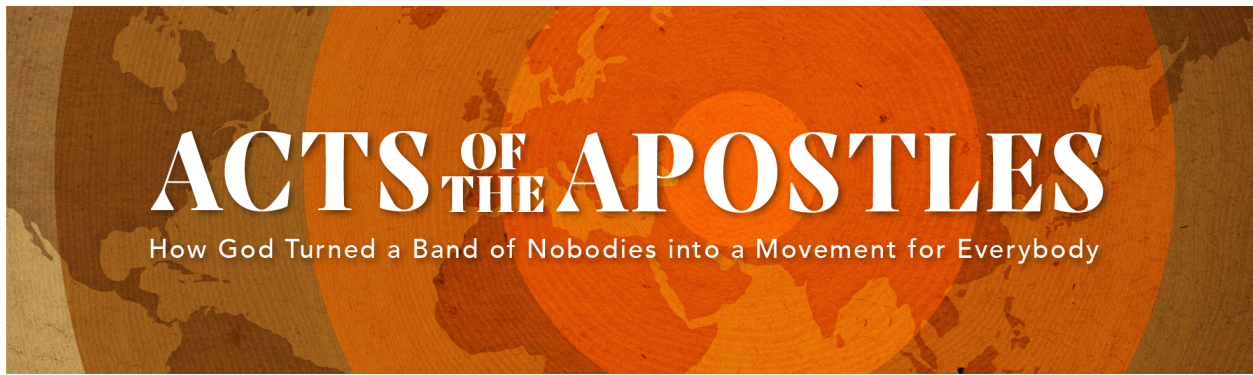
Why were the disciples confused about the Kingdom Jesus was inaugurating?

[The disciples thought Jesus would usher in a physical kingdom, the kind they are used to. They hoped Jesus would take back Jerusalem, and sit on a physical throne like other earthly rulers. Jesus' Kingdom is different.](#)

## **2. Jesus taught them to wait for the Holy Spirit**

Jesus told his disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit before they got to work spreading the good news. Why do you think Jesus gave this command to wait when there was so much to be done?

[Waiting is difficult. We are all doers and we like getting stuff done, but when it comes to Christ's mission for the Church we cannot do it on our own. If we try to do it with our own power that eventually leads to burnout and disappointment](#)



Why was and is the Holy Spirit essential in the expansion of Jesus' Church?

- The Holy Spirit was foretold by Old Testament prophets like Isaiah (ch32), Ezekiel (36), and Joel (2), among others.
- Whereas the baptism of water brought repentance and forgiveness, the Spirit's baptism will bring the POWER OF GOD.
- We need the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the Power that comes with it. (1 Timothy 1:6-11)

### **3. Jesus taught them that they will be his witnesses “to the ends of the earth.”**

From the first pages of the Bible there has always been an emphasis on God reaching the entire world. Where do we see this in the Old and New Testament?

- Genesis 12:1-3
- Genesis 17:3-8
- 1 Kings 8:56-61
- Isaiah 56:7
- 1 Timothy 2:3-4

How can we join the disciples in becoming witnesses in Houston, Texas, and beyond?

Personal

**We are citizens of God's Kingdom, empowered by God's Spirit, to do God's work in the world.**

Spend a good amount of time discussing these last 3 questions with your group. This is how Eric's sermon will end and should be great discussion topics.

Whose Kingdom do you call home? - A nation, company, family?

Whose power moves you? What energy, purpose, or fuel drives you?

Whose work are you doing? Are you participating in Kingdom work or selfish?