

# Acts 1:1-11 | 11/15/15

- Introduction
  - Overview
    - This Book is also referred to as “Acts of the Apostles” in the manuscripts.
    - When you read the book however we see that the overall force behind all was accomplished is the Holy Spirit.
    - You could also say that Acts is the “Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles”
      - What took place in Acts was only possible because of God’s direction and actions.
    - This book is the FIRST work of church history. Given that its inspired Scripture we know that it is the only book of church history that is inerrant.
  - Author
    - While the author is not specifically named in the Book of Acts there is overwhelming evidence that Luke is the author. The same Luke that penned the Gospel of Luke.
    - Ancient manuscripts and the earliest theologians all vouch that Luke the physician, historian and Paul’s friend wrote this book.
    - This book was addressed to Theophilus just as was the Gospel of Luke
      - Luke 1:3
        - “It also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus”
      - Acts 1:1
        - “I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach”
    - Luke the historian
      - Luke was a historian who carefully did his research before committing it to writing.
        - Luke 1:1-4
    - Luke was an eye witness
      - Luke’s research included written letters and conversations with those involved but he was also an eye witness to many of the accounts.
      - He uses “we” and “us” in numerous passages.
        - Acts 16:10
          - “After he had seen the vision, **we** immediately made efforts...”
        - Acts 20:5
          - “These men went on ahead and waited for **us** in Troas,...”
        - Acts 27:1
          - “When it was decided that **we** were to sail to Italy,...”
  - Timeframe
    - While an exact date is not known it was likely prior to A.D. 60.
      - There seems to be an abrupt ending to Acts where we are left with Paul awaiting trial before Caesar.
      - No mention of the martyrdom of James who was the head of the Jerusalem church in A.D. 62.
      - No mention of the great persecution of Nero and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (A.D. 64 and A.D. 70).
    - This book covers approximately 30 years of history.

- The Focus of Acts
  - Luke writes the Book of Acts as an historical narrative.
    - We do not have difficult passages that are hard to interpret, what we have is Luke's divinely inspired historical account of the time from the ascension of Jesus and the following 30 years of events.
  - Critical Events
    - Ascension of Jesus, Pentecost, receiving of the Holy Spirit, first sermon given by Peter, vast numbers of new believers coming to Christ, church planting, making disciples, Paul's missionary work etc.,
  - Acts is a bridge from the Gospels to the rest of the New Testament books.
    - Acts provides the historical events that preclude the rest of the New Testament.
    - By knowing and understanding Acts it helps to provide context for the rest of the Bible.
    - Without Acts Paul's letters to Romans and the other church's would leave us wondering how they got there.
    - If you read Luke and went straight to Romans you would be wondering what happened in between, how did the church get there?
    - **Acts bridges this gap.**
- Luke's Prologue | Acts 1:1-3
  - **Read Acts 1:1-3**
  - These first 3 verses serve as a prologue to the book of Acts which clue us into the author of this historical book.
    - Luke makes it clear that this book is a continuation of the first book that Luke wrote which was the Gospel of Luke.
  - Jesus prepared His disciples to continue God's work
    - Jesus's apostles were called for a divine purpose by God.
      - They were not called as just simple companions to Jesus because He would be lonely and needed a friend.
      - They were called to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ by spreading the Gospel and making disciples after Jesus ascended into Heaven.
      - They were called to preach and to plant church's.
      - This was the purpose that God had called them to.
    - Jesus opened the minds of the apostles
      - After Jesus was resurrected He opened the minds of the apostles so that they would fully understand the Scriptures and the purpose of Christ.
        - Luke 24:44-48
      - This teaching was critical to prepare them for the great works that God had planned for them.
    - **Do you think the apostles knew what Jesus was preparing them for?**
    - **Have you personally experienced a time where God prepared you for His good works while you were unaware?**
  - Jesus continued His teaching for 40 days after His resurrection
    - For 40 days Jesus appeared and reappear to various followers proving His resurrection.
    - **Why do you think Jesus did this for this period of time? Why didn't He just appear once or twice?**
      - While there is not biblical answer my assumption would be so that there would be no question to His resurrection. Because so many people were witnesses to it.

