



The
ACTS
OF THE APOSTLES

The image features a central graphic of a flame in shades of orange and red, with the word 'ACTS' written in a bold, blocky font across it. Above 'ACTS' is the word 'The' in a cursive script, and below it is 'OF THE APOSTLES' in a simple, all-caps sans-serif font. The background is a dark, textured brown with stylized, wavy patterns in a lighter brown color, suggesting flames or smoke.



Today's Scripture Reading

Acts 7:54-60



⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.



⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

A stylized orange flame logo with three distinct tongues of fire, positioned to the left of the word 'ACTS'.

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MESSENGER, MODEL AND MARTYR

MESSENGER:

Acts 6:8-15

Stephen is arrested and put on trial for blasphemy against the holy place and the law.

Acts 7:1-53

God uses the trial of Stephen to give Israel one last opportunity to repent and embrace their King



MODEL:

Stephen's final days mirror Jesus's final days and are a reminder to the church of the hostility that the world will have against them.



John 15:18-21

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.



Acts 7:51-53

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”



Acts 7:54

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.

KJV

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

CUT TO THE HEART:

deep feelings of exasperation, rage, and anger



Romans 9:30-10:4

³⁰ What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. ³² Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ as it is written,



“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to
shame.”

¹⁰ Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.



Acts 7:55

But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

“The glory of God is the visible manifestation of the excellence of God's character. The greatness of God's being, the perfection of all His attributes. It is something we can never fully comprehend, but before which we can only stand in awe and worship.”

-Wayne Grudem



Ezekiel 1:26-28

²⁶ And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. ²⁷ And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him.



²⁸ Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around.

Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking



Acts 7:56

And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”



SON OF MAN REFERS TO BOTH JESUS'S
humanity AND *deity*.

Humanity

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”



Mark 8:31

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Matthew 8:20

And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”



Deity

John 13:31

When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

John 5:27

And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.



Matthew 26:63-66

But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.”



EXALTED RULER

Daniel 7:13-14

¹³ “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.



Acts 7:57-58

⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.



MARTYR:

Israel rejects the message and kills Stephen and his death sparks the first Christian mission.

Acts 7:59-60

⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.



GO IN POWER!

Acts 6:5

And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit

GO TOGETHER!

Acts 4:32

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.



GO WITH THE WORD!

Acts 2:14-28:28

GO IN LOVE!

Acts 7:60b

...Lord do not hold this sin against them



REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT GOING ALONE!

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”



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The image features a central graphic of a stylized flame in a vibrant orange-red hue. The flame is composed of several pointed, overlapping shapes that create a sense of movement and heat. To the right of the flame, the word "ACTS" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Above "ACTS", the word "The" is written in a smaller, elegant, cursive script. Below "ACTS", the words "OF THE APOSTLES" are written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. The entire text and graphic are set against a dark, textured background with a mottled green and brown color palette. The background is framed by large, stylized, light-colored shapes that resemble flames or smoke, creating a layered and dramatic effect.