

Lesson 2- The Power of the Kingdom

Today we will begin looking at this book verse by verse, with the main focus today being on the power of the Kingdom. Let's read these 8 verses, **Acts 1:1-8**.

The beginning of Acts is the connection between Volume 1 and Volume 2. As we said last week, the premise of both these books is to prove Jesus as the Risen Christ. These were trial documents for the Roman official Theophilus as an appeal to Paul and Christianity. And this appeal was written in two volumes and the first 11 verses of Acts are a sweeping recap of Luke's Gospel leading up to the Ascension. And in this summary of his Gospel, Luke focuses on the 40 days that Jesus presented Himself alive before He was taken up.

In these 40 days, Jesus begins expounding to them the mysteries that they previously did not understand about Himself and the Kingdom but it was not until the Holy Spirit had come upon them that they truly had the capacity to understand and proclaim the Truth. This is why Jesus said in John 16:12, *I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now... but when the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all Truth*. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches us, and bears witness to us about Jesus, and reveals Truth. There is such a dramatic change in the disciples after Pentecost. Before the Spirit, they were afraid, unsure, and without direction, but after the Spirit, they are changed men. They are bold, full of joy, they have purpose, and they know the plan of Redemption.

Let's begin by looking at the first three verses in Acts 1...

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,

3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

¹ Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιήσαμην περὶ πάντων, ὃ Θεόφιλε, ὣν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν, ² ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας, ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου οὓς ἐξελέξατο, ἀνελήφθη.

³ οἷς καὶ παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις, δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσαράκοντα ὀπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς, καὶ λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Luke says Jesus presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs for forty days. When you read the Bible, you notice there is something special about the number 40, particularly 40 days. For example, Noah's flood was 40 days and nights, Gen 7:12; Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days (twice), Ex 24:18; 34:28; Elijah fasted for 40 days, 1 Kings 19:8; Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days, Lk 4:2; and now Jesus is appearing to His disciples for 40 days after His resurrection.

These 40 days after the resurrection have always intrigued me. Especially the manner in which He presented Himself during these 40 days. Because if you read this carefully, you will notice Jesus is not presenting Himself to the entire world during these 40 days. He is only appearing to those who love Him. And this becomes a crucial piece linking to His ascension and eventually His return to catch us away at the rapture.

So what happened during these 40 days leading up to His ascension? Luke gives us a list in verses 2-4 of what Jesus did during these 40 days after He was resurrected: He gave commands to whom He had chosen; He presented Himself alive by many infallible proofs; He spoke concerning the Kingdom; and told them to wait for the Promise of the Father.

Acts 1:2- He through the Holy Spirit, gave commands to the Apostles whom He had chosen...

Jesus gave commands "through the Spirit." Jesus operated as a man full of the Spirit in this world, and the first command after His resurrection was the Great Commission, Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20. Jesus commanded us to preach the Gospel to the world, but there was no way we, or anyone else can do this by our own power, so in verse 4, Jesus tells them to wait in Jerusalem until they receive power from the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:3- To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, having been seen by them during forty days...

Notice the words “To whom.” This is referring to the Apostles. And Luke says that during these 40 days, Jesus presented Himself alive to them by many infallible proofs. The word “presented” is *paristemi*, *παρίστημι*, literally to stand alongside. In the Gospels we read examples of this. He was in His glorified body, yet He was flesh and bone, Lk 24:39; He could be touched, Jn 20:27; He could eat, Jn 21:12-13; Lk 24:41-43; He could walk-through walls and appear out of nowhere, Jn 20:19, 26; He would vanish from their sight, Lk 24:31; and He could transport between dimensions from earth to Heaven, Jn 20:17. There are 11 appearances recorded in the New Testament during these 40 days after His resurrection. Below I have created a chronological list of these appearances:

- Mary Magdalene at the tomb, John 20:15-18
- Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome on the road, Matt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1
- Peter, 1 Corinthians 15:6; Luke 24:34
- The two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-31
- Sunday evening in Jerusalem in the upper room to the disciples, Luke 24:33; John 20:19;
- Eight days later in Jerusalem in the upper room to disciples including Thomas, John 20:26
- Sea of Galilee- this was the third time Jesus showed Himself to the disciples, John 21:1, 14
 - Breakfast on the shore
 - Reconciles Peter
- Great Commission on the mountain in Galilee which Jesus had appointed, Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:9-20
 - probably the over 500 that Paul speaks of, 1 Cor 15:6
- Return to Jerusalem- Jesus appears to James his half-brother, 1 Cor 15:7
- Jesus tells them to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for the Promise of the Holy Spirit not many days from now, Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5
- Jesus leads them to Bethany and He ascends to Heaven, Luke 24:50-51

