

How Jesus Prepared His Men for Church Planting

Acts: The Gospel of Jesus Christ, Part Two

Dr. Luke begins the Book of Acts where he left off in his gospel account. Acts records the initial fulfillment of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 as it traces the beginning and growth of the New Testament church. Christ's last words before His ascension were so perfectly realized in the Book of Acts that they effectively and concisely outline its contents: You shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem (chapters 1-7), and in all Judea and Samaria (chapters 8-12) and even to the end of the earth (chapters 13-28). Thus, Acts traces the rapid expansion of the gospel, beginning in Jerusalem and spreading throughout the Roman Empire.

Author: Dr. Luke – gospel writer, historian, physician
Recipient: Theophilus – lover of God
Date: Written in A.D. 61

Focus	Witness in Jerusalem 1:1 8:4		Witness in Judea and Samaria 8:5 12:25	Witness to the Ends of the Earth 13:1 28:31	
Main Divisions	Power of the Church 1:1 2:47	Progress of the Church 3:1 8:4	The Expansion of the Church 8:5 12:25	Paul's Three Journeys 13:1 21:16	Paul's Three Trials 21:17 28:31
People Group	Jews		Samaritans	Gentiles	
Central Leader	Peter		Philip	Paul	
Time	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)		13 Years (A.D. 35-48)	14 Years (A.D. 48-62)	

Acts 1:1-11 ¹ In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶ So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

What Did Jesus Do To Prepare His Men to Launch the Church?

1. By the example of His life – v. 1
2. By teaching them the Word of God – v. 1
3. By working with them until the very last day – v. 2
4. By giving orders to them – v. 2, 4
5. By living filled with the Spirit – v. 2
6. By being available to them – v. 3
7. By showing them God's life – v. 3
8. By the resurrection and appearances – v. 3
9. By building expectations – v. 4, 5
10. By making them a team – v. 4
11. By letting them ask questions – v. 6
12. By refocusing them – v. 7, 8
13. By imparting vision for the world – v. 8
14. By giving them a strategy to reach the world – v. 8
15. By sending the Holy Spirit to help – v. 9-11
16. By allowing them to participate in what was most important to Him – v. 8-11

What Does Jesus Need to Do in My Life to Prepare to Use Me?

Discussion Questions

- A. What do you know about what the world was like at the time Acts was written?
- B. If the book of Acts were not included in the Bible, how would you describe what would be missing in the total picture of the Bible's message?
- C. The book of Acts has been called "Power Unleashed," "The Book of Christian Action," and "The Gospel's Momentum." With that reputation for this book, what kinds of answers and guidelines and solutions would you like to gain as you examine it more closely?

For Further Study

1. Read the following passages. What do you learn about Luke, the author of Acts?
Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:9-11; Philemon 23-24; Luke 1:1-4.
2. In the following passages, notice the places where the pronoun "we" is used, indicating that Luke was present with Paul during the events described. What kind of interesting experiences did Luke get to share with Paul? Acts chapters 16, 20, 21, 27, 28.
3. Look at Jesus' strategic teachings in these passages. What do they tell you about what is uppermost on the heart of Jesus Christ? Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45-49.
4. The mission statement at one church where I was the teaching pastor says: *The heart of our church is people helping people connect authentically to God, connect vitally to one another and connect effectively with our world.* In what ways do the apostles begin doing that in the book of Acts?
5. In preparation for next week, read Acts 1:12-26 and ask the question, In what ways did Jesus' men prepare *themselves* for Pentecost?

Check Out these Books to Get More out of this Course

Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*
Bill Hybels, *Rediscovering Church*
Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformissional Rev*
Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*
Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*