

ACTS 1

The book of the Acts (of the Apostles) was written some time between 63 and 70 AD around by Luke as a sequel to his Gospel. The Book of Acts is also called the *Acts of the Apostles* and it's a sequel to Luke's Gospel. It's an accurate, historical record and narrative of the early church that began in an event called Pentecost when God the Holy Spirit came during a corporate prayer meeting to empower and dwell in all Believers. The Book of Acts focuses on the men and women who took the Great Commission seriously as they began to actively and intentionally spread the Good News of the risen Savior in Jerusalem and then to the most remote corners of the world. And when they did, the enemy said, they turned the world upside down. Acts is an a connecting link between Christ's life and the life of the church and between the Gospel's and the Epistles/Letters. Acts is also a theological book, with lessons and living examples of the work of the Holy Spirit, church relationships and organization, the implication of grace and the law of love. And finally, Acts is an apologetic work building a strong case for the validity of Christ's claims and promises.

Vs. 1-3 – Luke writes to Theophilus and by saying most “*O Theophilus*”

indicates Luke was a using a title that indicates Theophilus was a person of high rank. The phrase “*taken up*” refers to Jesus' ascension to heaven, the end of his earthly ministry. The specific commandment Luke refers to here is the Great Commission which concludes the *synoptic Gospels* (Matthew Mark, and Luke). In the forty days between Jesus' resurrection from the dead and His ascension there are at least 10 appearances of Jesus to believers confirming His resurrection from the dead. The Apostle Paul details who saw the resurrected Jesus in *1 Corinthians 15:5-8*. Our faith in Jesus' birth,

ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven are solidly rooted in God's word pertaining to church history. The *Kingdom of God* was the central topic of discussion between Jesus and His apostles during the forty days between Jesus' resurrection and His ascension. The *Kingdom of God* refers to the reign of God over the hearts and lives of those who have trusted Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. When Jesus taught the disciples to pray He taught "*Thy kingdom come, Your will be done on this earth as it is in heaven*"

(Matthew 6:10). The most important thing for believers is not to get more concerned about the end times; our primary focus should be to get busy sharing the Gospel in the *present times* to this dying world.

The Holy Spirit Promised (vs. 4-8)

Vs. 4 - Before Jesus sent the church "out" He "first" brought them together "in" corporate prayer so they would build relationships and then be empowered by the Holy Spirit to do kingdom advancement work. Jesus desired the disciples to assemble together because man was created to live in community; to live in fellowship with one another. God said in ***Hebrews 10:25*** "*NOT forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*" God meets us in a special way when we are on one accord coming together for kingdom advancement. Notice God commanded them

before they left Jerusalem to do kingdom advancement work “to Wait on the promise of the Father” - a necessary virtue that many Christians really do not like to exercise and exhibit is *patience*. But [Isaiah 40:31](#) affirms that those who “wait” on the Lord shall renew their strength – they shall mount up with wings like eagles; we’ll run and not be weary and we’ll walk and not faint.”

Now to “wait” Biblically speaking, does not mean we become couch potatoes sitting back in your easy chair doing nothing. The word “wait” means, relying on and knowing God’s promises, as you pray them back with confident expectation. And while you’re Waiting on God to answer you in regard to what His Word Promises let me share what you should be doing while you are waiting:

1. Exercise Spiritual Disciples – Bible Intake (reading, meditating on, studying, and memorizing Scripture), Prayer, Worship, and Fasting (Jesus said there are some things that come only by prayer and fasting). Instead of starting the day on Facebook...we need to “put our face in this book”
2. Walk worthy of the calling on your life. We must guard our behavior – we must have the right mind set – [Philippians 2:5](#) says, *let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*. We must pursue hard the will of God. Instead of questioning why we are going through your trial...our mind set must be I’m going to make it through this trial because God has allowed or directed this trial for my good and His glory. [James 4:7](#) says, “Submit to God resist the devil and he will flee.

