

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## *The School of Christ*

### **Acts 1:3-11**

**Keywords:** Kingdom of God, Eschatology, Holy Spirit, Acts, Ascension, Apostles

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** none

**SermonAudio Blurb:** Prior to the ascension of Jesus Christ He spent a significant amount of time instructing His Apostles for their life of ministry. In this incredible time of schooling key subjects were taught: specifically, His resurrection, extensive teaching on the Kingdom of God, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, their calling to be witnesses throughout the earth, His ascension and the promise of His return.

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We continue our entrance into the book of Acts.
- B. Written by Luke. A thoroughly and carefully researched account of the spread of the good news of Jesus Christ into the world.
- C. A unique book in the bible as it straddles the transition between the Old Covenant of the Mosaic Law and the New Covenant. It is filled with many unique events that we ought not assume are to be normal throughout the church age.
- D. But it also is a time of unfolding great events that are then developed in the letters by the Apostles so it bears careful study by all of us. The greatest is the inexorable movement toward the Kingdom of God.
- E. But today we find ourselves in a school of sorts—the school of Christ.
  - 1. He is preparing to ascend into heaven and in the time He still had He teaches the eleven Apostles certain things.
  - 2. It is worth noting that in the limited time Jesus had to be present with these men it was spent instructing them on theology. It again reminds me of how important sound teaching is for all of us.
- F. Today we will look at six specific topics that Jesus either schooled the Apostles in or modeled it in these few short days He had with them. Six key truths that both the Apostles and we need to begin to understand and love.

#### **II. The School of Christ.**

- A. His resurrection.
  - 1. This requires no extensive explanation as I dealt with this in the prior sermon.

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2. It is sufficient to understand that without the resurrection there is nothing to hope in and nothing to live for other than fleeting pleasure wherever you can find it.
3. But if there is the resurrection then we must live in light of it. The Lord was crucified and died. But He did not stay dead and that means we will face Him and He will speak to each of you in one way or another.
  - a. Depart from me for I never knew you.
  - b. Well done my good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master.
  - c. There is no middle ground and never has been. As Jesus said it elsewhere, you are either with Him or against Him.
4. But the resurrection set into motion certain events and realities that are with us even to this day. Here are a few of them:
  - a. It showed that His sacrifice of His life on the Cross was accepted by the Father. Therefore the bible says that He was raised on account of our justification. In other words, through the resurrection of Jesus we can be declared righteous before our Holy God.
  - b. But it set up the ascension into heaven as well. There He is seated at the right hand of the Father, a position of authority and power. Where He is exalted above all other powers like Philippians 2 describes.
  - c. It opened up His intercessory work where as Hebrews puts it, “since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).
  - d. He will now send the Holy Spirit to those He redeems both inaugurating the New Covenant and giving birth to His Church.
  - e. And He sets into motion all of the elements necessary for Him to rule in His Kingdom, gathering back Israel to Himself in its fulness. Or as Romans 11:28 says, “thus all Israel will be saved.”
  - f. All of these are realities and events that are inextricably tied to the resurrection. Without it, there truly would be no hope and no purpose.

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## B. The Kingdom of God.

1. Note first His extensive instruction regarding the Kingdom of God in verse 3—forty days of teaching. That is a lot of information.
2. Also note that the question the apostles had was not about the kingdom itself but as to the timing.
  - a. We can conclude from this that Jesus had not stated the “when” but only the “what” in relation to the kingdom.
  - b. But in verses 4-5 He tells them to go and wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem.
    - (1) This is likely what caused them to ask if the timing of the Kingdom of God was soon. He teaches extensively about the Kingdom, now He says, “Go and wait for the Spirit to come upon you in just a few days.”
    - (2) A natural question would be, “Oh! Does that mean the Kingdom of God is now?”
  - c. This is important to note because massive debates center around the nature, meaning and purpose of the kingdom of God.
  - d. They were too preoccupied with the timing and not understanding that this was not what they were to concern themselves with. Rather, they were to go to Jerusalem and wait. In other words, they got ahead of themselves and went beyond what He had taught them.
  - e. It is not ours to know the timing of the Kingdom of God, which is what is meant in verse 7. But it is ours to understand what the Kingdom of God actually is for the bible teaches much on this massive subject.
3. I plan on doing a major excursus on the Kingdom of God and what it means very soon. This will be a multiple week study so I will leave my comments to that series.
4. But what is important today is simply to know that Jesus had all sorts of things He could have taught these men in this short time prior to His ascension and the Kingdom of God was the topic of choice. You should ask yourself, “why?”

