

UNSTOPPABLE

ACTS 2.0: CAN IT HAPPEN AGAIN?

ACTS 1:1-8

Follow the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7)

⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is **for your good** that I am going away.
Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.
John 16:7 (NIV)

Chapters 1-7	Chapters 8-12	Chapters 13-28					
<i>“at Jerusalem”</i>	<i>“in all Judea and Samaria”</i>	<i>“to the ends of the earth”</i>					
The Church is... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Born• Connected• Strengthened• Tested	The Gospel is... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spreading• Multiplying• Changing Lives• Breaking Barriers	13-15	16-18	19-20	21-23	24-26	27-28
		Paul's "Excellent Adventure"	Paul's "Excellent Adventure"	Paul's "Excellent Adventure"	Paul's Arrest: Protection from the mob	Paul's 3 Trials: Speaking to Kings	Paul's "Excellent Adventure" to Rome

PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

MISSIONARY JOURNEY MAP



A TRANSITION BOOK

Between...

The gospels and epistles, between Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, and between the beginnings of the church

The ministry of Jesus to the ministry of the Apostles

The Old Covenant to the New Covenant

Israel as God's witness nation to the Church as God's witness people

The new covenant practical outworking in the life of the Church

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

1. Movement of the church in Luke's life

A "one-way arc" from Jerusalem to Rome

"God's city to the enemy's city"

“Kingdom of God overcoming the kingdoms of the earth.”¹

2. The Gospel moves to the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles (John 4).
3. The Ministry of Peter and Paul
4. “Triumphal statements” in the narratives.²

TITLES

“Acts” or “Acts of the Apostles” (first or second century).³

“Acts” is a genre that normally recounts the deeds of a single great individual (Alexander the Great or Augustus) or a group (Acts of the Early Kings) in Hellenistic writing.⁴

More accurately— “Acts of Jesus” (Building his Church by His Word and His Spirit)⁵

HISTORICAL SETTING

From Jesus’ ascension to Paul’s imprisonment in Rome

Roman Empire Population- 50-80M

7M free Roman citizens

2.5M lived in Judea

5M Jews throughout the empire (10% of the empire’s population)⁶

Written about AD 60-62.⁷

Why Every Christian Needs to Know This Book!

- Acts reveals the history of EARLY CHRISTIANITY.
Written by Luke, Acts begins where the Gospels leave off. It covers the 30-year span of Christianity from the resurrection of Jesus to the time when Paul was in Rome.
- Acts helps us understand the REST of the New Testament.
- Acts **IGNITES** confidence, boldness, encouragement and courage.

1 *In my former book, **Theophilus**, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions **through the Holy Spirit** to the apostles he had chosen.*³

¹ Stephen Armstrong.

² Stephen Armstrong.

³ Wesley Towne, 9.

⁴ Wesley Towne, 10.

⁵ Stephen Armstrong, “Acts of the Apostles.”

⁶ Wesley Towne, “ACTS,” 11.

⁷ Stephen Armstrong, “Acts of the Apostles.”

After his suffering, he presented himself to them 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 Then they gathered around him and 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." Acts 1:1-8 (NIV)

LUKE

Author of Luke and Acts

- Referenced as the author by the early church fathers (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, and included in the Muratorian Canon (AD 170).⁸
- Obscurely mentioned three times in the NT (Col. 4:4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24).⁹
- A Syrian of Antioch, physician, disciple of the Apostles, and follower of Paul, without wife or children, died at 84 in central Greece-- until his martyrdom. "Luke was a Syrian of Antioch, by profession, a physician, the disciple of the apostles, and later a follower of Paul until his martyrdom. He served the Lord without distraction, without a wife and children. He died at the age of eighty-four in Boeotia [a region in central Greece], full of the Holy Spirit (Second Century Prologue), full of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰
- Trained in excellent Greek rhetoric, research, and composition skills— "A Gentile with excellent training in Greek knew the art of rhetoric, had superb research and compositional skills, and was familiar with the conventions of historical writing in the Hellenistic tradition. A strong familiarity with Judaism and the Greek Old Testament-- which may have come as a result of involvement in a synagogue before becoming a Christian."¹¹
- Traveled with Paul-- Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16.
- Practicing physician-- "Skilled in the art of healing the sick."¹²
- Researched an historical account of the birth, life, ministry, and resurrection of Jesus (Luke) and the work of Jesus through the early church (Acts). In Acts, Luke mentions 95 persons from 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 Mediterranean Islands.¹³

LUKE-ACTS

A Two-Volume Work

Symmetrical in size-- Luke (19,400 words) and Acts (18,400 words)

Comprising 25% of the NT¹⁴

⁸ Wesley Towne, "ACTS," 3.

⁹ Wesley Towne, 3.

¹⁰ Wesley Towne, 3.

¹¹ Wesley Towne, 3.