- There is also repetition with several events that took place over 40 days like Jesus's temptation in the wilderness and the flood as examples.
    - But we must not get too focused on finding "secret" or hidden meanings in Scripture. I feel very confident that God made His word clear and He would not have made hidden truths.
- The Promise of the Holy Spirit | Acts 1:4-8
  - **Read Acts 1:4-8**
  - The greatest and most significant event that took place in the book of Acts after the ascension of Jesus Christ was the bestowing of the Holy Spirit to the Christians.
  - The final instructions of Jesus to His apostles.
    - Jesus before His ascension told the apostles that they needed to remain in Jerusalem.
    - This was important for a number of reasons.
      - This is where they were to first receive the promised Holy Spirit.
        - At Pentecost in Jerusalem is where God would first bestow His Spirit upon the apostles.
        - This is what gave them the power to do God's will.
        - John 14:16-18
          - Jesus said that He is coming and that we will not be orphans.
          - He would come to live in the hearts of all who know Him.
      - Jerusalem was used as the hub to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
        - Their stay in Jerusalem was part of God's plan for the spreading of the Gospel.
        - As we get further into Acts we will see that the apostles actually stayed in Jerusalem for 5 years.
        - This was important as Jerusalem was a hub where all of the scattered Jews would come to the Holy City.
        - The apostles could stay in one place and reach thousands with the Gospel who would then take it back to their homes.
        - Further this is where the new believers also branched out to start new churches.
  - Baptism of the Holy Spirit
    - Jesus tells His apostles of a great and wonderful gift of God that they will soon receive. They are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
      - Baptism of the Spirit is not the physical action of baptism as we know it, it is spiritual that takes place in the heart when we receive salvation.
    - Jesus makes it clear that this is different than the water baptism of John the Baptist.
      - John the Baptist (cousin of Jesus) knew the purpose of His baptism compared to that of Christ.
        - Luke 3:15-16
          - "Now the people were waiting expectantly, and all of them were debating in their minds whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all, I baptize you with water, but One is coming who is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."
      - John the Baptist's purpose was to enact a baptism of repentance, to prepare those for the coming Messiah.
        - Matthew 3:1-3

- John knew the Messiah was coming quickly and that the people must repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ for their salvation.
- Mark 1:4
  - “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”
- This was a symbol of cleansing
  - The water itself did not actually cleanse their sins it was a symbol demonstrating their willingness to repent to turn away from their sins.
  - **The baptism of John (like the baptism that we do today as Christ commanded) portrays an invisible belief in the heart.**
  - **For them it was an outward expression of the invisible repentance they had in their heart, for us today it is an outward sign of an inward grace.**
  - John knew that his baptism did not bring salvation but it was only through belief in Jesus Christ.
    - John 3:36
      - “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”
  - Acts 19:4
    - “Paul said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the One who would come after him, that is, in Jesus.”
  - John knew that for the people to ultimately have forgiveness of sins that they had to repent which means that they had to actually acknowledge their sins.
    - This truth is made clear in
      - 1 John 1:8-10
    - **What if someone says I believe in Jesus Christ but I don’t believe that I have sinned and don’t need any forgiven?**
    - **We cannot say that we believe in Jesus Christ that He died on the cross for our sins and expect to be saved if we also reject that we have sin. That is completely contradictory.**
  - **Jesus came to die on the cross for our sins this is what we have faith in for salvation.**
- After the baptism of Jesus, we see a beautiful picture of the trinity
  - John 1:32-33
    - God the Father speaks from heaven
    - The Holy Spirit descends as a dove
    - God declares that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah and the Son of God.
    - The beautiful and perfect trinity.
- Jesus baptizes with the Spirit
  - The baptism of the Spirit is what happens when a person first has true saving faith and receives salvation.
  - They are baptized with the Holy Spirit and they are made new.
    - Titus 3:4-7

- Not only are they made new but the Spirit stays within the heart of the believer never to be removed.
  - 1 Corinthians 6:19
    - “Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God?...”
- The spirit used to walk with the apostles, but now the Spirit will live within them.
  - John 14:17
    - “He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn’t see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you. I will NOT leave you orphans; I am coming to you.”
- God transitions His role to the Holy Spirit
  - The Trinity of God is clearly seen throughout Scripture you have God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit.
  - Acts serves as the 3<sup>rd</sup> transition of God’s primary method of working and communicating with His people.
    - For example, in the Old Testament God communicated to His people through prophets and others that were chosen and He was always “God”.
    - In the New Testament as in the Gospel of Luke we see God manifested in Jesus Christ.
    - Now after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ one might think that God is no longer going to communicate with His children.
    - However, we now see the vital role that the Holy Spirit will play in God’s plan.
  - The Holy Spirit is the source of all of the work that takes place within the book of Acts.
- Restoration of the kingdom | Acts 1:6
  - The apostles had hoped that after the resurrection of Jesus that He was going to physical establish His kingdom on Earth and overthrow the rulers of the world.
  - This is part of God’s plan however it wasn’t the right timing.
  - The apostles wanted it to be here and now but Jesus tells them that it is not for them or us to know the time in which it will take place.
- The power of the Holy Spirit
  - Once the apostles were baptized in the Spirit they would have power given to them by God.
    - And I’m not talking “super” powers here
    - Luke 24:49 (ESV)
      - “And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”
  - This power of the Holy Spirit is not unique just to the apostles, all who become Christians receive the Spirit and have God living within them.
    - Now the nature of this power may be different but there is power.
  - For the apostles it gave them the strength and ability to do the work that God had called them to do.
    - Matthew 28:19-20
      - “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
  - This same power lives inside all Christians.

- **This power gives the Christians the ability to share the Gospel, love our enemies, refrain from doing evil and indulging in sin and the temptations of the world.**
  - This is only possible because of the Holy Spirit.
- **What power has the Holy Spirit given you?**
- Jesus ascends into heaven | Acts 1:9-11
  - ***Read Acts 1:9-11***
  - God's work on earth as Jesus has come to an end, and He ascends to heaven.
  - The apostles now must obey God so that they can fulfill their calling.