

“The End of the Story....and the Beginning!” Acts 1.1-11

1st Photo Album FAMILY we’re Adopted into thru Resurrection Jesus

Early CHURCH > Founding, Faith, Fathers, Fights, Failings

God’s Story > From John 21 to Romans 1? – Paul? Rome? Gentiles?

1. The Living Jesus 2. Learning from Jesus 3. Led by Jesus

1. The Living Jesus

Last Chs 4 Gospels Records RESURRECTION of Jesus

Still SOME DOUBTED > Fog of Uncertainty > Some kind of TRICK?

When they saw him, they worshiped him; *but some doubted.* Matt 28.17

they heard that Jesus was alive...*they did not believe it.* Mark 16.11

Most people in Jerusalem knew Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified, but they did not know he had been raised from the dead. Warren Wiersbe

a. Alive Doubting Disciples > Transformed to Fearless FOLLOWERS

v. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave *many convincing proofs that he was alive.*

NOT Somebody told them Jesus Alive > Jesus HIMSELF was PROOF!

New Testament > Direct Link to Risen Jesus > EYE-WITNESSES!!

v. 4 On one occasion, *while he was eating with them ...*

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but *we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.* 2 Peter 1.16

That which was from the beginning, which *we have heard*, which *we have seen* with our eyes, which *we have looked at* and *our hands have touched* - *this we proclaim* concerning the Word of life. 1 John 1.1,2

CHRISTIAN FAITH > Unique among ALL RELIGIONS

ALL other Belief Systems > Founder Buried, Active Ministry ENDS

Acts STORY of Christ > Vs. 1 – 11 > EVERY VERSE Refers to Jesus

v. 1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach

Brilliant Truth in WORD **BEGAN** = Still GOING, Life & Work of Jesus

Grave NOT END Jesus' Life & Work > HE Emerged from it ALIVE!

Jesus of History > Forever ALIVE // CHIEF ACTOR in Acts

Acts of Exalted Jesus in Power of HS thru His Apostolic Church

In the Gospels the Son of Man offered his life; in Acts the Son of God offered his power. In the Gospels we see the original seeds of Christianity; in Acts we see the continual growth of the Church. The Gospels tell us of Christ crucified and risen; Acts speaks of Christ ascended and exalted.
Kent Hughes

b. Ascended Disciples wanted Fellowship w/ Risen Lord FOREVER

It is for your good that I am going away. *Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*
John 16.7

Jesus in Body > Limited in Time and Place

Jesus in Spirit > Omnipresent, Eternal > Where 2 or More in His NAME

Physical Presence of Jesus in Heaven: Not in Cathedrals or Communion

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 2 Corinth 3.17

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.
John 14.12

?? "greater things"?? > GREATER in QUANTITY > NOT Quality

Nothing Greater Perfect, Powerful, Holy Life & Death of Jesus on Earth

NOW Spirit of Jesus empowers – Men, Women, Boys, Girls / GLOBE

Greater Extent X's Works thru Church: Ends of Earth to End of the Age

AWESOME PICTURE – Continuous, Eternal Blessings.... Luke 24.51

While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

Ascension – Historical EVENT: Divides Earthly & Heavenly Ministry

Simple, FACTUAL, HISTORICAL Descrip of Supernatural Event

God Encounters World: Creation, Virgin Birth, Resurrection, Ascension

Understand Word > WORDS Exceed Our UNDERSTANDING

v. 2 the day he was *taken up to heaven* > 5 X's Truth Stated VSS.

Happened in OT > ENOCH walked w/ God, and God took him...

ELIJAH taken into Heaven while ELISHA watched > ONLY MEN

v. 9 He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Cloud: Biblical Image of GLORY and POWER: Son of Man in Daniel

Coronation of King: Sovereign taking up THRONE > Begin RULE

...the royal chariot was sent for him...

Chrysostom

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
Psalm 110.1

vs. 10,11a They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky?..."

It was earth not the sky which was to be their preoccupation. Their calling was to be witnesses not stargazers. The vision they were to cultivate was not upwards in nostalgia...but outwards in compassion to a lost world which needed Him. It is the same for us. John Stott

In the Resurrection they saw the end, but not the beginning, and in the Ascension they saw the beginning, but not the end. Chrysostom

v. 11b 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.

NOT Press Words > 2nd Coming Not = Rewinding Film of Ascension

NOT Necessarily – Wear SAME Clothes to SAME Location

RETURN of Jesus > PERSONAL...but NOT PRIVATE

11 Apostles saw HIM GO > Entire Planet will See His Return

Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him Revelation 1.7

Return of Jesus > Personal...but NOT Alone – bring back Family!

