

The Acts of the Apostles

[Wed.] Acts Series, Acts 2.1-47 – Craig A. Thurman

Based on the writer's introduction and reference to the former treatise we have the implicit scope of this latter treatise. The scope of Acts can be said to be *of all that the Holy Spirit did through his churches unto the end of the apostolic period*. The very placement of this book reveals its subject matter. It follows the four gospels and precedes the letters. The gospels record those things associated with Christ's first advent; the letters address those things mostly associated with the churches. So Acts being situated between these two great Biblical records acts as a transition between the one and the other. The scope of Acts of the apostles takes us from the acts of Christ to the acts of the churches. Or we could say that the apostles' work is a transitory work from Christ to the churches. It is an intermediary time. A number first things or original things in the first church began by Jesus Christ, are recorded in Acts. These first things should be understood as transitional events and not as things that are necessarily intended to continue: the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or His coming upon them as promised by our Lord, at Pentecost; confusing of temple with church; the apparent laxity of church membership; the successive use of outward signs or miracles, tongues, and prophecies; the apparent blur of church offices between churches, are just a few things major issues that we can cite that have resulted in great error among the believing in Christendom today.

Acts 1.14 gives us the church of Jerusalem's actions during the ten day interim, which takes us from the departure of Christ in the cloud to the day of Pentecost. It was at this time that the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that the vacated office of Judas Iscariot needed to be filled by another. So the rest of chapter one gives us the details of that particular apostle's selection. (1.15-26)

Chapter one gives us the context for chapter two: *1.14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren*. This seems to be a special series of *prayer* meetings that accorded with the commands of Christ to them in 1.4 ... *that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait ...* The number of those who composed the membership were *about 120* believing men and women; and they had met in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem. Whether or not they continued meeting there cannot be proved. What we do know is, that by the end of chapter 2 they

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have begun conducting their meetings at the temple. (2.46; 3.1, 8, 11 *Solomon's porch*; 5.42 *daily in the temple*)

After giving some thought to the substance of this book the title is a little misleading. Where the gospels concerned our Lord Jesus Christ, here the Book of Acts concerns the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the title should read: *The Acts of the Holy Spirit through His Churches unto the End of the Apostolic Period*. Truly this what this book is about. There is hardly a chapter that does not having the Spirit of God working in His people. Notice:

- He is shown to be promised and coming 1
- fills the gathered church on the day of Pentecost 2
- fills Peter to answer the Temple tribunal who had apprehended him 4
- Filled that first church with confidence to continue in light of their threats 4
- The sin of Ananias and Saphira was said to tempt the Spirit and they died 5
- Filled Stephen, a deacon 6
- Filled him to witness of Christ in his judgment and stoning 7
- Indwelt the first Samaritan church 8
- Guided Philip to the Eunuch, and then led him to another place 8
- Filled the Saul/Paul leading him to obedience and baptism 9
- Guided Peter concerning going up to Caesarea 10, 11
- Came on the first Gentile church 11
- Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost 11
- Revealed a coming dearth 11
- Separated Paul and Barnabas for the missionary work 13
- Filled Paul to blind a sorcerer 13
- Filled the disciples with joy at Iconium 13
- Taught the church at Jerusalem what counsel to give to the gentile churches concerning the matter of the law 15
- Forbid the apostle to go into Bithynia 16
- Came on the Ephesian brethren 19
- Had followed Paul through every city where saints were warning Paul of His coming trouble in Jerusalem 20
- Pastors were appointed by the Holy Ghost 20
- Warned Paul of the trouble he would experience going to Jerusalem 21

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Of the 28 chapters in Acts there are only 12 (of which are the last seven chapters) that He is not specifically mentioned. Almost every chapter in this book teaches us something about what the Holy Spirit had done, taught, showed, guided, empowered, filled, appointed, etc., etc.

Next, when we consider the beginning of the gospels we learn again another similarity between these and the book of Acts. John the Baptist was preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. What was his work? He was preparing a people for the coming of the Lord. The time drew for the appearing of their promised Messiah. These disciples had all been baptized and were waiting, as a church (not a church yet) for the Christ of God to come. And now, in the opening of the book of Acts, we see that the baptized disciples of the Lord, properly gathered in his church, doing what? Waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit of God upon them as promised.

