

AMAZING ACTS

—act one

Acts 1:1 to 9:31

Enjoy the real life drama of ACTS

by Gerard Chrispin



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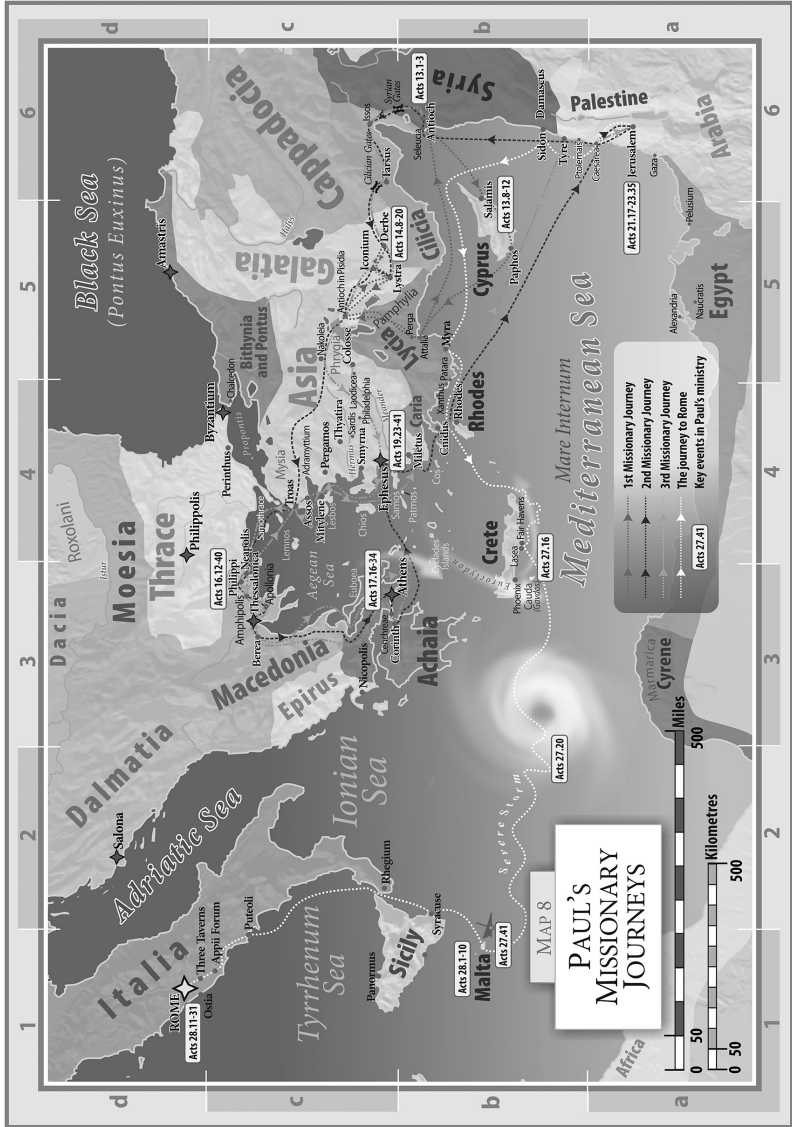
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This book is dedicated to Bible-believing churches and Christians worldwide who suffer because their ‘crimes’ are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, uphold the Bible as God’s word, and to share its good news with others. Jesus alone is *the way, the truth and the life* (John 14:6). They know they *ought to obey God rather than men* (Acts 5:29) even if that costs them their freedom and their lives.



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CHAPTER I

An explosive start!

ACTS I:1-14

¹ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. ⁴ And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' ⁷ And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you

*shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’*⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,¹¹ who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.¹³ And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James.¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 1:1–3

The facts about Acts—and an explosive start

Theophilus has a lot of reading to do! But he is used to it. Luke has already addressed his gospel to him.¹ In it he shared established facts about Jesus’ birth, life, teaching, miracles, death on the cross for our sins and rising again. Now Luke leads us to the thrilling start, growth and early adventures of Christ’s new church. Like footprints in newly fallen snow, we will follow the tracks of the early Christians.