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5. Also, you may wonder why the Apostles asked if the restoration of the kingdom to Israel was happening then.
  - a. He had just mentioned the baptism of the Holy Spirit and this was likely what prompted the question. And it was a good and legitimate question to ask.
  - b. Briefly look at Acts 2:2. We see two events here though only one is overtly stated.
    - (1) The first is baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is not obvious. That is the placing of these people into the Church, something I will explain when we get to this chapter.
    - (2) The second is a filling or empowerment of the Holy Spirit which is clearly stated and seen.
  - c. Now look down at verse 16-17.
    - (1) Here Peter explains what is happening and he does so through referencing the Old Testament prophet, Joel.
    - (2) The Apostles were well taught and knew what the Old Testament said regarding the Kingdom of God. And a key event tied to it was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is explicitly stated in several Old Testament passages.
    - (3) But what they did not understand was that this would be a gradual unfolding of the plan of God.
      - (a) Much like the reality of the first coming of the Messiah and the second coming. There was not the understanding or clarity of the gap between.
      - (b) And so what Jesus is saying is that the kingdom is coming but it is not for right now. Right now go wait for the Spirit and then go be my witnesses.

## C. The baptism of the Holy Spirit.

1. I will also commit an entire sermon to this subject as it is often misunderstood. The result is a whole host of bad practices in many churches and individual lives.

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2. Some observations to note:
  - a. First, he makes a distinction, in verse 5, between the baptism of John and this baptism of the Spirit.
    - (1) You may remember from Matt Miller's sermons in Luke that John the Baptist in chapter 3. This baptism was to signify the desire to turn from their rebellion and to welcome the long-promised Messiah, or Christ.
    - (2) In Luke 3 this was a preparatory baptism where they recognized that if the Messiah was coming then judgment was also coming. The call was to flee from God's wrath by coming to the Messiah.
    - (3) But in Luke we read also this from John's lips: "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16).
    - (4) Which is what Jesus is now teaching the Apostles yet again.
  - b. Second, there is no mention of them being baptized as followers of Jesus, or what some would call a "Christian baptism."
    - (1) What I mean by this is that there is never a mention of Jesus baptizing them at a later point in time prior to His death.
    - (2) John 4:1-4.
      - (a) We see there that there was some sort of baptism taking place by the disciples.
      - (b) What sort of baptism is not specifically stated but I think it is the same as with John the Baptist. A baptism of repentance.
      - (c) The reason is simply that Jesus makes no mention of any other type of baptism. Also there is the tight connection in vs 1 with John's baptism and this one done by the disciples.

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- (d) But what we don't find in the New Testament is an explicit statement that they were baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- c. What Jesus wants them to understand is that the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is coming soon and they are to go to Jerusalem and wait for it.
- d. And what we will see in the book of Acts is that through this work of the Spirit many great and wonderful things occur for the expansion of the gospel to all the nations.
- 3. Which takes us to the fourth topic.....
- D. The evangelistic directive (8).
  - 1. Right on the heels of this empowerment of the Spirit upon these men there is the restatement of the great commission.
  - 2. Note the flow of the gospel. Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and finally, to the ends of the earth.
  - 3. And this is the task of the Church to this day.
    - a. We do not exist for programs to have happy families and happy marriages.
    - b. We are not to be busy with social programs.
    - c. We are first and foremost to be a people who are on mission.
    - d. The local church exists to equip each person to go back into their world and be a witness of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done.
    - e. And the basis of this witness is the Apostolic writings of the Scripture.
  - 4. For most here the call is not to go to the outer parts of the world. But rather, you are called to be that faithful witness right where you live.
  - 5. What you will see in Acts is that the local church stayed put primarily in Jerusalem. But then God brought persecution upon them forcing them to scatter outward.

