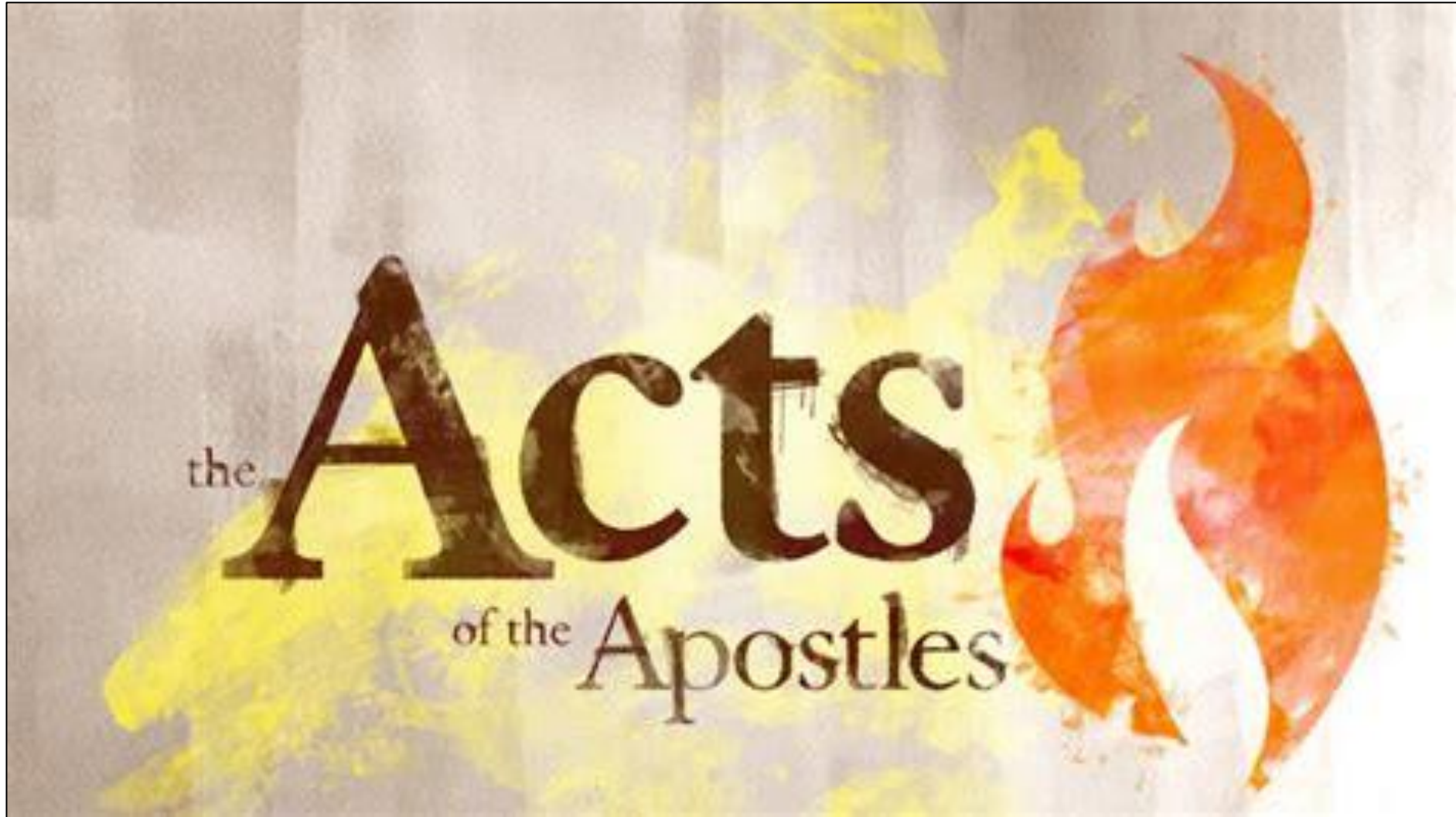


An introduction to the



Is it the wrong name?

The Acts of the Apostles

It is **some** of the acts of **2** of the apostles, Peter and Paul.

It could be better called the Acts of the Holy Spirit – although this is a selective account since He was at work through others apart from those mentioned in the book.

A Better name?

Acts has 3 words that are prominent , especially in the first 13 chapters:
Using a computer word search we find:-

God (166 times), Jesus (73 times), and the Holy Spirit (57 times)

So we could call it :-

**The Acts of God
through the Name of Jesus
by the Power of the Holy Spirit.**

But we will call it “**Acts**” for short!



