



CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

SWINDOLL'S
LIVING
INSIGHTS

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

ACTS



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CONTENTS

Author's Preface	vii
The Strong's Numbering System	ix
Introduction	3
The Birth of the Church (Acts 1:1–7:60)	14
Operation Revolution (Acts 1:1-14)	16
Dice in the Prayer Meeting (Acts 1:15-26)	26
Supernatural Churchbirth (Acts 2:1-13)	33
Peter's First (and Best) Sermon (Acts 2:14-36)	43
The Birth of Three Thousand "Babies" (Acts 2:37-47)	54
The Beggar Who Danced in Church (Acts 3:1-26)	66
Religion vs. Christianity (Acts 4:1-22)	76
Pioneer Christians (Acts 4:23-37)	87
A Deadly Deception (Acts 5:1-11)	95
We Overwhelmingly Conquer (Acts 5:12-42)	101
Growing Pains (Acts 6:1-7)	111
The First Martyr's Last Stand (Acts 6:8–7:60)	119
The Rise of the Church (Acts 8:1–12:25)	136
The Pure and the Phony (Acts 8:1-24)	139
A Divine Appointment (Acts 8:25-40)	150
A Persecutor Turned Preacher (Acts 9:1-22)	160
A Man in Need of a New Name (Acts 9:23-31)	170
Supernatural Manifestations (Acts 9:32-43)	180
Facing the Prejudice <i>Sindrome</i> (Acts 10:1-23)	190
God Is Not Partial (Acts 10:24-48)	199
Getting Out of God's Way (Acts 11:1-18)	209
Operation Comeback (Acts 11:19-30)	216
More Powerful than Prison Bars (Acts 12:1-17)	226
Challenge . . . Triumph . . . Expansion (Acts 12:18-25)	236
The Expansion of the Church (Acts 13:1–20:2)	247
When the Going Gets Tough (Acts 13:1-13)	252
A Hunger for the Truth (Acts 13:14-52)	263
Operation Yo-Yo (Acts 14:1-20)	277
Wrapping Up a Memorable Trip (Acts 14:21-28)	285
Grace on Trial (Acts 15:1-12)	290
The Essentials (Acts 15:13-35)	299
When Co-Workers Clash (Acts 15:36-41)	308
What Opens When Doors Close? (Acts 16:1-10)	314
A Foothold in Europe (Acts 16:11-40)	321
Neck Deep in Greece (Acts 17:1-15)	333
Areopagus Eggheads vs. a Seed Picker (Acts 17:16-34)	341
A Corinthian Impact (Acts 18:1-22)	352

The Full Gospel (Acts 18:23–19:7)	364
God’s Extraordinary Power (Acts 19:8-20)	374
Leading in the Midst of Conflict (Acts 19:21–20:2)	382
The Challenges of the Church (Acts 20:3–28:31)	392
Adaptation (Acts 20:3-12)	395
A Touching Farewell (Acts 20:13-38)	402
Human Advice vs. Divine Direction (Acts 21:1-17)	412
When Misunderstanding Takes Over (Acts 21:18-39)	421
An Unanswerable Argument (Acts 21:40–22:30)	432
When Pressure Mounts (Acts 23:1-22)	443
Between the Frying Pan and the Fire (Acts 23:23–24:9)	453
The Peril of Procrastination (Acts 24:10-27)	463
Disciplines that Cultivate Maturity (Acts 25:1-22)	471
Almost Persuaded (Acts 25:23–26:32)	481
How to Enjoy a Shipwreck (Acts 27:1-44)	493
Time to Heal (Acts 28:1-11)	504
The End of the Beginning (Acts 28:12-31)	510
Endnotes	523
List of Features and Images	
Timeline of Acts	2
Map of the Roman World in the Time of the Apostles	2
The Book of Acts at a Glance	4
The Place of Acts in the Bible	7
Map of Luke’s Travels with Paul	10
Baptism	19
Map of the Jewish Diaspora at Pentecost	39
Courts of the Temple in Jerusalem	69
Herodian Temple Complex	72
The Sadducees	80
Sanhedrin Hall	83
The Politics of Religion	106
A Brief History of Samaria	143
Map of Philip’s Ministry	152
Excursus: Can I Get a Witness?	153
Excursus: Textual Criticism and the Reliability of the Scriptures	157
Paul’s Encounter with the Risen Christ on the Road to Damascus	166
Stages En Route to Spiritual Maturity	172
Paul’s Travels Referenced in Acts 9	173
Acts 9 Chronology	174
Map of Saul’s (Paul’s) Early Travels	176
Map of Peter’s Ministry	183
The Nature of Miracles	184
The Ruins of the Harbor Built by Herod the Great	193
The Autobiography of Paul of Tarsus	218
Tarsus	220
The Chaos of the Herodians	229
Map of Israel after Herod the Great	229
Agrippa, Messianic Hope of the Sanhedrin	242
Syrian Antioch	255
Map of Paul’s First Missionary Journey	256
Paul’s Traveling Companions	258
Map of Paul’s Second Missionary Journey	312
The Acropolis of Athens	344

The Areopagus in Athens	347
The Acrocorinth at Corinth.	356
The <i>Bēma</i> at Corinth	360
John the Baptizer.	367
Map of Paul's Third Missionary Journey.	369
Ephesus, the Mother of Commerce in Asia.	377
Artemis	386
The Theater in Ephesus	387
Circumcision: A Right or a Rite?	425
Herod's Temple Complex	428
Felix	458

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

For more than sixty years I have loved the Bible. It was that love for the Scriptures, mixed with a clear call into the gospel ministry during my tour of duty in the Marine Corps, that resulted in my going to Dallas Theological Seminary to prepare for a lifetime of ministry. During those four great years I had the privilege of studying under outstanding men of God, who also loved God's Word. They not only held the inerrant Word of God in high esteem, they taught it carefully, preached it passionately, and modeled it consistently. A week never passes without my giving thanks to God for the grand heritage that has been mine to claim! I am forever indebted to those fine theologians and mentors, who cultivated in me a strong commitment to the understanding, exposition, and application of God's truth.

For more than fifty years I have been engaged in doing just that—*and how I love it!* I confess without hesitation that I am addicted to the examination and the proclamation of the Scriptures. Because of this, books have played a major role in my life for as long as I have been in ministry—especially those volumes that explain the truths and enhance my understanding of what God has written. Through these many years I have collected a large personal library, which has proven invaluable as I have sought to remain a faithful student of the Bible. To the end of my days, my major goal in life is to communicate the Word with accuracy, insight, clarity, and practicality. Without informative and reliable books to turn to, I would have “run dry” decades ago.