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- a. What stands out though is that they took the Christian Gospel with them. They were witnesses in Jerusalem, and now they simply became witnesses elsewhere
  - b. And this is your responsibility too. You move? Take the gospel with you. You stay? Bring the gospel to those around you.
- E. His ascension.
1. Note the anti-climatic nature of the ascension.
    - a. The whole of the gospels had a growing anticipation because Jesus was the Messiah (explain).
    - b. All of that came to a crash with the arrest and crucifixion. And then all of it was reignited with the resurrection.
    - c. But instead of establishing the promised kingdom, and make no mistake it is a promised kingdom that involves the restoration of Israel, He ascends into heaven.
  2. He is currently seated in heaven.
    - a. Currently he is at the right hand of the Father. But this is not His kingdom. Something I will explain in detail in the coming weeks.
    - b. But in the future he will have His own throne in the Kingdom.
      - (1) We read of this in Matthew 19:28, *“And Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’”*
      - (2) In Luke 22:30 it is described as His Kingdom.
      - (3) And in Matthew 25:31 we see that this throne and rule is yet future: *“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.”*
        - (a) That little word “then” He will sit... speaks to a specific time.
        - (b) Too often you hear people say He is seated on His throne now, but that is not proper. It is at His

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second coming, His return. Literally, “at that time”  
He will sit.

(4) Rev 3:21 speaks of different thrones. *“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”*

c. This is not to say that He is not ruling, but merely that a key aspect of His rule is not yet here.

F. The promise of His return.

1. Note it is in the “same way.” The question becomes what is meant by that? It is not a throw away line. It is intentional.
2. First the clouds — Mark 13:24-27.
3. Second the location.
  - a. Note that verse 12 says that this took place on the Mount of Olives or Olivet.
  - b. This was the same place where He taught the disciples extensively about the end of times and His second coming in Matthew 24.
  - c. But even more importantly is that Zechariah expressly states that this is the place where the Lord stand and rescue Israel and in that day the Lord shall be king over all the earth (14:9).

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. The school of Christ. Such a blessing for these people.
- B. We see a lot of grace in this precious time for them.
  1. Such a trying time experiencing and watching the crucifixion. What sort of emotions must have gripped them.
  2. Such a whole separate batch of emotions and thoughts when He appeared and was raised from the dead.
  3. But it was not some fleeting glimpse and then He was gone. But rather a measured and focused time to have sweet fellowship with His dear friends.

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4. A time to hold dear to their hearts once He was gone. A time to remember what He taught them.
  5. Things were going to get very busy and very difficult and dangerous for them in just a short time. But now was a time to prepare and to rest.
- C. Some of you are needing to rest. You need to just sit and listen and think and learn. Perhaps it is to heal a bit from a time of trouble and hardship. In a sense you are in that gap time and it would be wise to soak it up.
- D. But for many of you it is time to go to work. To give a long, hard look at your life and your decisions. Are they made with the mission of God at the forefront or something else?
- E. What are changes you might make over the next 2-3 months that would enable you to become a true witness of Jesus Christ to your area? What can Missio do for you to help you?

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## Small Group Questions

- What do you know about the subject of the Kingdom of God? Spend time on this talking it through and try to make some notes. What is confusing or intriguing? Any controversy about it that you know of?
- What are changes you might make over the next 2-3 months that would enable you to become a true witness of Jesus Christ to your area? What can Missio do for you to help you?