

Spirit-Empowered Witnesses Acts 1:1-11

Michael Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World*

Three crucial decades in world history. That is all it took. In the years between AD 33 and 64 a new movement was born. In those thirty years it got sufficient growth and credibility to become the largest religion the world has ever seen and to change the lives of hundreds of millions of people. It has spread into every corner of the globe and has more than two billion adherents. It has had an indelible impact on civilization, on culture, on education, on medicine, on freedom and of course on the lives of countless people worldwide. And the seedbed for all this, the time when it took decisive root, was in these three decades. It all began with a dozen men and a handful of women: and then the Spirit came.

How should we study Acts?

- #1: Cold Scholar
- #2: Casual Admirer
- #3: Committed Soldier

#1: Luke's Message Continues (1:1)

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach

Luke 1:1-4:

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that

you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Luke is a Syrian, a native of Antioch, by profession a physician. He was a disciple of the apostles and afterwards accompanied Paul until the martyrdom of Paul. He served the Lord without distraction, without a wife, without children, and at the age of eighty-four he fell asleep in Boeotia, full of the Holy Spirit.
(Anonymous, The "Anti-Marcionite" prologues to the Gospels)

#2: Jesus' Ministry Continues (1-11)

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

The Ascension

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

#3: The Church's Mission Continues (6-11)

A. The Question (6)

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

B. The Responses (7-8)

1. “That’s None of Your Business” (7)

⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

2. “This is Your Business”: Be my Witnesses Everywhere (8-11)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

- ^{2:32} This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are **witnesses**.
- ^{3:15} and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are **witnesses**.
- ^{10:39} And we are **witnesses** of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree,

- ^{22:15} for you will be a **witness** for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard

“We cannot hesitate to believe that the great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries (Harnack).

Lloyd Jones: “I spend half my time telling Christians to study doctrine, and the other half telling them doctrine is not enough.”