¹² Wesley Towne, 4.

¹³ Wesley Towne, 4.

¹⁴ Stephen Armstrong, "Acts of the Apostles."

Volume 1, Luke

What Jesus did and taught in his incarnation.

Volume 2, Acts

What Jesus continued to do in his enthronement.¹⁵

LUKE-ACTS

Similarities

Both start in Jerusalem.

Both highlight commission narratives (Luke ends and Acts begins with the Great Commission)

Both cover 30 years,

Both give 25% of the content to Jesus' last days (in Jerusalem) and Paul's last days (in Rome).

Both developed parallels between Jesus in the Gospel and His disciples in Acts.¹⁶

THEOPHILUS

Direct Recipient of Luke and Acts

- “Most excellent” derived from the Greek word *kratistos*, describing a person of high social status and wealth, often of equestrian rank in Roman society, below the senatorial order, and requiring a minimum of 400,000 sesterces (net worth of USD 4,350,000).¹⁷
- Possible Reconstruction-- Convinced by the Holy Spirit to subsidize Luke's research (physicians were typically poor and from the slave class), Theophilus is the “direct recipient,” benefiting with a deeper knowledge and opportunity to grow as a new believer. Prompted by the Spirit, he finds scribes to make copies of the manuscript for wide distribution to churches that Luke and Paul have overseen throughout the empire. Luke's immediate audience is Theophilus, but he expected the works to be copied and circulated.¹⁸

Why did Jesus need the Holy Spirit to communicate to his apostles?

Answer: “Spiritual truth cannot be understood by the flesh, by natural man. It can only be understood by the Spirit of God.” (STEPHEN ARMSTRONG)

¹² *What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit **who is from God**, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.* ¹³ *This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in **words taught by the Spirit**, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.* ¹⁴ *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.* 1 Corinthians 2:12–14 (NIV)

¹⁵ Wesley Towne, “ACTS,” 7.

¹⁶ Wesley Towne, 8.

¹⁷ Wesley Towne, 5.

¹⁸ Wesley Towne, 5.

Where did the Apostle's question of Israel's restoration originate?

⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

The answer: Throughout the prophets and dramatically in Zechariah 12:10-13. Zechariah describes the moment Jesus returns to Jerusalem at his second coming and pours out his spirit on the Jews to believe that they he, the one whom they crucified, is the Messiah.

Mourning for the One They Pierced

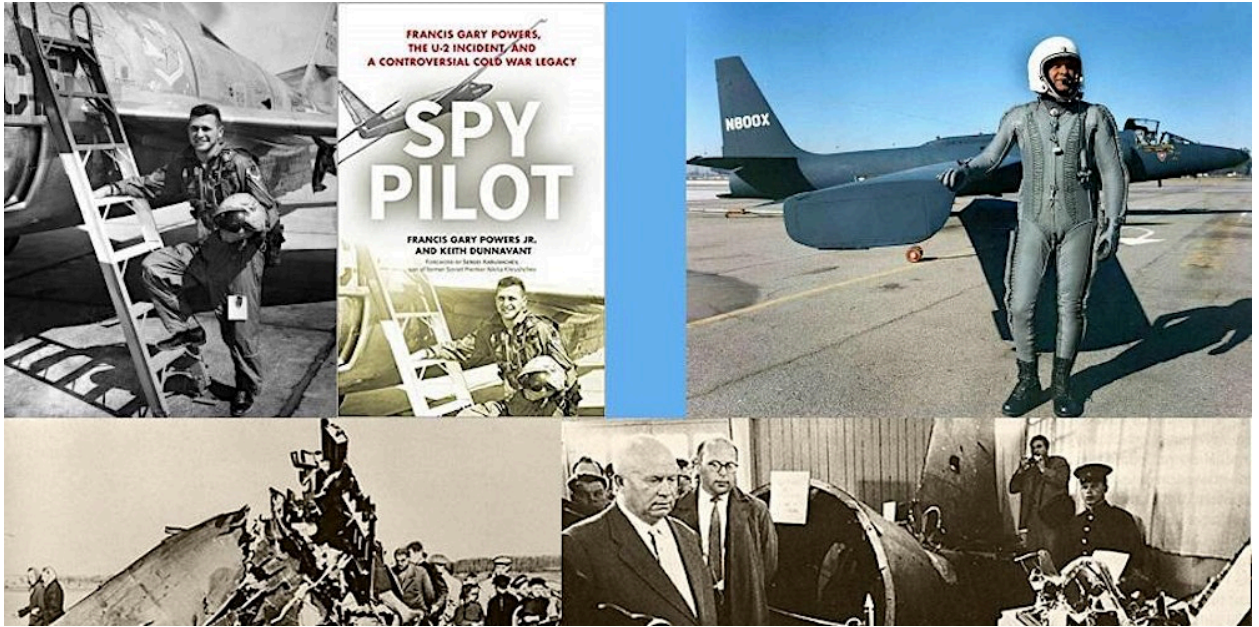
¹⁰ *"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a **spirit of grace and supplication**. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."* Zechariah 12:10 (NIV)

