

Jesus Ascends We are a-Sent

Acts 1:1-11 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 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; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power 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." 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. 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."

❖ Intro: The Acts of the Apostles

➤ Written by Luke:

- **Who was: A Doctor, he was know to be a physician... He was also obviously an Historian...**
 - In Colossians 4:14 Paul calls him "the beloved physician."
 - We meet him for the first time in Troas
 - ◆ He joins Paul and Silas and Timothy on the second missionary journey
 - Toward the end of Paul's Ministry we see him in 2 Tim 4:11 where Paul is imprisoned
 - ◆ Paul says, "Luke alone is with me"
- **He also wrote the Gospel of Luke... and He did this by documenting eye witness accounts**
 - He says in Luke 1.1-4 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ **that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.**
- **So.. Here again we see him introducing Volume 2 of his early Christian history...**
 - So in Acts 1 he refers to his first volume
 - ◆ **Acts 1:1-2** In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.
 - He then carries on where he left on in the Gospel of Luke...
- **Luke gets his information by following along with Paul**
 - So, as Paul went, so did Luke to document the Acts of the Apostles...
- **So... Luke wrote both of these books as one work in two Parts...**
 - And he does this with a desire to give his gentile Christian readers certainty regarding what they had been taught...

➤ Written during:

- Written about the times AD33 to AD64
- Likely finished after AD 60

❖ The Importance of this Book:

- **Why it was written:**
 - It was written to give a faithful representation of what the early church looked like
 - It serves as an example to the church of every decade
 - **Luke says in verse one that in His Gospel he wrote of all the things Jesus began to do...**
 - Began... That Jesus work was just beginning...
 - And here in Acts we see it begin to take off...
 - And we are left even today to carry on the works of Christ...
- **The book of Acts is a fulfillment of what Jesus told His disciples before He left...**
 - **John 14:12 ¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”**
- **How Should We Use it Today:**
 - **1) Compare**
 - Now... I want us to be careful not to be legalistic in our comparison...
 - ◆ **And remember there were different cultures and ways of learning etc.**
 - **And we must remember they were NOT perfect...**
 - **And they lived in the grace Jesus provided for them daily...**
 - **But, the principles and ways of living remain the same...**
 - ◆ Therefore...
 - We should look at the early church... And mimic the church
 - **2) Re-Capture:**
 - One commentary put it like this:
 - ◆ “seek to recapture something of its confidence, enthusiasm, vision and power.
 - **3) Challenge**
 - 1) Challenge the privacy of the individual with a community where they had all things in common.
 - 2) Challenge selfishness with a body of believers who were willing to sacrifice their own good for others.
 - 3) Challenge the thinking that God is whoever we choose for Him to be with a God that has revealed Himself to us in truth that must be taken to the world.
 - 4) Challenge the idea of letting people believe what they want with a church that persuaded unbelievers to believe the truth and be converted
 - 5) Challenge the idea of inward focus and keeping your best people with a church that sent out their best to reach the lost.
 - 6) Challenge the ideas of techniques and strategies with a church that relied on being morally pure, prioritized prayer and relied on the Holy Spirit to lead them.
 - 7) Challenge the idea of safety and comfort with a church that believed in suffering for the cause of Christ and saw it as a basic part of being a disciple of Jesus.

❖ **Is it Possible?**

- Is it possible that we mimic the work of the apostles in the early church.
- Can we become a church like the early church that took the gospel to the lost and dying?
- **Honestly: It will be very difficult**
 - I am an optimist at heart... But I see a few issues for us that differ from these guys
 - **1) These guys left all to follow Jesus by making disciples**
 - Most of us have not
 - **2) They were very close to Jesus daily for three years**
 - Most of us do not spend quality time with Jesus daily
 - **3) They took what Jesus had given them and began to invest in others**

