

Dundonald Youth: Acts

Week 1: You Will Be My Witnesses!

Open in prayer: Ask God to be with you, speaking to you through his word, helping you to trust Jesus Christ.

DO THIS STUDY FIRST - then listen to Pete TG talk

Today we begin a new series in the book of Acts! It's the next book after the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John... Acts!

Read Acts 1:1-2.

What did Jesus do before he was taken up to heaven?

- *Immediately* before he was taken up to heaven, Jesus gave instructions to his apostles - **read Luke 24:45-49** to flashback to this. What do you notice? What strikes you?
- *More generally*, Luke is referring to *everything* that Jesus **did** and **taught** during his life and ministry, including his death and resurrection! Remember - this is Volume II of Luke's writing - and just like you'd watch Series 1 of a TV show before watching Series 2... let's flip back to the beginning of Volume I to remember what and why Luke is writing all this...

Read Luke 1:1-4.

How and why did Luke write his gospel?

verse 1-2 - Luke wasn't the first/only person to write about Jesus! Many eye-witnesses of Jesus' life and ministry told people what they saw and heard. This book is going to be about the things that have been 'fulfilled among us' because everything God promised in the Old Testament is fulfilled by Jesus.

verse 3 - Luke, a doctor by profession, has 'carefully investigated' everything 'from the beginning' so he decides to write an 'orderly account' of who Jesus was and what he did, for his friend / acquaintance 'Theophilus'. We don't know much about this man, but 'Theophilus' simply means 'friend of God' so clearly Luke didn't want Theophilus to be the only person that read this book... God inspired Luke, and had it perfectly recorded so that people like us could read it too!

verse 4 - this book is written SO THAT the 'friend of God' may know with certainty the things they've been taught. Luke will need two volumes to write everything he wants to say (Luke & Acts) and this term we're reading on to find out about Jesus' continuing ministry after his return to heaven!

Read Acts 1:3-5

What do the apostles need to wait for? Where do they need to be? Wait for the gift that the Father promised: the Holy Spirit! Jesus says they will be 'baptised' with the Holy Spirit and they need to stay in Jerusalem until this happens - because as we'll discover as we read on, the Holy Spirit will empower the apostles to do the work Jesus has given them!

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Read Acts 1:6-7

What are they looking forward to happening? When will it happen? Jesus has been speaking to them about the kingdom of God (v3) and they ask if Jesus is going to 'restore the kingdom to Israel' (v6). In bible terms the kingdom of Israel = the kingdom of God, and in the Old Testament this was at it's peak when King David and then King Solomon were alive, and God's people lived in God's land under God's rule and blessing. One day God's Kingdom will return - fully! - and all people everywhere will recognise the King and there will be peace and joy for God's people... but Jesus says the Father has set this date and it's not for them (or us!) to know when it will happen...

Read Acts 1:8

Until God's Kingdom fully comes, what mission does Jesus give his disciples? To be my witnesses! In Jerusalem... in all Judea, and Samaria... and to the ends of the earth! They will be empowered by the Holy Spirit, to tell everyone, everywhere, about Jesus' life and death and resurrection and that people must repent to be forgiven for their sins! They are eyewitnesses that can testify who Jesus is (!) and what he has done (!) and what it means to follow him and be reconciled to God!

Read Acts 1:9-11

So Jesus has given his followers a mission: What will signify the beginning & the end of this mission? (imagine a running race: what is the starting pistol? What is the finish line?) Well the beginning is the arrival of the Holy Spirit, which will empower them for the mission, and the finish line is when Jesus returns. v11 says that Jesus will physically come back... and the bible tells us King Jesus will judge the living and the dead, and reign his Kingdom in the New Creation. Until then, his followers must witness to the world what they've seen and experienced and proclaim the good news of the gospel!

NOW LISTEN TO THE TALK - Youth Bible Series: Acts 1

- A) Re-read Acts 1:8. In what ways is our mission and role the same as the Apostles that Jesus was speaking to, and in what ways is it different?
 At it's most basic level our mission and role is the same: they bore witness to what they had seen / experienced and we bear witness to have we have seen and experienced. Clearly what we have seen and experienced has some similarities and differences! As Jesus' followers we too have the Holy Spirit with us, and the task of proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth remains!
- B) What has encouraged you / struck you from today's passage? Use that to fuel your prayers now!

Pray: Thank God for his word, and pray that we would grow a strong & confident faith in Jesus.

Listen/Sing: Witness - Josh Yeoh (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFNOtc7POwg>)

Meditate: Acts 1:8