

CPC Adult Sunday Studies
 Fall 2026
 Deeper into Acts, #1

Intro & Overall Context of Acts 1-12

Deeper into Acts Class: Where We're Headed

1. Nov. 1 - Acts 1-12 - Overall Context of 1-12
2. Nov. 8 - Acts 13-28 - Overall Context of 13-28
3. Nov. 15 - Greco-Roman World and Government Structure
4. Nov. 22 - Missions
5. Dec. 6 - Jew and Gentile Relations
6. Dec. 13 - Suffering

Why Overviews are Important

- “Context, context, context” - if we don't understand the overall redemptive-historical context of the text we're reading, we'll misread it.
- Seeing the Forest for the Trees - God's plan is fulfilled across generations!
- Reading the Bible in different ways, we should find time for all of these:
 - Slowly: verse by verse, prayerfully and meditatively
 - Larger sections: to get a perspective of the whole story
 - Redemptive-historically and theologically: while holding that every word is inspired and useful for teaching, we also believe that God revealed himself in stages (or epochs of redemptive history) that impact our understanding of each text

Bible Project video on Acts 1-12

Major Themes [from the ESV Study Bible]

1. The witness is worldwide —Judea, Samaria, the “end of the earth.”	1:8
2. The witness is inclusive of all kinds of people : Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, the physically handicapped, pagan mountain people, a prominent merchant woman, a jailer and his family, Greek philosophers, governors, and kings.	chs. 2–5; 8:4–40; 10:1–11:18; 14:8–18; 16:11–15, 25–34; 17:22–31; 24:24–27; 26:1–29

3. The witness is guided by the providence of God , who preserves his witnesses for their testimony through all sorts of threats: murderous plots, angry mobs, storms at sea, and constant trials before the authorities, to name only a few.	4:5–22; 18:12–16; 19:23–41; 23:12–22; 24:1–23; 27:21–26
4. On the other hand, faithful witnesses must be prepared to suffer , even to die for their testimony to Christ.	5:41–42; 7:54–60
5. The power behind the witness is the Holy Spirit . The Spirit is granted to all believers, both male and female, whom he empowers for witness. The Spirit guides witnesses in moments of special inspiration and is behind every advance in the Christian mission.	1:8; 2:1–13, 18, 38; 4:8; 7:55; 8:17; 10:44; 13:2–12; 19:6, 21
6. In the early days, the witness was often accompanied by “ signs and wonders ,” the “wonders” being the miracles worked by the apostles, which served as “signs” pointing to the truth of the gospel. Miracles usually opened a door for witness.	e.g., ch. 3
7. Effective witness demands the unity of the church.	2:42–47; 4:32–37; 5:12–14
8. A key component of the witness is the resurrection of Jesus. For the Jews the resurrection demonstrated that Jesus was the promised Messiah. For the Gentiles it pointed to his role as judge and established their need to repent.	1:22; 2:22–36; 17:30–31
9. Acceptance of the message borne by the witnesses depends both on human response and on the divine sovereignty behind the response.	e.g., 2:47; 11:18; 13:48

<p>10. The OT Scriptures point to the death and resurrection of Christ, and the prophecies that point to Christ and to his followers must be fulfilled (1:16).</p>	<p>(The numerous OT citations in the sermons of Acts illustrate this point.)</p>
<p>11. The witness to the gospel calls for a response. Most speeches in Acts end with some sort of invitation. Representative of this is Paul's exchange with Agrippa II. The response called for is repentance of one's sins in the name of Christ, which brings forgiveness of sins.</p>	<p>26:27–29, e.g., 2:38</p>
<p>12. Witnesses must always maintain integrity before the world. In Acts this is illustrated by the many remarks from the authorities about the Christians giving no evidence of any wrongdoing.</p>	<p>18:12–15; 23:29; 25:18; 26:31–32</p>
<p>13. Christian witnesses continue the ministry that Christ "began" (1:1). This is illustrated throughout Acts with the many implicit parallels between the experiences of the apostles and those of Christ: his miracles, the forebodings of his journey to Jerusalem, the cry of the angry Jewish mob for his death, and his trial before the governor and the king.</p>	<p>20:36–21:16 (cf. Luke 9:22; 13:31–34; 18:31–34); 21:36; 22:21 (cf. Luke 23:18); 24:1–26:32 (cf. Luke 23:1–25)</p>
<p>14. Faithful witness brings great results. Acts is all about the victory of the Christian gospel. The witness brings results among both Jews and Gentiles. The book ends on this note, with Paul bearing his faithful witness to "all" who came to him in Rome.</p>	<p>4:4; 11:20–21; 13:48–49; 17:4; 18:6–11; 21:20; 28:30–31</p>

Outline of Acts 1-12 [from the ESV Study Bible]

1. Preparation for Witness (1:1–2:13)

1. Jesus prepares the disciples (1:1–5)
2. Jesus ascends (1:6–11)
3. Matthias replaces Judas (1:12–26)
4. The Spirit descends at Pentecost (2:1–13)

2. The Witness in Jerusalem (2:14–5:42)

1. Peter preaches at Pentecost (2:14–41)
2. The Christian community shares a life in common (2:42–47)
3. Peter heals a lame man (3:1–10)
4. Peter preaches in the temple square (3:11–26)
5. Peter and John witness before the Jewish council (4:1–22)
6. The Christian community prays for boldness in witness (4:23–31)
7. The community shares together (4:32–5:16)
8. The apostles appear before the council (5:17–42)

3. The Witness beyond Jerusalem (6:1–12:25)

1. Seven chosen to serve the Hellenist widows (6:1–7)
2. Stephen bears the ultimate witness (6:8–8:3)
 1. The arrest of Stephen (6:8–15)
 2. Stephen's address before the Sanhedrin (7:1–53)
 3. The martyrdom of Stephen (7:54–8:3)
3. Philip witnesses beyond Jerusalem (8:4–40)
 1. Witness to the Samaritans (8:4–25)
 2. Witness to an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40)
4. The conversion of Saul (9:1–31)
 1. Saul's encounter with Christ (9:1–9)
 2. Saul's encounter with Ananias (9:10–19a)
 3. Saul's witness in Damascus and Jerusalem (9:19b–31)
5. Peter preaches in the coastal towns (9:32–11:18)
 1. Healing of Aeneas and Dorcas (9:32–43)
 2. Conversion of Cornelius (10:1–48)
 3. Peter's testimony in Jerusalem (11:1–18)
6. The Antioch church witnesses to Gentiles (11:19–26)
7. The offering for Jerusalem (11:27–30)
8. The Jerusalem church is persecuted (12:1–25)
 1. The death of James (12:1–5)
 2. Peter's deliverance from prison (12:6–19)
 3. The death of Herod Agrippa I (12:20–25)