

“WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?”
(After Completing a Study of the Life of Christ in the Book of John)
Acts 1:1-8
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INTRODUCTION

Our Lord Jesus lived a perfect life, taught men how to live, died a substitutionary death. But, now He was gone. He ascended into Heaven and left His disciples. What were they to do? What are we to do? *Where do we go from here?*

Good for us that the four gospels are followed by the Book of Acts—the one historical book of the New Testament, the book that gives us the history of the New Testament Church.

When we concluded our study of John’s gospel Jesus was with His disciples in Galilee. We saw how Jesus had restored Peter to a position of leadership among the disciples—soon to be apostles. The book of Acts begins with Jesus and his disciples now in Jerusalem—as we see Him there at the end of the Gospel of Luke (24:36-53). Since Luke is the author of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts, he recaps Luke 24 here and connects Acts with his entire Gospel.

Let us look at some background information about this book:

- **AUTHOR**—Luke, the physician (Col. 4:14). He makes reference in verse one to his “former treatise” which is the Gospel of Luke. He also points out that Luke concerned **“all that Jesus BEGAN to do and teach”**. This implies that Jesus—though in Heaven—is still doing and teaching. But how? If he is in Heaven how does He still act and teach? The answer is obvious; He continues to act through His disciples whom He has carefully trained.
- **TITLE**—“The Acts of the Apostles” (KJV), or simply “The Acts” (NASB). This book can just as easily be called “The Acts of the Holy Spirit” or even “The Continued Acts of the Lord Jesus Christ”.
- **DATE**—When we put all the information together—especially noting when the last incident in chapter 28 takes place, and Luke’s relationship with the Apostle Paul, it is fairly certain that Luke wrote this book in 62-64 AD. It appears that Paul’s case before Nero was still pending (28:30-31)
- **ADDRESSEE**—Theophilus, the same person address at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke (1:3). We do not have additional information about this man, but it is evident that he is a believer—likely a fairly new believer who needs additional training. The fact that Luke would take such pains to address two such significant books to one man indicates that Theophilus was both influential and wealthy. He probably had a significant circle of influence by which he could spread this message—and possibly even finance the copying and distribution of these books.
- **PURPOSE**
 - For Theophilus—for his personal growth and encouragement
 - For those with Theophilus
 - For the Church—progress of the gospel and the healthy life of the church

- For a positive presentation of Christianity in light of its relationship with the Roman political powers; this would have a strong influence upon those concerned with Paul's trial before Nero.

The connection of Acts with Luke shows the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ through his Apostles and disciples. **Therefore, the burden of this book is to show us—His church—how He wants us to carry on in His physical absence.**

In this passage, Luke shows us our present responsibility in light of the past and future.

YOU MUST BE A WITNESS FOR JESUS CHRIST.

I. SUMMARY OF THE PAST (1-5)

A. The Beginning of Jesus' words and works (1)

1. The choice of the Apostles (2c) [Note that the word "apostle"—a word rarely used of the disciples during Jesus' earthly ministry—refers to their official commission and power along with their delegated authority.]
2. His life and teachings implied as described in Luke (and the other Gospels)
3. His suffering and resurrection—"after His passion—suffering"; He was "alive" (v. 3; see Lk. 24:)
4. His appearances (v. 3; Lk. 24);
 - Note that Jesus "**presented Himself**"—He was in control and manifested His power and victory over the grave!
 - He only presented Himself "to these"—esp. the apostles, but also other believers; He did not present Himself to the world.
 - He gave "many convincing proofs" of His resurrection and continuing life. Christianity is not a religion built upon superstition or hearsay; it is built upon a solid foundation of factual evidence given to **those who were not expecting to see Him alive again and were thoroughly discouraged**. This is why Jesus needed "many convincing proofs." Such were likely the various manifestations, amazing actions, sudden appearances and disappearances, various forms, profound teachings, etc.
 - He did this over a period of **40 days**.
 - He spoke to them "of the things concerning the kingdom of God"; this has reference to the spread and continued teaching of Jesus Christ's message through the church.
5. His commission (2b; Lk. 24:47)—He "gave orders to the apostles"
 - a. Preach the Gospel in the whole world.(Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:47)
 - b. Tarry in Jerusalem (4-5; Lk. 24:49). They were to "wait for what the Father had promised, which you heard of from Me"—the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26.
 - c. Baptism in the Holy Spirit—John had used water; Jesus uses the HS. This baptism introduces believers into the Body of Christ—the Church (I Cor. 12:13).This baptism unites the believer with Christ and with one another in one body—a real unity. The Spirit is the

medium in which we are baptized and he indwells, fills, and also empowers the believer.

6. His Ascension (2a)—“until the day when He was taken up”—see Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:9-11.

Now, after this review, Luke really begins his second account.

II. QUESTION OF THE FUTURE (V. 6)

This incident took place on the Mount of Olives, outside Jerusalem to the east (Lk. 24:50) “When they had come together, they were asking Him”. Note, that this was a persistent concern of theirs (“were asking”).

“Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”

- Note that they didn’t ask Him IF He was going to restore the kingdom to Israel; they asked Him about the time of the restoration.
- They had every right to be thinking this way, for according to the Old Testament the Holy Spirit would be given in the Messianic age when Israel would be restored to its former glory and would have dominion under Messiah’s rule (e.g. Joel 2; Is. 11; Micah 4).
- Notice that Jesus did not rebuke them for believing in the restoration of Israel’s earthly kingdom; **He had a perfect opportunity to do so here if they were incorrect in their understanding.** He only corrected that in regard to the TIME.

III. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRESENT (7-8)

A. The Future is in God’s authority (7)

1. It is not for them OR US (even Harold Camping) to know “the times or seasons.”

2. The Father has determined such times and seasons by His own authority.

It is not our job to do a great deal of speculating about future events about which there is no specific revelation in the Word of God. We must teach the prophecy that is in the Bible, but not worry about “the secret things” that He keeps to Himself.

B. The Present is Our Responsibility (8)

1. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles.

2. The Spirit gave them (and us!) Power

3. The Spirit made them(and us!) Witnesses

- We are JESUS’ witnesses—not promoting ourselves, church, or agenda.
- We have marching orders as to our procedure; the next words really give us **an outline of the Book of Acts**
 - Jerusalem—1-7
 - Judea and Samaria (8-12)
 - The Uttermost part of the Earth (13-28)

Likewise, we must follow these instructions:

- Begin at Home
- Continue in outlying regions—our county, state, country
- Carry the message around the world

CONCLUSION

Oh, what an exciting job we have! How great it is to be a Christian!

We must not get bogged down in the issues and problems of life we face.

The Lord shows us here our past and our present—how we got to this point in Christianity and
What our continuing job is.

As we study this great book, let our cups overflow with enthusiasm and joy that God allows us to
be a part of this great movement of His Church!

Let us keep busy for Him—or get busy if we are not already!