



Book of Acts (Pt.2):
Jesus' Commission & Ascension (Acts 1:1-11)

Billy Humphrey - January 19th, 2025

I. Review

- A. The book of Acts is the 2nd volume of a two-part account written by Luke and addressed to Theophilus (whose name means "friend of God"). Most scholars agree that it was written between 60-90 AD.
- B. The first volume (Luke) is about the things Jesus did until He ascended. The second volume (Acts) is the things Jesus did after He ascended.
- C. Last week we discussed many of the distinguishing traits of the Church in the Book of Acts, including the empowerment of the Spirit, their devotion to prayer and worship, their commitment to the Word, their radical generosity and unity, their joy in suffering, and their engagement in mission.
- D. This week we want to consider Jesus' commission to the Church and His ascension and consider how these two things set the course for the early Church.

Acts 1:1-11 – "1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 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, 3 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. 4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' 7 And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.' 9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'



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II. Many Infallible Proofs

- A. There are at least a dozen unique post-resurrection appearances of Jesus recorded in the Bible. There are at least 10 that are identified at different times between the resurrection and the ascension.
- B. Paul records that over 500 individuals saw Jesus alive at one time after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6).
- C. Consider the great sense of wonder and encouragement and the incredible momentum the disciples were feeling while, for forty days, Jesus had appeared to them and taught them about the Kingdom.

III. Things Pertaining to the Kingdom

- A. "He had been seen by them for forty days and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Undoubtedly, He spent much time opening their hearts to understand the scriptures and likely His own parables about the Kingdom just as He did with the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus the day of His resurrection (Luke 24:13).
- B. There are two key names of Jesus that are established in this section of the commission of the Church. These two names are specific components of who Jesus is and His ministry. Each name is a messianic title with deep roots established in Scripture. They are:
 - 1. Son of David – Matthew 21:9
 - 2. Son of Man – Daniel 7:13

IV. Son of David

- A. Jesus had been teaching them about the Kingdom. Therefore, when they asked Him, "Is it now that you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" it may seem to us that this was an odd or out of place question. However, it reflected their specific understanding of the Kingdom and Jesus' impending reign as Messiah.
- B. They were really asking, "Is it now that you are going to begin to rule and reign as Messiah, the Son of David? Is now the time that you are going to expel Rome and initiate the Kingdom age?" Their question was rooted in their belief that Messiah would establish a literal, physical, kingdom on earth.



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- C. One of the most important ideas as we consider their question and Jesus' response is the fact that they were looking for Jesus to begin to reign upon David's throne in their day.
- D. The Lord promised David that one of his descendants would establish an eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16). God's covenant with David gave Israel an enduring hope that one day Messiah would come through David's lineage and sit on the throne of Israel.
- E. Old Testament prophets including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, and Micah all affirmed that Messiah would come from David's line. Matthew opens his Gospel by tracing Jesus' genealogy, declaring Him the Son of David and the fulfillment of Israel's hope.
- F. For us to fully grasp the empowerment of the Spirit on Pentecost, we must understand the disciples' expectation of the Kingdom. If we don't understand the Kingdom, we won't understand the birth of the Church as the community of the Kingdom.

V. You Shall Receive Power to Be My Witnesses

- A. Jesus told them not to leave Jerusalem until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. The word here for *baptized* literally means *immersed*.
- B. In Luke's Gospel, he recorded the phrase, "Clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).
- C. There is an important distinction between what Jesus was pointing to as an event that was still to come and what happened with the disciples 40 days earlier.
- D. In John 20:19-23 an event is recorded as happening on the same day that Jesus was raised from the dead. In the evening of that day, He appeared to the disciples (except Thomas) and told them to receive the Holy Spirit and then breathed on them. This is a distinct and separate event from what Jesus was now, forty days later, telling the disciples to wait for.
- E. This was the disciples' born-again experience, where He breathed the breath of God into them and revived them. What was coming wasn't going to be just a breath, but a clothing with power, an immersion of power to be witnesses.



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VI. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the Ends of the Earth

- A. The key to the power that the disciples were now going to receive was that it would enable them to be witnesses of Jesus. They were now going to be people who evidenced the fact of Jesus' resurrection and messiahship.
- B. He told them this power was for a mission in which they would go to different spheres of society and bear His name and authority.
- C. Jerusalem speaks of the local mission to bring the Gospel where you live. This includes your family, friends, co-workers, classmates, and anyone you connect with in your normal immediate context (Acts 2:14-41 gives a picture of this).
- D. Judea and Samaria speak of the regional expansion of the Gospel's mission. Judea represents the regional area that is most connected to us culturally while Samaria speaks of the regional area that is across cultural and social barriers.
- E. The ends of the earth speak of the mission of the Church to stretch to all tribes, tongues, peoples, and nations. Notice that Jesus presents this prophetically by saying "you shall be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth." There is a sure promise of God's Kingdom expanding to the farthest reaches of the globe.

VII. He will Come in like Manner

- A. The angels standing by as Jesus ascended left the disciples with a clear message, "He is coming back in the same way you saw Him go."
- B. This declaration to the Church sealed the commission of the Church with the surety and expectation of Jesus' return.
- C. Jesus told them they would see Him come on the clouds of heaven with great power and great glory, the very glory of the Father (Luke 21:27, Matthew 24:30, Mark 13:26). Undoubtedly, this is how He ascended if the angels were able to rightly say, "He's coming back in the same way He left."
- D. This explanation was also an acknowledgement of the second facet of Jesus' identity, namely who He is as the Son of Man.



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VIII. Son of Man

- A. The title "Son of Man" was used by Jesus to speak of Himself over 80 times in the Gospels. It was the title He used more than any other. The significance of this title connects Jesus to the divine figure from Daniel 7:13-14 who will receive everlasting dominion. In using this title, He was clearly drawing attention to His identity as the Messiah.
- B. Similarly, when the angels state that Jesus would be returning on the clouds of heaven just as He was taken up, was a clear call back to the image of the Son of Man from Daniel 7:13 who will come on the clouds of heaven.
- C. The angels emphasized that "this same Jesus" (Acts 1:11), the Son of Man who lived, died, and rose again, will return. This continuity assures that the reigning Messiah is both human and divine, as prophesied in Daniel 7:13-14.
- D. The angels' statement implies a visible, bodily return, as Jesus left visibly in their sight. This parallels Daniel 7:14, where the Son of Man's return is an event of cosmic significance, witnessed by all nations.
- E. Daniel 7:14 proclaims that the Son of Man will establish an everlasting Kingdom. The angels' words affirm that Jesus' return will signal the final fulfillment of this prophecy, when His Kingdom is fully realized on earth.