

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 1-10-16 AM NOTES
"RESOURCES TO CARRY OUT THE CHURCH'S TASK"
ACTS 1:1-11
#1 in Series, "The Spirit, the Church, and the World"

John 19:30 (NASB) "It is finished!"

Matthew 28:18-20 (NASB) "¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

Introduction (vv. 1-2)

I. The Manifestation of the Resurrected Christ (v. 3)

John 20:19 (NASB) "So when it was evening on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'"

Luke 24:39 (NASB) "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

1 Corinthians 15:4-6 (NASB) "⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep."

II. The Might of the Holy Spirit (vv. 4, 5, 8a)

Luke 24:49 (NASB) "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

John 14:17 (NASB) "*that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and **will be in you.**"

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NASB) "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

“Have you ever noticed who gives the altar call in the book of Acts? It is almost invariably the ones being preached to. On the day of Pentecost it was. As the Spirit of God preached through Peter to those thousands who had been brought in by that tremendous miracle of the tongues after the Holy Spirit descended upon them, Peter got only halfway through his message. He had only reached his second point. What happened? They were convicted in their hearts. They broke in on him and said, ‘Preacher, what must we do to be saved?’ (Acts 2:37). Now, who gave the altar call there? Well, they did. When the Philippian jailer is impressed by the singing of Paul and Silas at midnight, and the earthquake comes and shakes down the prison walls, who gives the altar call? Why he does. He comes running and says to them, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ (Acts 16:25-27).”
—Ray Steadman

III. The Mission Made Clear (vv. 6, 7, 8b)

IV. The Motivation of His Return (vv. 9-11)

John 16:7 (NASB) “But 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.”

1 John 2:1 (NASB) “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Revelation 22:12 (NASB) “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

First Baptist Church Powell 01 10 2016 AM

Sermon 1: Resources to Carry Out the Church’s Task

Series: The Spirit, the Church, and the World

Acts 1:1-11

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of* forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” *He said*, “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to

Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

The work of Jesus is both finished and unfinished. His work of providing salvation is finished. There is absolutely nothing that can be added to the work of Christ on the cross. When Jesus cried out in John 19:30 (NASB): “It is finished!”, He was speaking literally. The full payment for sin was made. His substitutionary death for all who would repent and believe on Him was now complete. His resurrection on the third day evidenced the Father’s acceptance of the Son’s sacrifice. However, the work of proclaiming of the good news of what is finished is not finished. To put the same truth in other words, Christ’s work of redemption is finished, but the work of proclamation and evangelization is continuing on today through the church.

Acts is the primary book that reveals the mission and the power of the church. When the church begins to be distracted from its primary mission and begins to grow self-focused, the church needs to spend a lot of time in Acts. To put it another way, Acts shows us how to obey the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20 (NASB): “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Without the book of Acts we would never understand the books of the New Testament that follow Acts, nor would we understand church history. When the four Gospels end, you see a handful of culturally non-influential Jews in the city of Jerusalem looking for a literal kingdom for Israel. When you open the book of Romans, you find a man whose name is not mentioned in the Gospels is writing to a group of Christ followers in Rome – the center of Gentile culture. This letter to the church at Rome speaks of taking the good news of Christ to the furthest part of the then known world! Acts tells us how the church was formed and how it began reaching the Gentiles and how the power was received to accomplish the unthinkable.

Let’s examine Luke’s introduction to the book of Acts in verses 1-2. Luke speaks of the first account he composed that focused on what Jesus began to do and teach. That is obviously referring the Gospel of Luke. Acts is Luke’s record of what Jesus continued to do and teach through the lives of believers. It covers a period of about thirty-five years (30-64 AD). We don’t really know who Theophilus was. The name means “loved of God.” He was likely a literal person, but we know nothing about him.

In Acts 1:3-11, Luke tells us what these first disciples of Jesus were given to prepare, equip, and encourage them to move out in obedience to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). They needed four things:

First, they needed the assurance that Christ was still alive. They knew how much they needed Him. A dead and buried Savior offered no hope, no enabling to carry out His commission.

Second, they needed supernatural power to accomplish this impossible task.

Third, they needed the mission to be made clear. Where did they start, what was their strategy?

Fourth, they needed the motivation that Christ Himself was going to one day return. I submit to you that these are the same four needs we have to continue the command to make disciples from every tongue, tribe, and nation.

I. The Manifestation of the Resurrected Christ (v3)

A dead Savior could provide nothing more than a good example of how to live and die. These early believers needed more than that. We need more than that! The message they were to proclaim to a lost world would bring persecution and even martyrdom. They needed assurance that Jesus was alive. Verse 3 tells us that Jesus gave them that assurance. This is why His ascension back into the Father's presence wasn't immediately after His resurrection. It was forty days after He rose from the dead before He ascended back to the Father. During that time, Jesus presented Himself alive by many "convincing proofs."