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels
2 Thessalonians 1.7

God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him 1 Thessalonians 4.14

Jesus is Coming Again > POWERFUL, VISIBLE, and CLIMACTIC

2. Learning from Jesus

Jesus wears MANY HATS > 1 is TEACHER > MASTER TEACHER

Risen Jesus 40 Days on Earth > Primarily to TEACH Apostles

Prepare them for Mission > Foundation of NEW TESTAMENT

a. Subject > twin themes KINGDOM of God & SPIRIT of God

v. 3 He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the *kingdom of God*...

v. 5 ...in a few days you will be *baptized with the Holy Spirit*

BAPTIZED – Immerse, Deluge, United w/ JESUS thru HOLY SPIRIT

PROPHET ISAIAH FORETOLD: See, a *king will reign* in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice... the *Spirit is poured upon us* from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field
Isaiah 32.1,15

In Kingdom see Jesus' PRESENCE / By Spirit have Jesus' POWER

b. Scripture > TEXTBOOK of Master Teacher is HOLY SCRIPTURE

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then *he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.*
Luke 24.44-45

Jesus Key to Understand OT > & TEACHER who Inspired the NT

LUKE Biggest Contributor to NT: Only GENTILE Author of Bible

2 Vol: Luke/Acts > Longer than Paul's 13 Letters & John's 5 Books

Never met Jesus: Paul's Convert > "Our dear friend Luke, the doctor..." Colossians 4.14

97 VS of 'WE' > Luke was TRAVELING COMPANION of PAUL

Both Volumes Dedicated: v. 1 "In my former book, Theophilus..."

Theophilus: Wealthy Seeker? Believer? PATRON?? Supporter?

c. Scholarship > Luke the Scholar was filled with God's Spirit

Luke: Proficient in Literary Greek, Trained Hellenistic Historical Style

Luke's Scholarship > Used by GOD – Primary Author > Inspiration

You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's, and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment

Sir William Ramsey / Prof Classical Art & Archeology, Oxford Uni

...the author of Acts (was) among the historians of first rank F.C. Baur

For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming...Any attempts to reject its basic historicity in matters of detail must now appear absurd.

A.N. Sherwin-White, Oxford University

Ramsey, Baur, Sherwin-White > 3 Formidable SCHOLARS - Professors

Radical CRITICS of Acts/Luke: Studied to Criticize became Convinced

d. Sermons > Jesus teaches thru Sermons > EVEN THIS ONE!

ACTS - 25% of Book = 32 Speeches > 19 of them Sermons

Revival in Bible: 1st Teaching, then Repentance & Outpouring of Spirit

A spiritual awakening always soars on the wings of the Word. Lewis Drummond

3. Led by Jesus

Main Story-Line ACTS > Spread of KINGDOM Message of JESUS

LUKE: Jesus TO Jerusalem/ ACTS > Jesus People FROM Jerusalem

Luke
 Going TO -----→ **Jerusalem** -----→ Acts
 Going FROM

Jesus took the Twelve aside and said, 'We're going up to Jerusalem, and every- thing that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled' Luke 18.31

vs. 4,5 "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

J. Conquered CROSS in Jerusalem/ We CARRY Cross FROM Jerusalem

Gospel of Luke > Jesus on Earth // Book of Acts > Jesus in Heaven

Luke: Jesus' *Earthly Humiliation* // Acts: Jesus' *Heavenly Exaltation*

In the book of Acts we see the footprints of the Holy Spirit in and through the footprints of the Apostles.

R.C. Sproul

ONLY GOD-ORDAINED Tools > God's Word and God's Spirit

ANY who Use them RIGHTLY and REVERENTLY will be BLESSED!

v. 6 they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

RESTORE = Expecting a POLITICAL, TERRITORIAL Kingdom

ISRAEL = Expecting a NATIONAL Kingdom

AT THIS TIME = Expect IMMEDIATE Establishment of Kingdom

vs. 7,8 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."

3 HELPFUL Applications of Passage by John Stott –

a. The Kingdom of God is Spiritual in Character

Think ‘Spiritual Kingdom’ = UNREAL: Fairies, Fairy Tales, Legends

SPIRITUAL = NO Physical Expression, Flags, Buildings, Armies, People

5 yrs in KZ ICF Almaty “Stars Club” – Hottest Clubs in City

Set-Up Team > Turn on Blower Fans: Smoke & Beer / Wake DRUNKS

Presence Holy Spirit > Pray, Worship, Preach Word > Sacraments!

