

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

THE BOOK OF ACTS – CHAPTER 1 & 2

ACTS 1

In the book of Acts, Luke continues the history he began writing in the Gospel.

This is a span of 30 years after Jesus was taken up into heaven.

Within this time, the church was established, and the gospel of salvation was spread throughout the world, even to the Roman Empire.

v.1-11

These verses are the bridge between the events recorded in the Gospels and the events that mark the beginning of the church.

Jesus appeared to disciples on many occasions after his resurrection, proving that he was alive.

Jesus spent 40 days teaching his disciples. After several meetings with their living resurrected Christ, the disciples had many of their questions answered.

What change would this have had on the disciples?

They were drastically changed. Before the resurrection, they argued with one another and deserted Jesus.

At Jesus' death, they were scattered and disillusioned. They feared for their lives.

The disciples became convinced about the resurrection, learned about the kingdom of God, and discovered their source of power—the Holy Spirit.

After seeing the resurrected Christ, they became fearless and risked everything to spread the Good News.

They faced imprisonment, beatings, rejection, and martyrdom, but never compromised their mission.

v.3

Jesus explained that his coming established or launched the kingdom of God. When he returned to heaven, God's kingdom would remain in the hearts of all believers through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

v.4-5

The baptism of the Holy Spirit should be understood as doing a complete work in the life of the Christ follower:

1. The Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian experience.
 - We cannot belong to Christ without His Spirit (Romans 8:9)
 - We cannot be united to Christ without His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17)
 - We cannot be adopted as his children without His Spirit (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6-7)
 - We cannot be in the body of Christ except by baptism in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)

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2. The Spirit is the power source of our new lives in Christ. He begins a life-long process of change making us more like Christ (Galatians 3:3; Philippians 1:6)
 - When we receive Christ by faith, we begin an immediate personal relationship with God. The Holy spirit works in us to help us become like Christ.
3. The Spirit unites the Christian community in Christ (Ephesians 2:19-22). The Holy Spirit can be experienced by all, and he works through all (1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:4)

ACTS 2

Pentecost is also known as the Feast of Weeks. It took place 50 days after Passover. It was one of the three major annual feasts in Deuteronomy 16:16. It was a festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops

Jesus was crucified at Passover and ascended 40 days after his resurrection. The Holy Spirit came 10 days after the ascension

Jews from many nations had gathered in Jerusalem for this festival

v.3-4

Here we see the fulfillment of John the Baptist's words about the Holy Spirit's baptizing with fire (Luke 3:16) and the prophet Joel's words about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29).

Why tongues of fire?

Tongues symbolize speech and the communication of the gospel

Fire symbolizes God's purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements of our lives and ignites the lives of others

On Mount Sinai, God confirmed the validity of the OT law with fire from heaven (Exodus 19:16-18)

At Pentecost, God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit's ministry by sending fire.

At Mount Sinai, fire came down on one place; at Pentecost, fire came down on many believers, symbolizing that God's presence is now available to all who believe in him

v.4-11

The people literally spoke in other languages

All the nationalities represented recognized their own language being spoken and saw the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit.

v.9-11

Why are all these places mentioned?

This is a list of all of the places Jews came from for the festival in Jerusalem. These Jews were not living in Palestine because they had been dispersed through captivity and persecution.

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It's very likely that some of the Jews who responded to Peter's message returned to their homelands with the Good News of salvation

We see here how God prepared the way for the spread of the gospel. As we read Acts, we will see how the way was often prepared for Paul and other messengers by people who had become believers at Pentecost. The church at Rome for example was probably started by Jewish believers.

v.16-21

Not everything mentioned in Joel 2:28-29 happened on that particular morning. The "last days" include all the days between Christ's first and second coming and is another way of saying "from now on".

"The great and glorious day of the Lord" means the whole Christian age. We read that even Moses longed for the Lord to put his Spirit on everyone (Numbers 11:29). At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was released throughout the entire world- men, women, slaves, Jews, Gentiles.

v.25-32

Peter quoted from Psalm 16:8-11.

It was a psalm written by David. He explained that David was not writing about himself, because David died and was buried (2:29). Instead, David was writing as a prophet (2:30) who spoke of the Messiah who would be resurrected.

The audience understood "decay" (2:27) to mean the grave. The emphasis here is that Jesus' body was not left to decay but was in fact resurrected and glorified.

v.46

A common misconception about the first Christians (who were Jews) was that they rejected the Jewish religion. But these believers saw Jesus' message and resurrection as the fulfillment of everything they knew and believed from the OT

The Jewish believers at first did not separate from the rest of the Jewish community. They still went to the temple and synagogues for worship and instruction in the Scripture. But their belief in Jesus created friction with Jews who didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah

So, believing Jews were forced to meet in private homes for communion, prayer, and teaching about Christ. By the end of the first century, many of these Jewish believers were excommunicated from their synagogues.

SOURCES:

1. Life Application Study Bible – NIV
2. Life In The Spirit Study Bible- NIV
3. The Jeremiah Study Bible -NKJV