Among my favorite and most well-worn volumes are those that have enabled me to get a better grasp of the biblical text. Like most expositors, I am forever searching for literary tools that I can use to hone my gifts and sharpen my skills. For me, that means finding resources that make the complicated simple and easy to understand, that offer insightful comments and word pictures that enable me to see the relevance of sacred truth in light of my twenty-first-century world, and that drive those truths home to my heart in ways I do not easily forget. When I come across such books, they wind up in my hands as I devour them and then place them in my library for further reference . . . and, believe me, I often return to them. What a relief it is to have these resources to turn to when I lack fresh insight, or when I need just the right story or illustration, or when I get stuck in the tangled text and cannot find my way out. For the serious expositor, a library is essential. As a mentor of mine once said, “Where else can you have ten thousand professors at your fingertips?”

In recent years I have discovered there are not nearly enough resources like those I just described. It was such a discovery that prompted me to consider

becoming a part of the answer instead of lamenting the problem. But the solution would result in a huge undertaking. A writing project that covers all of the books and letters of the New Testament seemed overwhelming and intimidating. A rush of relief came when I realized that during the past fifty-plus years I've taught and preached through most of the New Testament. In my files were folders filled with notes from those messages that were just lying there, waiting to be brought out of hiding, given a fresh and relevant touch in light of today's needs, and applied to fit into the lives of men and women who long for a fresh word from the Lord. *That did it!* I began to work on plans to turn all of those notes into this commentary on the New Testament.

I must express my gratitude to both Mark Gaither and Mike Svigel for their tireless and devoted efforts, serving as my hands-on, day-to-day editors. They have done superb work as we have walked our way through the verses and chapters of all twenty-seven New Testament books. It has been a pleasure to see how they have taken my original material and helped me shape it into a style that remains true to the text of the Scriptures, at the same time interestingly and creatively developed, and all the while allowing my voice to come through in a natural and easy-to-read manner.

I need to add sincere words of appreciation to the congregations I have served in various parts of these United States for more than five decades. It has been my good fortune to be the recipient of their love, support, encouragement, patience, and frequent words of affirmation as I have fulfilled my calling to stand and deliver God's message year after year. The sheep from all those flocks have endeared themselves to this shepherd in more ways than I can put into words . . . and none more than those I currently serve with delight at Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas.

Finally, I must thank my wife, Cynthia, for her understanding of my addiction to studying, to preaching, and to writing. Never has she discouraged me from staying at it. Never has she failed to urge me in the pursuit of doing my very best. On the contrary, her affectionate support personally, and her own commitment to excellence in leading Insight for Living for more than three and a half decades, have combined to keep me faithful to my calling "in season and out of season." Without her devotion to me and apart from our mutual partnership throughout our lifetime of ministry together, Swindoll's Living Insights would never have been undertaken.

I am grateful that it has now found its way into your hands and, ultimately, onto the shelves of your library. My continued hope and prayer is that you will find these volumes helpful in your own study and personal application of the Bible. May they help you come to realize, as I have over these many years, that God's Word is as timeless as it is true.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever. (Isa. 40:8)

Chuck Swindoll
Frisco, Texas

THE STRONG'S NUMBERING SYSTEM

Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary uses the Strong's word-study numbering system to give both newer and more advanced Bible students alike quicker, more convenient access to helpful original-language tools (e.g., concordances, lexicons, and theological dictionaries). The Strong's numbering system, made popular by the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, is used with the majority of biblical Greek and Hebrew reference works. Those who are unfamiliar with the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek alphabets can quickly find information on a given word by looking up the appropriate index number. Advanced students will find the system helpful because it allows them to quickly find the lexical form of obscure conjugations and inflections.

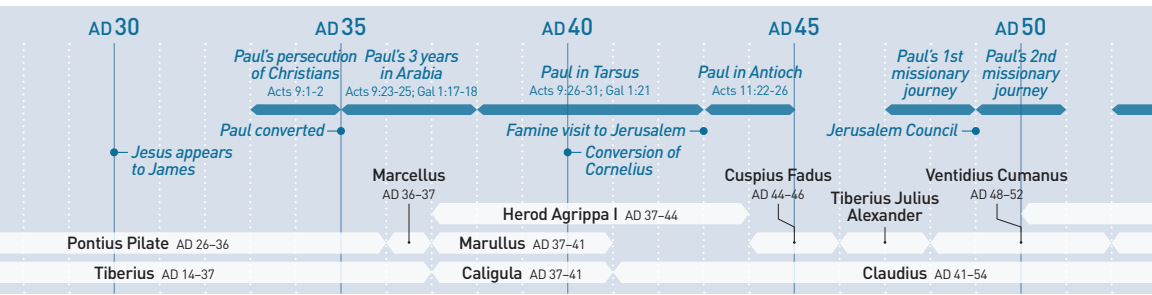
When a Greek word is mentioned in the text, the Strong's number is included in square brackets after the Greek word. So in the example of the Greek word *agapē* [26], "love," the number is used with Greek tools keyed to the Strong's system.

On occasion, a Hebrew word is mentioned in the text. The Strong's Hebrew numbers are completely separate from the Greek numbers, so Hebrew numbers are prefixed with a letter "H." So, for example, the Hebrew word *kapporet* [H3727], "mercy seat," comes from *kopher* [H3722], "to ransom," "to secure favor through a gift."

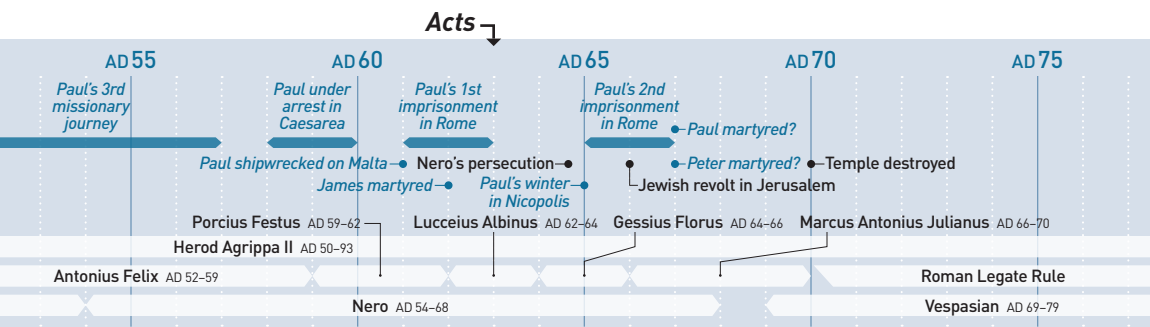
INSIGHTS ON ACTS

Throughout this narrative, Luke shows the church challenged, the church guided by the Holy Spirit, and the church triumphant.

