

Acts 1-2 “How to be an (amazing) New Testament Church”



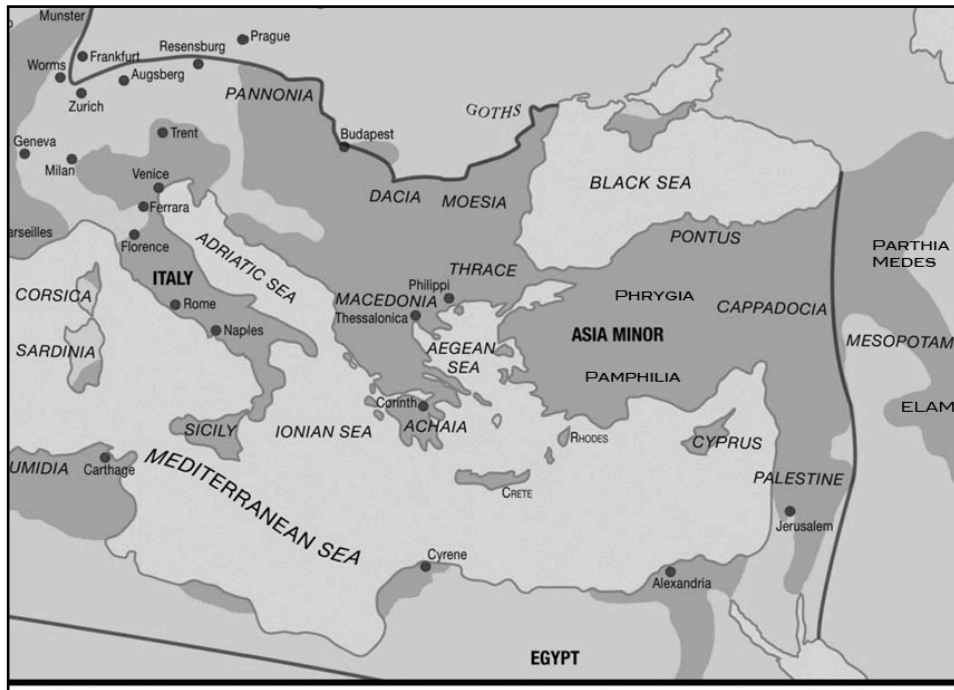
Lukey-Luke: The Biblical Historian who writes faster than the Heretics

The “Acts-as-a-Bridge” theme: Luke presents the developments in Acts 1-2 as a fulfillment of OT prophecies

- Judas’ fate & replacement (Acts 1:20 < Ps 69:25; 109:8)
- The prophecy of Joel concerning the outpouring of God’s Spirit on his people in the last days is applied by Peter to the events of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-36 < Joel 2: 23-30)

Pneuma-matic Luke: Of the four gospel writers, Luke is the one who places the heaviest emphasis on the Holy Spirit...[Here, again] In the early chapters of Acts Luke refers to the promise, the gift, the baptism, the power and the fullness of the Spirit in the experience of God’s people. (Stott 60)

Oratory Overload? Speech-Making in Acts. Luke seems to follow a trait of ancient historiography by having his main characters communicate via speeches. There are 22 speeches recorded in Acts (for the record, it’s the Christians 19 and the non-Christians 3, with the scoring as follows: Paul = 9, Peter = 8, Stephen = 1, and James 1). Almost all Evangelical scholars believe that most of these speeches are a condensed version, an accurate summary of what was said and not the whole discourse.



1. How to Choose spiritual leaders (Acts 1:12-26)

1.

2.

3.

4.

[5. Casting of Lots? Probably not!]

Too many men in the huddle, or, Why get that twelfth man? [cf. Luke 9:1-6; Luke 22:28-30]

Acts 2 The Day of Pentecost & the Coming of the Holy Spirit

Many parallels have been offered for understanding the Day of Pentecost: The Giving of the Law at Mt Sinai; Pentecost is the Feast of first fruits; The early ministry of Jesus (in Luke); But Luke does not seem to develop or pursue any of these.

2. How to play a role in an amazing evangelistic event Acts 2:1-11

Who were these people? "...They were all together..."

Who is the audience?

What happened? The emphasis is on The objectivity of this event

1.

2.

3.

What did they say in those other languages?

Wind and Fire in Scripture

The presence of the Spirit of God had been represented by wind (1 Kings 19:11; Is. 66:15; Ez. 37; John 3:8) John the Baptist's prophecy was that the Coming One would baptize with wind and fire (Luke 3: 16-18)

Can scriptural imagery help us understand this event?

- The wind = power
- The fire = purity
- The languages = universality

Luke intentionally uses metaphorical language:

NIV: "a sound like..."; "...what seemed to be tongues of fire..."

KJV: "a sound... as of..." , "...tongues like as of fire..."

NAS: "...a noise like..." , "tongues as of fire..."

The Pentecost" by Alexander Sadoyan,
www.interarteonline.com/Alexander_Sadoyan.htm



Theology behind the Gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Stott, Polhill, Fernando)

- The sending of his Spirit is the final act of the saving ministry of Jesus, before the Parousia
- Pentecost proved that the Church was now empowered to bear its mission
- Pentecost was the inauguration of the new era of the Spirit
- Pentecost is the first 'revival', the first of those unusual visitations of God in which a whole community becomes aware of his immediate, overwhelming presence
- Pentecost was the first fruits of a spiritual harvest
- Pentecost teaches that personal witness (Peter's speech) is still required to reach others.
- Pentecost reveals that the Church's mission has worldwide implications
- From this point forward in Acts, the gift of the Holy Spirit is an integral part of the conversion experience

3. How NOT to get distracted by Glossolalia (or other Biblical surprises)

Recognize the Miracle: there are accounts of the linguistic difficulties (dialectal traits) Galileans had when speaking; theirs was considered to be a sign of uneducated background.

