

## St. Jerome Adult Bible Study

### The Acts of the Apostles

Chapters 1 – 6

Acts (or Acts of the Apostles or, rarely, The Gospel According to Luke Book II) was probably written by Luke or by a scribe under his direct instruction. The author is almost certainly the same one who wrote the Gospel. Luke was likely not a direct witness to the events described in the Gospel and only a few of the events in Acts but one takes him at his word when he claims to have researched the subjects thoroughly (Luke 1:1-4). Luke was not a Jew and was likely a Greek born in Antioch (in what is now Turkey). His Greek was excellent and it appears that he used the Greek (Septuagint) translation of the Old Testament rather than the Hebrew.

Luke was writing to non-Jewish Greek-speaking seekers, although some scholars believe Theophilus (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1) to have been a High Priest. The book was likely written some 20 years after the events described and readers can find discrepancies and inconsistencies. One must keep in mind, however, that Luke was not writing as an historian but, rather, as a sort of pastor whose intent was not so much to chronicle the early days of the Church as to explain how the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit, working through the Apostles, made it possible.

Luke was probably a companion of Paul and was a physician:

#### **Colossians 4:14 (NRSVA)**

<sup>14</sup>Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

#### **2 Timothy 4:11 (NRSVA)**

<sup>11</sup>Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry.

#### **Philemon 1:23 (NRSVA)**

<sup>23</sup>Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, <sup>24</sup>and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

### Study Questions

1. How does this book pick up where Luke's Gospel left off?
2. Peter takes a leadership role in 1:15. Given his denial of Jesus before, how might the disciples have felt about this? Who was present at this meeting?
3. Why did God wait until Pentecost (A Jewish Harvest festival) to send down the Holy Spirit?
4. Peter addresses a crowd (2:14ff). What would they have known about Jesus' crucifixion and the empty tomb? What are the implications now about His resurrection?
5. See 2:43 and 3:6. How did the Apostles "do" miracles?
6. How would you feel with Peter accusing you as in 3:15? Does he give you reason for hope?
7. What intimidated the Sandhedrin into releasing Peter and John?
8. Does the story of Ananias and Sapphira resonate with more recent world events? Why? What is different?