

The Acts of the Apostles

This New Testament book is a sequel by Luke to his gospel. It starts with the book being 'an orderly account to Theophilus', a Greek friend of Luke, followed by the foretelling of the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus. It starts with the ascension of Jesus witnessed by the remaining 11 disciples, before the addition of Matthias (C1: 12-26) made up the 12, corresponding to the 12 tribes of Israel, with a pronouncement by the angels of Jesus's return.

The following accounts are of particular and special importance:-

1. Peter's sermon in the temple 2: 22-24 to the Jews detailing Christ's divine authority, proven by His miracles which God performed through Him.
2. The believers' shared life 2: 43-47
3. The declaration, stoning and death of the deacon Stephen, the first Christian Martyr 7: 1-53
4. The church at Antioch 11:19-26
5. The conversion of Saul, later to be known as Paul, on the road to Damascus 9:1-24
6. Peter and the centurion Cornelius and his conversion with all of his family.
7. The baptism and giving of the Holy Spirit to the gentiles 10: 44-46

The main themes of Acts are the describing of the first years of the spreading and the persecution of Christianity; its theme is that the new faith was of no threat to Roman authority, being the true fulfilment of Judaism and that the Roman/gentile world should see and experience it as such.

Luke, the author of Acts, brings out clearly that the gospel of Christ was, and still is today, the power to change people through the Holy Spirit, and to turn the 'world upside down'. A message surely for 'ordinary men and women' today in these difficult times of the Covid pandemic, conflict in and between nations and global warming.

With my Lenten thoughts, study and prayers

sincerely Ian Silcox