Therefore, I would state Luke's purpose this way: to demonstrate, from the facts of history, that the church has become God's instrument for stewarding the new covenant, that the church is guided by His Spirit, and that nothing can prevent Christ from building His church. The book of Acts opens with a question about the kingdom of God and Christ's commissioning and empowering of the church, and it closes with the assurance that, even under arrest in Rome, Paul continued "preaching the kingdom of God . . . unhindered" (28:31).



The Roman World in the Time of the Apostles. The Roman Empire spanned the entire Mediterranean world, from Syria to Spain and from Egypt to Macedonia. Acts tells the story of how, following the Day of Pentecost (2:1-47), the apostles and their associates carried the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus throughout the entire Roman world.



ACTS

INTRODUCTION

“Unhindered.” That’s the very last word in the book of Acts. “Unhindered” is a fitting final word because it perfectly describes the central theme of Luke’s historical account of the first-century church. That’s not to say that the movement established by Jesus Christ and carried forward by His followers didn’t meet with opposition. On the contrary, Acts describes opposition so ferocious and so deadly that any other organization would have folded immediately. “Unhindered” doesn’t suggest that the first believers didn’t experience challenges. They did, in fact, meet challenges so insidious, so unique, and so frequent that following conventional wisdom would have hastened their doom. “Unhindered” simply indicates that nothing would keep the church from fulfilling its divine purpose.

While Luke provides an accurate, detailed account of the first-century church and its spread across much of the known world, his book really does not focus on ideas or events, or even the people who served and led the church. In fact, the usual title, Acts of the Apostles, could mislead readers; the book primarily recounts the actions of two key apostles—Peter and Paul—though both were always in close cooperation with numerous gifted associates and ministry assistants. Perhaps a more apt title might be “Acts of the Holy Spirit.” One of these Spirit-filled ministry associates, the physician Luke, has assembled a grand mosaic using facts like colored bits of broken pottery to display the work of God as He carries out His plan to redeem and transform the world.

Because Acts tells part of the story about God and His relationship with the world, it’s helpful to see where this book fits in the grand scheme of redemptive history. The late evangelist Billy Sunday

THE BOOK OF ACTS AT A GLANCE

	THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH	THE RISE OF THE CHURCH
	1:1–7:60	8:1–12:25
THEMES	The Church Is: Born Tested Purified Strengthened Empowered	The Gospel Is: Spreading Multiplying Changing Lives Breaking Traditions
KEY TERMS	Apostle Be Amazed Witness Sign Wonder	Preach/Proclaim Evangelize Disciple Repent Circumcision

THE EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH	THE CHALLENGES OF THE CHURCH
13:1-20:2	20:3-28:31
<p>The Witness Is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Received and Rejected Changing Lives Unifying Jews and Gentiles 	<p>The Movement Is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tested Persecuted Defended Unhindered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reason With/Discuss Make Known Widely/Proclaim Exhort/Encourage Suddenly/At Once Faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persecute Solemnly Testify Immediately Accuse Command

described his experience of the Scriptures in a poignant first-person word picture:

Twenty-two years ago, with the Holy Spirit as my guide, I entered the wonderful temple of Christianity. I entered at the portico of Genesis, walked down through the Old Testament art galleries, where the pictures of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Isaac, Jacob and Daniel hang on the wall.

I passed into the music room of Psalms, where the Spirit swept the keyboard of nature, until it seemed that every reed and pipe in God's great organ responded to the tuneful harp of David, the sweet singer of Israel. I entered the chamber of Ecclesiastes, where the voice of the preacher was heard, and into the conservatory of Sharon, and the lily of the valley's sweet-scented spices filled and perfumed my life. I entered the business office of Proverbs, and then into the observatory of the Prophets, where I saw telescopes of various sizes, pointed to far-off events, but all concentrated upon the bright and Morning Star, which was to rise above the moon-lit hills of Judea for our salvation.

I entered the audience room of the King of kings, and caught a vision of His glory, from the standpoint of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; passed into the Acts of the Apostles, where the Holy Spirit was doing His work in the formation of the infant Church. Then into the correspondence room, where sat Paul, Peter, James and John, penning their Epistles. I stepped into the throne room of Revelation, where towered the glittering peaks, and I got a vision of the King sitting upon the throne, in all His glory, and I cried:

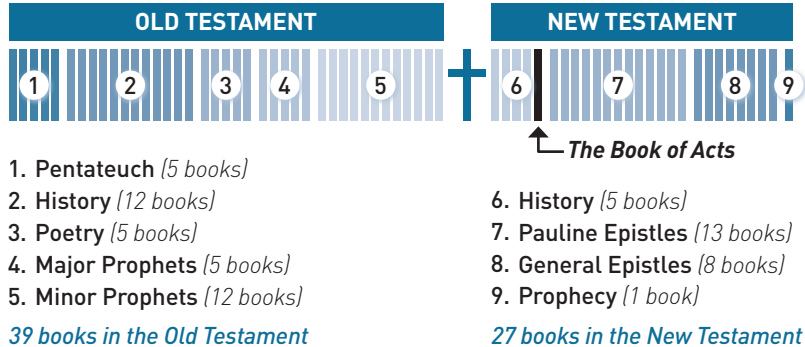
All hail the power of Jesus's name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.¹

Acts is a pivotal book in the great narrative of God's redemptive plan. The Old Testament introduces God to humanity and establishes His covenants with Israel, all in anticipation of Jesus Christ. The Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tell the story of how the God-man, Jesus, came to fulfill the Old Testament covenants and to establish a new covenant with humanity. God summarized this new covenant through the prophet Jeremiah:

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34)

Acts documents the launch of the new covenant and traces the new-covenant community’s phenomenal growth in the first three decades after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

The Place of Acts in the Bible



THE PURPOSE OF ACTS

Today, the books of the New Testament appear in a standardized order—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, and so on—that separates Luke and Acts. But the book of Acts was never intended to be read as a stand-alone document; rather, it is the second volume of Luke’s two-volume work, which began with his historical account of Christ’s life, the Gospel of Luke.

Nevertheless, the book of Acts is well placed after the Gospels. It is a book of transitions, documenting the period after the earthly ministry

of Jesus when the church began receiving the written treasures of the apostles. Consequently, it comes after the Gospels and before the Epistles in the New Testament. Luke's second volume narrates an era like no other in history, a time when God had much to say but spoke less through individual prophets and more through a growing, Spirit-filled community.

