

## “Embryogenesis!”

### 1. Intro:

- 1.1. **Embryogenesis** is the formation and growth of an *embryo*.
  - 1.1.1. A new human being progresses from a **single cell**.
  - 1.1.2. When an egg is fertilized it is called a **zygote**.
  - 1.1.3. When the zygote begins to divide it becomes an **embryo**.
  - 1.1.4. After 8 weeks it becomes a **fetus**.
    - 1.1.4.1. A zygote contains a full set of chromosomes, ½ from the male & ½ from the female cell in its inception.
  - 1.1.5. I see **the book of Acts** as the **Embryogenesis** of the **Church**.
    - 1.1.5.1. It shows the **formation & growth** of the early Church.
  - 1.1.6. It's a *spiritual Zygote* of the **Holy Spirit & man** coming together to bring about **New life!**
- 1.2. **Q:** How has God's Spirit moved in **our country's history** since its inception?
- 1.3. **1<sup>st</sup> Great Awakening** (1720's)
  - 1.3.1. **Started:** Dutch Reformed; spread to Congregationalist, thanks to Jonathan Edwards in Mass.(1734); which sparked George Whitefield & the Wesley's in New England & the Middle Colonies(1739); next to the Presbyterians; Baptists; Methodists.
  - 1.3.2. **Results:** [1] Widespread conversion [2] Stirring of missionary interest [3] Founding of Evangelical Colleges (The Congregationalist started **Yale, Harvard & Dartmouth**, Presbyterian **Princeton**, and Episcopalian **Penn** and **Columbia**, & the **Baptist** started **Brown Univ**)
  - 1.3.3. **At least 10% of New England was converted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Great Awakening.**
- 1.4. **2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening** (late 1700's) [due to *Concerts of Prayer* set up with diff pastors]
  - 1.4.1. **Finney Revival's** (early 1800's) N.Y.
  - 1.4.2. **The revival of 1858** – Quite different. No great names attached to it, **laymen** were most responsible. Some say it was the **Business people** of N.Y. because of a bank panic, scared people into a new dependence on God. But the 1<sup>st</sup> outbreaks in U.S. in Virginia & the Carolina's occurred among slaves. Ultimately over 100,000 African American's were converted in the 1858 revival.
  - 1.4.3. **D.L. Moody** (late 1800's)
- 1.5. **Evangelical revival:**
  - 1.5.1. **Azusa St. Revival** in LA. (early 1900)
  - 1.5.2. **Billy Graham** (mid-late 1900's)
  - 1.5.3. **Jesus Movement**(starting in late 1960's) which we were birthed out of

- 1.6. Some movements were started with God using **popular individuals**; some with the **average Christian business men**, some with **folks** getting together & pleading/praying for revival; **but each** a *deliberate, intentional, purposeful* moving of the **Holy Spirit**.
- 1.7. The book of **Acts** is simply history written with a purpose.
- 1.7.1. It is the **development** of the **early church**.
- 1.7.2. **No person** set out to create the Church. The Holy Spirit **birthed it right into the very soul of His people**.
- 1.8. **Q: Where is the Church today?**
- 1.9. **J. I. Packer** said, "The outside observer sees *the Christian faith* staggering on from gimmick to gimmick and stunt to stunt like so many drunks in a fog, not knowing at all **where we are** or **which way** we should be going. Preaching is hazy; heads are muddled; hearts fret; doubts drain strength; uncertainty paralyzes action. **Unlike the 1<sup>st</sup> Christians** who in 3 centuries won the Roman world, and those **later Christians** who pioneered the **Reformation**, and the **Puritan Awakening** and the **Evangelical Revival**, and the **great missionary movement** of the last century, **we lack certainty**. **Why is this?** We blame the **external pressures** of modern secularism, but this is like Eve blaming the serpent. The real truth is that **we have grieved the Spirit**...we stand under divine judgment. For 2 generations our churches have suffered from a famine of hearing the words of the Lord."
- 1.10. G.K. Chesterton said, "Christianity has not been **tried & found wanting**; it has been found **difficult & not tired**."

## 2. **INTRO TO ACTS!**

- 2.1. **Interesting Nuggets:**
- 2.2. **Q: What were Jesus last words**(recorded words)? **A:** The Great Commission in Acts 1:8
- 2.3. I love the intro in my Bible(*Broadman & Holman*), "The book of Acts is the story of the men & women who **took that commission seriously** & began to spread the news of a **risen Savior** to the most **remote corners** of the known world."
- 2.4. **Book Overview:**
- 2.5. Written by Luke. It's **Volume 2**, in a 2-part work.
- 2.5.1. Luke was a close friend & traveling companion of Paul.
- 2.5.2. **Ps:** We will be having the actor **David Payne** back out, Wed night Sept.12<sup>th</sup>, "**Prisoner of Passion**" Paul in prison w/Luke by his side, & a slave girl.
- 2.5.3. Many believe Luke wrote both **Luke & Acts** while in Rome w/Paul.
- 2.5.3.1. Paul wrote in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, "**only Luke is with me**." (4:11)
- 2.6. We know Luke was a Gentile & a Physician.
- 2.6.1. The **Anti-Marcionite** prologue to Luke's Gospel(2<sup>nd</sup> cent a.d.) states that he was a native of Antioch, Syria, never married, & died in Boeotia(Bee-o-shee-a/ Ancient Greece) at the age of 84.

