

“The Acts of the Exalted Jesus done in the Power of the Holy Spirit  
through His Apostolic Church”  
Acts 1.1-11

Where, within eighty pages, will be found such a varied series of exciting events – trials, riots, persecutions, escapes, martyrdom, voyages, shipwrecks, rescues – set in that amazing panorama of the ancient world – Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Rome? And with such scenery and settings - temples, courts, prisons, deserts, ships, barracks, theaters? Has any opera such variety? A bewildering range of scenes and actions (and of speeches) passes before the eye of the historian. And in all of them he sees the providential hand that has made and guided this great movement for the salvation of mankind. E.J. Goodspeed

1. The Living Jesus      2. Learning from Jesus      3. Led by Jesus

1. The Living Jesus

Last Chapters of ALL FOUR Gospels Records RESURRECTION of Jesus  
Still SOME DOUBTED > FOG of UNCERTAINTY > Some kind of TRICK?

When they saw him, they worshiped him; *but some doubted.* Matthew 28.17

When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, *they did not believe it.* Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. These returned and reported it to the rest; *but they did not believe them either.* Mark 16.11-13

Most of the people of Jerusalem knew that Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified, but they did not know that he had been raised from the dead. Warren Wiersbe

a. Alive DOUBTING Disciples > Transformed to FEARLESS FOLLOWERS

v. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave *many convincing proofs that he was alive.* He appeared to them over a period of forty days

NOT Somebody TOLD THEM Jesus Alive > JESUS HIMSELF WAS PROOF!  
NEW Testament > OUR Direct LINK to RISEN JESUS > EYE-WITNESSES!!

v. 4 On one occasion, *while he was eating with them ...*

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but *we were eyewitnesses of his majesty*.

2 Peter 1.16

That which was from the beginning, which *we have heard*, which *we have seen* with our eyes, which *we have looked at* and *our hands have touched* - *this we proclaim* concerning the Word of life.

1 John 1.1,2

CHRISTIAN FAITH > Unique among ALL RELIGIONS

ALL other BELIEF SYSTEMS > Founder BURIED, Active MINISTRY ENDS

Acts Now STORY of Christianity > PRESUMABLY Without CHRIST  
BUT, SURPRISE!! Vs. 1 – 11 > EVERY VERSE Refers to Jesus

v. 1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach

BRILLIANT Truth in WORD > **BEGAN** = Still GOING, Life & Work of Jesus  
GRAVE did NOT END Jesus' Life & Work > HE EMERGED from it ALIVE!

Jesus of History > Forever CONTEMPORARY /// CHIEF ACTOR in Acts  
Acts of Exalted Jesus done in Power of Holy Spirit thru His Apostolic Church

Acts forms the perfect counterpart and contrast to the Gospels. In the Gospels the Son of Man offered his life; in Acts the Son of God offered his power. In the Gospels we see the original seeds of Christianity; in Acts we see the continual growth of the Church. The Gospels tell us of Christ crucified and risen; Acts speaks of Christ ascended and exalted. The Gospels model the Christian life as lived by a perfect Man; Acts models it as lived out by imperfect men. Kent Hughes

b. Ascended

NO DOUBT > Disciples wanted SWEET Fellowship w/ Risen Lord FOREVER  
Last Sunday preached on Beautiful Kauai – now HAD to come to Beijing, China

It is for your good that I am going away. *Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.* John 16.7

Jesus in Body > Limited in Time and Place

Jesus in Spirit > Omnipresent, Eternal > Wherever 2 or More in His NAME  
Bread & Wine

PHYSICAL Presence of Jesus in Heaven: NOT in Cathedrals, Communion

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.  
2 Corinthians 3.17

The task of the visible church is to make the invisible kingdom of Christ visible.  
John Calvin

AWESOME PICTURE – Continuous, Eternal Blessings....

While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

Luke 24.51

ASCENSION – HISTORICAL EVENT: Divides Earthly & Heavenly Ministry  
SIMPLE, FACTUAL, HISTORICAL Description of Supernatural EVENT

DIVINE Encounter w/ World // Creation, Virgin Birth, Resurrection, Ascension  
Understand WORDS > But WORDS Exceed OUR UNDERSTANDING

v. 2 the day he was *taken up to heaven* > FIVE TIMES Truth Stated these VSS.