- Few of us are trying to pour what God has given to us into others
- **4) They were extremely generous**
 - Only 2%-4% of Christians actually tithe
 - I am unsure of the percent for us but it is somewhere around
 - This tells me... that people have not followed Jesus.
 - You can tell those who are of the faith because they are generous and they make disciples...
- **5) They prayed relentlessly**
 - We pray when we want to
- **6) They relied on the Holy Spirit for everything**
 - We hardly know who He is
- **So... Does this leave us hopeless...?**
 - I would certainly say NO... without a doubt no...
 - Because: The same Jesus is Lord today
 - And He has sent His Spirit to lead us
 - **We need to do one thing: Begin to follow Him...**
 - He will take care of the rest...
 - If we follow Him... He will prepare us
 - If we follow Him... He will take us to the people or bring them to us
 - If we follow Him... He will give us boldness
 - If we follow Him... He will give us a passion for lost people
 - If we follow Him... He will give us a generous spirit
 - If we follow Him... He will provide everything we need for the task
- **Therefore: Let us all today... Consider Repentance as an avenue for Following Jesus**
 - Let us know that the Holy Spirit grants repentance
 - So pray to Him and ask for Him to move in your heart today

❖ **Personally:**

- **I really want to see this... I want to see this in my own life and in your lives...**
 - I want to look back in 20 years and be able to see that the Spirit moved in our church
 - And we can follow a history of believers back to this day
 - Where God's Spirit came and moved in our people
 - And then began to reach the world...
- **For this to happen I wrote down some things personally that I need to grow in...**
 - I figure, if the God ordained Pastor for this particular church is weak...
 - Then the church may be weak as well...
 - Because, even though God has given us His Spirit... We are able to quench the Spirit...
 - ◆ Essentially that means throw cold water on a fire
 - So I wrote down these things for myself... maybe you will have some similar ones...
 - 1) I must have Purity of mind, heart and mouth.
 - 2) I must be devoted to Jesus in Prayer, Bible Reading and Memorization.
 - 3) I must lead my family toward Jesus daily.
 - 4) I must be purposeful in my work and Rest.
 - 5) I must be Spirit led.
 - 6) I must invest my time in growing believers.
 - 7) I must consistently reach out to the Lost.

❖ **The Book of Acts is All About Jesus...**

- **Jesus has died... He rises from the dead...**

- This gives great power and boldness to the disciples
- He teaches them for 40 more days
- He ascends in to heaven
- He sends His holy Spirit Back
- The apostles and disciples testify, or bear witness about all that Jesus had said and done
- And they offer salvation to those who turn to Jesus and follow Him...

➤ **In John Polhill's Commentary on Acts he writes:**

- *“The Book of Acts is in a real sense a book for renewal. It calls the church back to its roots—to the early church in the upper room in its undivided devotion to prayer, to its missionary fervor, its fellowship and sharing, its mutual trust and unity. It sets a pattern for faithful discipleship, for a witness that walks in the footsteps of the Master, a wholehearted commitment with a willingness to sacrifice and even to suffer. It speaks to us when discouraged, reminding us that all time is in God's hands, reassuring us of the reality of his Spirit in our lives and witness. It challenges us to open our hearts to the power of the Spirit that we might be faithful witnesses to the word and come to experience anew its triumph in our own time.”*

❖ **1) Luke's Introduction and the Work of the Holy Spirit**

- *In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.*

➤ **He is writing to a guy named Theophilus...**

- And He wants to make sure the this guy and whoever else reads it... knows about Jesus...
- **Lukes's gospel ended with Jesus being taken up...**
 - And Luke decides to pick up where he left off
- **He reminds Theophilus that Jesus spent His time on this earth**
 - Pouring His teachings into the heart of His disciples...

➤ **Notice 2 things....**

- **1) The commands:**
 - Jesus is giving the disciples something to do
 - He is giving them a task
 - He did not come and train them and prepare them so they could sit back and watch the grass grow
 - Or to watch their stock portfolio go up
 - Or watch their fish business expand
 - *John 20:21 ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.*
- **2) The Holy Spirit**
 - The role of the Holy Spirit is not to be overlooked.
 - He is central to the ministry of Jesus
 - He is central in the book of Acts
 - We see the Spirit come upon Jesus at His baptism
 - ◆ After he comes up out of the water the scriptures say the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove...
 - **Then here we see the command to go given through the Holy Spirit**
 - ◆ And this same Spirit that Jesus walked with
 - ◆ Is given to the disciples to walk with...
 - ◆ This same Spirit is given to His children even today

◆ What an amazing thought...

