

“The Promise and Power of the Holy Spirit” **ACTS 1:1-26**

Theme: The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the establishment and spread of the church.

Background: Acts reveals the work of the Holy Spirit by bridging the church to the writings of the apostles (particularly Paul), and mapping the spread of Christianity around the known world at that time.

Acts also is a book that transitions God’s active work with the Jews to performing an incredible work through the establishment of the universal church.

Bruce writes, “But it is Luke that we have to thank for the coherent record of Paul’s apostolic activity. Without [Acts], we should be incalculably poorer. Even with it, there is much in Paul’s letters that we have difficulty in understanding; how much more there would be if we had no Book of Acts” (F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, p. 27).¹

Outline of Acts:

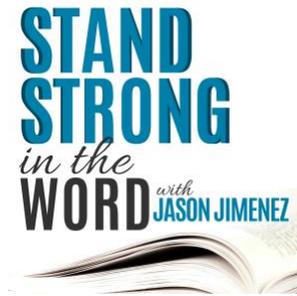
- 1. Jerusalem (Acts 1-8:3)**
- 2. Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:4-12:25)**
- 3. Ends of the World (13:1-28:31)**

Key Verse: Acts 1:8

1. The Record of Jesus Christ (1:1-5)

- A. *In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt* (bring about) **with all that Jesus began to do and teach**—**The former book was Luke, which contained the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ. And now Luke picks things up in part two in the book of Acts. **Theophilus** – “Dear to God,” was likely to be a wealthy figure who held a prominent position and funded Luke’s efforts. “*Since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning...that you may know with certainty the things you have been taught*” (Lk. 1:3, 4). According to

¹ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, vol. 2, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-), 349.



this approach Luke's goal was to record the spread of the gospel message from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth (1:8). Barclay writes in his commentary, "Luke's great aim was to show the expansion of Christianity, to show how that religion which began in a little corner of Jerusalem had in a little more than 30 years reached Rome."² This explains the transition from a Jewish ministry to a Gentile one, and from Peter to Paul. In addition, this view suits the historical outlook of Acts 1:1 with Luke 1:1-4. The prologue of Luke 1:1-4 is that of a historian like Herodotus, Thucydides, or Polybius. It is quite clear that Luke was writing history in both books.³

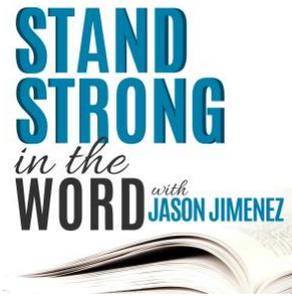
- 1) Luke is a first-rate historian based on his works (Luke & Acts). He was an eyewitness who wrote what he witnessed, was a contemporary of Paul, an investigator and interviewer of other eyewitnesses and followers of Christ, and published a biography of Christ and a record of the early church and apostles within 25-30 years after the ascension of Christ.
- 2) NOTE: While arguments from silence are not conclusive, it is perhaps significant that the book of Acts contains no allusion to events that happened after the close of Paul's two year imprisonment in Rome: e.g., the burning of Rome and the persecution of the Christians there (AD 64), the martyrdom of Peter and Paul (possibly 65-67) and the destruction of Jerusalem (70).

B. ² until the day when he was taken up (ascension to the Father; Lk. 24:51), **after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen** (to select; to prefer). John used the phrase **taken up** several times (6:62; 13:1, 3; 16:28; 17:13; 20:17). Luke is the only writer who mentions the ascension at the end of his book (Lk. 24:50-52); and then a second time Acts 1:2, 9-11. **Holy Spirit**—Empowered and guided Jesus on earth and will do even more for the apostles and the early church (Matt. 4:1; Lk. 3:22; 4:14, 18).

C. ³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs (*tekmēriōis*, demonstrable evidence), **appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God**. After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus spent forty days laying out evidence of His deity, validating His ministry as Messiah from the standpoint of

² William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. xvii.

³ John Walvoord, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *Vol. 2: The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (350). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



the OT, and expanding on the kingdom of God to come (the Millennial Kingdom).

- D. **4** *And 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; John the Baptist was the first to prophesy of the Holy Spirit to come (Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33), and then announced in the Upper Room by Jesus (Jn. 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15). The Holy Spirit would come on the apostles in a way never experienced.*

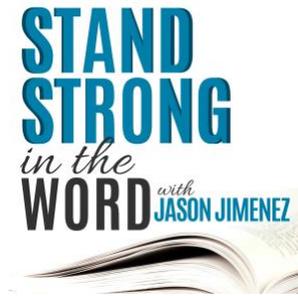
2. Baptized in the Holy Spirit (v. 5)

- A. **5** *for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* Water, in the OT, was often an analogy used by the prophets to refer to God’s Spirit (Isa 44:3; Ez. 39:39). **Baptized with the Holy Spirit**—This will be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It was a phrase used by John the Baptist regarding the ministry of Jesus (Matt. 3:11; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33). It was the official start of the earthly church. Paul writes, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free (1 Cor. 12:13).” The Holy Spirit joins all believers to the Body of Christ.

- 1) NKJV Study Bible: **“shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit:** The passive tense of the verb indicates that baptism does not depend upon our efforts to obtain the promise, but upon the Lord’s will. The simple future tense demonstrates that there is no uncertainty or doubt in the promise. The Greek word for *baptized* means “to immerse” or “to dip.” It also connotes being identified with someone or something. Spirit baptism means we have been placed in spiritual union with one another in the body of Jesus Christ, the church (see 1 Cor. 12:12, 13).”

