



Acts



Reading the Bible Together NOVEMBER 2015

What is 'In Sync' Bible Reading?

'In Sync' encourages us to read together through the Bible, and then reflect together on what we have read from God's Word. We consider the main message and the key themes of a whole book (or books) of the Bible, and then we can share with others what we have learnt through our Bible reading.

'I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.' (Psalm 119:16)

Questions to consider

Reading the Bible does not have to be an intellectual study. Anyone can read the Bible and by God's grace understand it. The main thing is that we pray for God's help as we read.

Here are some questions to help you think through what you are reading:

1. What have I learnt about God and about Jesus?
2. What does this teach me about humanity and myself?
3. What has most encouraged me from this book?
4. How does this teach me to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul and mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
5. How does this teach me to love my neighbour as myself? (Matt 22:37-40)
6. Is there anything else I should learn here to be 'equipped for every good work' (2 Tim 3:17)

What to expect?

Acts is the second volume of a historical account written by Luke. It follows on from where Luke's gospel leaves off. The book of Acts narrates the founding events of the church and describes the first 30 years of the history of the Christian church. We witness the gospel spreading from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and then, through persecution and missionary endeavour, across the Roman empire (Acts 1:8). Two apostles feature prominently in the book – Peter and Paul.

The book can be divided as follows:

- Foundations of the church and its mission (1:1 – 2:41)
- The church in Jerusalem (2:42 – 6:7)
- Wider horizons: Stephen, Samaria and Saul (6:8 – 9:31)
- Peter and the first Gentile convert (9:32 – 12:24)
- Paul's ministry to the Gentiles (12:25 – 16:5)
- Further advance amongst Gentiles (16:6 – 19:20)
- Paul's plans to go to Rome (19:21 – 28:31)

Without Acts we would know nothing of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the martyrdom of Stephen, the life of the early church in Jerusalem, or the way in which the gospel came to Samaritans and Gentiles. Acts also provides us with the historical background to the founding of many of the churches to which Paul addressed his epistles.

Acts shows us the power of the gospel to change lives and to birth churches. In Acts, we see universalising of the church, as the gospel message is proclaimed and bears fruit across the Gentile world. At the same time, we are made aware that persecution and suffering are part of gospel endeavour. Also, Acts teaches us principles concerning gospel unity.

In-Sync for December 2015 :
General Epistles