

The Acts of the Apostles

Introduction

Introduction: Acts provides us with several important speeches/presentations of the Good News that define our task a bit more completely. Of the 28 speeches, 8 are given by Peter and 10 by Paul. They are missionary speeches to Jews, evangelistic speeches to gentiles and debates before pagan philosophers.

Just like Luke's opening and birth of Christ, chapter 2, so Luke opens the Acts of the Apostles with the birth of the Church, in chapter 2. Luke gives little details for Jesus' first 30 years, but provides significant details for the first 30 years of the Church.

Luke presents the historical record of the Church's emergence as distinctly different from Israel and the Temple/Synagogue community. As the Christian community grows it grows away from the Jewish community; yet it is distinctly Messianic/Christ centered.

Acts 1:1-11 - Jesus' Return to Heaven - These verses are the overlap/connector verses of Luke and Acts and provide important moments in the early life of the Church.

Command - Acts 1:1-5

Command: Serve God in the power of the Holy Spirit!

Summary: Ministry without the Holy Spirit is human effort and the results are temporal. Do not serve God or God's people without the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Promise - Acts 1:6-8

Concept: The Holy Spirit provides access to God's power for—witnessing.

Summary: Evangelizing and Discipling others is always empowered by the Holy Spirit! (Philippians 1:12-20) Predicting the return of Christ is not our business—we are on a mission and living on a promise.

Memory - Acts 1:9-11

Precept: Jesus Christ will return the same way he left - Remember & Anticipate!

Conclusion: None of the original disciples or those that take up the message in the early Church had it easy and the truth is exhibited by Paul in Philippians 3:7-15.

Acts tells us that the Holy Spirit did not come to reveal himself; he came to use us to reveal Jesus Christ to those who have not yet heard. Acts insists that I am most blessed when I am being used by the Holy Spirit to present the good news of Jesus Christ.

Acts presents us with three Church emphases: First, is it militant, aggressively carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth - evangelistic; second, it is skilled at discipling and training new converts to obey God, serve in the Church and support her ministries - school; third, it is a place where hurting people can recover and reenter ministry after being troubled/damaged by life - hospital. Acts presents us with all of these, militancy, training and care which seem to define the early church.