



SUNDAY MESSAGE DELIVERED
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6th DECEMBER 2020

THEME: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH AND THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Act 1: 1-15: and Acts 2: 1-4

INTRODUCTION:

Before I begin to preach my sermon today, I must submit to you that the author of the Book of Acts was Luke - a doctor, a Greek and Gentile Christian. He is the only known Gentile author in the New Testament. This man was a close friend and companion of Paul.

The book of Acts begins where the gospels leave off, reporting the actions of the Apostles and the work of the Holy Spirit. Beginning in Jerusalem, the church was established and it grew rapidly, then faces intense persecution which drove the believers out into the surrounding areas. Through this dispersion, Samaritans and Gentiles heard the good news and believed.

In the time of the old covenant, the Holy Spirit was active in individual human beings chosen by God for specific tasks. Hence the prophets used the words "Thus says the Lord" to attest to their divine authority and instruction. The Spirit of God awakened in them the thoughts on which their proclamations of both judgement and salvation were based. By commission of God, the prophets also anointed kings to rule the chosen people. Thus, for example, David was anointed king by Samuel (1 Samuel 16: 12-13). With this act, David's kingship was "sealed", as it were. Furthermore, we read that the Spirit of God came upon David. According to Psalm 51: 11, the king prayed-after having committed a sin-that the Lord should not take His Holy Spirit from him.

Moreover, the Old Testament contains references to the future, when the Spirit of God would be poured out-no longer merely upon individuals, but upon many people: "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also, on My menservants and on My maidservants, I will pour out My Spirit in those days" (Joel 2: 28-29). Comparable promises can be found in the words of other prophets, for example in Ezekiel 36: 27: "I will put My Spirit within you." In his sermon on Pentecost, Apostle Peter pointed out that the promise of the prophet Joel had been fulfilled (Acts 2: 15 referencing Joel 2:28-29)

THE MESSAGE

Luke is telling us that the disciples were witnesses to all that had happened to Jesus Christ. His life before His crucifixion and the 40 days after his resurrection as he taught them more about the kingdom of God. Today there are still doubters of the message of

Jesus and that of the Kingdom of God. Some even doubt that he never resurrected. They said he did not die, it was Judas who took his place. What a mistake this people especially our Muslim brothers.

Imagine what it would be like if the Book of Acts wasn't in the Bible. You pick up your Bible and see the ministry of Jesus ending in the Gospel of John; next you read about a man named Paul writing to the followers of Jesus in Rome. Who was Paul? How did the gospel get from Jerusalem to Rome? The Book of Acts answers these questions. "A great New Testament scholar has said that the title of Acts might be, 'How they brought the Good News from Jerusalem to Rome.'

That expansion from Jerusalem to Rome is a remarkable story. "Humanly speaking, [Christianity] had nothing going for it. It had no money, no proven leaders, no technological tools for propagating the gospel. And it faced enormous obstacles. It was utterly new. It taught truths that were incredible to the unregenerate world. It was the subject to the most intense hatreds and persecutions

Today people prey on others for monetary gains. Let us turn our attention to Theophilus: This man might have been a Christian wanting instruction. He might have been a Roman official being briefed by Luke about the history of the Christian movement. Or, the name could be symbolic, because the name **Theophilus means "God-lover."**

In the introduction to the first volume (Luke 1:3), Luke addresses Theophilus with title most excellent, which was a way to address people who held high office. Since Acts ends with Paul awaiting trial before Caesar, some have wondered if Luke-Acts are not "defense briefs" on Paul's behalf to give a Roman official background on Paul's case. Luke arrived in Jerusalem with Paul in Acts 21:17; he left with him again on the journey to Rome in Acts 27:1. In those two years, Luke had plenty of time to research and write his Gospel and the Book of Acts.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS AS MY CONCLUSION?

We can learn of the last works of Jesus before His ascension to heaven. Until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Until the day in which He was taken up: Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, instructed the apostles regarding what to do in His absence. He had given commandments to the apostles. Significantly, Jesus did this through the Holy Spirit. This was the resurrected, glorified Lord Jesus Christ, risen with all authority and sovereignty. Yet He still chose to not rely on His own resources (as it were), but relied on the power and the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit – the Third Member of the Holy Trinity – is the aspect of God that lives and empowers and inspires man. The Holy Spirit has a work among those who are not yet believers, but also a great and significant work in those who believe