- But... We must ask ourselves an important question... Why do we not seem to walk as if we have the power of the Holy Spirit within us?

❖ 2) Jesus is Alive and Still Teaching

- ³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

➤ Jesus is Alive

- To a group of guys that the scriptures say scattered when Jesus was arrested...
 - There were doubters... there were deniers, and there was even one betrayer that left them
 - They cowered in rooms with locked doors in fear of the same fate
- But here Jesus is gracious to spend forty more days proving He is alive...

➤ Still Teaching

- The disciples failed to grasp many of the teachings that Jesus taught before He was crucified
- **Not only did He show He was alive, He continued to teach them about the Kingdom of God**
 - He explained many of their misunderstandings
 - He helped them understand these things in light of what happened on the cross
 - They were not ready for Him to go there and die
 - They did not even see the need for it
 - So Jesus teaches them

➤ We need this as well don't we:

- We need to live daily in the truth that our God is Alive
- That our God was crucified on a cross and died... But came back to life...
- Nothing can stand in the way of the work God gives us to do...
- **We can live with power and boldness...**
 - 2 Tim 1:7-8 ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
 - ⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,"
 - We should live like Paul... Who was afraid of no man
 - The disciples who lived to please God not man

➤ God is our King... And We know Him to be the King of all the world...

- Even if they do not acknowledge Him...
- He is the King of worldly governments and their kings and presidents.
- He is the King of these abortion rights groups
- He is the King of the promoters of homosexual agendas
- Even though they fail to acknowledge him... they one day will bow before Him
- In recognition of His Authority and Power and Holiness
- So do not fear worldly and man made agendas...
- Trust Jesus

❖ 3) Jesus Promises to Immerse Them with the Holy Spirit

- 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; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

➤ He tells them to wait

- To wait for the promise of the Father...
- And he reminds them... "which you heard from me"
 - So back in Luke we see John the Baptist saying this:

◆ In Luke 3:16 he says: I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

• And Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit

◆ John 16:7-8 ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

➤ **He is going to immerse them with the Holy Spirit**

▪ **Now I believe they had already received the Holy Spirit...**

- We see that in John that He breathed on them and told them receive the Holy Spirit...
- But this was something truly extraordinary...

▪ **He reminds them John baptized with water**

- And this was a baptism of Repentance...
- The person was immersed in water and it was a sign that they wanted to repent of their sins

▪ **Jesus promises to Baptize with the Holy Spirit...**

- Our baptisms with water are a symbol of many things, none less important than being immersed by the Holy Spirit

➤ **What does it mean that He will baptize them with the Holy Spirit**

▪ **Quick and Easy answer is to look at it in Acts 2 when it happened**

- We see there was a loud noise
- There were tongues of fire that came upon them
- And they were able to speak in the languages of other nations...
- **But most importantly we see that the Holy Spirit filled them with**
 - ◆ Who Jesus is
 - ◆ And caused them to promote and glorify the name of Jesus
 - ◆ And to teach the hearers that Jesus is God

▪ **So... Here are these guys that already knew Jesus...**

- That had already received the Holy Spirit
- Had already been united with Jesus through His death and resurrection
- And now Jesus gives them something extraordinary to fulfill the mission
- To persuade men of the truthfulness of the gospel
- To convict men of their sins and what righteousness is...

➤ **Let us Pray for this same work of the Spirit today...**

- (We will speak more about this later in Acts) But...
- It is true that God is here with us today...
- It is true that His Spirit is here and moving today...
- But at certain times and in certain places God chooses to show Himself in a greater way...
- Let us pray for a more powerful and more clear moving of the Holy Spirit today...

➤ **God's Spirit is free to do as He pleases...**

- We can not control God or God's work
- And neither could the disciples...
- They were told to wait...
- So they waited and they prayed for the coming of the Spirit...

➤ **It is the same for us today:**

- I pray EVERY week that God's Spirit will come and move in our people
- That we will bring conviction of sins and clarity of the gospel in the mind of the people...

➤ **Our work here at Hope Church**

- Is totally reliant on the Holy Spirit of God...