3. **Give Away your Spiritual Gift** – Every believer in Christ Jesus has been given at least one spiritual gift and we are to use it to glorify God. (Do you know what your spiritual gift is or gifts are?...if not, then pray to God to reveal your gift(s). **1 Peter 4:10** affirms - *As each one of us has received a gift use it to serve one another.* So while you are waiting on your answer be engaged in serving others...volunteer to serve during our 4th Saturday food distribution ministry – prepare a meal for someone on the sick and shut in list – write an encouraging note to someone who is enduring a trial. Often times *after* we begin *servicing others* with the “**right motive**” is when our breakthrough occurs. *Now we can't manipulate God; you can't serve just to be blessed; God knows our heart.*

4. **Learn how to WORSHIP in the midst of your storm** – Don't stop attending and participating in church...don't stop fellowshiping with believers. **Proverbs 18:1** says, “*A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.*” And stop telling everybody “*How big your problem is*”...start telling everybody “**How big your God is.**” Church, God does not ignore a broken and contrite heart – you see...when praises go up, blessings can come down.

5. **Live in Expectancy** - Expect God to answer and deliver you out of your trial *in His perfect timing*. **1 John 5:14-15** gives me such peace while I'm waiting on God. It says, “*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*” Now if we want God to **hear our prayer** so that we can have **confidence God will answer our prayer...we must resolve Psalm 66:18** (read verse). Finally, regarding the latter phrase of **vs. 4** we must know a ***promise***

from God is a guarantee; it is already done in God's perfect timing. ***Luke 24:49*** records this promise; it says *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry (or wait) in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”*

Vs. 5 – John baptized with water, symbolic of what a sinner does after they receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. And this was a baptism of repentance of sin into the new life of publicly acknowledging Jesus as your Lord and Savior. In the latter part of ***vs. 5b*** that says, *“but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now”* this was a reference to Pentecost found in ***Acts 2:1-4***. Ten days after Jesus shared this statement with the disciples the Holy Spirit came...and we today are baptized with the Holy Spirit when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior at the phase of Salvation called ***Justification***. The Holy Spirit was sent so that God would be with His followers after Jesus ascended back to heaven. The Holy Spirit is our seal and guarantee of the redemption of our mortal bodies – The Holy Spirit is our paraclete – the One called alongside us to guide us to know God's truth. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live the new life in Christ and He begins a lifelong process called ***Sanctification*** to help change us to be more like Christ.

Vs. 6 - we find the disciples still not fully understanding the mission of the master; they are still asking Jesus if He was going to restore a literal earthly kingdom to Israel. But what they were really saying is “Lord, do we get to be

in charge now”...and this lets us know the **Holy Spirit** is not operating in our lives when we’re more concerned with doing ministry **our way** verses **God’s way** when we are more worried about **who gets the credit for the ministry** **than if people get saved and God be glorified**. We cannot engage in ministry with the mind-set - “We always did it **this way**” instead of praying, “Lord, this year, how do **You** want us to do this ministry initiative?” Some people, when they are operating in the flesh, if they are not **leading a ministry initiative** they tend to not support it and they’ll even try to influence others to not support it with them.

Vs. 7 - Jesus is making a reference to a future event of the church of which no man knows the day or the hour when it will occur – the **Rapture** (primary Scripture reference - ***1 Thessalonians 4:13-17***). When the last person is saved in the Church Age also called the Age of Grace; God will say to Jesus – go get your bride – the church. All the dead in Christ and those alive at the time of sound of the archangel sounding the trumpet will be caught up to meet the Lord in the sky. The Rapture is an eminent event – nothing else need to occur before it happens, so this should compel us to stop gazing and start evangelizing.

