

Acts 1:1-3 The Movement Continues

Today we are beginning an in-depth verse by verse study through the Book of Acts

A) Fascinating study - Curiosity - How many of your Bibles read - Acts of the Apostles as a title?

B) That is not a good title: Acts of the Holy Spirit working through his People.

C) That is really what we see in the book of Acts - The work that Jesus started continues in dramatic fashion through his church.

The Book of Acts serves as a:

A) **A Bridge.** The book of Acts is a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles. -

B) Imagine if we went from John to the book of Romans - **who is this Paul guy writing to the church in Rome**

C) How did a church in Rome every come into place - what about Corinth **1 -2 Corinthians and Galatia - Galatians - Ephesus - Ephesians**

D) Acts tells the story of how the work of Jesus continues and the message of the gospel spreads to the ends of the earth

The Book of Acts serves as a: A Transition.

A) The book of Acts is a transition book from Judaism to Christianity and from the Law of Moses to the Law of Christ.

B) In the book of Acts we see the gospel being preached to the Jews but also the gentiles

C) preached to "whosoever will" - **to beggars, kings, governors, Jews, Gentiles, rich, poor, bond, free, slave and master.**

In the book of Acts we see a Birthday

A) The book of Acts records for us the birth of the early church on the Day of Pentecost.

B) Something new and different came into existence on the Day of Pentecost. **God's church, the Body of Christ was born -**

C) brought into existence by God's Spirit.

A Supernatural Power

A) Acts gives us a record of the expansion of the church.

B) The book of Acts Chronicles a group of men and women who under the Power of the HS **did not leave their world the way that they found it. 1) Turned their world upside down!**

C) **This all started with 120 people meeting in an upper room in Jerusalem -**

1) and 30 yrs later the gospel of Christ had spread around the world by normal people empowered by the Holy Spirit.

D) It is estimated that there were millions of Christians by the end of the first century.

That happened without slick marketing campaigns,

A) No Social media

B) it wasn't financed by wealthy investors - it wasn't the result of a political popularity contest -

C) It happened as normal people like you and me were empowered by the Spirit of God **to do what Jesus told them to do** -

Go into all the world and preach the gospel and make Disciples of all nations

D) It was started and sustained by the power of God!

"The book of Acts shows what the Church can do in the face of opposition when it honors its Lord and is full of the Holy Spirit." **Griffith Thomas**

E) I agree whole heartedly with Pastor Mark Batterson when he said:

"When Christianity turns into a noun, it becomes a turnoff. Christianity was always intended to be a verb. And, more specifically, an action verb. The title of the book of Acts says it all, doesn't it? It's not the book of Ideas or Theories or Words. It's the book of Acts. If the 21st-century church said less and did more, maybe we would have the same kind of impact the first-century church did." Batterson

F) Acts gives us a supernatural look of the Spirit of God working through Jesus followers.

Now when we emphasize the Power of the HS - we often think of Miracles - and the gifts in operation -

A) We Believe miracles still happen today - Same God - Same Spirit

B) But here is what is interesting: If you do a careful read through the book of Acts -

1) this is what you will find - about 30 miracles....

C) Now you can read through the book of Acts this afternoon in about 30 minutes

D) It can seem like there is a miracle happening on every other page - you can think - wow!

1) That is AMAZING - IT IS

E) But don't forget the events recorded in the book of Acts take place over a period of 30 years

1) So here is what that means - **The Lord is giving us one miracle per year!**

Were there more miracles that happened?

A) Absolutely - **Many signs and wonders....apostles**

B) but the Lord only records 30 because miracles are not the focus

C) The Focus is Jesus - the Focus is the preaching of Jesus

1) The Focus is the movement of the gospel to reach a lost world and bring salvation to sinful men - **through the power of the Holy Spirit**

"If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95% of what they did would come to a screeching halt, it would have stopped and everybody would know the difference.

"If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference." A.W. Tozer

C) So we see Supernatural power

The Book of Acts presents us with a: A Manual.

