

4/11/21

Birth of the Church

Acts 1:1-8, 2: 1-4

I. Introduction:

A. Context

1. Easter celebrated the physical literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
2. The resurrection is the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry.
3. Jesus' earthly ministry had three aspects:
 - (1) – To be the perfect man
 - a. Jesus was 100% God and 100% man at the same time.
 - b. Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience to the Father. Jesus never sinned.
 - c. Jesus is the model we are to emulate as Christians.
 - (2) – To pay for our sin
 - a. As the perfect man Jesus could die in our place on the cross.
 - b. The wages or penalty of sin is death. Jesus took our sin & died in our place.
 - c. Jesus took our sin so we can have His righteousness.
 - (3) – To conquer death and the grave.
 - a. Jesus arose from the grave on the 3rd day, just as He predicted. Jesus' victory over death & the grave made the way possible for us to have victory over death & the grave.
 - b. By saving faith in Jesus we have His victory and eternal life.
 - c. We are guaranteed a resurrection because Jesus came out of the grave.

II. After the Resurrection (Acts 1:1-3)

A. Theophilus

1. Theophilus was Luke's friend. Little's known about him, but he was a brother in Christ
2. The former account Luke speaks of here is his gospel, the Book of Luke.
3. Theophilus was familiar with Luke's previous account of the life & ministry of Jesus.
4. Important Note: The Book of Acts is the history of the birth and growth of the church of Jesus Christ in the first century. Book of Acts is greatest source of information about:
 - a. How the church began.
 - b. How it was structured.
 - c. How the church functioned.

B. Instruction

1. Luke states one of the things Jesus did after His resurrection was give instruction.
2. Jesus taught His disciples before His passion & after His resurrection He continued to teach them. Jesus instructed them through the Holy Spirit. (**Acts 1:2**)
3. Application: We are instructed by our Lord the same way today as we read the Bible & learn about Jesus, the Holy Spirit instructs & teaches us.

C. Details of the post resurrection ministry

- *Luke gives three details concerning the post resurrection ministry of Jesus. (Acts 1:3)*
 1. – Duration
 - a. Jesus appeared and taught His disciples for 40 days in His resurrection body.
 - b. Many people saw and heard Jesus teach after His resurrection.
 2. – Many infallible proofs!
 - a. Jesus appearing over 40 days provided proof of His bodily resurrection from the dead
 - b. Word for "proof" is the Greek word *tekmēriois* which means demonstrable evidence

- c. The evidence of Jesus' resurrection is demonstrable for three reasons:
 - (1)- Saw Him (Recognized Him as the Jesus they had known)
 - (2)- Heard Him (Recognized His voice and teaching)
 - (3)- Touched Him (Confirmed His literal substance by touch)
- d. So overwhelming was and is the proof of Jesus' resurrection, Luke does not feel the need to address it in detail. The fact of Jesus' resurrection was and is beyond dispute!
- e. Application: Those who deny the literal physical resurrection of Jesus do so out of a cold and hardened heart. The evidence is infallible, irrefutable.
- 3. – Pertaining to the Kingdom of God
 - a. The subject of Jesus' instruction over those 40 days was the kingdom of God.
 - b. This subject would have consumed the thoughts of the apostles and disciples.
 - c. They were expecting Jesus to establish the promised kingdom of God all along.
 - d. Church: They did not yet understand God's plan for an age of grace or God's plan for the church and the sharing of the gospel. They didn't know there'd be 2000+ year period before the kingdom comes in full form to this earth.
- 4. Millennial Kingdom: The kingdom they were looking for will come to this earth after the tribulation in the period known as the millennial reign of Jesus.

III. Preparing for the church age (Acts 1:4-8)

A. Wait for the Spirit

- 1. The first thing Jesus told them to do was wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Spirit.
- 2. The church would begin by the Holy Spirit's power. Jesus told them He'd be leaving.
- 3. Jesus also told them He would send the Helper, the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. (**John 14:16-18**) (**John 16:7**) Jesus would depart after His resurrection, but the Holy Spirit would come and permanently indwell every believer. His departure was better for us.
- 4. The Holy Spirit: We are reminded of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives & in the world.
 - (a) – He formed and continues to form the church.
 - (b) – Keeps us saved (c) – Empowers us to serve

B. Their question

- 1. The apostles and disciples still had the kingdom on their mind.
- 2. It was a reasonable question. (**Acts 1:6-8**) Jesus' answer is twofold:
 - (a) – It is not for you to know the time. (b) – You will be My witnesses
- 3. Rather than be consumed with when the kingdom is coming, I want you to focus on being a witness to the world. Notice how Jesus said this would happen:
 - (a) The Holy Spirit will come upon you. (b) Witnesses in Jerusalem.
 - (c) Witnesses in all Judea. (d) Witnesses in Samaria. (e) Witnesses to end of the world
- 4. They were to lay the foundation of the church who has been carrying out this commission for the last 2000 plus years. The kingdom will come in the Father's time.

IV. Birth of the church (Acts 2:1-4)

A. Gathered in Jerusalem

- 1. Apostles & disciples did what Jesus told them. On Pentecost they assembled in one place. Worshipping together, the Holy Spirit came upon them & the church was born.
- 2. – Audible: There was the sound of a mighty rushing wind.
- 3. – Visible: Flames of fire appeared over each of them.
- 4. – Miracle: The presence of the Holy Spirit was marked by a powerful miracle.
- 5. Those present were able to hear the teaching of God's word in their own native tongue.
- 6. Result: Over 3,000 people were saved that day (Acts 2:41)