As with the first volume of his work, Luke dedicated the second volume to "Theophilus," whose identity remains a mystery (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). The name means "one who loves God," which could be the nickname of Luke's patron. In ancient times, wealthy people typically commissioned histories, usually for self-serving reasons. The head of a family might want to establish a credible family line in order to claim a title or give the family name a higher standing. Or he might commission a history to vindicate the actions of his ancestors or to glorify his family's achievements. In other words, the patron would have had a specific reason for paying a historian to compile a history that others would read. In the case of the first volume, Luke states his purpose, which likely reflects that of his patron: "so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught [concerning Jesus]" (Luke 1:4). We can therefore say with reasonable certainty that Theophilus commissioned Luke to research the life of Jesus and to meticulously set down the facts to undergird the faith of the church.

The purpose of the second volume most likely follows that of the first, with a slight variation in emphasis. Perhaps prompted by the recent challenges the church was facing, Theophilus may have commissioned Luke to chronicle the rise and expansion of Christ's body by focusing on a recurring theme: "unhindered" growth despite overwhelming opposition, with special emphasis given to the role of the Holy Spirit.

Several fine expositors have offered credible suggestions about the purpose of Acts. On the one hand, F. F. Bruce sees Luke as a pioneer apologist, defending Christians against misinformation and misunderstanding spread by their unbelieving critics.² He arrives at this opinion because so much of Acts depicts the church as unfairly accused and unjustly treated, and Paul's appearances before secular authorities are given special attention. On the other hand, William Barclay claims that "Luke's great aim was to show the expansion of Christianity, to show how that religion which began in a little corner of Palestine had in a little more than 30 years reached Rome."³ A few commentators point to Luke's stated purpose for his Gospel, saying that persecution shook

the faith of many in the church and that the book of Acts assured them Christ would not let His church fail.

I have difficulty with these suggestions because they give too much attention to the issue of persecution, only one of *many* trials threatening the first-century church. Throughout this narrative, Luke shows the church challenged, the church guided by the Holy Spirit, and the church triumphant. Therefore, I would state Luke's purpose this way: *to demonstrate, from the facts of history, that the church has become God's instrument for stewarding the new covenant, that the church is guided by His Spirit, and that nothing can prevent Christ from building His church.* The book of Acts opens with a question about the kingdom of God and Christ's commissioning and empowering of the church (Acts 1:6-8), and it closes with the assurance that, even under arrest in Rome, Paul continued "preaching the kingdom of God . . . unhindered" (28:31).

THE AUTHOR OF ACTS

Luke is a small figure in the story of the early church, but he looms large in its history.⁴ Some identify him as Lucius of Cyrene (13:1), one of the leading elders in Syrian Antioch who commissioned Paul and Barnabas for the first missionary journey. Some church traditions place Luke in Antioch during these early days of the church, but we have little hard evidence to support the theory. If we take the book of Acts at face value, Luke appears to be a late addition to Paul's evangelistic team instead of a top-ranking voice in the most influential Gentile church at that time. (For an extended discussion of Luke's identity, see my introduction to *Insights on Luke*.⁵)

LUKE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 16:10-17⁶

Acts 20:5-21:18

Acts 27:1-28:16

Colossians 4:14

2 Timothy 4:11

Philemon 1:24

In three extended passages in Acts, Luke uses the pronoun "we." Presumably, when Luke uses "they" and "them," he means that he wasn't personally present at the time. Based on that assumption, we



Luke's Travels with Paul. Luke met Paul on the course of Paul's second missionary journey. Paul left him to work in Philippi, and then Luke rejoined him for the journey back to Jerusalem.

find that Luke encountered Paul for a period during the first missionary journey but didn't meet him again until the end of the third missionary journey. Luke later traveled with Paul from Jerusalem to Rome.

Luke apparently met Paul and his entourage during the second missionary journey as the men lingered in Troas. When the Holy Spirit prevented them from penetrating the Roman provinces of Bithynia, Asia, and Mysia with the gospel, the team remained in this port city for an extended time, pondering their next move (16:6-8). Luke may have been a believer when he encountered Paul, or perhaps Paul led him to faith while in Troas. Luke doesn't say. We know only that when Paul and the members of his team decided to alter their course for Macedonia and Greece, Luke traveled with them on the first leg of the journey, from Troas to Philippi. He witnessed the beating and imprisonment of Paul and Silas (16:22-40), and as a physician (Col. 4:14), undoubtedly took the lead in treating the men's wounds. When the team continued on to Thessalonica and then Greece, Luke remained in Philippi, because it is possible he had lived there before meeting Paul.

On the third missionary journey, Paul and his entourage passed through Philippi on their way to Greece, again without adding Luke to their number. After several months of ministry in Greece, Paul intended to sail directly home from Cenchrea, a port city near Corinth, but a plot to kill him changed his plans. To distract any would-be assassins, he instructed his team to board a ship in Cenchrea as originally planned, but to sail for Troas, where he would rendezvous with them. Meanwhile, he retraced his steps through Philippi (Acts 20:2-5), where he evidently invited Luke to join him. According to the second “we” passage, Luke accompanied Paul to Troas. We know this was not Luke’s last journey with Paul. It is possible that Luke remained at Paul’s side for the rest of the apostle’s life.

The third “we” passage (27:1–28:16) follows Paul from his arrest in Jerusalem to confinement in the palace of Herod Agrippa, along the journey to Rome, and through his two years of house arrest awaiting trial. No one knows for certain where Paul traveled after his release, but within a couple of years, he was back in Rome and again in prison. As he penned his final letter to Timothy and prepared for the end, he mentioned that only Luke remained at his side (2 Tim. 4:11).

THE STRUCTURE OF ACTS

Luke’s Gospel followed Jesus’ earthly ministry in ever-narrowing circles from Nazareth and Galilee (Luke 4:14–9:50), through Samaria and Judea (Luke 9:51–19:27), and ultimately to Jerusalem (Luke 19:28–24:12). The book of Acts, however, radiates from Jerusalem outward in ever-expanding circles. When the risen Lord met with His disciples for the last time, they asked, “Is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). They still expected Jesus to seize the reins of religious and political power and become the leader of a worldwide Jewish empire, through which God would rule the earth. But Jesus corrected their understanding of the plan. He said, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (1:7-8).

Note the emphasis on geography: “Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” This becomes an “inspired outline” for the book of Acts: “Jerusalem” (Acts 1–7), “all Judea and Samaria” (Acts 8–12), “the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 13–28).

THE UNFINISHED STORY

In His last appearance in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus summarized His earthly ministry using the Old Testament Scriptures as a guide (Luke 24:44-49). He demonstrated from the Scriptures that God’s plan had *always* been for the Messiah to suffer on behalf of His people and conquer death on the third day. His plan had *always* been to call the nations to repent of sin, receive His forgiveness, and trust that His grace is sufficient to save. The city of Jerusalem had *always* been the Lord’s intended light on a hill (see Ps. 43:3; Matt. 5:14) and would finally become the starting point of world evangelism (Isa. 43:10; 44:8; Acts 1:8).