A) The Book of Acts is a manual on church principles and conduct.

B) Acts tells us how a church should live, act and minister.

C) In our church - The way we teach the Bible...

Our emphasis on being led and empowered by the Holy Spirit - not striving - Acts

A) Our emphasis on Worship, Prayer, fellowship - community -

B) Our approach to missions

1) Our desire to help other churches (this week.....)

C) The way we approach our relationship with the Govt. - **example we see in the book of Acts -**

1) Our view of Eschatology - end times.....

A Manual

The book of Acts is going to present us with a Challenge!

A) What about us? What about now - that was the 1st century - we see how they lived -

B) How are we living as followers of Jesus now in the 21st century ?

C) Are we living in the power of the Holy Spirit?

D) Do we want to take the Gospel to the world ?

1) Starting with the neighbor across the street or the co-worker across the hall

This study has the protentional to radically change us as individuals and as a church

A) I am ready to see another Jesus people movement - what is it going to look like?

B) How is he going to work? How is it going to be similar? How different?

As we begin V.1-3

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.

The Author

A) The author of Acts was Luke, the only Gentile author of the Bible.

B) Historians tell us that Luke was a Syrian from Antioch.

C) From his exacting use of the Greek language, we know Luke was an intelligent man.

1) We know from Colossians 4:14 that he was a doctor.

Trained in the schools of Alexandria or Athens

Physicians in the Roman Empire didn't have the prestige they have today in our culture.

A) They were considered the hired servants of ELITE!

B) Some were even slaves

Audience

The letter is addressed to a man by the name of Theophilus. - Beloved of God

He is the same person that Luke wrote the gospel of Luke to:

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write **to you an orderly account**, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. Luke 1:1-4

So in his first letter to Theophilus – Luke set out to give an orderly account of the Life and ministry of Jesus

A) We appreciate this about Luke – in his gospel account as well as the book of Acts –

B) Luke is into detail. – Doctor thing.

Note the phrase: Luke 1:3 Most excellent Theophilus

A) Most scholars believe that Theophilus was a high ranking Roman official – possibly the Governor of a province

B) which is why Luke referred to him in that way.

C) Paul the Apostle addressed the Roman Governors Felix and Festus in the same way – The most Excellent Felix Festus

D) Many scholars believe that Luke was the personal Physician of this Roman official Theophilus

But notice that there is a Change in his description of Theophilus - From his gospel – to the book of Acts

A) In the book of Acts – He is just Theophilus

C) Why the Change?

Opinions/ Theories :

A) Luke was no longer his servant didn't feel the need to refer to him in that way. –

B) Not likely – still show respect - Mr. President former presidents

C) Another opinion - more - likely that Theophilus became a follower of Jesus himself -

1) Saw Luke now as his brother in Christ – and told him – just call me Theophilus

Here is something that I want you to catch:

A) Luke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes two books - letters - are a part of the Bible

B) Addressed to ONE PERSON - ONE MAN

C) Luke didn't know when he was writing that this was going to end up in the Bible as part of the NT

1) There wasn't a NT yet -

D) Here is my point - He was just writing to a friend someone he cared for -

1) To tell him about Jesus - ONE PERSON

I have had the privilege of preaching the gospel to 1,000's of people -

A) Easter - Crusades - events overseas - Kaluga

B) Not saying that to wow you - I have to be faithful to my calling -

1) you have to be faithful to your calling

C) Most of you will NOT have the opportunity to preach to 1,000's -

1) but are you sharing the gospel with THE ONE

Sphere of influence - Opportunity we all have -

A)Easier to preach to 1,000's - they are there - I just need to deliver the goods

B)It is a lot harder to share with the one - Like you I have a sphere of influence -

C)Takes more effort to earn the right to speak to those in our sphere of influence - our CALLING

There was a Chinese man who was blind - who was given cataract surgery by a Christian missionary doctor - the surgery allowed this blind man to see.

A few days went by and this missionary doctor looked out the window of the bamboo hut he was staying in - he noticed the formerly blind man holding the front end of a long rope.

