

# House Group Studies

**January to March 2010**

## **Acts chapters 1 to 4**

19th January	Acts 1	This is not the end
2nd February	Acts 2:1-41	Spirit Empowered Witnesses
16th February	Acts 2:42-47	The marks of Christ's people
2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Acts 3	What Jesus offers to a broken world
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Acts 4	Unstoppable



## **Acts chapters 1-4**

### **Background to Acts**

Acts was written by Luke and is the sequel to Luke's gospel. We know from the opening verses of Luke's gospel that he was writing so that we could "know the certainty of the things we have been taught".

The book of Acts enables us to know for certain the message of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus. It was written to give us confidence; to open our eyes to the glory of Jesus; and to show us how we fit into the continuing work of Jesus in this world.

As with all Bible study, we need to ask the following questions.

- 1. What does the text say?**
- 2. What does it teach us about the Lord Jesus Christ?**
- 3. What do we learn about ourselves and our world?**
- 4. How should we be praying and living as a result of what we learn?**

House Groups work best and are of the most benefit when those attending have prayerfully and carefully read the passage, and then thought about it before meeting with the rest of the group. Please try and so this for your own benefit and for the benefit of the rest of the group.

**Read Luke 1:1-4**

What does Luke want us to know?

**Read Acts 1:1-11**

If Luke's gospel is the beginning of Jesus' work, what is Acts? v1-4

How different is Jesus to the founders of other religions?

From verses 1-8, what are we told about the ways that Jesus would continue His work?

How did Jesus show to His followers that He really was alive?

Can we be as convinced about these things as the apostles were?

Why does it matter how sure we are about the facts of Jesus?

From your knowledge of the rest of Acts, how was verse 8 fulfilled?

If Acts is about Jesus continuing His work, why is v9-11 seemingly shocking?

What did the angels want the first disciples (and us) to know, v11?

## **Read Acts 1:12-26**

If we didn't know the rest of the book of Acts, what might we expect the first believers to feel and do once Jesus had ascended?

What do we find the early church doing?

- v12
- v14
- v15-20
- v21-26

What are the qualifications for an apostle?  
Why is that so important?

### **Applying the text:**

What does this chapter teach us about:

Jesus?

The apostles?

Ourselves?

The world?

How does Acts 1 encourage us & spur us to action?

How should we now pray?

- Prayers of praise
- Prayers of thanks
- Prayers for the Lord's help

**Peter' Transformation – Read Luke 22:60-62.**

Before the resurrection of Jesus how would you describe Peter?

But now **read Acts 2v14 & 36.**

How would you describe Peter now?

**Read Acts 2:1-13**

Why has there been this remarkable change?

How do Acts 2:5-12 begin to fulfil chapter 1:8?

**Peter's Message – Read the first Christian sermon in Acts 2:22-36**

List everything Peter says about Jesus.

- His earthly ministry
- His death
- His resurrection
- His ascension (ruling now)

v36 What is Peter's summary of all this?

## **The response – Read Acts 2:37-41**

How do we know the people *really* understood the message?

Why is that the appropriate response to the message of Jesus?

What 2 things does Peter say they must they do? Why?

What 2 things are they promised?

Why are these promises so important?

The promise of the Holy Spirit is for all of God's people – (see the prophecy from Joel in **Acts 2v17-18**). Why is that so important?

How does this passage challenge political correctness?

Why would so many people find v36 unacceptable?

In what ways might we be tempted to present a distorted Jesus to the world? What do we need if we are going to be bold witnesses?

### **Applying the text:**

What does this chapter teach us about:

Jesus?

The apostles?

Ourselves?

The world?

How does Acts 2:1-41 encourage us & spur us to action?

How should we now pray?

- Prayers of praise
- Prayers of thanks
- Prayers for the Lord's help

Look back at **Acts 2:37-41**.

What distinguishes those who have truly understood and responded to the message of Jesus?

**Read Acts 2:41-47**

What are we told about those who accepted the message that Jesus is Lord and Christ?

v41

v42

v43

v44-45

v46

v47

Consider each of the points you have written down and try and think about what they teach us about being a Christian.

Try and be practical about what they will look like in practice.

v41 – How would we explain the importance of baptism?

v42 – What will mean to be 'devoted' for each of these areas?

v42 – Why is it important to 'break bread' together?

Using all of v42-47 – What would they have prayed about?

How can we make the most of the opportunities to pray together?

How can we pray more about all these things?

v47 – How can we praise God more?

v46-47 – They met together, daily they witnessed – but it was the Lord Jesus who added to their number those who were being saved.

What's the lesson here for our witness?

### **Applying the text:**

What does this chapter teach us about:

Jesus?

The apostles?

Ourselves?

The world?

How does Acts 2:1-41 encourage us & spur us to action?

How should we now pray?

- Prayers of praise
- Prayers of thanks
- Prayers for the Lord's help

In what ways is our world “broken”?

How does the world try to mend that?

**Read Acts 3:1-10**

Look at the details we are given in verses 1-3. How do they highlight the brokenness of the man?

How does Peter emphasise that the message of Jesus is different to anything else the world can offer?

What is the first thing the man does when he is healed?  
Why is that so great?

**Read Acts 3:11-26**

In v12 what is so significant about Peter’s response to the crowd?

In v13-15, Peter hardly talks about the miracle. What does he speak about? Why?

What does Peter tell the crowd about Jesus?

Look at Isaiah 35:6. What should the people have realised from this miracle?

How does that expose the wickedness of how they treated Jesus?

What is the connection between the resurrection and the healing?

How do verses 17-20 show the incredible character of God?

Why is the message of Jesus so wonderful for our broken world?

v21 How does the miracle give us a foretaste of what God will finally do to this world?

What does Peter tell the people they should do (v19; 22-23)? Why?

Why does Peter describe rejecting Jesus as a 'wicked' thing?

What does this passage teach us about what we as Christians have to offer this world?

### **Applying the text:**

What does this chapter teach us about:

Jesus?

The apostles?

Ourselves?

The world?

How does Acts 3 encourage us & spur us to action?

How should we now pray?

- Prayers of praise
- Prayers of thanks
- Prayers for the Lord's help

Have we come across those say, “if only I saw a miracle, then I would believe”?

Is this true?

**Read Acts 4:1-22**

What did Peter & John tell the people about Jesus (v2)?

Why did this so disturb the Saducees?

How did the Saducees display an attitude of, “I’ve made my mind up, and won’t be changed”?

If the Sanhedrin believed the evidence, what would they have to admit?

In this passage what does the resurrection demonstrate? v11-12

What did the Sanhedrin ask Peter and John to do?

Why do Peter and John refuse to do this?

What is our world happy for Christians to do and say?

What does the world not want Christians to do and say?

Why doesn’t the world want to hear v12?

Why must the world hear v12?

If we *only* declare “Salvation is found in Jesus” – how is our message deficient?

How does this passage reflect the world’s attitude to the risen Jesus?

### **Read Acts 4:23-31**

What does the prayer in Acts 4:24-30 show that the early church understood about Jesus?

- v24 – “Sovereign Lord” i.e. God is ...
- v24 – “You made ...” i.e. God is ...
- v25 – “You spoke ...” i.e. God is ...
- v28 – “You decided ... ” i.e. God is ...

What did they pray about for themselves (v29)?

How does v31 fit with the continuing work of Jesus?

### **Applying the text:**

What does this chapter teach us about:

Jesus?

The apostles?

Ourselves?

The world?

How does Acts 4 encourage us & spur us to action?

How should we now pray?

- Prayers of praise
- Prayers of thanks
- Prayers for the Lord’s help