Learn Much in Acts about Key Apostles Peter and Paul

NOT Physical Appearance, Parents, Politics, Hobbies, Death >> Message

Leaders SUPPORTING ROLE > MAIN ACTOR in Acts is JESUS

Kingdom of God = God’s TRUTH, Not TERRITORY

= God’s RULE, Not REALM

= God’s PEOPLE, Not PLACE

what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4.18

b. The Kingdom of God is International in Membership

Ap’s Q: Betrays JEWISH NATIONALISM, God’s Kingdom Bigger

1st Month as Pastor of Haili took American Flag out of Sanctuary!

Lived most Adult Life OUT of USA > Best Country in World – Proud!

Xi Jing Ping CHINA flags in Churches > Communist! Lived Iowa!

Gospel Not Property of ANY STATE, LANGUAGE, or ETHNICITY

Jesus is not American: Church is Global > All Nations WELCOME

Pastor in SD “I do not pray for OUR Troops” Church has no Army

Pray 4 People in War, Justice, Mercy, Peace > Church to Shine w/ Jesus

Deacon Haili Church: ‘Who R Strangers you bring in Our Church?’

When Church meets in Heaven > Will be REAL Strange!!

...a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Revelation 7.9-10

c. The Kingdom of God is Gradual in its Expansion

GOD Knows TIMES and DATES > SERVICE NOT SPECULATION!

LEAVEN: Secret, Slow, Saturating > Entire Loaf is Transformed

Small Mustard Seed > Mighty Tree > Birds of Nations sit in Branches

Time btwn Coming of Spirit and Coming Again of Son > WITNESS

1986 Dayna & I Taught Bp Tucker Theol College in Uganda

Principal > My extracurric > Director of Missions and Evangelism!

Met Students to Share > BIG IDEAS – Across Uganda, Africa, World!

Rich M from USA w/Pick-up Truck: Some Saw \$\$ more than Disciples

Disappointed when I read Acts 1.8 – Our Jerusalem was MUKONO!

NOT NEED My Truck – ALL WALK House/House, Shop/Shop

Mission FAILED, Lack of INTEREST: Who wants Go Across Street!

2 Years Later > New Gp Students > One READ – Acts 1.8 in Meeting

Hey! Let's have Outreach our OWN Village, Begin Right Here!

GREAT Response & Blessing: NEIGHBORS in WORD & DEED

Moved back to Hilo 1991 > left 200 Students of Theology BTTC

2010 – Cape Town, SA - Met School's Principal Lausanne Conference

Uganda Xtian University – 11,000 Students: Theol, Nursing, Eng, Law

2011 BJ > UCU spoke 2 X's Day/Week Several Thousand UCU Students

The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, & the nearer we get to him, the more intensely missionary we must become| Henry Martyn, Persia/Iran

Holy Spirit gives Salvation to US – Moves Us Share with Others

14 Ref in Acts – 'filled with Holy Spirit' EACH ONE > Witnessing!

v. 8 Holy Spirit comes on you; you'll **be** my witnesses...to ends of earth

To be a witness for Christ is to bring a message that is a marvel of simplicity: Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh; he died to pay for our sins; he was resurrected; now he is exalted in Heaven; he calls us to believe in him and so receive forgiveness of sins. Kent Hughes

* * * * *

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do & to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men & gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 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. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "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." Acts 1.1-11

Prayer of Confession and Reflection (Acts 1.1-11)

God, please forgive us for not living like Jesus has truly risen from the dead – and that we have risen in Him. Forgive us for focusing more on our gains than your glory as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Sometimes we complain your “times and seasons” do not fit in with our plans. Forgive us for staring into the skies - speculating about stars and signs - more than studying the Scriptures.

Forgive us for quenching the Spirit who baptized us to make disciples. Two billion people in our world still have not heard the Good News that saves.

Risen Jesus we need your forgiveness; Spirit of the Lord we need your power.

Take a Moment and Silently Talk to God

Joy to the world! You, are risen from the dead, Lord Jesus. We are baptized with the power of your Holy Spirit and called into your Church. What a mystery that You should take up residence in my weak and frail body!

Almighty God, help me to humbly and gladly receive the plans you have fixed by Your own sovereign authority.

Heavenly Father, help us to hear the clear command of our Risen Lord - go, go, go, go – to the ends of the earth until the end of the age.

Fill us again with your power and grace, that we may be your hands and feet, and heart and spirit, day by day. For the glory of your Triune Name. Amen.