In a single file and holding to the rope behind him came several blind Chinese men whom their friend had told about his operation.

They all knew their friend had been blind, but now he could see.

He told them of the doctor who had cured him; and naturally, all these other blind people wanted to meet the doctor who cured their friend!

The cured man could not explain the physiology of the eye or the technique of the operation. **He could tell others he had been blind, the doctor had operated on him, and now he could see.**

WELL That was ALL the others needed to hear. They came to the doctor.

D)So it is in our Christian lives.

E)We need not all be trained theologians. We need not understand all the intricacies of God's mysteries,

1)We are not even going to be perfect examples of flawless Christian living.

F)But We can ALL tell everyone what Christ has done for us.

1)TELL YOUR STORY!!!!

Note intro again: The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

Luke was volume 1

A) In the Gospel of Luke - Luke is describing what Jesus **BEGAN TO DO** ministering here on earth in his physical body

B)Acts is Volume 2 In the book of Acts Luke is describing what Jesus is **CONTINUING TO DO** through his mystical body the church

1)through the lives of men and women who are **indwelt** by his life.

C)The work of Jesus is **not Static it** continues on !

The book of Acts is still being written - in fact in ends in Chapter 28 abruptly Paul the Apostle is left in Prison - how it ends -

A)**Cliff hanger - on purpose** - that is not the end of the story

B)Church planting movement called Acts 29 - we are all a part of Acts 29 - Acts ch.30

C)The Holy Spirit is still at work today in the lives of the mystical body of Christ - the church

1)Not a building - at 885 East Vista way

D)The church is a living organism - a body of believers - Jesus is still desiring to work through

1)**This is the Huddle - out there is the game.**

What made the early Church so Powerful?

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.

A) What made the early Church so Powerful?

B)The Resurrection and their dependency on the Holy Spirit.

The Resurrection is the key to everything - "If Christ be not risen, then our faith is in vain,"

1 Corinthians 15:17

C)We don't believe in the Resurrection because the Bible tells us it is true

D)We believe in the Bible because the Resurrection is true -

These men saw Jesus die - brutally killed - on the cross

A) Saw him buried in a tomb - Huge stone - Roman seal - Roman guard

B) Three days later the tomb was empty - they saw Jesus alive

C) **V.3 Jesus presented himself alive - presented** = literally means to place beside or near or to stand beside.

D) In the present context the idea is that Jesus made a visual demonstration to the apostles by standing beside or near them

The word **“seen” in V.3** is taken from the Greek word from which we get our English word **ophthalmologist, or eye doctor.**

A) It literally means Jesus was being **“eyeballed”** by them, “stared at,” or “scrutinized him examined.

B) Many infallible proofs - They saw him with their eyes

1) They touched him with their hands - no ghost

C) He ate with them - This is Jesus - this is real

D) I love the way that John expresses it in **1 John 1:1-4**

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. **1 John 1:1-4**

Jesus is the real deal!

A) Jesus did what he said he would do -

B) Therefore Jesus is who he claimed to be - God in human flesh - the only way to the father -

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. **John 14:6**

C) Absolute statement in a world - no absolutes - Not a way, a truth or a way of life

1) **THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE**

D) Proved it when he rose again from the dead.

He appeared to Mary Magdalene

A) Appeared to Peter

B) Appeared to the 11 Disciples

C) Seen by 500 people

1) Appeared to Saul of Tarsus - religious zealot - persecuting the church - **Saul why are you persecuting me**

D) Saul gets saved and becomes Paul the Apostle the greatest spokesman for Jesus ever in the world

E) Paul lost everything for following Jesus - Family - friends - ostracized by the religious community

1) Eventually lost his life –

THE RESURRECTION is the Key to everything

Several years a group of lawyers met in England to discuss the biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection.

A) They wanted to see if sufficient information was available to make a case that would hold up in an English court of law.

B) When their study was completed, they published the results of their investigation.