Who wrote it?

Luke. Tradition states that Luke was a gentile convert who lived in Antioch. He had a long life, dying at the age of 84 in Boeotia in Greece.

He wrote Acts as the 2nd volume of his work. He was a doctor by training (Colossians 4:15) and a co-worker with Paul on his travels. Parts of the narrative have Luke's eye-witness account in the story as he speaks of "**we** did so-and-so".



Who was it sent to?

The first volume of this two part work is Luke's gospel and both parts are addressed to a man called Theophilus , which means "friend of God".

Theophilus is given the title "most excellent" in Luke 1:3. This shows that he was a person of some rank in Roman society.

Also this title was given to Felix (Acts 23:26) and Festus (Acts 26:25) who were both Roman Governors, high officials under Roman law.



Why was it written?

Luke says he wanted to provide a detailed and orderly account of the events of Jesus' ministry and the subsequent work of Jesus by the Holy Spirit after his ascension.

It is suggested that the books of Luke and Acts were written to provide details of the origins of Christianity and to show that Paul was innocent of breaking any Roman law, so that Theophilus as Paul's 'defence lawyer' in Rome could make his case at Paul's trial.



Theophilus – and Paul's defence?

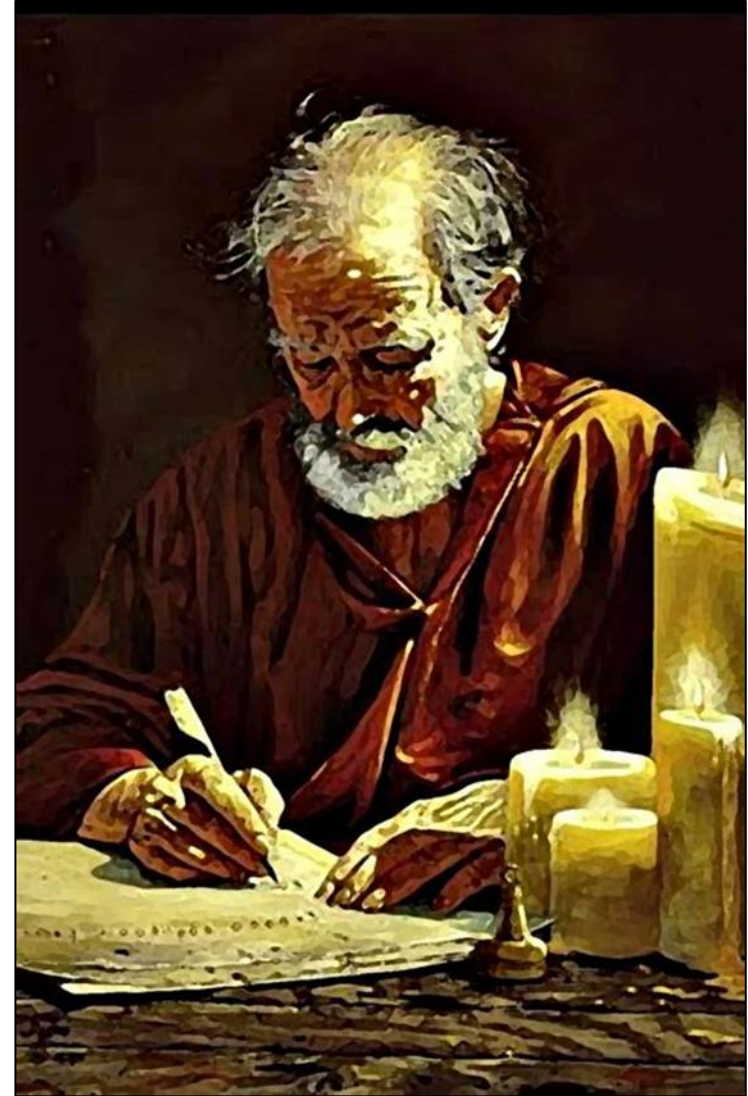
This would explain why Acts ends as abruptly as it does waiting for the trial before Caesar. It was all the evidence needed at that time.

It appears from the subsequent details in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus that Paul was released after this trial, so Luke's work was successful.



What happened to Paul then?

Just to complete the account:-
Paul continued his mission work
after his release until his final arrest
and execution in Rome (64AD).
Luke was still with him about this
time also. (2 Timothy 4:11)



What became of Luke's work?