Vs. 8 - The disciples’ mission from God was to *GO spread the Gospel* first by witnessing in Jerusalem (meaning home) – for us at TMFBC that means a 2-3

mile radius of this church building is our home base for unsaved souls...also the people in your sphere of influence is your home base. In addition to witnessing to the people in this area and your immediate sphere of influence...Jesus said “Go” to Judea (which represents the regional area) and go to Samaria and to end of the earth (worldwide). *So how are we at TMFBC affecting the word of God going to the regional area and worldwide?* If we are to be a functioning church like Christ commands, we must address operating in a “kingdom advancement manner. Well first, we must be trained on evangelism...we have had formal training at our church by Dwayne Pipkins and BGCT current director and their former evangelism director Oza Jones to help equip us to go out as a church and/or to partner with other churches striving to share the gospel in our region. Margaret/Sammy Quintana provide multiple opportunities for us to go beyond the borders of the USA as we will have multiple Casa Educativa mission trips to Mexico planned...other churches have youth mission trips planned of which we’ve been invited to partner with them. Through the CBA Church Network we have developed a relationship with a church in Coamo, Puerto Rico (Iglesia Bautista de Raham Baptist Church) after Hurricane Maria and the spiritual darkness on the island. And praise God for our media ministry who place our worship services and sermons online allowing the word to minister to people in our

region and all over the world. And then during our June 2019 Washington DC trip – we’ve paid for the translation of two books of the Bible (Ephesians and Colossians) for a people group in the South Sudan that currently does not have the Bible in their native language. God’s Good News of Salvation by grace through faith in Jesus has not reached its final destination yet...all of us have people in our family, people in our community, and on our job who are not saved...so we must pray for God to open up their heart to the Gospel when it’s shared with them.

Jesus Ascends to Heaven (vs. 9-11)

Vs. 9 - First of all we need to know regarding **vs. 9** that God the Father called Jesus home *after His mission was completed*; and that is exactly how it will be for you and I. No one leaves earth one minute early nor stay one minute late. And since we don’t know if God has destined us to marathon (long earthly life) or a sprint (short earthly life), we need to get busy planting seed and watering the seed of the Gospel where others have planted (all the increase is up to God). Jesus’ ascension ushered in a new age – the “Church Age or the Age of Grace. And it will end when the last person whom God the Father knows will be saved gets saved; and Jesus comes back for His bride in the Rapture. Everyone saved during the Church Age or the Age of Grace will receive a glorified body designed for us to live in eternity with Jesus. A body

whereby there will be no more pain...no more medication needed...a body whereby there will be no more hospital visits needed...no walkers or walking canes, and we will see all those who died and were saved during the church age. Jesus was received by God in heaven and He is seated at the Right Hand of the Father according to *Mark 16:19*.

Vs. 10-11 - The two men referenced in *vs. 10* were angels in the form of men. *Hebrews 13:2* says we better be careful how we treat folk because some have entertained angels unaware. Our Lord's ascension into heaven was an important part of His ministry; for if He had not returned to the Father, He could not have sent the "promised gift" of the Holy Spirit as stated in *John 16:5-15*. And "this same Jesus" is coming back again. Are you ready?

The Upper Room Prayer Meeting (vs. 12-14)

Vs. 12 – A "sabbath's day journey" was considered to be about a half mile (only this distance was permitted on the day of the sabbath). Jesus told the disciples that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit so they prayed and waited on it. In other words after they heard the sermon they did not walk out the church and forget all that was said; they were obedient to the word of God.

Vs. 13/14 – The phrase *“these all continued with one accord”* reflects notable unity. When we saw the disciples in the Gospels, they frequently fought and bickered. Some were jostling for position; who would sit on Jesus’ right and left hand. So what had changed? Peter still had the history of denying the Lord; Matthew was still a tax collector; Simon was still a zealot. Their differences were still there, but the resurrected Jesus in their hearts was greater than any difference. One accord also means “same mind” or thinking like-mindedly. Now that does not mean all the people thought and felt the same way about doing ministry etc., but they were people who set aside personal feelings and committed themselves to the same kingdom advancement tasks – and in this case it was witnessing to others about the birth, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of Jesus for His church. (Get a reader to read **John 17:20-21**). And the fact they were praying seeking God’s will made a difference. When we are faced with a difficult task and important decisions, don’t rush into the work and just hope it comes out the way it should. Your first step is to pray for the Holy Spirit’s power and guidance.