There are three main events in this chapter:

1. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the first church on the day of Pentecost;
2. The witness of the disciples of His presence, and,
3. And many, as a result, showing saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2

1 ¶ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

What had been taking place during the 10 day interim of Christ's absence since his being received into a cloud? They were having a **prayer meeting**, waiting for the promise of the Father to be sent at the request of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jn.14.16)

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

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3 *And there appeared unto them cloven **tongues** like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

*Cloven, διαμερίζω, KJV to divide 5, part 6. Cloven is a past participle. Verse 45 gives us the same word. And [they] sold their possessions and goods, and **parted** them to all men, as every man had need.*

These tongues distinct (divisible) languages that came to rest upon each man (vs.8 *How hear we every man [each, understood man] in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*) This really crushes the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement who involve mostly women in the speaking of tongues. (1Co.14 is directed to men ... they are the public demonstration of these gifts. Verse 34 excludes women from this activity.) While all were filled with the Holy Ghost, it is very doubtful that the women spoke these known languages. The women had important roles of support, and in ministering to the Lord and the saints. (Ro.16.1)

4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to **speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

5 ¶ *And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*

6 *Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them **speak in his own language**.*

7 *And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not **all these which speak Galilaeans?***

It appears that some of these men that were responding to this occurrence knew these as men of Galilee.

8 *And how hear we every man [each] in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*

9 *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,*

10 *Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,*

11 *Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

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The Holy Spirit of God moved these brethren to exalt through these sovereignly dispensed languages the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

There is always going to be those who will listen and agree with what we preach of the doctrine of Christ Jesus. But remember this as well ...

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

The scoffers will be plentiful. There will be opposition to the things of God. Do we quit? Do we get discouraged? Do we change our message? What then? Keep giving the truth of the Word of God. He is at work! We may not think so, but He is.

*14 ¶ **But Peter**, standing up with the eleven,*

Notice that it isn't Peter and the apostles that were being used of the Holy Spirit to utter these wonderful works of God to these multitudes gathered here. So who is speaking in these languages? It is those of that little flock that had a number of about 120 disciples. These were moved by the Holy Spirit to become bold and willing to speak the truth.

*lifted up his voice, and **said** unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

Now what follows is a reference to the Scriptures (only O.T. thus far is with them). Peter takes the prophesy of Joel shows them that this is, in part coming to pass this very day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

*17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I **will pour out (verse 32)** of my Spirit upon **all flesh**:*

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All flesh is qualified. It means all sons and daughter, men young and old, **who are my servants in verse 18.** (18). The Holy Spirit did not come on all without exception, but on all without distinction who were of that small flock.

*and **your sons and your daughters** shall prophesy (Philip's 4 daughters, Acts 21.9), and your **young men** shall see visions, and your **old men** shall dream dreams:*

*18 And on **my servants** and on **my handmaidens** I **will pour out** in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:*

19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The proof of an indiscriminate salvation. Notice the subject of this sentence is: Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord: the intransitive verb shall be saved. I think this is preparing them for the great, universal scope of sowing the gospel of Jesus Christ beyond the borders of Israel. What these men were hearing was that God was saving sinners who called upon him. Would the scoffer call. No. He has not been prepared to call yet. But you take that same scoffer, when the Spirit of God moves upon his heart we can go ahead and start the Hallelujah chorus, because he shall respond in faith and call upon the Lord at the sound of that good news: that Jesus Christ saves sinners.

Now we move into the clear presentation of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ. This involves, as it must, the whole truth. We cannot pick and choose what it is we are to preach. We either preach the truth or we do not.

Peter told them straightforward of Jesus; the purpose of God to have Him sacrificed for the sins of men; and their wickedness in taking Him, crucifying Him and slaying Him on that cross.

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22 *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:*

23 *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,*

This is never presented as any kind of an excuse for men's wickedness against Christ and his people.

ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

In clear terms he tells them that **they** took him by their wicked hands, crucified him, and slew him on that cross. Men by this must know that it was their sins that put him there. When they understand this they can understand that he died for their sins.

Now we move from Joel's prophecy to David's. This O.T. Scripture is used to show how the Lord Jesus knew that he would die, be buried and raised again. Christ saw through the agony of Calvary to the place of his throne at the right hand of the Father.

25 *For David speaketh **concerning him** (Concerning Jesus), I foresaw the Lord (Jesus speaking of His Heavenly Father) *always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:* (Even at the prospect of such a horrible death.)*

26 *Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:*

27 *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

28 *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.*

29 **Men and brethren, let me freely speak** unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 *Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, **that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;***

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This does not mean that Christ is now on his throne. That still remains to be fulfilled.