What were those "convincing proofs"?

John 20:19, He appeared in a room where the doors were locked without ever opening the doors.

John 20:19 (NASB): "So when it was evening on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace *be* with you.'" From Luke's account in the Gospel he wrote, we see that Jesus did more than just make a brief appearance.

In Luke 24:39 (NASB) Jesus said, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

Later in Luke 24:41-43, we see that Jesus ate with His disciples. Some said that the disciples were just hallucinating, but it is hard to get a hallucination to eat! They saw the food disappear. Jesus spoke to them, invited them to touch Him, and even ate with them.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:4-6 (NASB): "and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep."

For 40 days Jesus appeared to them, ate with them spoke with them, and even invited them to touch the wounds received at the cross. One of the key elements of preaching in the book of Acts was the message, "Jesus Christ is alive"! They not only had proof; they had "convincing" proofs, "infallible" proofs (KJV). What was the topic of Jesus' conversations with His disciples when He appeared to them? It was the kingdom of God. In its general meaning, the kingdom of God refers to a realm where God rules. I believe that the Bible teaches that will be a literal kingdom when Jesus Christ returns. However, until then, the kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God in the hearts and lives of those who have repented of sin and savingly believed on Him. As we will see when we get to verses 6-7, it was that physical kingdom that His disciples were looking for. The kingdom Jesus spoke about after He rose from the dead was His rule in the lives of His disciples.

Because these early disciples were absolutely convinced of the resurrection of Christ, they fearlessly proclaimed the Gospel. From Scripture and history, there is evidence that every one of the Apostles (with one exception) were martyred for their faith. The exception was John who was exiled on the Isle of Patmos where he received the last book of Scripture – the book of Revelation. This is likely the reason that God kept him alive. The rest of the Apostles and multitudes of believers were martyred. The accounts that we have of their martyrdom show that they went to their deaths triumphantly because they knew that Jesus conquered death by being raised from the dead.

II. The Might of the Holy Spirit (v4, 5, 8a)

Armed with the truth of the resurrection of Christ, these disciples were no doubt ready to boldly proclaim the Gospel to the world. They had received the great commission from the resurrected Savior and now they needed to go, right? Wrong! The knowledge, willingness, and excitement weren't enough. They needed supernatural might, a power beyond themselves. Power was needed to accompany truth.

Enthusiasm is not enough to accomplish the commands of God. There is the need for the power of the Holy Spirit. They were ready to charge hell and Jesus said, "wait." He said, "Don't even leave Jerusalem until you receive what the Father has promised." What was it that the Father had promised?

This promise was given several times in the Gospels in different words. We hear it in Luke 24:49 (NASB): “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

We see this promise in John 14:17 (NASB): “*that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”

The Old Testament saints had the Holy Spirit come upon them to equip them for the tasks God had for them, but Jesus spoke of a time when the Holy Spirit would be *in* His disciples. In verse 5, Luke refers to Matthew 3:11 where John the Baptist said that there was coming a day when Jesus’ disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. That phrase, “baptized with the Holy Spirit” is misunderstood by many believers. In the *Here We Stand* series we looked at where we stand on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There are seven references to the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The first five references are prophetic (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5). In other words, this is John the Baptist and Jesus saying that there is a time coming when the disciples of Jesus would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The sixth reference to the baptism with the Holy Spirit is historical in Acts 11:16 as Peter interprets what happened when the Gospel went to the Gentiles. The final reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit is doctrinal. It is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13 (NASB): “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

Today, the baptism with the Holy Spirit happens at the moment of salvation for every believer. It is when we are united with Christ and are thus “in Christ” and the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Christ) is in us. We will deal much more in depth with this when we get to Acts 2.

The Lord tells us in the first part of verse 8 that what the disciples were to wait for was the receiving of the Holy Spirit Who would come at Pentecost. Acts 1:8a (NASB): “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...” It would be the Holy Spirit in them who would give them the power that they must have to take the Gospel to the world.

We need to be consumed with the truth that Jesus Christ is alive! But that is not enough. We must be filled with Power which comes when the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, fills us with His power to proclaim that truth of the resurrection of Christ. God’s gift to the church is not a program; it is a supernatural power that is ours when the indwelling Spirit fills us and empowers us to fulfill the command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

Let me tell you the main reason that we don’t see happening today what was happening in the book of Acts. We tend to focus on man developed methodology. The methodology of the book of Acts is simple; it is primarily the Holy Spirit doing the work! They didn’t have the means of communication we have; they didn’t have all of the programs and material that we have; they didn’t have the ability to travel long distances in a short period of time; they didn’t have the books and seminars. They just went everywhere trusting the Holy Spirit to work, being a witness of what they had seen, heard and experienced. The result was that the whole Roman Empire was affected.