Even though it may have been first written for Paul's defence at his trial, the books of Luke and Acts were also quickly recognised as a reliable history of the start and development of the Gospel movement. Luke is now considered as a first class historian of the times, with archaeology confirming his accounts time and again.

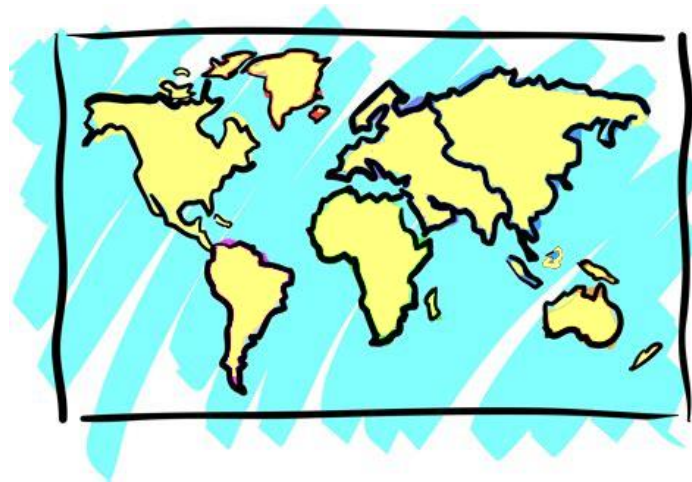


What is Acts about?

Acts describes how the good news of Salvation crossed the religious barrier between Jews and gentiles and began to spread throughout the mighty Roman empire.

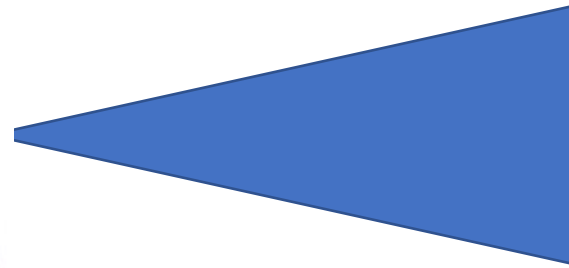
We see the fulfilling of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis.

Genesis 22:18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.



What is Acts about?

It also shows the reversal of God's judgement at the tower of Babel. The division of the people into separate nations begins to be reversed to become a real 'united nations' under one God and king Messiah Jesus.

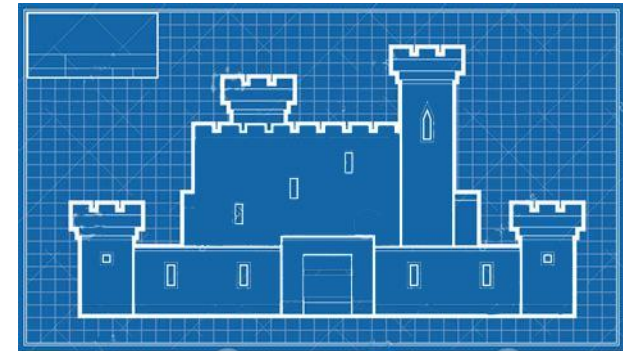


Just 30 years for a blueprint

Acts only covers a period of about 30 years from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to the first imprisonment of the apostle Paul in about 62 AD

During that time Luke describes the establishment as well as something about the structures of the various communities of believers throughout the expanding church.

It lays the model for church planting and practice for future generations and sets the context for the letters in the New Testament.



the Kingdom of God

It describes the beginning of 2000 + years of the story of the Kingdom of God which is prophesied to fill the earth.

Isaiah 11:9-10 They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

Acts demonstrates the power of Jesus' words in his commission to his followers :-



Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

From a dejected group of 11 Jewish men and some women helpers at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, the group grew to take on the powers of the day to become a worldwide movement.

One overview of Acts



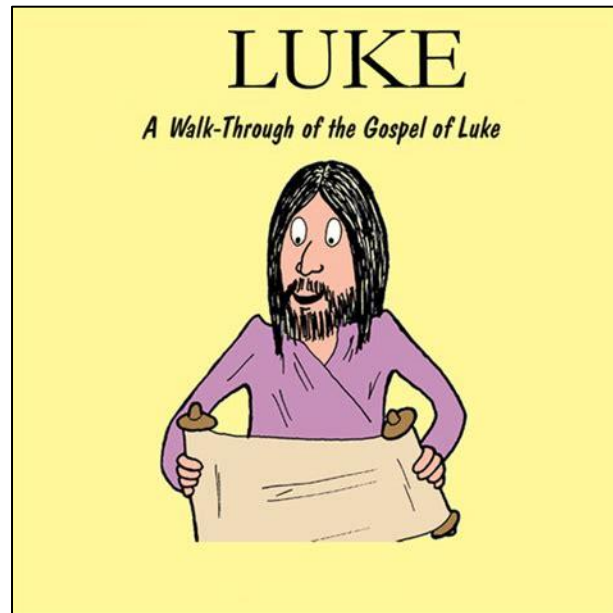
Chapter 1 provides the link between the resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Chapters 2 to 12 deal mainly with Peter