*31 He seeing this before spake **of the resurrection of Christ**, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.*

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

*33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received (His request, Jn.14.16) of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he **hath shed forth (has poured out)** this, which ye now see and hear.*

What you have just witnessed today in this display of miraculous languages being spoken is the Holy Spirit being poured out upon His servants just as promised, which is proof positive that Jesus is alive and well, seated at the right hand of God in the heavens. (Acts 7.56 Stephen saw Him standing)

Ro 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

*34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself (This is further proof that it is the Lord Jesus, the one they crucified, that is raised from the dead.), The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.*

Ps.110

*36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, **whom ye have crucified**, both Lord and Christ.*

Now, what follows is the fruit. At the witness of Christ through this demonstration of the Spirit and the Word of God there is fruit to be reaped.

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37 ¶ *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

38 Then **Peter said** unto them, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* (This is equal to Acts 3.19)

For

εἰς, unto, **upon**, into, to, unto; upon the basis of the... ; into the fact of ...; unto the truth of

Unto, meaning to the remission you have received already. Ro.4.22 faith for righteousness; baptism for remission. Not in order to receive it, but *on account of*. Or we could say eis means *upon*. (cf. Ro.5.18 **upon** all men; **to** condemnation; the free gift came **upon** all men **unto** justification of life.

Mk.1.4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance (repenter's baptism) for (eis, margin *unto*) the remission of sins.

If this is not what this means, then why did John require fruit of some who came to his baptism and he denied them that? If baptism removes sin, forgives sin, sends it away, then of all things John was remiss in his duty. But that is not what it means.

Mt.3.5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,
6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

The sentence structure is this:

The Subject: Then Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, confessing their sins (Participial phrase as an adjective explaining the kind of people that went to John) (subject)

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predicate: went out to him, and were baptized of him in Jordan.

7 ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

(What is this? I thought Baptism washed away sins. I thought Baptism got people saved.)

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Baptism does not good to one who has not received the forgiveness of sins.

Baptism is essential because it is commanded by God.

Vindication of the Baptists from the Charge of Bigotry in Refusing Communion at the Lord's Table to Paedobaptists, by Abraham Booth, Reprint 1979, The Baptist Bookshelf, p.11:

'Dr. Doddridge thus expresses his views of the subject. "The Law of Christ requires that all who believe the gospel should be baptised – For any to abstain from baptism, when he knows it is an institution of Christ, and that it is the will of Christ that he should subject himself to it, is such an act of disobedience to his authority, as is inconsistent with true faith ...

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

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What this text states and does not state is extremely important. What it states is this:

Those that were baptized did so willingly; were of an age to respond for themselves; not babies.

They were believers already

That of the baptized number, 3000 were added to the church.

What this text does not state is:

That baptism in any way regenerated any one of them

That 3000 were baptized

That baptism is an automatically entry into the church

42 ¶ And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

They had a relationship based on Christ that brought them together like nothing had ever done before.

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

This is not communism. They obviously kept private property. They sold what they thought would be of help to others. Some owned slaves. (Philemon) They had houses. (1Co.11.22, 34)

For a fuller explanation of this refer to 4.32

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46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,

The idea of what it means to go from house to house does not mean that the whole church went to every house, but that the members could break down into groups and have their fellowship with one another. Chapter 12.12 shows us that these saints could collect together to have, in this case prayer.

*did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,
47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

The church is for the believing only.

Pentecost was a singular, one-time event, but it is manifestly true that the Holy Spirit comes upon every group of N. T. believers who assemble with the purpose of carrying out the Lord's commission. It will be demonstrated a few more times through the book of Acts for sign evidence to those of the first church to show that the Lord is moving in his church into all the earth from the first church to all other succeeding churches. (chapters 8 Samaritan brethren; 10 Caesarea [Cornelius])

First, the notable act of the Holy Spirit descending upon the church.

Second, we have clear information about the process of church membership (Acts 2.41):

Gladly expresses personal willingness. they felt the need to repent and believe

Received expresses a personal understanding. They understood the terms of repentance and faith.

There were added unto them means, of those baptized about 3000 were added to the church.

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Are there any questions concerning this before we move forward into our lesson? If you do not understand something here, please ask. We need to be sure about the function of baptism.