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Acts 1:1-11
Pastor Gary Hamrick

Historical Background

1. Luke was the writer of this book, but God was the author.
 - a. Luke was the only Gentile writer of Scripture.
 - b. Luke was a physician and a traveling companion of Paul.

2. The book of Acts was written circa 60-69 A.D

3. The book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke were both addressed to Theophilus.
 - a. Theophilus may have been Luke's employer because in that day personal physicians were hired as slaves or what we might understand to be an indentured servant.
 - b. In Greek Theophilus means lover of God, which could mean this name was a pseudonym for the Church.¹
 - i. Theos is the Greek word for God.
 - ii. Phileo is Greek for one of several words which mean love.

4. This book is often referred to as the Acts of the Apostles, but many would suggest that it could be called Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles.
 - a. The Holy Spirit is referred to 57 times in this book.
 - b. Pastor Gary said, "[In support of this understanding] what we read about in the book of Acts [were] some incredible displays of the power and the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit."

5. The book of Acts has 28 chapters, which include 30 miracles, spanning about 31 years.

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2321&t=NIV>

The Holy Spirit

6. The Holy Spirit is a real being: the third person of the Trinity.
 - a. Pastor Gary said, “The Bible reveals God as one God who reveals himself in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. ... The Holy Spirit is not to be talked of as ‘it.’ The Holy Spirit is a real being...”

7. Jesus used personal pronouns to describe the Holy Spirit.
 - a. **John 14:16-17** - *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept **him**, because it neither sees **him** nor knows **him**. But you know **him**, for **he** lives with you and will be in you.”* (Emphasis added)

8. The Holy Spirit has all of the attributes of personality.
 - a. The Holy Spirit has a mind.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 2:11** - *“For who among men knows the **thoughts** of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the **thoughts** of God except the Spirit of God.”* (Emphasis added)
 - b. The Holy Spirit has a will.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 12:11** - *“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He **wills**.”* (Emphasis added) (New King James Version)
 - ii. “[D]istributing to each one” is a reference to spiritual gifts.
 - c. The Holy Spirit has emotion.
 - i. **Ephesians 4:30** - *“And do not **grieve** the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”* (Emphasis added)

9. The Holy Spirit has always existed, being co-equal and co-eternal with God.
 - a. The Holy Spirit was there at creation.
 - i. **Genesis 1:2** - *“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters.”* (Emphasis added)
 - b. The Holy Spirit empowered specific individuals in the Old Testament.
 - i. Examples include Moses, Gideon, Samson, Saul, and David.
 - c. Pastor Gary said, “[The] main difference between the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament and the Old Testament [is that the Holy Spirit became available to all Believers at the time of Pentecost in Acts 2]. It’s not that suddenly the Holy Spirit [appeared] on the world scene in the book of Acts; he’s always existed, being a part of the Trinity of God, but in the Old Testament he was always assigned on certain individuals Whereas now, the Holy Spirit is available [to all] believers in Christ.”

10. The book of Acts is a book about the Holy Spirit and the Church.
- a. The word “church” is found 20 times in the book of Acts.
 - b. The Greek word for church is ekklesia, which means the called-out ones.²
 - i. Pastor Gary said, “We are called out from the world to be different and distinct as followers of Christ. ... And we are also called to go out from the church to influence the world.”
11. The book of Acts teaches us several important things about the Church.
- a. The birth of the Church
 - i. The Church began when Jesus ascended to heaven and left the work of the ministry to the Believers.
 1. **Acts 1:9** - *“After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.”*
 - ii. The Holy Spirit came for all Believers and empowered them for the work of the ministry in the world.
 - b. The growth of the Church
 - i. The Church grew spiritually and exponentially.
 - c. The unity of the Church
 - i. **Acts 1:14** - *“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...”* (New King James Version - NKJV)
 - ii. Pastor Gary said, “[The] Church has to work [on this] intentionally, to not be so... divided [with a lot] of factions and divisions, because, otherwise, we become ineffective to reach people for Christ...”
 - d. The power of the Church
 - i. The Greek word for power is dunamis, which is found 12 times in the book of Acts.³

Jesus In The Book Of Acts

12. Jesus remained on earth forty days after his resurrection.
- a. **Acts 1:3** - *“After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”*
 - b. **1 Corinthians 15:6** - *“After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.”*
 - c. Jesus reminded his disciples about the Holy Spirit and their calling to be his witnesses.
 - d. Jesus returned to heaven from earth.