Chapters 13 to 28 cover the missionary journeys of Paul and his arrival in Rome, the capital of the Roman empire

Acts 1:1-12

In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus **began** to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions **through the Holy Spirit** to the apostles he had chosen.



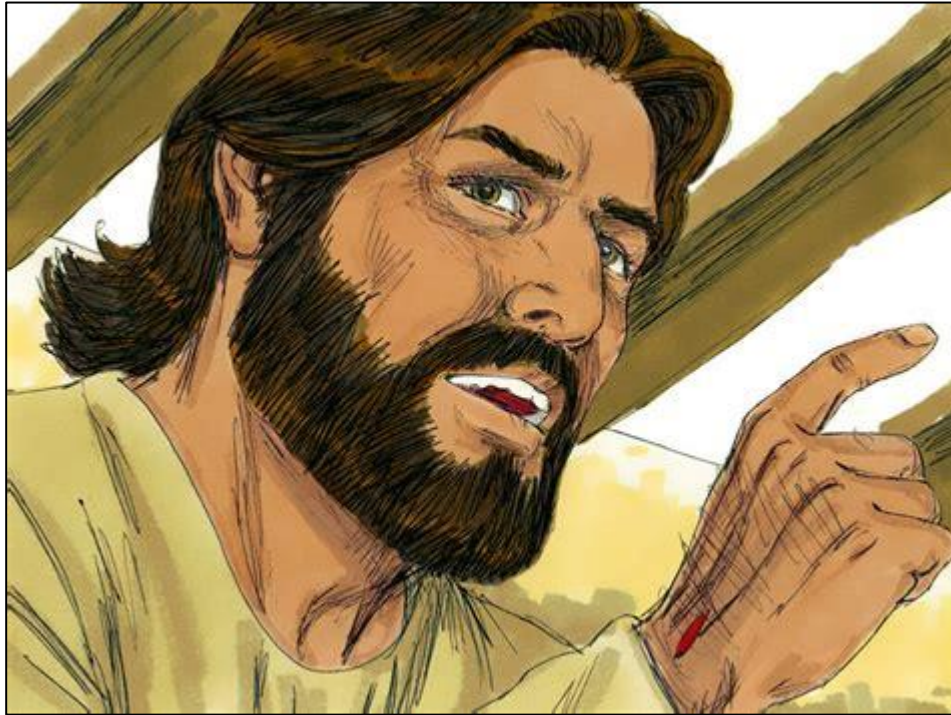
After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.



He really rose from the dead!

Jesus' central theme.

He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.



Mark 1:14-15 .. Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

THE essential energy supply

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command.. "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."



Inquisitive?