1) They concluded that Christ's resurrection was one of the most well- established **facts of all of history!**

C) **In fact John Singleton Copley, one of the greatest legal minds in British history and three times High Chancellor of England, wrote,**

"I know pretty well what evidence is, and I tell you, such evidence as that for the resurrection has never broken down yet."

D) In his book, **Countdown**, G. B. Hardy has given us some thought-provoking questions about the resurrection.

- 1) "There are but two essential requirements:
1. Has anyone cheated death and proved it?
 2. Is the record available to me

E) **Here is the complete record:** Confucius' tomb -- occupied. Buddha's tomb -- occupied. Mohammed's tomb -- occupied. **Jesus' tomb -- empty**

F) That is what Makes Christianity unique

Sophomore year High School: Know what you believe and Why?

A) **THE KEY - Reality of the RESURRECTION!**
Empty tomb –

C) The Arguments against the empty tomb - no sense

D) Wrong tomb? – Produce the Right tomb!!!

E) Swoon theory – Explain Really ?

1) No idea of Crucifixion

A person wrote to an advice columnist:

My college professor said that Jesus didn't really die on the cross.... Passed out Coolness of the tomb revived him.. Your thoughts

She responded: Let's take your college Prof and Beat him senseless while blind folded

Beat him with Roman whip....glass.... – until his body is completely ripped to shreds

Then we will nail him to a cross for 6 hrs and **watch him bleed –**

Then we will take a spear and stick thru his heart

Put him in a CAVE– seal it with a 3 ton stone and put some armed guards outside

Then Let's see what happens ?

Swoon theory is ridiculous if you study the facts

F) Then there is the very first Argument: The one given in the Bible – The Disciples stole the body!

Now to believe that – you have to come to the conclusion that - Roman soldiers all fell asleep

A) **Crime Worthy of death! –**

B) The Disciples who were cowards and ran away when Jesus was arrested

1) **Mustered the courage to go against 16 Roman soldiers - ROME'S FINEST**

C) **Conspired together to Lie about the REZ!**

All choose to die as Martyrs in different countries and NOT ONE – EVER CONFESSED THE LIE

A) **James was the first Martyr – Beheaded JERUSALEM- Acts**

- Peter crucified upside down
- Bartholomew – crucified upside down in Albania
- Andrew the brother of Peter – Crucified
- Simon the Zealot and Thaddeus – crucified
- Phillip - shot full of Arrows
- Matthew – Skinned alive in Iran
- James the less – stoned and then clubbed to death
- Thomas – pierced through with spears
- John – boiled in oil – banished to Patmos

B) ALL they had to do to escape that torture and brutal death was to admit – Jesus was NOT RISEN

C) Not one of them Caved - gave him /- **Possible?**

The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out - the stone was rolled away to let the skeptic in

A) Here today - not a follower of Jesus - You have to face this FACT - there is an Empty tomb - why? -

B) Jesus is risen - He is the only way!

C) Jesus is risen - like he promised -

D) That means He is going to fulfill his other promise to come back to this world - ready?

1) Know Him - given your heart to him

So the empty tomb says to the Philosopher: Explain this event if you can ! /

A)It says to the Historian Refute this event if you can

B)It says to the Scientist: Repeat this event if you can

C)And to the Skeptic Blot out this event if you can !!!

And the empty tomb says to all of Humanity - Believe this and be saved!

Pray

There are Four types of People in this room today - watching online

A)Not Yet followers of Jesus - No neutral ground = For me or against me

B)There is an Empty tomb - Jesus is Risen - alive - extends invitation to you today - will you open your heart to him - **Alive in you!**

Carnal - Been trying to live on both sides of the fence

A)**miserable** - too much of the world - to really enjoy Jesus - but you know too much the truth to really enjoy the world -

B)Are you ready to be done with that today! -

1)Turn from your sin - turn to Jesus follow with all of your heart

Complacent - Not in the game - playing it safe - glad you are saved -

A)But you are not making any impact whatsoever

B)Are you ready to get in the game - be about the kingdom

Those following hard - all in - going all out - Keep going his power - His Mission