

Acts TOP 40

JOHN D. BARRY



CATEGORY ALL OF HIS OWN

Jesus (Son of God)

Poor man from Nazareth born of a virgin. Incarnate Son of God and Savior of the world. Primarily called Himself the Son of Man. *Pretty much everywhere in the New Testament.*

MAJOR CHURCH LEADERS/SPEAKERS

Paul

Previously known as Saul of Tarsus, the hit man for the Pharisees, who beat and stoned Christians for their beliefs. Converted to Christianity after an encounter with the risen Christ that left him temporarily blind. Became the first church planter and the most widely influential Christian. *Acts 13-26; authored Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.*

Peter

Fisherman who became a disciple of Christ and denied Him three times before His death. Was given tough love by Jesus after His resurrection. Became an apostle and leader of the central hub of the early church, Jerusalem. Didn't always get along with Paul. *Acts 1-5; 8-12; 15; 1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal 1-2; 2:9-14; Matt 4; 8; 10; 14-19; 26; Mark 3; 5; 8-11; 13-14; 16; Luke 5-6; 8-9; 12; 18; 22; 24; John 13; 18; 20-21; authored 1 Peter and 2 Peter.*

John (Son of Zebedee)

Fisherman turned disciple of Christ. Rather quiet through the gospels, but always there for the big moments. *Acts 3; 8; 12; Gal 2:9; Matt 4; 10; 17; Luke 5-6; 8-9; 22; Mark 1; 3; 5; 9-10; 13-14; author of the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and Revelation.*

Timothy

A strong, no-limit Christ-follower from a young age. Paul's traveling companion. *Acts 16-20; Rom 16:21; 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor 1:1, 19; Phil 1:1; 2:19; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 3:2, 6; 2 Thess 1:1; Philemon 1:1; Heb 13:23; 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy were addressed to him.*

James (Brother of Jesus)

Jesus' own flesh and blood (well, at least on Mary's side) who became a disciple. *Acts 12; 15; 21; 1 Cor 15:7; Gal 1:19; 2:9-12; Jude 1:1; Mark 6; Matt 13; author of James*

Barnabas (Joseph)

A devout Jew from the Levite clan who became a missionary to non-Jews (Gentiles). Sought Paul's help. *Acts 4; 9; 11-15; 1 Cor 9:6; Gal 2; Col 4:10*

Matthias

A disciple of Jesus chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot. *Acts 1*

Philip (Evangelist)

An unsung hero who helped change the world. The evangelist who was one of seven chosen to assist the apostles. *Acts 6-8; 21*

Apollos

Told Christ's story to many people—especially Greeks. Worked with Paul and on his own. *Acts 18-19; 1 Cor 1:12; 3; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13*

Stephen

The first martyr of the church who preached the gospel by citing examples from the Old Testament. *Acts 6:5, 8-9; 7:59; 8:2; 11:19; 22:20*

Agabus

A prophet in the early church who announced a coming famine. *Acts 11; 21*

Aristarchus

A fellow worker and sometimes fellow prisoner of Paul. *Acts 19-20; 27; Col 4:10; Philemon 1:24*

PEOPLE WHO HELPED CHURCH LEADERS/SPEAKERS

Aquila and Priscilla (Married)

Financial and spiritual supporters of Paul's mission to spread the gospel and plant churches. *Acts 18; Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19*

Publius

An important official from Malta who hosted Paul after a shipwreck. *Acts 28:7-8*

Ananias (Disciple)

A disciple of Christ who was sent to open the eyes of Saul (prior to becoming Paul), when he was blinded on the road to Damascus. *Acts 9:10, 12-13, 17; 22:12*

INFLUENTIAL BELIEVERS

Aeneas

A paralytic in Lydda who was healed at Peter's command. *Acts 9*

Lydia

A Gentile woman converted under the preaching of Paul in Philippi. *Acts 16*

Sergius

A Roman Proconsul (Governor) who became a Christian through the preaching of Paul and Barnabas. *Acts 13*

Dorcas (Tabitha)

A woman at Joppa. Peter prayed and she returned to life. *Acts 9*

Lysias

A commander of a Roman army who transferred Paul to Caesarea with an escort for protection. (May or may not have been a believer.) *Acts 23-24*


Cornelius

A Roman centurion (official) at Caesarea, whose family was among the first Gentiles to receive the gospel and be baptized. *Acts 10*

Theophilus

The person to whom Luke addressed his Gospel and Acts. Likely wealthy since he commissioned Luke's works. *Acts 1; Luke 1*

The book of Acts is almost as much of a maze as Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. It's hard to keep the cast of characters in your head. As you navigate Acts, you inevitably run into someone you don't recognize and wonder, "Should I know who this person is? Will I need to remember them for later?" And the problem just compounds when the next character is introduced.

With a startling 164 individuals, groups of people, "gods" and nations mentioned in Acts, it's not surprising that it's a difficult read. Fortunately, the problem now has a remedy—the Acts Top 40. If someone is crucial to the plot of Acts, they made our cut. Consider this a character-based Cliff Notes to Acts. 

FINDING OUR ROOTS

The Bad

RULERS

Caesar

The Roman Emperor's title. *Acts 25-28; Phil 4:22; Matt 22; Mark 12; Luke 2-3; 20; 23; John 19*

Claudius

Paul's case was sent to this fourth emperor of Rome, who reigned from 41-54 AD. *Acts 11; 18; 23*

Gallio

Proconsul (Governor) of Achaia when Paul was in Corinth. *Acts 18*

Pontius Pilate

Roman prefect who issued the decree for Jesus to be beaten and crucified. *Acts 4:27; Luke 23; John 18:28-19:42*

Herod Agrippa I

The Judean king who executed James the son of Zebedee. *Acts 12*

Herod Agrippa II

The governor over Judah when Paul was imprisoned in Jerusalem. *Acts 25-26*

Ananias (High Priest)

High priest during Paul's hearing in Jerusalem. *Acts 23-24*

Felix

A governor in Caesarea who heard Paul's case. *Acts 23-25*

Festus

Succeeded Felix as governor. Sent Paul's case to Rome. *Acts 24-26*

PHONIES AND THE RIDICULOUS

Tertullus

The hired spokesman of the Jews who accused Paul before Felix at Caesarea. *Acts 24*

Elymas

A Jewish false prophet, who opposed Paul and Barnabas on Cyprus. *Acts 13*

Demetrius

A silversmith of shrines of Artemis in Ephesus, whose livelihood was threatened by the gospel brought by Paul. *Acts 19*

DISOBEDIENT BELIEVERS

Simon (Magician)

More influential magician than Houdini or Criss Angel. Became a Christ follower under Phillip the Evangelist and Peter's ministry. *Acts 8*

Ananias and Sapphira

Struck dead by God for lying about a donation they made to the early church. *Acts 5*

The Ugly

Satan

Ultimate adversary of God and the Church. Unsuccessfully tempted Jesus. *Acts 5; 26; Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 4 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:15; 2 Thess 2:9; Matt 4:10; 12:26; Mark 1:13; 3-4; Luke 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22; John 13:27; Rev 2-3; 12; 20*

SPIRITUAL ADVESARIES

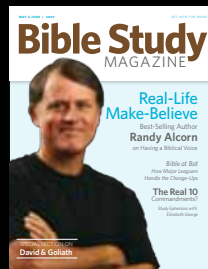
Zeus

The chief god of the Greek Pantheon, and the focus of worship for many Greeks. *Acts 14*

Artemis

The Greek goddess of wild animals and hunting, as well as the patron deity of Ephesus. *Acts 19*

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