

The Continuing Acts of Jesus

I. Announce:

- A. Slide1-6 AP: Fresh Hope. Men's Brkfst. Retreat. BAM. Hani Prayer. Intro Cameron.
- B. Slide7 Prayer Night (Hani & Iran)
- C. The drone strike of *Qassim Suleimani* is a seismic event in the Middle East. We wait, we watch & we pray. What I do know: Read Acts 17:26-31.
 - 1. *Did you know*: Iran has the fastest growing church in the world (more have come to Christ in the last 20 years than in the last 1300 yrs of when Islam swept thru).
- D. Prayer: As we study this book, may it study us. Global size task.

II. Slide8a Intro: ACTS FACTS

- A. My goal: we're not going to study as **scholars** but as **soldiers**. It seems **scholars** and **soldiers** study history the most. **Scholars** want to look at *what people used to do*. **Soldiers** want to see *what still needs to be done*. MDM
 - 1. **Scholars** study for the sake of information, **soldiers** study for mission.
 - a) Slide8b We don't want to study this only for *what God did* but for what *He still wants to do*.
 - 2. We're invited in, *to the most important mission of the world*.
- B. Slide8c I love the intro in my old Bible (Broadman & Holman), *The book of Acts is the story of the men and women who took that commission seriously and began to spread the news of a risen Savior to the most remote corners of the known world*.
 - 1. We get to go on a journey together. We get to watch this *slow burning gospel fire* sweep across the known world, from Jerusalem to Rome.
- C. Slide8d The book of Acts is simply *history written with a purpose*.
 - 1. It's the birth & development of the early church. It's the coming of the HS. It's the gifts of the Spirit being worked out. It shows the apostolic authority. It introduces persecution & martyrdom. It's about world missions. It's about grace vs law. It's about bold gospel preaching. It's about walls of racial & religious pride being dealt with. And we have Jesus' last words to us in 1:8.

- D. Some spiritual movements started with God using **popular individuals**, some with the **average Christian business men**, some with folks getting together & pleading/praying for revival; **Slide8e** but each were *a deliberate, intentional, purposeful moving of the Holy Spirit*.
1. No person set out to create the Church. The Holy Spirit birthed it right into the very soul of His people.
- E. **Slide9a** Acts is written by **Luke**. It's Volume 2, in a 2-part work. **Acts** is the **Sequel** to which **Luke** is the **Prequel**.
1. **Slide9b** Luke ended with Jesus' ascension, *And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.*
 - a) The reader is compelled to say...*but then what?* **Luke answers that question for us in his sequel**. He proceeds to tell us the exciting story of the coming of the Holy Spirit, who is the Promise of the Father, and the exciting birth of the early church.
 2. **Slide10a** Luke wrote in the early 60's AD. As he ended Acts w/**Paul** still awaiting trial in prison. **And** the **Emperor Nero** had not yet turned against the Christians, 64ad.
 3. Luke was a close **friend & traveling companion** of Paul.
 4. Many believe Luke wrote both Luke & Acts while **in Rome** w/**Paul**.
 - a) Paul wrote in 2nd Timothy, *only **Luke** is with me.* 2 Tim.4:11
- F. **We know Luke was a Gentile & a Physician**.
1. A writing in the 2nd century states, that **Luke was a native of Antioch, Syria**. **Never married. Died in Boeotia/Bee-O-Sha Ancient Greece, at the age of 84.**
- G. **Slide10b** Gospel of Luke is the **longest** single book in the NT. Luke & Acts constitute **28%** of the NT, making **Luke** the most prolific of its contributors. [2,138 verses vs. Paul who wrote 2,033]
1. It is also written in the moist refined Greek in the NT, giving it unsurpassed literary richness & beauty.

2. Also the book of Acts begins where each of the 4 gospels left off.
 [Mt - great commission. Mrk - confirming the Word thru accompanying signs.
 Luke - the ascension. John - testimony is true]