Ray Steadman pointed out something interesting that I had never noticed in the book of Acts.

Have you ever noticed who gives the altar call in the book of Acts? It is almost invariably the ones being preached to. On the day of Pentecost, it was. As the Spirit of God preached through Peter to those thousands who had been brought in by that tremendous miracle of the tongues after the Holy Spirit descended upon them, Peter got only halfway through his message. He had only reached his second point. What happened? They were convicted in their hearts. They broke in on him and said, “Preacher, what must we do to be saved?” (Acts 2:37). Now, who gave the altar call there? Well, they did. When the Philippian jailer is impressed by the singing of Paul and Silas at midnight, and the earthquake comes and shakes down the prison walls, who gives the altar call? Why he does. He comes running and says to them, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:25-27).
[Ray Steadman, Sermon, *Acts: An Unfinished Story*]

It is interesting that the Greek word translated “power” in Acts 1:8 is *dunamis*, the word from which we get “dynamite.” Every person who has been made a new creation in Christ has this spiritual dynamite dwelling in them to enable them to blast away fear, feelings of inadequacy, and every barrier that is raised to keep us from making disciples and thus living in obedience to God. We who have Christ have no excuse. We have the truth that Christ is alive; He has defeated death and provided salvation for all who would repent of sin and believe the Gospel. Ah, but we have more than the truth; we have the power, the spiritual dynamite of the Spirit of Christ who dwells in us as to enable us to obey our Lord in every area and especially in the area of proclaiming the Gospel.

III. The Mission Made Clear (v6, 7, 8b)

The disciples had their timing mixed up. Jesus doesn’t seem to rebuke them for their question. He simply says that the time for the literal kingdom where all of the promises to Israel will be fulfilled is not the Kingdom that He has come to bring at this time. There is coming a literal kingdom, but that will be at His second coming, and the timing on His return is a mystery that has not been revealed to us. The Father knows when it will be and the exact time is not our concern.

Then Jesus tells them what they need to focus on is the immanent coming of the Spirit to unite them with Christ and indwell them to give them power, spiritual dynamite, to take the Gospel to every creature. In the last part of verse 8 the mission is spelled out. Acts 1:8b (NASB): “...you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” That is our mission! We are witnesses. A witness (as I said earlier) is one who tells what He has seen, heard, and experienced. We are not called to be God’s lawyers, but His witnesses. We are not spreaders of propaganda; we are His witnesses. We are not high pressure recruiters or sales persons. We are witnesses. A witness is simply expected to tell the truth. We are simply to tell the truth about Jesus! I warn you that in a culture that is hostile to the Gospel, being a witness may be dangerous. The Greek word for witness is the word that we get the word “martyr.” Why is that? It is because so many who were witnesses for Christ were killed for their faith that to be a witness was to be a martyr. Our culture is not the first culture that has been hostile to true Christianity.

Verse 8b gives the location where our witness is to be carried out. It is “in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” You can divide the book of Acts on that basis; this is a table of contents for the book. The first seven chapters of Acts focus on being a witness to Christ in Jerusalem. In chapter eight you find a break, and the disciples are driven out of Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria. Beginning with chapter thirteen you have the missionary call of Paul and Barnabas to go out to the Gentile world on what is called the first missionary journey. That begins the story of taking the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. That is God's program for the geographical carrying out of the gospel.

IV. The Motivation of His Return (v9-11)

This is what is called, “The ascension of the Lord.” Can’t you feel the excitement these early followers of Christ experienced? Why was it so important that Jesus ascend back to the Father? If He had not returned to the father, He could not have sent His Spirit. John 16:7 (NASB): “But 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.” This and so much more is ours because He ascended back to the Father.

Notice in Acts 1:9 that a cloud enveloped Him and took Him to heaven. I don’t believe that it was a normal cloud. It was likely the same cloud that filled the temple when Solomon dedicated the Temple. This cloud was called by the Jews the “Shekinah glory cloud.” He ascended back to glory and was received in heaven in glory. The disciples were just mesmerized by all this. Finally, they get what seems like a mild rebuke from two angels who are now on the scene. The angels gave a promise that ought to be dear to our heart: Acts 1:11 (NASB): “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus,

who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” That is an angelic promise concerning the second coming of our Lord.

Conclusion

This same Jesus is one day coming again. He said in Revelation 22:12 (NASB): “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.” Until He comes, we have work to do. We are to finish the work Jesus began and to enable us, He has given us His Spirit. We are to go to our Jerusalem (neighbors, town, our county); we are to go to our Judea and Samaria (North America), and we are to go to the remotest part of the earth. He has given us all we need to carry out our marching orders. We have no excuse.