Happened in OT > ENOCK walked with God, and God took him...

ELIJAH taken into Heaven while ELISHA Looked On > ONLY MEN

v. 9 He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

CORONATION of KING > Sovereign taking up THRONE > Begin RULE

...the royal chariot was sent for him...

Chrysostrom

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet."

Psalms 110.1

vs. 10,11a 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?..."

It was earth not the sky which was to be their preoccupation. Their calling was to be witnesses not stargazers. The vision they were to cultivate was not upwards in nostalgia...but outwards in compassion to a lost world which needed Him. It is the same for us.  
John Stott

Gospel of Luke > Jesus on Earth // Book of Acts > Jesus in Heaven  
Luke: Jesus' *Earthly Humiliation* // Acts: Jesus' *Heavenly Exaltation*

In the Resurrection they saw the end, but not the beginning, and in the Ascension they saw the beginning, but not the end.  
Chrysostom

v. 11b 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.

CANNOT Press Words > like 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming // REWINDING Film of Ascension  
NOT NECESSARILY – Wearing SAME CLOTHES, to SAME LOCATION

CLOUD: Biblical IMAGE of GLORY and POWER > Son of Man in Daniel

RETURN of Jesus > PERSONAL...but NOT PRIVATE

Only 11 Apostles saw HIM GO > ENTIRE PLANET will See His RETURN  
Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him...  
Revelation 1.7

RETURN of Jesus > PERSONAL...but NOT ALONE – bring back FAMILY!

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels  
2 Thessalonians 1.7

God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him 1 Thessalonians 4.14

DIFFER on DETAILS > United on TRUTH – Jesus is COMING AGAIN  
POWERFUL, VISIBLE, and CLIMACTIC

## 2. Learning from Jesus

Jesus wears MANY HATS > One is TEACHER > MASTER TEACHER

The Gospel is made up of two-parts – Christ’s teaching and his actions. People who only know the historical events do not know the Gospel, for it is teaching that reveals what Christ achieved by his actions. These two form a holy knot that no one must undo.  
John Calvin

RISEN Jesus remained on EARTH 40 Days > Primarily to TEACH Apostles  
PREPARE them for MISSION > FOUNDATION of the NEW TESTAMENT

a. Subject > twin themes KINGDOM of God & SPIRIT of God

v. 3 He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the *kingdom of God*...

Jesus said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."  
Luke 4.43

v. 5 ...in a few days you will be *baptized with the Holy Spirit*

BAPTIZED – Immerse, Deluge, United With JESUS thru HOLY SPIRIT

OT PROPHETS > Linked KINGDOM of God with the SPIRIT of God

See, a *king will reign* in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice... the *Spirit is poured upon us* from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field  
Isaiah 32.1,15

Acts ENDS where Caesar is Lord / Rome is Kingdom > NOT for God’s People

Boldly and without hindrance he (Paul) preached the *kingdom of God* and taught about the *Lord Jesus Christ*.  
Acts 28.31

b. Scripture > TEXTBOOK of Master Teacher is HOLY SCRIPTURE

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then *he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.*

Luke 24.44-45

Jesus KEY to Understand OT > and the TEACHER who Inspired the NT

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.* 2 Peter 1.21

Largest Contributor to NT was LUKE

2 Volumes – Gospel, Acts > Longer than Paul's 13 Letters, and John's 5 Books

NEVER met JESUS – Paul's Convert > Our dear friend Luke, the doctor...

Colossians 4.14

97 VERSES of 'WE' > Luke was TRAVELING COMPANION of PAUL

BOTH VOLUMES Dedicated: v. 1 In my former book, Theophilus...

Theophilus > Wealthy BELIEVER > PATRON?? Support Research, Writing

c. Scholarship > God uses BRAINY & BUMBLE-Headed, Luke was Former

Luke: Proficient in Literary Greek, Trained in Hellenistic Historical Style, Deeply Influenced by Greek Translation of Old Testament – SEPTUAGINT

Style of Writing – Gospel/Acts – Style of Septuagint = SACRED HISTORY

Luke's SCHOLARSHIP > Used by GOD – PRIMARY AUTHOR – Inspiration

You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's, and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment, provided always that the critic knows the subject and does not go beyond the limits of science and justice.

