

Acts 1:1-5 | In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 1:1-5 | New Conquest

The early drama of scripture centers around the people of promise inheriting by conquest the land of promise. Of all the nations of the world God takes for himself one nation through whom he intends to bless the whole world. The Lord has for his people a land of promise, and the way he gives his people this land of promise is by sending them into the promised land to conquer without the inhabitants of the land which God had given to them.

Therefore the inheritance that they have received is given to them by means of a conquest in which they must participate. Joshua is the old covenant book of Conquest. Today we begin Acts the New Testament book of conquest. Both books begin with the departure of the former leader, the one who accomplished their exodus. Both books begin with the sending of a new leader to take the people into the promised land. This leader baptizes the people, and then leads them to conquer a great city and on to the rest of the land.

The conquest of the book of Acts is as more glorious than Joshua as the New Covenant is compared to the Old. Joshua is given the Spirit that rested on Moses. The church is given the Spirit that rested on Jesus. Joshua conquered the promised land. The Church by the Holy Spirit is sent to conquer all the nations of the world. Joshua baptized the people in crossing the Jordan, the church is baptized by fire from the Holy Spirit. Joshua conquered by swords made of metal the church conquers by the flaming sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Let us see the shape of the conquest of the church.

1. Author & Recap

Acts 1:1 | In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,

Acts is written by Luke, the gentile physician who wrote the gospel of Luke. Here he explains to his main reader, a man named Thophilous, that this book is a sequel to this first book. This is the story of what comes right after Jesus ascended into heaven. The book is likely written to a particular person, probably commissioned by this wealthy patron, who desired an orderly account of all that had taken place regarding the life of Christ and the

mission of his church. Theophilus means lover of God. You can hear the love in the Phil, like Philadelphia, and the God in Theo, like huckstable. His introduction the first book shows the type of project he began in Luke and continues in Acts.

Luke 1:1-4 | Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

You see this is Luke's project, to compile a narrative from eyewitness evidence and place it in an orderly account so that the reader may be certain of the things that have been taught regarding Christ. This is the same purpose which he continues regarding Acts. The difference is merely the timeline. The first book recounted up...

Acts 1:2 | until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

What Luke alludes to here is the necessary background you need to call to mind regarding the beginning of Acts. And we know that the commands that Jesus gave to the apostles by the Holy Spirit was the great commission to make disciples of all nations, and the proclamation that all that is written in Moses and the Prophets has been fulfilled in Christ. Likewise notice that the first book was about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up, that means the book of Acts is still about Jesus's ministry.

2. Resurrection

Acts 1:3 | He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Luke goes on to summarize the period between Christ's resurrection and his ascension. Christ appears alive after his suffering to his apostles, and many others as well. This is a forty day period in which Christ presented himself many times to prove his resurrection to them. This is essential to grasp about the nature of Christianity as a religion, and the faith that is proclaimed all over the world. Acts is not the story of what the people of God did in the wake of their dead leader. Jesus is alive! Jesus is still ruling his people, he is still with his people.

He is God who was ruling over his people for all time, and he is still ruling over his people. Sometimes when we were in Acts we can think we were reading a mere history or how to do the church manual, rather than reading a particular period of redemptive history that we are to learn from and apply to our present state today. But look, you're still in the Bible,

you're still in the same book as Genesis 1 and the fall in the garden. You can tell because things take 40 days. Why is Jesus speaking to them about the kingdom of God for 40 days. Well what is 40 in the Bible? Its always new birth, the beginning of something new. Because you know what takes 40 weeks. The beginning of a new life. And that is exactly precipitates the new beginning shown to us in the book of Acts. New life coming into the world.

This new life coming into the world is called by Jesus, the Kingdom of God. Because the Kingdom of God is the rule of God in the hearts of his people and his rule over the whole world. The Kingdom of God is described in the gospel in which those who enter his kingdom by the blood of Jesus become citizens of this heavenly kingdom receiving remission of sins and promise of eternal glory. For forty days after his resurrection, Jesus declared this good news so that it would be fresh in the minds of his apostles. It was the nature of their mission, to proclaim the kingdom of God.

3. The Holy Spirit

Acts 1:4-5 | And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The question of the 40 days that Luke is leading us into is just what we are on the cusp of in this book. He orders his apostles to not depart from Jerusalem but to await the promise of the father. They receive this instruction while they are eating with Jesus. The word for staying with them, is actually a word for eating with them. There is a covenantal frame to this. Jesus is eating a meal with them, like the last supper and he is promising them the coming baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Look at the trinitarian shape of this promise. The promise is of the Father. The father promises to send the Holy Spirit upon his people. The promise is given to the apostles by Jesus, as he says, “you heard from me.” It is the Spirit of Jesus which will be placed upon the apostles to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. And the promise is the Holy Spirit. The same spirit which rose Jesus from the dead will enliven the people of God.

It is a moment of waiting. The Exodus has taken place, the forty days have passed. There is a new baptism coming, a crossing of the Jordan, but not into the promised land, one that spreads the promised land into all nations. It is precisely where Luke ends.

Luke 24:44-49 | Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them,

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

They are poised to take the promised land, and equipped with the scriptures by their Lord. We should hear the echoes of Joshua on the cusp of the promised land, given the word of God from Moses.

Joshua 1:8-9 | This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

God will be with his people to conquer new land in his name by the power of his word and Spirit. He subdues the souls of his people, offering forgiveness of sins to his enemies across the whole world so that all nations might be citizens of his heavenly Kingdom.