² <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1577&t=NIV>

³ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1411&t=NIV>

Exegetical Study

13. **Acts 1:3** – “... [Jesus] spoke about the kingdom of God.”
- a. **Luke 17:21** – “[Jesus said]... the kingdom of God is within you.”
 - b. Pastor Gary said, “The idea of the kingdom of God is that it is the rule and reign of the Lord in your life. In any kingdom there’s always a king and there are subjects to the king. ... God is King, Jesus is Lord, and [we] are his subjects. [The] idea of the kingdom of God in my life means that I have to surrender and submit my life to the lordship of Jesus because he is supreme and he is king, not me. ... The idea of Christianity is the idea not just of salvation, not just a ticket to heaven; [it’s] the concept of lordship; it is a life of surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. That’s what the kingdom of God [means].”
14. **Acts 1:4** – “On one occasion, while [Jesus] was eating with them...”
- a. This verse tells us something about the glorified body.
 - b. The glorified body doesn’t need to eat for sustenance, which means that eating will for pleasure.
15. **Acts 1:4-5** – “... [Jesus] gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ”
- a. The Day of Pentecost was fifty days after Passover, which was when Jesus was crucified.
 - b. Jesus lived on earth forty days after his resurrection.
 - c. The disciples waited ten days for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. See **John 14-16** regarding what Jesus had to say about the Holy Spirit.
 - d. Jesus spoke about two baptisms: water and the Holy Spirit.
 - i. Baptism comes from the Greek word baptize, which means to overwhelm or to be inundated. ⁴
 - ii. Water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are distinctly different.
 - iii. **John 20:19-23** – “On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are

⁴ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=G907>

not forgiven.’ ”

- iv. Pastor Gary said, “When did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit? Right here! ... The idea being that when they believed and received Jesus Christ as the risen Lord Jesus, and they put their faith and trust in him, Jesus then [breathed] on them, and they received the Holy Spirit as part of that salvation experience. You cannot separate the Trinity. When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you receive God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. ... [Some Christian traditions teach that] this is it, [and] you get all of the Holy Spirit when you get saved and that’s all you need. What is challenging to [these] traditions [are] that if the disciples received everything there was concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, why is it that... Jesus told [them] to wait for the [gift of the Holy Spirit]? What Scripture teaches us, when you compare Scripture with Scripture, [and you compare] [John 20](#) and [Acts 1](#), is that you have to make room for the idea that Scripture presents [the truth] that you receive the Holy Spirit when you get saved, but [the] fulness and baptizing work of the Holy Spirit is a second work of grace. Now this has nothing to do with salvation. It’s not that you need the second work of God’s Spirit... to go to heaven. But I can tell you this, you do need the baptism of the Holy Spirit to live a fruitful, productive life as a Christian on this earth until you get [to heaven]. [We] need to be empowered for service and as witnesses. We need power and strength over temptation. We need the very presence and power of the fulness of God’s Spirit to be Believers who are energized for service and [to] have the ability to overcome temptation and to be effective as witnesses in this world, and you can go to heaven without the fullness [of the Spirit], but you will not be effective in this world without the power.”

16. [Acts 1:6-7](#) – *“So when they met together, they asked him, ‘Lord are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of Israel?’ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.’ ”*

- a. The disciples jumped quickly away from Jesus’ teaching about the baptism of the Holy Spirit to, “When are you going to rule and reign?”
- b. Jesus went immediately back to the subject at hand!

17. [Acts 1:8](#) – *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes [upon – NKJV] you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (Emphasis added)

- a. Jesus was telling the disciples not to worry or be concerned about his coming again but to be focused on the gift of empowerment by the Holy Spirit!
- b. [John 14:16-17](#) – *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another*

*Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives **with you** and will **be in you**.”* (Emphasis added)

- c. Pastor Gary said, “None of us came to faith in Jesus Christ... only by the exercise of your intellect. Your intellect was engaged by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit was working with and around you to bring you to that place of surrender. ... Now, when did the Holy Spirit come in [the disciples]? [The Holy Spirit came when Jesus met with them and breathed on them and they received the Holy Spirit], because they believed the finished work of Christ. ... [The Holy Spirit woos you and works with you to bring you to the moment of surrender, at which time the Holy Spirit is now in you. ... [Upon] is a different preposition altogether. This is the description of that overwhelming work, the empowering of God’s Spirit. And notice that [Jesus] said that [they] would be [his] witnesses. ... [The Greek word for witness is *martyrs*,⁵ which is where the English word martyr comes from! All of the disciples except for John ended up being martyred for their faith in Jesus, and that’s really being a witness. When we share with people, that’s really just giving a testimony.] Being a witness is being prepared to die for your faith.”
- d. Jesus told them they would be witnesses in Jerusalem, which was where they were when Jesus met with them.
 - i. Leesburg and Loudoun County should be considered our Jerusalem.
- e. Jesus told them they would be witnesses in Judea and Samaria, which means the neighboring provinces.
 - i. The Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. area should be considered our Judea and Samaria.
- f. Jesus told them and us that to be a witness *“to the ends of the earth.”*
 - i. Cornerstone Chapel uses the wonder of technology to reach countries all over the world!

18. **Acts 1:9-11** – *“After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’ ”*

- a. Jesus ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives, which is just east of Jerusalem.
- b. **Zechariah 14:3-5** – *“Then the LORD will go out and fight against those*

⁵ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G3144&t=NIV>

nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him."

- c. After the seven years of the Great Tribulation, Jesus will come again to the earth, and at the battle of Armageddon, Jesus will be victorious over the nations that are opposed to Israel and opposed to God.
- d. Jesus will then establish his kingdom on earth for one thousand years.
- e. After Jesus' millennial reign there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the 1984 New International Version (NIV)