Sir William Ramsey

Late Professor of Classical Art and Archeology, Oxford University

...the author of Acts (was) among the historians of first rank

F.C. Baur

For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming...Any attempts to reject its basic historicity in matters of detail must now appear absurd.

A.N. Sherwin-White, Oxford University

ALL 3 > Formidable SCHOLARS > Were RADICAL CRITICS of Acts/Luke

LUKE was ONLY GENTILE Author of HOLY SCRIPTURE -

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark...Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. *These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God...* Epaphras...sends greetings...Our dear friend Luke...  
Colossians 4.10-14

JUST THREE JEWS with Paul in Roman Prison Then > REST GENTILES!

As he penned his record of God's salvation in Christ, Luke the Gentile was himself and exhibit and a proof that God's light now shone on all the peoples of the earth.

Dennis Johnson

d. Sermons > Jesus teaches thru Sermons > Hopefully EVEN THIS ONE!

JOHN'S GOSPEL > Gospel full of JESUS' SERMONS

ACTS - 25% of Book = Total of 32 Speeches > 19 Sermons

BIBLICAL REVIVAL > Teaching First, Repentance, and Outpouring of Spirit  
Joshua - EZRA – Josiah >> PETER on PENTECOST

A spiritual awakening always soars on the wings of the Word. Lewis Drummond

### 3. Led by Jesus

Main STORY-LINE of ACTS > SPREAD of KINGDOM Message of JESUS

LUKE: Jesus MOVING TO Jerusalem/ ACTS > Jesus People FROM Jerusalem

Luke  
 Going TO -----> **Jerusalem** -----> Acts  
 Going FROM

Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

Luke 9.30,31

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Luke 9.51

Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

Luke 13.22

I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day-for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

Luke 13.33

Jesus took the Twelve aside and said, 'We're going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled'

Luke 18.31

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes.

Luke 19.41,42

vs. 4,5 "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."

Jesus Conquered CROSS in Jerusalem > We CARRY Cross FROM Jerusalem

In the book of Acts we see the footprints of the Holy Spirit in and through the footprints of the Apostles.

R.C. Sproul

MISSION Theme > Back to Jerusalem > GOOD IDEA > Chinese M's Go!  
NO BIBLICAL BASIS > Just GOOD TOOL > God CAN USE If He Chooses

ONLY GOD-ORDAINED Tools > God's Word and God's Spirit  
ANY who Use them RIGHTLY and REVERENTLY will be BLESSED!

v. 6 they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"



Their stupidity is incredible. They had been carefully taught for three whole years, yet were as ignorant as if they never heard a thing! There as many errors in this question as words!  
John Calvin

RESTORE = Expecting a POLITICAL, TERRITORIAL Kingdom

ISRAEL = Expecting a NATIONAL Kingdom

AT THIS TIME = Expecting IMMEDIATE ESTABLISHMENT of Kingdom

vs. 7,8 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."

Three HELPFUL Applications of Passage by John Stott –

#### a. The Kingdom of God is Spiritual in Character

MOST Ears ‘Spiritual Kingdom’ = UNREAL > Fairies, Fairy Tales, Legends

SPIRITUAL – NO Physical Expression – No Flags, Buildings, Armies, People

Key People Peter and Paul > Much we DO NOT Learn: Physical Appearance, Parents, Politics, Hobbies, Death >> **Focus – Sermons & Service for Jesus**

Many Individuals > CONNECTING Theme > FOLLOWERS of Jesus  
Individuals have SUPPORTING ROLE > MAIN ACTOR in Acts is JESUS

Kingdom of God = God’s TRUTH, Not TERRITORY  
= God’s RULE, Not REALM  
= God’s PEOPLE, Not PLACE