So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

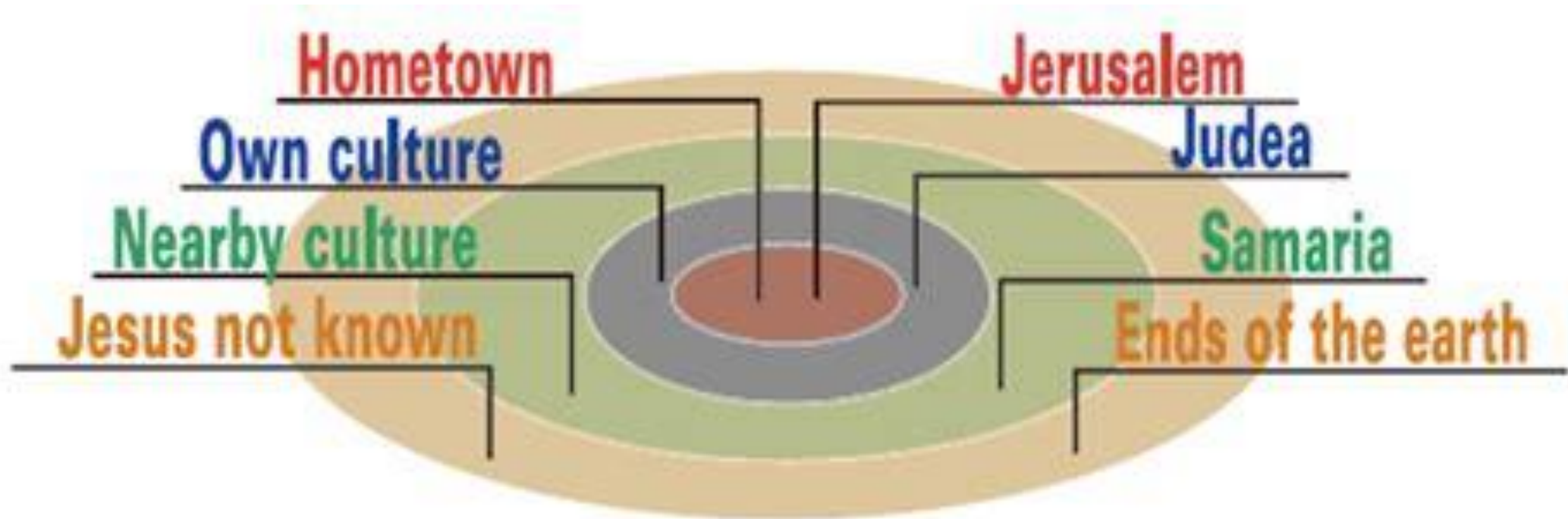
He said to them.. "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."



Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

The ripples will spread out

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.



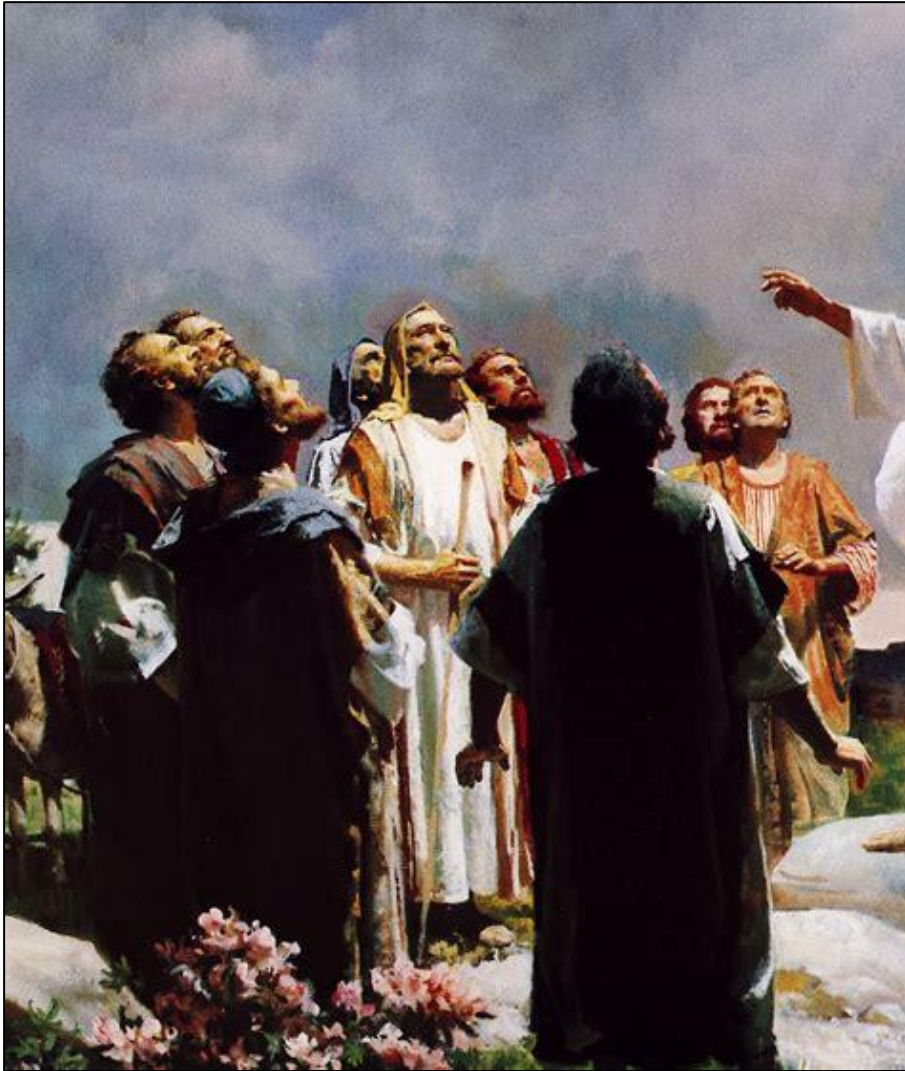
This also gives us another overview of Acts

Where did Jesus go?