The Lord’s final proclamation (Luke 24:36-49), densely packed with meaningful terms and expressions, foreshadows many of the key themes and events in the book of Acts. For example, the term for “witness” (*martys* [3144], Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 2:32) is the term from which we derive the English word “martyr.” Above all, the apostles were witnesses to the Lord’s resurrection (1:22). The English meaning of the word “martyr” developed from the fact that some of the witnesses to Jesus’ death and resurrection were willing to readily die rather than recant the gospel message (7:59-60; 12:1-2).

The verb meaning “send forth” (*apostellō* [649], Luke 24:49; Acts 3:20, 26) is related to the term from which we get “apostle.” Jesus had been sent from God, and He had sent the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49) so that the apostles could be sent forth even to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17; 28:28).

The “promise of My Father” (Luke 24:49; cf. Acts 1:4-5, 8) is a reference to the Holy Spirit, who would soon “[clothe them] with power.” This word picture is taken from the commissioning ceremony of a government official. The phrase “from on high” declares the source of their commissioning and power, God Himself (cf. 4:13-20).

As the book of Acts opens, the power of the Holy Spirit falls like lightning on the newly commissioned witnesses, who begin teaching and preaching the good news with boldness in the temple. The Jesus movement then emanates from Jerusalem to the surrounding territory, then to neighboring Samaria, up to the Gentile lands just north of Galilee, and from there all across the eastern Roman Empire.

We don’t find a nice, tidy conclusion at the end of Luke’s second volume; instead, the last lines describe the apostle Paul’s two years of house arrest in Rome, where against all odds, he was “preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered” (28:31). This feels very much like the soft

ending of volume one, after which Luke clearly intended to continue the story. We do not know whether he intended to write a volume three. Paul had hoped to say a final farewell to his mission east of Rome and then embark for the western frontier as far as Spain (Rom. 15:23-28). Luke undoubtedly expected to go with him and document every step. But that was not to be.

Regardless of Luke's literary plans, the Holy Spirit intended the narrative to end with volume two. I don't see this open-ended conclusion as an accident. Luke didn't foresee Nero's persecution, which led to Paul's second imprisonment and execution, but God was not surprised by it. Could the Lord have left the narrative open intentionally for others to complete—not in writing, but by continuing the commission Jesus gave His first one hundred or so witnesses in Jerusalem? When you think about it, there's no good place to conclude a history of the church. For two millennia, each generation of believers has met challenges, responded through the power of the Holy Spirit, and perpetuated the gospel. They have continued to "write" the history of the church—and now that duty falls to us. Throughout the twenty centuries of church narrative, nothing could stop its inevitable expansion, and it continues today—unhindered.

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH (ACTS 1:1–7:60)

The book of Acts documents a span of time unlike any other era in history. Like the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt—with its plagues, Red Sea parting, glowing shekinah pillars, and manna from heaven—the early days of the church saw supernatural events that will never be repeated. As Luke’s second volume opens, the church doesn’t exist; the Holy Spirit has not yet come to reside in Christ’s followers; the apostles possess no power, no courage, no authority, no direction. Yet by the last verse, the church will span the Roman Empire from Jerusalem to Rome. In the first few months of church history, recorded in Acts 1:1–7:60, a glorious explosion of divine power energized a group of ordinary men and women to carry out a God-sized mission using supernatural abilities.

Just as Jesus had said (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), the disciples would begin their mission in Jerusalem, declaring the new covenant message of redemption in the presence of the very religious leaders and temple authorities who had handed Jesus over to Pilate. In this first stage of the divine plan for the church’s growth (1:8), the believers would learn to trust in God’s plan and power to overcome all obstacles, including persecution from without (4:1–31), failures and tension within (5:1–11; 6:1), and even the loss of important leaders to martyrdom (6:8–7:60). Jesus’ miraculous power and message would be manifest through the suffering of His followers.

Within days of His ascension, the believers received the first part of His promise: The Holy Spirit filled every believer, granting each one the power to fulfill his or her role in God’s redemptive plan. At Pentecost, the first believers stunned their peers with supernatural, miraculous abilities, prompting thousands of Jews to embrace Jesus as their Messiah. They, in turn, also received power from the Holy Spirit to be witnesses, preaching in the temple and evangelizing Jerusalem. In time, the church of Jerusalem grew strong and vibrant while Peter and John provided solid leadership, guiding the congregation despite constant pressure from the Sanhedrin. Even persecution by Saul did little to curb the church’s growth—until the martyrdom of Stephen dealt the community of believers its first significant blow.

KEY TERMS IN ACTS 1:1–7:60

***apostolos* (ἀπόστολος)** [652] “apostle,” “sent one,” “official envoy,” “commissioner”

The noun form of the verb *apostellō* [649] (“to send,” “to send with a commission or with authority”) described an official government envoy, who might carry official news or read proclamations publicly across the empire. Greek religion and philosophy later used the term to refer to divinely sent teachers. In Christianity, it came to describe both the function and official capacity of certain men; to be called an “apostle,” one must have personally encountered Jesus Christ after His resurrection and received His commission to bear the good news to others.

***existēmi* (ἐξίστημι)** [1839] “to be amazed,” “to be separated from something,” “to be beside oneself,” “to be out of one’s senses”

Literally, this word means “to be displaced.” Figuratively, it refers to a psychological state of mind in which one no longer has control over oneself. By the time of Jesus, this had become hyperbole, in the same way we might say someone “lost his mind” with excitement. Another, milder term used often by Luke is *thaumazō* [2296], which simply means “astonished” or “filled with wonder.” *Existēmi* is decidedly more colorful, used to characterize someone as animated in his or her astonishment.

***thaumazō* (θαυμάζω)** [2296] “to wonder,” “to be amazed,” “to marvel,” “to be in awe”

This term describes being extraordinarily impressed, awed, or even disturbed by something, especially when confronted with some form of divine revelation. In the Septuagint it indicates worship, honor, and admiration, generally referring to “religious experience face to face with what transcends human possibilities.”¹

***martyria* (μαρτυρία)** [3141] “witness,” “testimony,” “evidence”

This term refers to “confirmation or attestation on the basis of personal knowledge or belief”² and was commonly used in connection with legal proceedings. In ancient courts, the corroborating testimony of independent witnesses was considered virtually irrefutable.