3. The Commissioning of Christ (1:6-8)

- A. **6** *So when they had come together (filled with angst), they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore (change back to previous state) the kingdom to Israel?”* The disciples naturally interpreted this all to mean the coming restoration was about to happen (see Ezek. 36:36-37; Joel 2:28-29; Zech. 12:10).



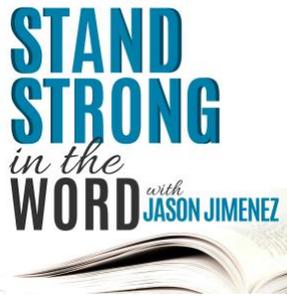
1) NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: “A central aspect of ancient Jewish hope was the restoration of Israel, which generally included the return of the “lost” tribes, gathering of the exiles, restoration of the house of David, and restoration of the temple. Jesus’ disciples may have shared all these hopes.”

- B. ⁷ *He said to them, “It is not for you to know times (duration of time) or seasons (dates) that the Father has fixed by his own authority.* Many Jews believed God would “adjust” His coming restoration, while others attempted to predict His return. However, Jesus affirms it is “fixed” as God has made it to be, and they will know once it happens. Paul writes in 1 Thess. 5:1, “Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you.”
- C. ⁸ *But you will receive power (dynamis, virtue of an ability; the capacity) 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.”* Jesus calls His disciples *witnesses* (a remnant) who are “called out” (*ekklesia*) to preach the gospel to *end of the earth* (OT reference from Isa. 49:6). The gospel is to spread geographically and ethnically. **Power**—They will be empowered in a “dynamite” way of the Holy Spirit, and teach, perform miracles, write inspired works, and grow the church of Christ.

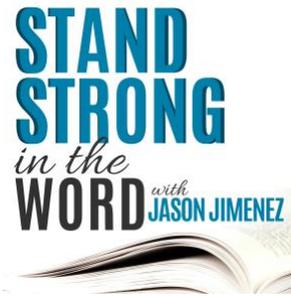
4. The Ascension of Christ (1:9-11)

- A. 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.* Jesus fulfilled the words in John 16:28, “I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”
- B. 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.”* The Ascension of Christ brought the empowering of the Holy Spirit and ushered in the period of the church to be salt and light to the world as we await the rapture of the church. Jesus will come back soon (Zech. 14:4; Rev. 1:7).

5. Prayer and Supplication (1:12-14)



- A. **12** *Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away* (about 3,000 feet). Jesus will return and stand as King on the Mount of Olives according to Zechariah 14:4.
- B. **13** *And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room* (the Passover room), *where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.* Luke provides an identical list from Luke 6:13-16, minus Judas Iscariot.
- C. **14** *All these with one accord* (same mind) *were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.* The disciples began to pray "In the Name of Jesus" (Jn. 14:13-14) with their families as they anticipate the coming of the Holy Spirit. **Women**—Luke mentioned many women followers of Jesus (Lk. 8:2-3; 23:49, 55; 24:1-11) and wives of the apostles (1 Cor. 9:5). **And his brothers**—Jesus' four brothers (James, Judas, Joseph, and Simon) didn't always believe (Mk. 3:21; Jn. 7:1-9).
6. **Choosing the 12th Apostle (1:15-26)**
- A. **15** *In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,* **16** *"Brothers, the Scripture had to* (divine necessity) *be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.* Peter stands before the 120 followers of Christ (1 Cor. 15:6) and is instructed by the prophetic Word to elect a new apostle.
- B. **17** *For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry."* **18** *(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.* Two explanations are given for Judas' bowels bursting open after his hanging. One, the rope broke and the swollen body burst open on impact. Second, his body was discovered and tossed over into Gehenna before the Sabbath. Either way, Luke's mentioning of this does not contradict Matt. 27:5. **Allotted his share in this ministry**—Judas was never truly a follower of Jesus Christ. He participated in activities, and had relationships with some of the disciples, but did not believe in Jesus as his personal Savior (Matt.



- 1:21; Jn. 1:14; Jn. 3:36). Instead, Judas is called the “son of perdition” (Jn. 17:12). A prophecy fulfilled according to Psalm 41:9.
- C. ***19And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20“For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’; and “ ‘Let another take his office.’*** Peter refers to two royal imprecatory psalms 69:25 and 109:8, and points to David’s prophetic reference to Judas’ betrayal and destruction.
- D. ***21So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”*** Being an eyewitness of actual events (John the Baptist’s ministry, teachings and healings of Jesus, the resurrection and ascension of Jesus) was vitally important, and a requirement to fill Judas’ seat. Filling this spot was a sign of restoration to come, and a sacred to preserve the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).
- E. ***23And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas (“Son of the Sabbath”), who was also called Justus (“The Just One”), and Matthias. 24And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” 26And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*** The key is prayer. The disciples look to God for direction on who He appointed as the twelfth apostle. ***Cast lots***—The disciples probably wrote the names of the two men on stones, placed it in a jar, shook it up and whichever name came rolling out first was a sign of God’s divine hand. This action was not practiced in the NT, but is mentioned in Proverbs 16:33.