



Approaching God

Read Psalm 102:25-28 and begin with an opening prayer (Consider that God is Eternal)

Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth and made the heavens with your hands. They will perish, but you remain forever; they will wear out like old clothing. You will change them like a garment and discard them. But you are always the same; you will live forever. The children of your people will live in security. Their children's children will thrive in your presence. (Psalm 102:25-28)

Countdown To Acts

Passage Introduction:

In anticipation of the Acts daily bible reading plan—the KCP Fall study beginning on Sept 14—we'll spend this week looking at a 'Countdown to Acts', a 5-day introduction establishing the historical and geographical context of the book. Read along with us as we set the stage with the people and places significant to the beginning of the early church. To set the stage, it is helpful to remember the narrative arc of the Bible is told in essentially three movements:

- 1. The Old Testament** - the story of our creation and fall, and of God's promise to redeem His people
- 2. The Gospels** - the story of God's promise fulfilled through Christ's life, death, and resurrection
- 3. The Book of Acts** - the story of Jesus' impact on the world as His followers took the gospel message to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (The only narrative portion of the New Testament not covered in Acts is John's imprisonment and revelation on the island of Patmos.)

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words. Use the margins to take notes. Where do you see the narrative arc in each of these passages?

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Genesis 3:8-19 - **8** And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" **10** And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." **11** He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" **12** The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." **13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." **14** The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go,

and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. **15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." **16** To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." **17** And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; **18** thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. **19** By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

[John 20:30-31](#) - **30** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

[Galatians 2:1-9](#) - **1** Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. **2** I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. **3** But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. **4** Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in--who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery-- **5** to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. **6** And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)--those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. **7** On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised **8** (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), **9** and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Close in Prayer:

The book of Acts is not the end of God's story, but rather the beginning of how the church found its way around the world and down through time to the places where we live and worship today. As you read today's passages, what were 1 or 2 main takeaways or things that you wrote down in the margins? What can you thank or praise God for? What do you want to trust him for today as you think about where you live and worship today? Make that your simple prayer to the Lord.

Resources for Further Study

Introduction to the Book of Acts

Introduction to Acts

Helpful information as we get ready to read and study through the book of Acts.

Author: Luke

Though the book of Acts specifies no author, earliest records attribute the book to Luke, who also wrote the Gospel bearing his name. Luke's name appears three times in Paul's prison letters (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 1:24), indicating he was one of Paul's traveling companions. Colossians 4:14 also identifies Luke as a doctor, which is supported by the way Luke uses specific medical language (e.g. Acts 28:8). *"Of the original quartet of writers on Jesus, Luke alone continues to tell the story as the apostles and disciples live it into the next generation. The remarkable thing is that it continues to be essentially the same story. Luke continues his narration with hardly a break, writing in the same style, using the same vocabulary as he did in his gospel account."* - Peterson

Date: 60-65 A.D.

Both the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are believed to have been written at the same time, during the early to mid 60s, likely during Paul's imprisonment in Rome. The events in Acts take place after the death of Christ in AD 33 and conclude in AD 62.

Theme:

The book of Acts emphasizes the work of God through the Holy Spirit in the lives of people who devoted themselves to Jesus Christ—especially Paul, as he led the Gentile missionary endeavor. The Christian church was built, city by city, through the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit working through God's chosen vessels.

"The story of Jesus doesn't end with Jesus. It continues in the lives of those who believe in him. The supernatural does not stop with Jesus. Luke makes it clear that these Christians he wrote about were no more spectators of Jesus than Jesus was a spectator of God - they are *in* on the action of God. God acting *in* them, God living *in* them. Which also means, of course, in *us!*"

Eugene Peterson