Acts 1:10–11 takes over where Luke 24 finished, with Christ’s ascension to Heaven. What an explosive start to a new era! Before that, the risen Jesus had often met with and taught His disciples. That provided some of the ‘many infallible proofs’ that after His death on the cross He rose from the tomb. The risen Lord appeared to many people in different circumstances and at

different times.² Credible, first-hand, and consistent eye-witnesses testified to this. Such strong evidence would gladden the heart of any courtroom advocate! This gripping book of Acts is no fairy tale. Like the rest of God’s word, the Bible, it is God-breathed³ and entirely trustworthy. As you read it, you can trust it!

Acts 1:4–8

A staggering mission statement—and how to achieve it

Jesus was fully Man and fully God. At one meal with His disciples He told them that one day, as they waited at Jerusalem, God would keep His promise of baptizing them with the Holy Spirit.⁴ John the Baptist had immersed willing converts to Christ into water to signal their turning from wrong in their lives.⁵ Jesus would place under the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit anyone who turned to Him from sin. The Bible teaches that when the Holy Spirit comes to live within each new believer in Christ He also places that new Christian into the body of Christ, namely His worldwide church.⁶ The Holy Spirit’s first task is to convict us of our sinfulness and unrighteous lives, for which we deserve God’s eternal judgement.⁷ He then points us to Jesus who bore our sins and our deserved judgement when He died on the cross in our place.⁸

The Holy Spirit changes the lives and eternal destiny of those who receive Christ. He also helps weak Christians to fulfil Jesus’ demanding mission statement of Acts 1:8, to share His good news ‘in Jerusalem, and in all Judea (which surrounds Jerusalem) and Samaria, and to the end of the earth’. We must continue to make Christ known ‘here, there and everywhere’ by our changed lives and language. Great blessing awaits those who trust in Jesus as they tell others about their Saviour.

Acts 1:9–11**He is going! He is coming again!**

The last words of loved ones and famous people are often remembered. Listen to those last words of our risen Saviour before He ascends miraculously to His heavenly home. Jesus is far more than a religious teacher. Everything He is and all He has said and done reach their climax in His ascension to Heaven. No mere man could ever do that! Man on the moon caused great wonder and acclaim. God's coming from Heaven to earth in human flesh and then returning, make mere moon landings look trivial by comparison. And He came to save sinners. That too is special.

Jesus will return in glory.⁹ The New Testament is full of that certain hope. He will come to judge those who do not turn from sin and trust Him. He will take back with Him those who know Him as their Saviour and Lord.¹⁰ Jesus, as judge, will seal each person's eternal destiny

Acts 1:12–14**But life must go on. The power house for weaklings!**

After witnessing Jesus' ascension His disciples now return home from the Mount of Olives. Previously they cowered away in fear and 'froze' after Jesus's crucifixion, like rabbits caught in car headlights. They were not easily convinced about the resurrection, but were later persuaded by the facts. Now God gives them great confidence in Him. They return to the upper room to pray. In future, personal individual confidence in Christ and the encouragement brought by praying together will help them live for their Saviour in an often-hostile world. Others join in to pray with the eleven remaining leaders.¹¹ Humble women who have served Jesus faithfully accompany His own mother

and His formerly sceptical and critical brothers.¹² They pray with the apostles. Joining in prayer together with others in a prayer meeting becomes a new blessing when Christ becomes your Lord and Saviour. But they now have a difficult choice to make, as we shall see soon.

Questions on Chapter I

An Explosive Start!—Acts 1:1–14

A. What confidence can you have that you can really trust that the account in the book of Acts is true?

Acts 1:1–3, Luke 1:3, 2 Timothy 3:14–16, 2 Peter 1:19–21

B. Why can it often be so hard to fulfil Jesus' mission statement of Acts 1:8? How does God make it possible for a new Christian to achieve it?

Acts 1:5, Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:18–20

C. What does Acts 1:1–11 teach about Jesus? What do you learn about prayer in Acts 1:12–14? Is there a connection between them?

Acts 1:1–11, Acts 1:12–14, Philippians 4:6–7, Revelation 1:17–18, Hebrews 7:25