THEY WERE UNSTOPPABLE FOR 3 REASONS

1. FOLLOW THE SPIRIT OF JESUS FOR SPIRITUAL VITALITY

*"But you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you."* ACTS 1:8

*"After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave **many convincing proofs** that he was alive."* ACTS 1:3



Amazi story fam spy pilot, Francis Gary Powers, piloting U2 spy plane - shot dn over Russia on May 1, 1960, & he surv that crash fr near outerspace altit -- plus hard time in Soviet prision...Aft released, went on pilot a series of worlds most dangerous experimental aircraft...What a survivor. But sadly, yrs later, lost his life in ano crash. Was piloting simple traffic helicopter for LA radio sta - When it went dn & he was killed & u know why it crashed – 1 Reason. He Ran Out of Gas! After surv... U2 crash ... Soviet Prison ... thou experimental flights – He Ran Out GasWHAT A LESSON!

U could be ... most skilled pers at yr job ..Talented -But u will crash/burn if run out Gas!The early Xns had a vitality – energy – power – spirit – MISSING in Am Xns. & ACTS challenges us to get that back!!! Every key u will need in in the grt bk of ACTS



Accident: August 1, 1977 (faulty fuel guage)

"A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle...they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other; age creeps upon them; infirmities follow; ...those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. It (the release) comes at last -- the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them -- and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence, a world which will lament them a day and forget them forever." MARK TWAIN SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH

HOW? Fuel-up regularly

1. Give Jesus the first 15 minutes of each day.
2. Find your people.

2. FOLLOW THE SPIRIT OF JESUS BY SHARING YOUR STORY

*"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."* ACTS 1:8





“They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” ACTS 2:45-47

HOW? B.L.E.S.S.

3. FOLLOW THE SPIRIT OF JESUS BY LETTING HIM PUT YOU IN

*“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, **ordinary** men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” ACTS 4:13*

²⁴ However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace. Acts 20:24 (NIV)

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

What They Didn't Have... • \$ Backing • Great Buildings • Organizational Structures • Stable Economy • Favorable Governmental Conditions • Supportive Media

What They Did Have... (IMPACT) • 120 People (Peter, Paul, Barnabas, James, Stephen, Phillip, Lydia, Pricilla, Aquila) • 32 Countries • 54 Cities • 9 Islands • Rome

HOW? start

What did they have—impact.

Peter, Paul, Barnabas, James, Stephen, Philip, Lydia, Priscilla, Aquila were all some of the famed early Christian leaders, out of a number that started at only 120 people total. But they went to 32 countries, 54 cities, 9 islands and to the super-power of that day, Rome.

Why? They had 1 resource—the people in the church. EVERYONE!!!!

They had impact because everyone was a player, not a spectator. ECKARD



Pic this. YR sitting stop light — in yr 1971 Fd Pinto – smoke pour exhaust (& for u yng & don't know what Pinto is... 1 of 10 worst cars hist – the others were Gremlin, Vega). Yr sitting in yr '71 Pinto, some pulls nxt brand new Lamborghini (571 hspwr - Sells for \$273,000 - top speed 202) This car rumbles up nxt to u, owner looks over at u & feels compassion for u. Feels sorry for u in

piece junk yr riding arnd in. Feels so sorry, gets out, walks over, knocks on window.

U roll dn, handle falls off, shove dn. He says, "I've got deal u. I will trade u my brand new

Lamb for yr '71 Ford Pinto rt now, on the spot." (Guys- ? How take this deal?)

U say, what does have to do w/ God? God lks dn sees r pathetic cond & feels compass for us. Offers an exchange. I'll excg life of my son – his perf for yr imperfection. Want to trade?

Imag Bill Gates calling u on phone. Board just fin meeting & want to offer u Microsoft in exch for yr pers bus which happ be hot dog stand at corner Wash/111 which can't get permit..

We'd all take it rt here, rt now!

Yr thinking 2 things:

#1 Never happ in mill yrs- prob rt & #2 If were offered deal like-you'd take it on the spot. Deal God offers to us is phenomenal. It's much better than that deal.

(What good is Lamborghini to dead guy?)

(In other words, Microsoft, I guarantee don't have "Windows" in heaven. They'd have Mac's.)

Few years ago Mercedes got commercial. Pres, demonstrating Mercedes crash resistant frame.

Told viewers at end of commercial – Mercedes has decided not to patent it "because some things are too important not to share". Listen, an exchange program with God where he'll exchange all my flaws and failures is too important not to share.

Follow the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7)

Bibliography

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