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.



The promise of His return

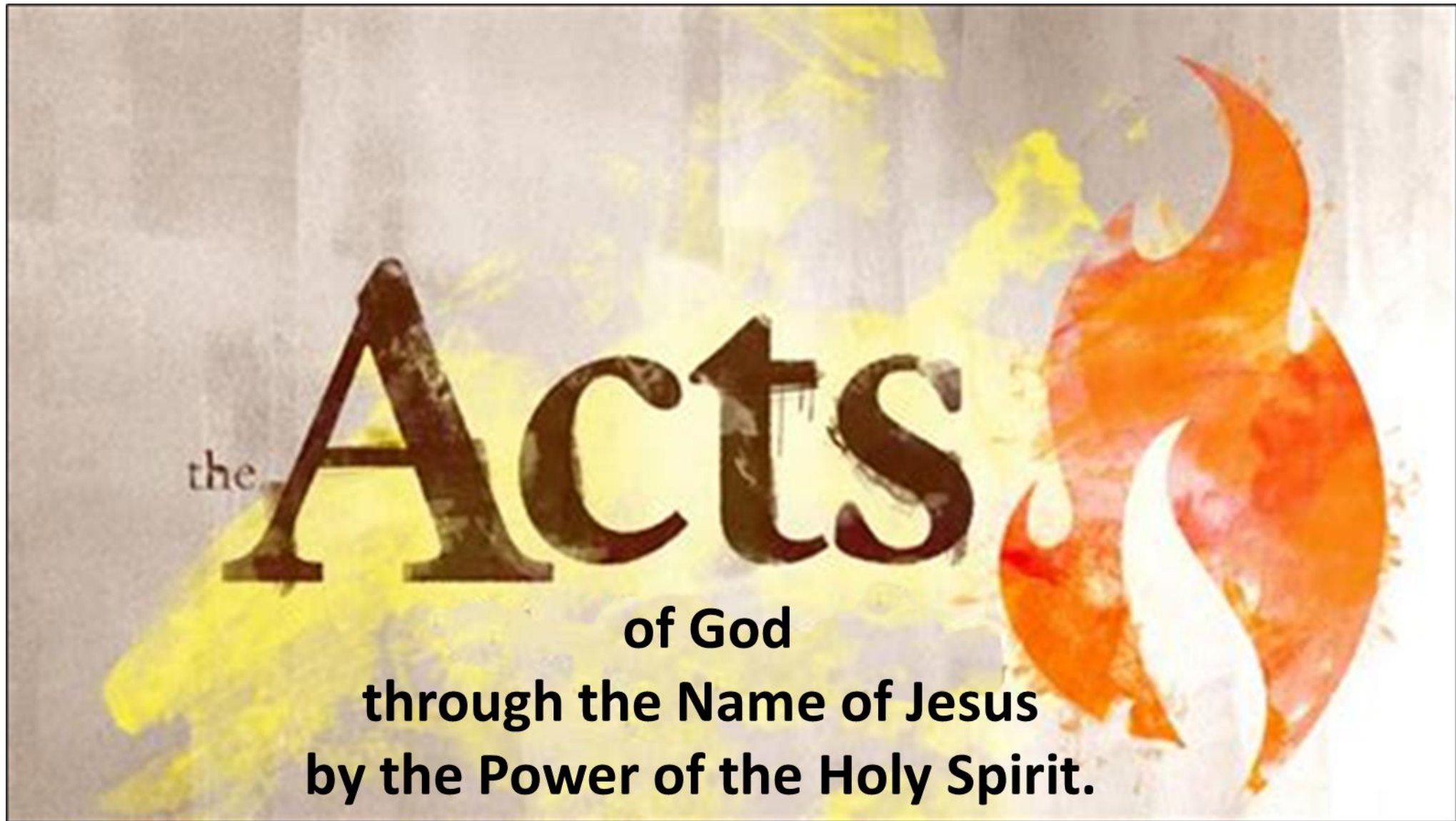


They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Where it happened (and where it will again)

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day`s walk from the city.





Have you begun to add your chapter to this adventure story?