

Acts of God’s People Empowered by the Holy Spirit ²

Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, was not an apostle, but a close associate of Peter and Paul. Luke was a Gentile, an educated man and physician whose home was at Phillipi, Macedonia.

Day 317 - Acts 1-2 ●

Acts 1 reveals what the First Christians believed. ²

1. They believed in the Risen Christ (1:1-11)
2. They believed in Each Other (1:12-14)
3. They believed in Prayer (1:15, 24-25)
4. They believed in God’s Leading (1:16-23)

Ordinary people were able to do extraordinary things because the Spirit of God was at work in their lives. ²

“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.” Acts 1:8

Acts 2 records four experiences in the life of the church. ²

1. The Church Waiting for the Spirit (2:1)
2. The Church Worshiping the Lord (2:2-13)
3. The Church Witnessing to the Lost (2:14-41)
4. The Church Walking in the Spirit (2:42-47)

What significant event is recorded in the last ten verses of Luke and the first ten verses of Acts?

Day 318 - Acts 3-5 ●

In his previous sermon, Peter had explained that the cross was the meeting place of divine sovereignty and human responsibility (Acts 2:23); and he repeated this truth in this sermon (3:17-18). ²

1. The Healing of a Lame Man (Acts 3)
2. The Beginning of Persecution (Acts 4)
3. Purging and Persecution (Acts 5)

Peter and John were arrested, tried, and threatened by the Sanhedrin, the same council that a few months before had condemned Jesus to die. The Sanhedrin could not deny the miracle, because the man was standing before them; and yet they could not explain how “uneducated and untrained men” could perform such a mighty deed.

When asked to explain the secret of his remarkable ministry, the noted British preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon replied, “My people pray for me.”

St. Augustine said, “Pray as though everything depended on God, and work as though everything depended on you.” ²

Acts 4:24-30 is one of the truly great prayers recorded in the Bible – a prayer of thanksgiving for the sovereign power of God. ¹

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” Acts 5:29-32

How are both repentance and conversion necessary for salvation?

Acts 3:17-26

Day 319 – Acts 6:1-8:3 •

Acts 6 and 7 focus on the ministry and martyrdom of Stephen, a Spirit-filled believer. Stephen was faithful in life and death.

In his sermon, Stephen recited the privileges of the nation Israel and their rejection of God’s messengers; then he laid blame for the slaying of Jesus squarely on his hearers. ¹

“Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.” Acts 7:52-53

What can one conclude based on Luke 12:8 in regard to Stephen?

Day 320 – Acts 8:4-9:43 •

The events in Acts 8 center around four different men. ²

1. A Zealous Persecutor – Saul (8:1-3)
2. A Faithful Preacher – Philip (8:4-8)
3. A Clever Deceiver – Simon the Sorcerer (8:9-25)
4. A Concerned Seeker – an Ethiopian (8:26-40)

The Christians were scattered due to great persecution.

Acts 9 records the account and aftermath of Paul’s conversion.

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Acts 9:15-16

After his conversion, Paul disappears for three years. It is likely that Saul’s visit to Arabia (Gal. 1:17) took place about this time. Though not mentioned in Acts, this period in Paul’s life would probably fit between Acts 9:22 and 9:23. ¹

Acts 9:26 states that Paul came to Jerusalem, but the disciples were all afraid of him. Then, Paul goes somewhere else for seven years. In Acts 11:25, we will hear of Paul again when Barnabas will be sent to find him and bring him to the church of Antioch.

List five different names that were used for God’s people in Acts 9.

 (9:2)

 (9:13)

 (9:14)

 (9:19)

 (9:30)

Day 321 – Acts 10-11 ●

Chapter 10 is pivotal in the Book of Acts, for it records the salvation of the Gentiles.

The meaning of Peter's Acts 10:11-16 vision is explained in 10:28. God was showing Peter that he should not call any man unholy or unclean. It was unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner. Peter shared the gospel with Cornelius, Cornelius's relatives and close friends. The Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. These Gentile converts were then baptized in water.

The difference between Cornelius and many religious people today is this: he knew that his religious devotion was not enough to save him. John Wesley was like Cornelius in many respects. Wesley was a religious man, a church member, a minister and the son of a minister.

On May 24, 1738, Wesley reluctantly attended a small meeting in London where someone was reading aloud from Martin Luther's commentary on Romans. "About a quarter before nine," Wesley wrote in his journal, "while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." The result was the great Wesleyan revival that not only swept many into the kingdom, but also helped transform British society through social action." ²

What criticism was raised against Peter in Acts 11?

When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life." Acts 11:18

Day 322 – Acts 12-13 ●

James, the brother of John, became the first apostle to be martyred, beheaded by Herod. (Acts 12:2)

Peter was in prison for the third time awaiting trial and certain death. An angel of the Lord woke him up, Peter's chains fell off his hands, and he was led past the first and second guard, freed from prison.

Why did an angel of the Lord strike Herod so that he died?

Day 323 – Acts 14-15 ●

In Acts chapter 13, Paul becomes the dominant figure. Paul's first missionary journey is details in Acts 13-14.

Key principles of Paul's first missionary journey. ²

1. He worked primarily in the key cities and challenged the believers to take the message out to the more remote areas.
2. He used one approach with the synagogue congregations (Jewish Christians) and another with the Gentiles.
3. He majored on establishing and organizing local churches.
4. He grounded the believers in the Word of God.

What encouragement can you gain as you study the life of John Mark? (Acts 13:13, 15:36-41; 2 Timothy 4:11)

References

¹ *Ryrie Study Bible*, Moody Press, 1995.

² *Be Dynamic*, Warren W. Wiersbe, 1987.