Recall Important reminders from scripture

The word “tongues” can be a bit ambiguous; “dialect” and “language” (Acts 2:4,6,8) cannot;

Speaking in tongues is indeed a genuine gift of the spirit; Paul in 1st Corinthians warns against undue attention given to it (Bruce 52);

Recontextualize: How might this be different from the instances of speaking in Tongues that Paul deals with in Corinth? (Stott)

Consider:	Jerusalem (Acts 2)	Corinth (1 Cor. 12, 14)
Direction of the tongues	Directed to others	Directed to God
Character of the tongues	Comprehensible	Unintelligible
Purpose of the tongues	Evidential	Edificatory

4. Acts 2: 12-41 How to answer a confused but spiritually ripe crowd

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
4. Keep Christianity about Christ !

The Theology behind Peter’s speech

Joel’s prophecy regarded the last times; Peter’s speech indicates that he clearly understood his audience to be living in those last times

Interpretative mode : “This is that...”

Joel: “And afterwards,



Peter: “In the last days, God says,



I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

The first and main theme of [Joel's] prophecy is that God is going to pour out his spirit upon all the people, i.e., *upon all kinds of people* and not just upon the prophets, kings and priests." (Marshall 73)

There are still spiritual conditions for receiving the Spirit, but there are no social distinctions... (Stott 74)

Peter uses Scripture (Psalm 16) AND cultural knowledge to make his point: David was dead, and his tomb proves it; Jesus is the true fulfillment of this prophecy since, unlike David, he did not stay in the grave

Peter's speech contains elements common to most early apostolic preaching

- An announcement that the age of fulfillment has arrived, including a citation of OT scriptures pointing toward this fulfillment
- An account of the ministry, death, and triumph (exaltation) of Christ
- A call to repentance

In v. 36 Peter's speech moves from scriptural truth to accountability: Jesus was the messiah, was killed, raised from the dead, and summoned to sit at the right hand of God the Father... how terrible, then was the act of the Jews in crucifying Jesus (Marshall 80)

Peter concludes with a promise of hope (38)

Analyzing Peter's Plan of Salvation

A Pair of requirements: repentance & baptism (sign, seal, admittance into the visible church)

A Pair of promises: the forgiveness of sins & receipt of the Holy Spirit

Peter's "Life and Ministry of Christ"

- Fully human and divine
- Put to death, but according to God's purposes
- Raised from the dead
- Exalted up to heaven, pouring down his Spirit
- Gives forgiveness
- Adds believers to his community

5. How to practice faithful witnessing

- Answer real questions (“What is happening?”)
- Tell the Gospel events (Death & resurrection)
- Bring up the Gospel witnesses (OT scriptures, testimony of the Apostles)
- Expound upon the Gospel promises (forgiveness, power of HS)
- Remind people of the Gospel conditions (repentance, public evidence of faith)

6. A 20th Century example of a radically changed life for Christ (Fernando 118)

Stories like Peter’s transformation have been repeated over and over in the history of the church. In 1935 Blasio Kigosi, a schoolteacher in Rwanda, Central Africa, was deeply discouraged by the lack of life in the church and the powerlessness of his own experience. He followed the example of the first Christians and closed himself for a week of prayer and fasting in his little cottage. He emerged a changed man. He confessed his sins to those whom he had wronged, including his wife and children. He proclaimed the gospel in the school where he taught, and revival broke out there, resulting in students and teachers being transformed. They were called abaka, meaning ‘people on fire.’ Shortly after that, Blasio was invited to Uganda, to share with the leaders of the Anglican Church there. As he called leaders to repentance, the fire of the Spirit descended again on the place, with similar results as in Rwanda.

Several days later, Blasio died... His ministry lasted only a few weeks, but the revival fires sparked through his ministry swept throughout East Africa and continue to the present. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been transformed over the decades through this mighty East African revival. It all began with a discouraged Christian setting himself apart to seek the fullness of God’s Spirit (Fernando 118)

Practices of The early church 2:42-47

This early Church was a learning Church, a loving Church, a worshipping church and an evangelical church

How to put Acts 1-2 into Practice
“Being a (pretty amazing) New Testament Church”

Practical Quotes

“If the Holy Spirit is the divine gift which empowers and guides the church, the corresponding human attitude towards God is prayer” (Marshall 62)

The wind and the fire were abnormal, and probably the languages too; the new life and joy, fellowship and worship, freedom, boldness and power were not” (Stott 61)

“It is the Lord’s prerogative to add new members to his own community; it is the joyful prerogative of existing members to welcome to their fellowship those whom he has accepted.” (Bruce 75)

- 1. How will you participate in the choosing of spiritual leaders? (Sept. 28!)**

- 2. How will you play a role the amazing work of evangelism?**

- 3. What are the debatable issues in scripture that can distract you from the primary missions of the church?**

- 4. What can you do this week to be better prepared to take advantage of divinely scheduled appointments to talk about your faith?**

- 5. Take one of the analyses of Peter’s speech and draft your own personalized statement about who Jesus is, what he has done, what he has promised, and what someone has to do to appropriate His righteousness.**

- 6. What might it take for you to seek a radically changed life for Christ?**

Acts 12-26 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives...When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus — he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." ... "For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms, "‘May his place be deserted; let there be no-one to dwell in it,’ [Psalm 69:25] and, "‘May another take his place of leadership.’ [Psalm 109:8]. Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Acts 2: 1-11

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs — we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Acts 2:12-41

Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters

will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ [Joel 2:28-32]

“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him: “I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’ [Psalm 16:8-11] “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” [Psalm 110:1]

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he 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 favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.