***sēmeion* (σημεῖον)** [4592] “sign,” “authenticating mark,” “token,” “miracle”

The most basic meaning of this word is “something that gives a true indication of something else.” A road sign accurately indicates what lies ahead for the traveler. The Greeks gave the term special attention as a physical indication of divine will or supernatural omens. Lightning, for

example, indicated the will of Zeus, and thunder was considered a foreboding indication that he was about to speak through a sign. For the Jews, a “sign” provided visual confirmation that a prophet was authentically from God or was a physical manifestation of God’s glory.

teras (τέρας) [5059] “wonder,” “portent,” “omen,” “miracle”
 Never used alone and frequently appearing in tandem with *sēmeion*, this word refers to something that astonishes or causes people to wonder. The term often denotes an extraordinary event that suggests something much deeper or more important has occurred or will occur soon. For example, Augustus claimed that the wonder of a bright comet was, in fact, the spirit of his adopted father, Julius Caesar, entering heaven.

Operation Revolution

ACTS 1:1-14

NASB

¹The first account I ^acomposed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when He was taken up to *heaven*, after He had ³by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. ³To ^athese He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them *over a period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. ^{4a}Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for ^bwhat the Father had promised, “Which,” *He said*, “you heard of from Me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized ^awith the Holy Spirit ^bnot many days from now.”

⁶So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be

NLT

¹In my first book* I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. ³During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

⁴Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. ⁵John baptized with* water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

⁶So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

⁷He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses,

My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

⁹And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰And as they were gazing intently into ^athe sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. ¹¹They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into ^athe sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the ^amount called ^bOlivet, which is near Jerusalem, a ^cSabbath day’s journey away. ¹³When they had entered *the city*, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and ^aJames and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, ^aJames *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the* ^bson of ^aJames. ¹⁴These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the women*, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

1:1 ^aLit *made* 1:2 ^aOr *through* 1:3 ^aLit *whom*
1:4 ^aOr *eating with*; or *lodging with* ^bLit *the promise of the Father* 1:5 ^aOr *in* ^bLit *not long after these many days* 1:10 ^aOr *heaven* 1:11 ^aOr *heaven* 1:12 ^aOr *hill* ^bOr *Olive Grove* ^cI.e. 2K cubits, or approx 3/5 mile 1:13 ^aOr *Jacob* ^bOr *brother*

telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. ¹⁰As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. ¹¹“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

¹²Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of half a mile.* ¹³When they arrived, they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying.

Here are the names of those who were present: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the zealot), and Judas (son of James). ¹⁴They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.

1:1 The reference is to the Gospel of Luke.
1:5 Or *in*; also in 1:5b. 1:12 Greek *a Sabbath day’s journey*.

Ours is a world in motion—high speed, perpetual progress, nonstop change. Hundreds of years used to separate scientific revolutions; now we expect them every couple of decades. Most don’t even make the news; they simply shift our scientific paradigms—and shift us right along with them. A few decades ago, one good technological advance was enough to propel a new company straight to Fortune 500 status. Now, if your company isn’t changing its industry every couple of years, you won’t have a company for long.

Given our rapid-fire-change culture, I am encouraged to see the church not only surviving but thriving! This amazing venture enjoys a strong grasp on tradition yet continues to affect every culture it touches. Furthermore, the church remains relevant despite two thousand years of cultural evolution. The late Steve Jobs once said, “Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.”³ We have the most creative, forward-thinking, adaptive, innovative, progressive Leader the world has ever known, and He has been with the organization from the beginning. In fact, He started this global enterprise and has served as its Leader through countless challenges and changes.

— 1:1-2 —

Luke begins with a quick glance back to his Gospel account. This indicates a definite break in his narrative, but not one so large he had to bridge a chasm. He assumes the life of Jesus remains fresh in the reader’s mind. After all, Luke had gone to great lengths to show that the man Jesus is not only the Messiah but that He came to earth as God in human flesh. God sent His message to humanity wrapped in the blood, bone, sinew, and muscle of someone like us. He walked among people for thirty-plus years, preaching, teaching, healing, casting out demons, and raising the dead. Ultimately, He was crucified, buried, and then raised to a new kind of life. That’s what Luke means by “all that Jesus began to do and teach” (1:1).

Take note of the word “began.” The work isn’t finished. There’s more to do. Yet the next phrase tells us that Jesus was taken up to heaven. We won’t see Jesus face to face until either we die or He returns in the same way He departed—in the clouds (1:11). So how would Jesus complete the work He “began”? The answer is foreshadowed in the phrase, “had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen” (1:2).

— 1:3-5 —

After rising from the dead, Jesus spent forty days consoling His followers, who had endured a gut-wrenching ordeal of their own. In the dark hours leading up to His crucifixion, they abandoned their Lord (Mark 14:50). Then they watched in horror as the unthinkable occurred: The Messiah—their Master and Lord—died! Upon His return from the grave, He first had to prove the authenticity of His resurrection. Myth and folklore had taught them to believe in ghosts. Common views of resurrection among the doctrinally influential Pharisees taught them to believe in a future mass resurrection of both the righteous and the

BAPTISM

ACTS 1:5

A literal translation of the Lord's promise in Acts 1:5 reads, "You will be baptized *into* the Holy Spirit." People of ancient cultures understood the significance of this symbolic rite of baptism; we need the help of some cultural and historical context.

The ritual of baptism in ancient cultures symbolized identification. An organization or society initiated a new member by immersing him or her in a liquid of some kind—usually water, or in the case of many pagan rituals, the blood of sacrificed animals.⁴ So, when one was "baptized into" a community, he or she became one with it and, therefore, identified with it. After an initiate had been immersed into something and surrounded by it, he or she emerged from the pool soaked and dripping—covered, as it were, in the same substance as all the other members. After being "baptized into" a society, the initiate was considered both a member and a representative of the community's beliefs. A person "baptized into" a society, therefore, received everything that goes along with membership: rights, benefits, powers, and responsibilities.

In Judaism, a new convert was ceremonially immersed in pure water after attending classes to learn the Hebrew language, study Hebrew history and culture, and most importantly, learn the Law of Moses. After passing an examination, the males were circumcised, and all converts were baptized. The symbol of baptism became a figurative once-for-all cleansing from sin before entering the Hebrew covenant community. To be "baptized into" Judaism was to become a "son of the covenant" along with natural-born Jews.⁵

John the Baptizer then gave the rite of Gentile baptism a new application. He called Jews to a baptism of repentance, saying, in effect, "Because of your sin, you are outside of Abraham's covenant with God—*unclean*! You must repent like a Gentile and come to God as if for the first time." According to Jesus, the water baptism administered by John would eventually be followed by a supernatural baptism from above. The disciples understood the concept of "baptism into" the Holy Spirit, but they could not have made sense of all its implications. At least, not yet. To be "baptized into the Spirit of God" means to be made a member of God's supernatural society and taking on all the rights, benefits, powers, and responsibilities shared within the Trinity.

wicked. But a miraculous resurrection of the Messiah alone prior to the resurrection of the rest of humanity? That required a reworking of their understanding of end-times events.

