

STRETCH

Acts Session 1

Pivotal moments



For the want of a nail the shoe was lost, For the want of a shoe the horse was lost, For the want of a horse the rider was lost, For the want of a rider the battle was lost, For the want of a battle the kingdom was lost — And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

(Benjamin Franklin)

lzquotes.com

Read Acts 1:1-8

- Whose “Acts” are recorded in the book of Acts?
- What do you think Acts should be called?

“The Acts of...”

The Acts of...

- V 1 – The Acts of Jesus?
- V 2 – The Acts of the Apostles?
- V 8 – The Acts of the Holy Spirit?

Acts: The Continuing Words and Deeds of Jesus by his Spirit through his Apostles.

Jesus continued...

- Jesus only **began** his ministry on earth. It continued. And it continues today – through us.

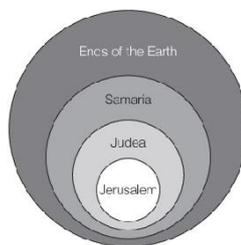
“We believe simultaneously in the Jesus of history, that lived. And the Jesus of heaven, who lives and is with us till the very end of the age.” (John Stott)

Background of Acts

- Written by Luke, Pauls companion (Col 4:14)
- Written to “Theophilus” – most likely a patron. (Part 2 of Luke/Acts)
- Intended Audience – Gentile Christians
- Aim – To show God’s plan of salvation and the **inclusion** of Gentiles, brought about by Christ and the Holy Spirit

Overview of Acts

Acts 1:8 "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**."



Outline of Acts (from Fee & Stuart)

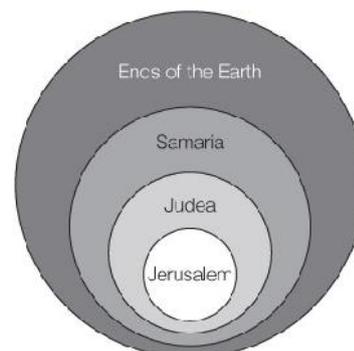
- The Good news begins in Jerusalem (1:1-6:7)
- The Good news spreads to Judea and Samaria (6:8-9:31)
- The Good news spreads to the Gentiles (9:32- 12:24)
- The Good news spreads to Asia (12:25-16:5)
- The Good news spreads to Europe (16:6 – 19:20)
- The Good news reaches Rome (19:21-28:31)

What similarities do you see in these summary statements?

- Acts 6:7
- Acts 9:31
- Acts 12:24
- Acts 16:5
- Acts 19:20
- Acts 28:30-31

Why do you think Luke repeats himself?

The gospel is spreading out



1) Kingdom Pioneers

Jesus chose the apostles (v2)

- Same verb (*eklegomai*) in account of Jesus' calling and choice of the Twelve 'whom he also designated apostles', Luke 6:13.
- Same term used of Paul in Acts 9:15, 22:14-15. **God chose them**

1) Kingdom Pioneers

Jesus appeared to them (v3)

- Many proofs
- Prolonged – 40 days
- Physical – not "spiritual experience"

Act 1:21-22, qualifications of the apostles – **eyewitness**.

1) Kingdom Pioneers

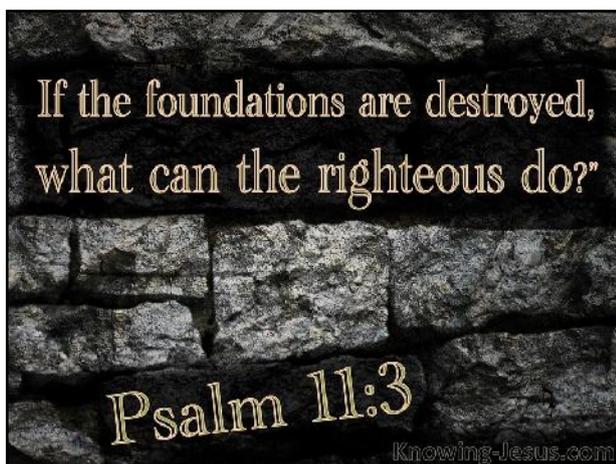
Jesus instructed them (v2-3)

- gave them commands
- spoke about the kingdom
- Is this a summary of the end of Luke 24 v 45-49?

“Apostle” – one sent with a message, carrying the authority of the sender.

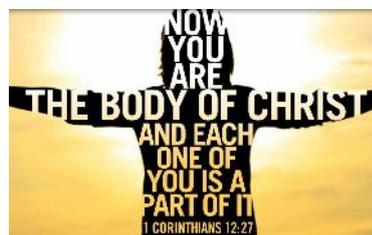
Discussion

- *In what sense is the church today built on the foundation of the apostles? Why is this important?*
- 1 John 1:1-3
- Gal 1:1-9
- 1 Thess 2:13
- 1 Cor 15:1-11
- Luke 24:45



2) Kingdom Principles

- **Serving Christ** – Jesus continues his ministry through us. His agenda. His work. His words. (v1-3)



2) Kingdom Principles

- **Spirit dependent (v4)** – “wait” – “don’t leave without it”- how much of our lives would carry on unaffected without the HS?

Exo 33:15-16 “And he said to him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”

V5 – the wrong kingdom

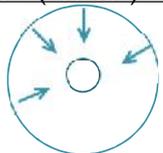
Calvin - ‘there are as many errors in the question as words’.

- the verb *restore* shows that they were expecting a political and territorial kingdom;
- the noun *Israel* that they were expecting a national kingdom;
- the adverbial clause *at this time* that they were expecting its immediate establishment. (John Stott)

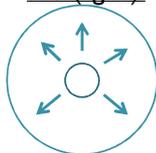
2) Kingdom Principles

- **International in outlook** – go to them, not come to us (v5-8).

OT (“come”)



NT (“go”).



2) Kingdom Principles

- **Big picture perspective** - (v7,9-11), getting right priorities



2) Kingdom Principles

- **Powerful in witness** (v8) – power to advance the kingdom (v6) until it meets Christ's return (v7)

“Power in God’s kingdom is different from power in human kingdoms...the Holy Spirit defines its nature. The kingdom of God is his rule set up in the lives of his people by the Holy Spirit. It is spread by witness, not by soldiers, through a gospel of peace, not a declaration of war, and by the work of the Spirit, not by force of arms, political intrigue or revolutionary violence. (John Stott)

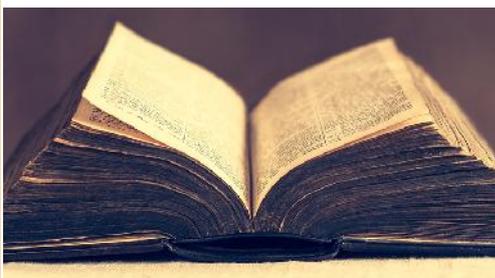
2) Kingdom Principles

- **United in Prayer** – (v13-14) – notice the new order of names



2) Kingdom Principles

- **Guided by Scripture** – (v15-26)



Discussion

- Which of these principles do you feel most passionate about? Share your reasons why.
- Which of these principles do you feel are lacking in your life personally? Pray that as we read Acts God would invigorate your faith to supply what is lacking!

Are we a Kingdom People?

- Serving Christ's agenda
- Dependent on the Holy Spirit
- International in our outlook
- Powerful in our witness
- 'Big picture' in our perspective and priorities
- United in our prayer
- Guided by and obeying scripture

Homework

Judas

Read Matthew 27

- How does this compare to Acts 1?
- How are the accounts the same?
- How are they different?
- How do you reconcile the apparent contradictions?