- 2.7. Luke wrote in the early 60's (he ended Acts w/Paul still awaiting trial in prison)
- 2.7.1. The **Emperor Nero** had **not yet** tuned against the Christians (64 ad)
- 2.8. It records the acts of **Peter**(ch.1-12) & the acts of **Paul**(ch.13-28).
- 2.8.1. **Peter** used "**the keys**" to open the door of faith to the **Jews**(2); the **Samaritans**(8); & the **Gentiles**(10).
- 2.8.2. **Paul** took the good news to the **Gentiles** in the **Roman Empire**.
- 2.9. Some say the best title would be **The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the church!**
- 2.9.1. This book then is for **every Christian** who wants to **experience the power of the Holy Spirit & be a witness** for Jesus Christ "to the end of the earth".<sup>1</sup>
- 2.9.2. **Q: Do you want to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life?**
- 2.9.3. **Q: What part does God want you to play in taking the good news to the world?** It simply starts with 1 phrase, like Paul used in **9:6(read)**.
- 2.10. We can also break it down into **3 sections**:
- 2.10.1. **Ch.'s 1-7; 8-12; 13-28.**
- 2.10.2. Each focus in on: a **particular audience**, a **key personality**, & a **significant phase** in the **expansion** of the gospel message.
- 2.10.2.1. i.e. **Jerusalem – Judea & Samaria – end of the known earth.**
- 2.10.2.2. Each expansion was brought on by **persecution**.
- 2.10.2.3. But they were able to watch the **gospel message** penetrate geographical, social, racial, & religious barriers.
- 2.10.3. So **Acts 1:8** really **outlines** the book!

### **3. THE EMBRYONIC CHURCH! (1-3)**

- 3.1. (1) **Do & teach** – Don't you just love the order?
- 3.1.1. May we not just be known for our **sayings**, but of **both** our **sayings & doings!**
- 3.1.2. And, may it be said that our **doings** did not clash with our **sayings!**
- 3.2. **Jesus began both to do & teach** - Acts is an account of **the continuation** of Jesus' work, through the Holy Spirit, in the early church.
- 3.3. (3) **Many infallible proofs** - The word "**proofs**" occurs only here in the NT, and looks at **demonstrable evidence in contrast with** evidence provided by witnesses.
- 3.3.1. In other words, the Resurrection was proven by touch, sight, and feel.
- 3.3.2. Luke 24:39 "**Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.**"
- 3.3.3. 1 John 1:1 **That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched** this we proclaim concerning the Word of life

<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe; With The Word; pg.705

- 3.4. Questions to Ponder: (Think, Dream & Ponder with me on these!)
- 3.5. Q: What is God going to do in/with **our church** by going through this?
- 3.6. Q: What is God going to do in/with **me** by going through this?
- 3.7. Q: How do we or how should we judge if the Spirit is working in our church/in us?
- 3.8. Q: Is our God limited to moving how He did during the Jesus Movement? (i.e. afterglow's?)
- 3.9. Q: Is it about **us** experiencing something, or **the world** experiencing Him?
- 3.10. Q: Would we be satisfied with a world won for Christ & the Father blessed with worshipers...or do we need more?
- 3.11. Q: What if God wanted to emphasize only the **boldness of faith** in this next spiritual awakening would we be ok with that?
- 3.12. Q: What will the **next Jesus movement** look like? How will it be **different**? **Who** will He use?
- 3.12.1. (Look what it changed last time: youth came back to church; the music style completely changed; the spotlight became what was on the inside, not on what you wore to church; it focused once again on the Essentials of The Book, & not the opinions of The Majority; it took a total different direction then the church was going at the time)
- 3.13. Q: What will the **next Jesus movement** look like? How will it be **different**? **Who** will He use?
- 3.14. Q: Will you offer yourself to **pray for, to be used in, & to be open to HIS next move?** (*moving is changing, & changing is growing*)
- 3.14.1. Growing Faith **lives each day with eternity in view!**  
 Growing Faith **isn't afraid to embrace a vision greater than oneself.**  
 Growing Faith **isn't afraid to take on a God sized assignment!**  
 Growing Faith **invests in the most important things...People!**
- 3.14.2. It's being **in mission** with Jesus Christ! (mission = assigned task: a particular task given to a **person** or **group** to carry out)
- 3.14.2.1. It is whether or not we are willing to accept **God's mission**, as **our mission?**
- 3.14.2.2. **If we do...Warning!**
- 3.15. **Warning:** The **Devil** always fights the church when the church is **on the move!**
- 3.16. **Charles Spurgeon** used to say that *Satan never kicks a dead horse!*
- 3.17. Satan knew that the church was **on the move**, so he **attacked it**.
- 3.17.1. In Acts 2 we read that 3000 people were converted.
- 3.17.1.1. **Then what happened?** According to Acts 4, Satan came like a lion and had the apostles **threatened**.
- 3.17.2. In Ch.5, Satan came like a serpent, influencing Ananias and Sapphira to **infect the church** with their lying and hypocrisy.
- 3.17.2.1. **If Satan can't win by persecution from the **outside**, he will try pollution on the **inside**.**

- 3.17.3. **Then** Satan came as **the accuser** in Acts 6. One group of widows accused the other group of widows of taking over. **“We are being neglected,”** they said. Satan likes to get the saints to **accuse one another**.
- 3.17.4. **Then** according to Acts 12, Satan came as a murderer. **James** was killed, and **Peter** was put into prison to be kept for execution.
- 3.18. **Next time**(1:4-8) we’ll look at **Power**.
- 3.18.1. Jesus didn’t only promise the Holy Spirit’s **Presence** to His disciples, but also a desperately needed transfusion of **Power!**<sup>2</sup>
- 3.18.2. **“The Task ahead of you is never as great as the Power behind you!”**

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<sup>2</sup> Swindoll; Christ at the Crossroads; pg. 146