Matthias Chosen (vs. 15-26)

Vs. 15 – In this section of scripture (vs. 15-26) it represents the first church business meeting or church conference. The small group of 12 minus 1 had

already grown to more than 120. The main order of business was in their minds to appoint a new disciple, or apostle.

Vs. 16/17 - Here, Peter took a natural leadership role among the disciples as he often was the spokesman among the disciples during the earthly ministry of Jesus. There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting to lead; just lead for the glory of God; lead by Holy Spirit's guidance, and lead with the Bible as your blueprint. When Peter says, "*Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled*" - Peter's words show wisdom we did not often see in him before. He began by noting that Judas didn't spoil God's plan, he fulfilled it (this Scripture had to be fulfilled). This is something that only wise and mature disciples can see in the aftermath of evil. These Old Testament prophecy found in *Psalms 41:9* shows us Judas' betrayal was known to God and that it was sovereignly planned beforehand as the means by which Jesus would be killed.

Vs. 18-19 – The phrase *falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out* - Luke's historical note calls attention to the full details to how Judas died. Again, Luke is a physician, so he is more detailed than the other Gospel writers. *Matthew 27:5* says that Judas hanged himself, Luke simply adds details; after Judas died from strangulation apparently the rope was detached from the limb it was attached to and Judas fell and the impact

of falling from the tree ripped him open in the *Field of Blood*. It was called the *Field of Blood* not only because Judas spilled his blood there, but also because the field was purchased with the “blood money” (30 pieces of silver) given to Judas to betray Jesus.

Vs. 20-22 – The phrase “*for it is written*” is significantly important: Peter, quoting from two separate *Psalms (69:25 and 109:8)*, showed why God wanted them to choose another disciple to officially replace Judas. This was notable reliance on God’s Word. This wasn’t the wisdom of man at work, but a principle revealed in Scripture. *Now there are some scholars who believe Peter is making a reference in Psalm to King David and that David desired for someone from his lineage to replace him verses God is desiring someone would replace Judas.* Because when the apostle James was killed in *Acts 12:2* he was not replaced. Some scholars believe Peter made this request with good intentions and truly believed what he was asking was appropriate and since the manner in which he went about doing it – seeking God – following the qualifications laid down in Acts 1:21-22 for an apostle candidate: (1) to have been baptized by John the Baptist; (2) have accompanied the disciples from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry and (3) have physically seen the resurrected Jesus. Many scholars believe that God desired for Paul to be that apostle replacement because Paul was alive during Jesus’ ministry and he had seen

and heard from the resurrected Jesus in a vision on the road to Damascus.

But Paul made it clear he was not to be classified with the 12 Apostles in *1*

Corinthians 15:8; and *Galatians 1:15-24* and the 12 Apostles knew this. If the

12 Apostles thought that Paul was supposed to be one of them; they certainly

did not show it. In fact, they initially refused to admit Paul into Jerusalem

fellowship until Barnabus came to his rescue in *Acts 9:26-27*. The 12 Apostles

ministered primarily to the 12 tribes of Israel while Paul was sent to the

Gentiles (*Galatians 2:1-10*). It was necessary for the 12 Apostles to witness to

the 12 tribes of Israel at Pentecost. Some scholars say well nothing else is said

about Matthias in Scripture after this passage. But there is little specifically

mentioned of the work of some of the other 12 Apostles in the Gospels and

Acts. So believing either scholarly view does not put you in heaven or in hell it

really is okay to believe either view.

Vs. 23-26 – “*Casting lots*” was not voodoo; it was customary for the Jews to

determine the will of God on certain questions by this method since they

prayed and asked God to answer. Since they prayed for wisdom and they set

up criteria consistent with Biblical teaching they believed by faith the fall of

the lot was not determined by chance but by God’s sovereign will (*read*

Proverbs 16:33). *Now I have a very interesting question for you: Revelation*

21:14 tells is that each of the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem has the

name of one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. When we get to heaven, will it be Matthias or Paul's name listed as the twelfth apostle of the Lamb?