For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4.18

EVEN CITIZENS of Spiritual Kingdom > In BODIES – Decay, Die >> DUST

POLITICS offers PROMISES for Change > NO POWER to Effect CHANGE

God's PROMISES of Future Blessing on ISRAEL > Not about LAND, STATE

Descendants of ABRAHAM > Embrace by FAITH the PROMISED Son of Abe

The kingdom of God is his rule set up in the lives of his people by the Holy Spirit. It is spread by witnesses, not by soldiers, through a gospel of peace, not a declaration of war, and by the work of the Spirit, not by force of arms, political intrigue or revolutionary violence. At the same time, in rejecting the politicizing of the kingdom, we must beware of the opposite extreme of super-spiritualizing it, as if God's rule operates only in heaven and not on earth...although it must not be identified with any political ideology or programme, it has radical political and social implications...citizens of God's kingdom steadfastly deny to Caesar the supreme loyalty for which he hungers, but which they insist on giving to Jesus alone.

John Stott

b. The Kingdom of God is International in Membership

Apostle's Question betrays JEWISH NATIONALISM, God's Kingdom Bigger

Fastest Way USA Pastor LOOSE JOB > Take American Flag out of Sanctuary!

GOSPEL is not PROPERTY of ANY STATE, LANGUAGE, or ETHNICITY

Presbyterian Pastor in SD "I do not pray for OUR Troops" Church has no Army

Pray for PEOPLE in WAR – for JUSTICE – for Church to Shine TRUTH of Jesus

TOO Often CHURCH is SATISFIED with Small Thing > HOLY HUDDLE!

Lady in Church in Hawaii: 'Who are those Strangers you bring in Our Church?'

When REAL CHURCH has HEAVENLY MEETING > REAL STRANGE!!

...a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Revelation 7.9-10

### c. The Kingdom of God is Gradual in its Expansion

GOD Knows TIMES and DATES > SERVICE NOT SPECULATION!

(Jesus) went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. Luke 19.11

PARABLE > King WENT AWAY on Long Journey > Returns > Reckoning Time between Coming of Spirit and Coming Again of Son > WITNESS

The Church is the pilgrim people of God. It is on the move – hastening to the ends of the earth to beseech all men to be reconciled to God, and hastening to the end of time to meet its Lord who will gather all into one...at once missionary and eschatological.  
Leslie Newbigin

We have NO LIBERTY to STOP Until BOTH ENDS have BEEN MET!

Begin in Jerusalem = BLOOM where you're PLANTED! Live for Jesus NOW!

Teacher at Bishop Tucker Theological College in Mukono, Uganda  
Principal > Additional Duty – Director of Missions and Evangelism, was an M!  
Had a Pick-up Truck > Relatively MORE WEALTHY than Ugandan Teachers

Met Students to Share > Many BIG IDEAS – Across Uganda, Africa, World!  
Disappointed when I read Acts 1.8 – Our Jerusalem was MUKONO!

The light that shines the farthest will shine the brightest at home.

Oswald J. Smith

Did NOT NEED My Truck – We'd ALL WALK House/House, Shop/Shop  
MISSION FAILED, Lack of INTEREST > Who wants to GO ACROSS Street!

2 Years Later > New Group of Students > One READ – Acts 1.8 in Meeting  
Hey! Let's have an OUTREACH to our OWN VILLAGE, Begin Right Here!

Brought GREAT BLESSING – to NEAR NEIGHBORS in WORD & DEED

1980's – 250 Theology Students – Met School's Leader – Old Friend in Cape Town

Now – Uganda Christian University – 7000 Students > Speak there in JUNE

The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to him, the more intensely missionary we must become.

Henry Martyn

PIONEER to MUSLIMS in INDIA & PERSIA > 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

HOLY SPIRIT – Gives Salvation to US – Moves Us to SHARE with OTHERS

14 References in Acts – 'filled with Holy Spirit' EACH ONE > Witnessing!

v. 8 the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth

To be a witness for Christ is to bring a message that is a marvel of simplicity: Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh; he died to pay for our sins; he was resurrected; now he is exalted in Heaven; he calls us to believe in him and so receive forgiveness of sins.

Kent Hughes

\* \* \* \* \*

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 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. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 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." 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "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."

Acts 1.1-11

\*\*\*\*\*