- We can do nothing with the moving of the Holy Spirit of God

❖ 4) Jesus Words Cause the Apostles to Respond with a Question

- ⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

➤ Their question: Will you restore the kingdom to Israel?

- Now... they ask this question because they had read the Old Testament...
- And there were many promises that God would restore Israel to greatness...
- And there was a connection between this restoration and the coming of His Spirit...
 - Ezekiel 39:25,29 ²⁵ “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name....²⁹ And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.”
- So... We see it is understandable they would ask this question:
 - There seems to be in scripture a coming Restoring of Israel
 - Where Jesus will sit enthroned upon this earth and the nation of Israel will be restored
- What does this look like:
 - Well, that was essentially their question... and we see Jesus does not give them a yes...

➤ His Answer:

- He tells them... It is not for you to know when...
- Now... this tells me a couple things...
 - 1) That their question was very reasonable
 - 2) Their assumption was correct
 - ◆ This day is coming...
 - ◆ Jesus does not tell them that they are wrong in their assumption
 - Jesus just tells them it is not for them to know how or when God will do this...
 - Only God knows and He will do this when He is ready...

➤ Jesus does not stop there:

- He continues to answer their question...
- He does tell them it is not for them to know the seasons God has fixed...
- But He does tell them they are to be a big part of this season...

❖ 5) Jesus' Answers Their Question His Way

- ⁸But you will receive power 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.”

➤ But.... You are not to know when God will do what your asking... But...

➤ BUT....You will receive power

- This was the Holy Spirit coming on them with great might...
- The Holy Spirit came upon them
 - And His Presence Assured them of who God is
 - That God is Real and God was there
 - And God loved them
 - He filled them with Joy unspeakable
 - He filled them with such power that they could not help but to speak out...
- And this power leads to being a witness...
 - There is a huge connection here...

➤ You will be my witnesses

- **The word witness is the greek word that we get martyr from...**
 - Because being a witness for Jesus usually meant that you would die...
 - But the word witness means they would tell people Who Jesus is and what He did...
 - The word witness means: one who has knowledge or information about something and therefore could bring to light the truth about that particular thing...
- **And when these disciples were filled with power from the Holy Spirit**
 - They could not help but to testify of the good things God has done...
- **Do you understand this?**
 - Have you ever been immersed in the word of God
 - Or in the middle of a praise song
 - Or in the middle of a sermons
 - And the Holy Spirit moves in you and gives you great joy and assurance
- **In that moment:**
 - You feel as if you want to do anything for Jesus...
 - Just send me and I will go...
- **This is what happened to the disciples...**
 - But on a much larger scale...

➤ **What about us...?**

- **Is this possible for us?**
 - Yes... It absolutely is...
 - Although I do not think it will happen in the way it happened to the disciples...
 - It certainly seems like this occasion in Acts 2 was totally unique throughout all of History
- **But the Spirit continued to move and fill the disciples of Jesus in that day**
 - And He continued throughout history and even until today..
- **But go back to what I said before we started today... (I made 6 statements about them)**
 - 1) These guys left all to follow Jesus by making disciples
 - 2) They were very close to Jesus daily for three years
 - 3) They took what Jesus had given them and began to invest in others
 - 4) They were extremely generous
 - 5) They prayed relentlessly
 - 6) They relied on the Holy Spirit for everything
- Jesus does not use His rebellious children for such important tasks

➤ **Finally we see God's heart: To the Ends of the Earth**

➤ **God has a much bigger group of people in mind for His kingdom than the disciples ever imagined...**

- And we are going to see this played out throughout the book of Acts...
- Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the Ends of the Earth
- This is the calling of the church today...
- And you will see this verse played out over and over throughout the book of Acts...

➤ Luke Recorded this previously at the end of the book of Luke:

- Luke 24:46-48 ⁴⁶and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things.

❖ **6) The Promise of Return**

- ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and 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.”

- **In the end... Jesus Ascends into heaven triumphantly...**
 - And His disciples stand and stare in Amazement...
 - And His angels tell His disciples... Why are you staring...
 - He will come back the same way...
- **It is time to get to work...**
 - I believe there is a lesson there...
 - It is time for us to stop staring at God’s Word and being fed...
 - And Get to work...
 - The time is now...