

A couple weeks ago we launched a new series called, “The Supernatural Church” which is based on “Acts” which I believe is one of the most exciting books in the Bible. Acts is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke and one of the primary reasons Luke wrote Acts was to remind the Church to do its mission and ministry the same manner Jesus did: under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. And they did! Acts is the historical record of the Church replicating, duplicating, and even expanding all that Jesus did, including his miracles. Since Jesus is the “Same, yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8) and the Holy Spirit is still who he is, we as modern “churchers,” need to unleash our faith so that we can do “church” the same way. If that sounds funky to you this morning, then buckle up baby for you are in the ride of your life!

Wonder What You Think

The Text

Let’s now peruse the introduction to the “Book of Acts.” As we touched on last time, Luke addresses “Acts” the same way he did his Gospel, to his good friend, Theophilus (Luke 1:3). He begins (1:1-8):

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 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. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” 6 So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

40 Days of the Post-Resurrected Jesus

After his criminal crucifixion and physical resurrection, Jesus appeared to a minimum of 500 people (1 Corinthians 15:6). The appearances constitute many of the “convincing

proofs” Luke refers to in v3. At the end of his 40-day post-resurrection stay however, Jesus left his followers with this critical command (v4)

Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

We first saw this command in Luke 24:49

***I am going to send you what my Father has promised;
but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.***

The Father promised the gift of the Holy Spirit almost a millennium prior in places like Joel 2:28:

I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

And Isaiah 32:15, “When the Spirit is poured upon us from on high...” Along with Isaiah 44:3, “I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring.” And most notably in Ezekiel 36:26, 27:

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

The Shift: From Few to All

One of the most remarkable shifts from the Old Testament to the New Testament is the universal “pouring out” of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Old Testament his work, although prolific, was confined to people like prophets, priests, and kings and a scant few others. However, when Jesus removed and forgave our sins on the Cross, all people who have put their faith in him get the Holy Spirit. Unless his followers somehow forgot of the Father’s ancient and grand plan of empowering his people with his Spirit, Jesus reminds them “which you have heard me speak about.” Jesus taught constantly on the Holy Spirit. For example, in v5 our text

John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The John referred to here is Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist. In the tradition of the Old Testament prophets, he taught that Jesus would be baptizer of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11)

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Jesus' most developed teaching on the Holy Spirit is found in John's Gospel. His nickname for him was "Counselor."

14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth...for he lives with you and will be in you.

15:26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Instead of being awestruck about being baptized (*baptizo*-to dip, immerse, initiate), in the "Spirit" the disciples, predictably, almost understandably are thinking politics. "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel" (v6)? Their conception and expectation of Messiah, especially since he conquered death and was about to exit stage left, was to re-establish the 11th century (BC) Davidic/Solomonic kingdom. Those were the glory days of Israel when she was at the zenith of her prosperity and power. When this Holy Spirit comes, they want him to restore that earthly kingdom for them. How many do you know it's easy to confuse the fortunes for the Kingdom of God with the fortunes our nation, which the KOG it "ain't!" Jesus, the eternally patient one, replies that only his Father knows when the "Day of Restoration" will occur, but the reason they need to wait in Jerusalem is to be empowered by a Power far greater than any military or economy i.e., God himself in the 3rd Person! He will give them supernatural power, not to rebuild a "here-today-gone-tomorrow" geo-political entity, but to build a universal and eternal church! In Matthew 16:18 Jesus made the promise of all promises to build his Church in such a way that nothing in hell or earth would ever defeat it. How could he guarantee such a thing? He knew he would send the Holy Spirit to empower it, sustain it, and flourish it forever! Listen again to the promise of v8

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Conclusion

During our series we will see all the things the Church did, from the mundane to the miraculous, to the simple to the supernatural, after it was empowered by the Spirit. For right now, however, if you are wimpy in your witness, weak in your worship, washed-up in your worry, and whiplashed by the world then cheer up, the Spirit is going to do a new thing in your life and in our church. We just got to let him have at it so let's open our hearts to him as we now go to Holy Communion.