- H. Slide11 Acts records the *acts* of **Peter** (ch's.1-12) & the *acts* of **Paul** (ch's.13-28).
1. **Peter** used the keys to open the door of faith to the **Jews** (2), the Samaritans (8), & the **Gentiles** (10).
 2. **Paul** took the good news to the **Gentiles** in the Roman Empire.
 - a) We start in *Jerusalem*, capital of the Jews & end in *Rome* the capital of the Gentiles.
- I. Slide12a Some say a **good title** would be: *The Acts of Jesus*. Or *The Acts of the HS*. Or *The Acts of the Apostles* (as it's not exhaustive). Others say the **best title** would be *The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the church*.
1. It's a record of some specific acts chosen by the Holy Spirit to be recorded, to reveal to us His power, to show us how He worked in the early church.
 2. Slide12b Swindoll, *Acts is a travelogue, as we watch Christianity, from Jerusalem, to Syria, to Turkey, across the Mediterranean to Greece, & finally to Rome, Italy*.
 3. This book then is for **every Christian** who wants to experience **the power of the Holy Spirit & be a witness** (39 x's) for Jesus Christ *to the ends of the earth*
 4. Do you want to experience the **power** of the **Holy Spirit** in your life?
 5. Do you want to experience the **boldness** of the **Holy Spirit** in your life?
 6. What part does God want you to play in taking the good news to the world?
 - a) It simply starts with 1 question from Paul used in 9:6 nkjv *Lord, what do You want me to do?*
- J. Slide13 We can break Acts down into **3 sections**: Ch.'s 1-7. 8-12. 13-28.
1. **Each focus in on**: a particular audience, a key personality, & a significant phase in the expansion of the gospel message. [*ie* Jerusalem. Judea & Samaria. end of the known earth] **So Acts 1:8 really outlines the book**.
 2. **Note**: Each expansion was brought on by **persecution**.
 - a) But they were able to watch the gospel message **penetrate geographical, social, racial, & religious barriers**.

- b) Acts is about the 1st 30 years of the church, as God used ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

III. Slide14a THE CONTINUING ACTS OF JESUS (1-3) Read vss. 1-8

- A. Luke really says a lot in his intro about: Jesus. Do & Teach. Ascension. HS. Apostleship. Chosen. Resurrection. Jesus' suffering. Witness/proof. The kingdom of God. Baptism of the HS.
- B. Slide14b (1) Do & teach – Don't you just love the order?
1. May we not just be known for our sayings, but of both our sayings & doings.
 2. And, may it be said that our doings did not clash with our sayings.
- C. Slide14c Jesus began both to do & teach (in gospel of Luke) - Acts is an account of *the continuation* of Jesus' work, through the Holy Spirit, in the early church.
- D. (3) Many infallible proofs - The word *proofs* occurs only here in the NT, and looks at *clearly apparent evidence* in contrast with evidence provided by witnesses.
1. In other words, the resurrected Lord was proven by *sight, touch, hearing*.
 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. 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.**
- E. 40 days - Luke might be comparing the disciples' time learning from Jesus after His ascension to Moses' time learning from God on Mount Sinai, see Exod 24:18.
- F. Slide14d 40 days of *Kingdom of God* teaching - Why He sick around for 40 days?
1. Jesus kingdom is not political or geographic in the sense that nations and kingdoms are thought of today. Instead, it exists *wherever God's will is done*.
 2. It is the effective reign of God expressed in and through the lives and actions of His people.
 3. God's kingdom *via the Messiah* also deals with sin, which is the world's fundamental problem.

- G. **Slide15 Questions to Ponder:** Think, dream & ponder with me on these.
1. What is God going to do in/with **CM** by going through this book?
 2. What is God going to do in/with **me** by going through this book?
 3. How do we, or how should we **evaluate/assess** if the Spirit is working in us?
 4. Is our God limited to moving how He did during the last movement, *Jesus Movement*?
 5. Is it about us experiencing something, **or** the world experiencing Him?
 6. Would we be satisfied with **a world won for Christ & the Father blessed with worshipers**...**or** do we need more?
 7. What if God wanted to emphasize only **the boldness of faith** in this next spiritual awakening...would we be ok with that?
 8. What will the next Jesus movement look like? How will it be different? Who will He use?
 - a) **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 direction the mainstream church was going at the time.
- H. Will you offer yourself to **pray for**, to **be used in**, & to **be open to HIS** next move? (remember: moving is changing & changing is growing)
1. In 2020 Growing Faith **lives** each day with eternity in view.
 In 2020 Growing Faith isn't afraid to **embrace** a vision greater than oneself.
 In 2020 Growing Faith isn't afraid to **take on** a God sized assignment.
 In 2020 Growing Faith **invests** in the most important things...**people**.
- I. **Slide16** Are we willing to accept God's mission, as our mission? **Warning!** It will cost **you**. **Warning!** It will cost **us**...**only everything**.
- J. **Communion:**
1. **Bread** -
 2. **Cup** -