Accepting the fact of Christ's miraculous bodily resurrection, however, would be only the first of *many* significant paradigm changes.

Jesus spent those forty days meeting with His followers, deconstructing their false notions about the kingdom of God, and then setting them on the right course. By the time He ascended to heaven, the disciples had been well provisioned with the truth. Unfortunately, they had no power. And truth without power accomplishes little in a world dominated by evil. As it happens, the Lord never intended to send them out powerless. Therefore, He told them to wait for a special event, describing it in terms that must have stunned and amazed the disciples. Luke’s Gospel had mentioned “what the Father had promised” many times (Acts 1:4):

- John the Baptizer said Jesus would “baptize . . . with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16).
- Jesus, when speaking of the good gifts human fathers like to give their children, asked, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:13).
- Jesus assured His disciples that they would suffer persecution, but He also promised, “When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (Luke 12:11-12; cf. Luke 21:15).

“Not many days from now” (Acts 1:5), the disciples would receive the fulfillment of God’s promise.

— 1:6 —

When I studied at Dallas Theological Seminary, a course taught by Dr. Howard Hendricks called “Bible Study Methods” forever changed my life. In one of those unforgettable classes, “Prof” challenged us to examine Acts 1:8 and record fifty observations. Many classes of students before me had completed this assignment, as well as every graduate of that seminary since. I stared at that verse for hours. Then, I saw a detail I had overlooked for years: the tiny, incredibly significant three-letter word “but.” There it sat at the head of the verse, begging me to discover what contrast this conjunction indicated.

I traced Luke’s river of thought to its source and found a question: “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (1:6).

All of the Lord’s followers, even the inner circle of disciples that He

had trained for leadership, struggled to understand His agenda. All their lives, they had been taught that the kingdom of God was Israel. They had been taught to expect a Messiah who would revive the broken nation of Hebrews—now whittled down to the tribe of Judah—and return it to the kind of glory they hadn't known since David and Solomon. They anticipated a religious and political leader who would wear both the king's crown and the high priest's robe.

God is not done with Israel. Jesus will, of course, fulfill all those Old Testament promises. He owns the king's crown *and* the priestly robes, and He will wear them—literally, not just figuratively—in the future. But He hadn't planned to build the kingdom of God in the time or manner anyone expected. When God fulfills His promises, He always exceeds our expectations.

— 1:7-8 —

Jesus answered the disciples' question (1:6) with gentle admonishment to be patient. He said, in effect, "Relax. God's plan will unfold on His schedule, and nothing can stop it." Note that He didn't refute or correct their understanding of the coming kingdom, only its timing and method. No, He would not assemble an army for a march on Jerusalem—at least, not yet (see Rev. 19:11-21; 20:4). He wouldn't take control of the nation by diplomacy or intrigue. He wouldn't expand His kingdom in the manner of Nebuchadnezzar or Alexander or Augustus. "But . . ."

The Messiah is destined to receive the power and authority to rule the whole world (Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 11:15), "but," He said, "*you* will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8, emphasis mine).

In the Old Testament, the power of the Holy Spirit was reserved for kings and prophets, and occasionally for regular folk when the Lord wanted to accomplish something extraordinary. The filling of the Holy Spirit was a rare gift and almost always temporary. He filled and empowered certain individuals for a brief time for a specific purpose and then departed. Exceptionally few individuals were granted the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit for life, among them John the Baptizer (Luke 1:15). So, the announcement that the Spirit of God would indwell each believer seemed unthinkable—an unbelievable extravagance the followers of Jesus could barely comprehend.

The filling and empowerment of the Holy Spirit for every believer was not a brand-new concept. Hundreds of years earlier, God had

revealed that a new kind of kingdom would emerge from the new covenant, which required every citizen to have the mind of God (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 37:14; Joel 2:28-32). From the beginning of time, He planned to give His people the power to carry out His commands as citizens of His kingdom.

Note, however, that He granted them power. He didn't outline a program. He didn't give them a detailed strategy. Such a thing wouldn't stand the test of time, as we observe in the business world. Rather than set down a specific business model, God gave each member of the organization the mind of the CEO, in a manner of speaking. Instead of laying out a concrete battle plan, the Lord gave each soldier a brain that thinks in synchronization with the mission and values of the General. God, having baptized individuals into His kingdom, gives each citizen power.

The Greek term for “power” (*dynamis* [1411]) refers to one's ability or capacity; it suggests “being able” or “being capable of” something. The specific ability or capability in question depends upon the context. If the task is to lift a great weight, the “ability” is physical strength. If the task is to defeat an army, the “capacity” is that of a seasoned general. The Lord's promise leaves the *dynamis* indefinite. In other words, whatever is required, we will receive the power to do what God asks.

This *dynamis* yields results. In Matthew 28:19-20, the Lord issued a command to “go . . . and make disciples of all the nations.” But that was another day and another mountaintop conference. Here on the Mount of Olives, the spot of His eventual return, Jesus instead made a prediction: “You shall be My witnesses” (Acts 1:8). The term for “witness” is *martys* [3144], from which we derive the English term “martyr,” although back then it didn't have a strong religious connotation. First-century Greek writers understood *martys* as a legal term describing one who testified in court about something he or she had personally seen.

As noted earlier, Jesus' prediction foreshadows the unfolding of the story of the church. Luke calls special attention to the Lord's promise, because the rest of this narrative stands as a witness to its fulfillment: “Jerusalem” (Acts 1–7), “all Judea and Samaria” (Acts 8–12), “the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 13–28).

Volume one of Luke's work explains how the truth of God became flesh, how the good news became incarnate. Volume two demonstrates how, after Jesus physically departed the earth, the truth of God remained among flesh. He sent His Spirit to indwell His people. The good news of “God with us” continues with people who incarnate His message and are enabled by His power.

— 1:9-11 —

These verses overlap Luke’s description of the Lord’s final moments before ascending to heaven at the end of volume one. He led His followers to a spot on the Mount of Olives, probably over the ridge from Jerusalem, somewhere down the eastern slope. It’s a deeply meaningful place in the Old Testament. When the light of God’s presence departed the forsaken temple, never to be seen there again, “the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city” (Ezek. 11:23). According to the prophet Zechariah, the Lord will come to this mount before taking control of Jerusalem. Only the all-powerful King won’t climb and then descend the mountain; the mountain will miraculously move out of His way, parting like a curtain before Him (Zech. 14:4).

This is where Jesus ascended. He rose up through the clouds and then passed from our earthly dimension to the heavenly realm. Two angels announced that Jesus—the Savior of the world and its future King—will return in this same manner. He will not again be born as a baby. He will not appear in another form or take another identity. He will not be reincarnated or channel His personality through another individual. He will not return in spirit form—He’s already here in the person of the Holy Spirit! He will descend through the clouds in His own human body. Physically. Literally. Dramatically. Unmistakably.

— 1:12-14 —

The Lord’s followers did exactly as He commanded; they walked the short distance back across the Kidron Valley to Jerusalem, most likely to the same room where they had earlier been hiding out (Luke 24:33-36; John 20:19). And they waited. Though they didn’t know exactly when the Spirit would arrive, God knew that “not many days from now” (Acts 1:5) meant the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)—fifty days from the end of Passover and therefore ten days from Christ’s ascension. During this holiday Jews from all over gathered in Jerusalem to make an offering to God during the time of harvesting the first fruits (Exod. 34:22; Deut. 16:9-12). Fittingly, God was about to offer His own “first fruits” of the Spirit as a faithful remnant of Jews became the first initiates into the new community of the Spirit: the church.

Meanwhile, those dedicated disciples maintained a season of constant prayer. As the late expositor Harry Ironside once stated,

When God is going to do some great thing He moves the hearts of people to pray. He stirs them up to pray in view of that which

He is about to do so that they might be prepared for it. The disciples needed the self-examination that comes through prayer and supplication, that they might be ready for the tremendous event which was about to take place, the coming to earth of God the Holy Spirit to dwell in believers and empower them to witness for Him.⁶

Luke makes special note of the people present. During His earthly ministry, Jesus had chosen twelve men to receive concentrated spiritual instruction and leadership training. Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus to the temple officials in exchange for money and then, in unrepentant regret, hanged himself. The remaining eleven banded together. Several women had faithfully met the practical needs of ministry and were considered devoted learners of the Master. They, along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, joined the eleven in prayer. And surprisingly, the Lord's half brothers accompanied them. Originally hostile to the teaching of Jesus (Mark 3:21), they were affected by His crucifixion and then convinced by His resurrection.

Luke specifically mentions these people, but they were not the only disciples involved in this season of continual prayer. In the quiet between the promise of the Holy Spirit and its fulfillment, 120 believers joined in prayerful anticipation. This band of ordinary men and women would become the nucleus around which the worldwide, twenty-century (and counting), multicultural, multiethnic kingdom of God would grow. Their world was about to change, and they were about to become the agents of this change.

APPLICATION: ACTS 1:1-14

His Plan, His People, His Power

God has a plan for redeeming the world. It's not a new plan; it existed in the mind of the Creator before the first humans committed the first sin. None of what's happening surprises Him. He established a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, the Hebrews, calling them to teach the Scriptures, model obedience to the Law, and become an example of living faith in God. He strategically placed the nation of Israel on a narrow land bridge, through which the great civilizations of the region had to pass when conducting trade or making war with each other, so

that all could see the shalom (peace and wellbeing) of Israel and learn of their God. The plan of God had *always* been to send His Son, who would succeed where Israel had failed, suffer on behalf of His people, and conquer death on the third day. Remember, God had *always* called people to repent of sin, receive His forgiveness, and trust that His grace is sufficient to save. The city of Jerusalem had *always* been the Lord's intended light on a hill (see Ps. 43:3; Matt. 5:14), and in the days of the apostles, it would finally become the starting point of world evangelism (Isa. 43:10; 44:8; Acts 1:8).

Now we are a part of His plan. We, like the disciples, do not know when the kingdom will come (1:6-8). At the present time, we know only that God has called us to join Him in reclaiming creation from evil by our witness to the resurrected Messiah. He's given us a genuine stake in the plan's fulfillment, and there is no "Plan B." As I consider what the Lord is doing and how He has involved us, I have two observations.

First, *to carry out the plan, people must be infused*. You'll never advance the healing power of Christianity in a sick, dying world if you stay away from those infected with sin and error. Christ made consistent contact with His disciples, those disciples made consistent contact with their generation, and the world was infused with the antidote to sin and death. To implement an effective plan, we must infuse people with the cure of the gospel. Remember, this is about truth incarnated, divine truth in human flesh. It's not theoretical truth floating around on the pages of books that saves people. It's one life affecting another.

Second, *to impact a rapidly changing world, the power of the Holy Spirit must be released*. I am amazed at how few Christians really know the dynamics of the Holy Spirit. Truly amazed. All the power it took to raise Christ from the dead—not loud power but silent, effective, dynamic power—has been given to us. But we know so little about the potential energy of having the presence of God within, how to let Him fill and control us, and how to transform that power into positive change in the world.

Many years ago, I gave the closing message at a conference. Just as soon as the last words of my prayer slipped out of my mouth and we had a little music, a couple came right down front. "You talked about the Holy Ghost today," they said. (They used the archaic expression "Holy Ghost," which made me curious.)

"Yes," I said, "I mentioned the Spirit."

"We read that in the Bible and we don't know about that. What is it like?" This told me right away they had never been taught about the

Holy Spirit. So I gave an impromptu lesson that took about twenty minutes, and their mouths literally stayed open as they heard for the first time the truth concerning how the power of God, in the control of the Holy Spirit, can literally take them through life. They had never heard it, yet they had been Christians for many years.

Unfortunately, most believers don't really know much more—we have good theology, but no practical wisdom. If we pay attention, the book of Acts will fill in some deep gaps in our understanding of the Holy Spirit. I urge you to make the Holy Spirit a subject of intense study, not only to gain theological knowledge, but to discover how to release the incredible power of God residing within you.

Dice in the Prayer Meeting

ACTS 1:15-26

NASB

^{15a}At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty ^bpersons was there together), and said, ¹⁶“Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry.” ¹⁸(Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. ¹⁹And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰“For it is written in the book of Psalms,

‘LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE
DESOLATE,
AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT’;

and,

‘LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS
^aOFFICE.’

NLT

¹⁵During this time, when about 120 believers* were together in one place, Peter stood up and addressed them. ¹⁶“Brothers,” he said, “the Scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus. This was predicted long ago by the Holy Spirit, speaking through King David. ¹⁷Judas was one of us and shared in the ministry with us.”

¹⁸(Judas had bought a field with the money he received for his treachery. Falling headfirst there, his body split open, spilling out all his intestines. ¹⁹The news of his death spread to all the people of Jerusalem, and they gave the place the Aramaic name *Akeldama*, which means “Field of Blood.”)

²⁰Peter continued, “This was written in the book of Psalms, where it says, ‘Let his home become desolate, with no one living in it.’ It also says, ‘Let someone else take his position.’* ”