The secrecy in which Jesus presented Himself alive is not something many people think about, but it has huge implications. Jesus didn't announce to the world that He had risen from the dead. He only showed Himself to those who loved Him. Notice how Peter describes this to Cornelius in Acts 10:40-41. Jesus was very selective on who He showed Himself to. A good example is on the Road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-31. The secrecy is so astounding to me. This intimate Fellowship only comes to those who are seeking Him and are yearning to invite Him into their lives.

Luke continues in verse 3... and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Jesus preached the Kingdom of God. This is the Kingdom of Light. The Kingdom of Everlasting Life to all who believe in Jesus. A kingdom is the territory over which a king reigns. God created everything and He upholds all things by the Word of His power, Heb 1:3. Psalm 29:10 says, “...the Lord sits as King forever.” Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords and God is a sovereign God. And God is ruler over His kingdom, but in His sovereignty, He gave man free will and dominion over the earth. And with this free will, Adam sinned and gave his authority to Satan. Now Satan is the god of this world, 2 Cor 4:4, and he is the prince of the power of darkness. So now, because of sin, there is a system of evil working within the Kingdom of God. Jesus is King and He is King over everything. But in His kingdom there are some bad citizens that aren't submitting to His authority. But I have good news, this kingdom of darkness is passing away and the lust of it, 1 Jn 2:17, and as the world is passing away, and the True Light is already shining because Jesus Christ has come to give us Life, 1 John 2:8.

Within God's Kingdom, there is a force of darkness that hates the Light. And there will come a time when that force of darkness will be completely annihilated and thrown into the lake of fire. But that time is not now. Jesus describes this in His Kingdom parables; good and evil growing together until the end, as with the wheat and the tares, Matt 13:24-30; the mustard seed grows up and the birds lodge in its branches, Lk 13:18-19; the leaven in the bread, Luke 13:20-21; the parable of the dragnet gathering all fish, Matt 13:47-50. Evil is all around us, this is no surprise to God. God knew we would sin before the foundation of the world. This is why He sent a Savior. This is all part of the plan of Redemption. One of the best ways to describe this is the parable about a nobleman and His Kingdom in Luke 19:11-15.

Jesus has left to receive a Kingdom to Himself, and He is going to return, John 14:1-3- I go to prepare a place for you... Jesus has died, been resurrected, and has gone back to Heaven until the time of restoration as Peter says in Acts 3:21. He has left to receive a Kingdom to Himself. That's this age we have been living in for 2,000 years. This is the time that He is building His Church. And we are called as His servants to do Kingdom business until He returns. This is the Great Commission, and He has equipped us with everything we need to do His work, including giving us His power. And when He returns, He will reward those who are faithful, but those who hate the King will be slaughtered. He will come in judgement and war to evict the bad tenants from this earth, Rev 19:11-16, and afterward He will set up His Eternal Kingdom and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords for all eternity. In verse 3, Luke says Jesus was **speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God**... Jesus was describing this whole process of Redemption, but His focus is on building His Church through the power of the Holy Spirit... Because in verses 4 and 5, Jesus begins telling them how He will equip them to do the business of the Kingdom until He returns...

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me;
5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

4 καὶ συναλιζόμενος μετ’ αὐτῶν παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ περιμένειν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς, ἣν ἠκούσατέ μου.
5 ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας.

This wasn't the first time Jesus told them about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained the purpose of Holy Spirit to the disciples in the upper room before His crucifixion. We read this last week in John chapters 14,15, and 16. The Holy Spirit is our parakletos, **παράκλητος**, our Helper, our Comforter, the One who guides us into Truth, the One who reveals the Truth, the One who bears witness of the Truth who is Jesus Christ, and the One who bears witness to us that we are children of God so that we also can be a witness to Jesus. This is what Jesus said in **Acts 1:8**. When we, as born again believers who are full of the Holy Spirit read these words, this is what we think of. We know it is the power to be ambassadors for Christ in this fallen world with the expectancy of His imminent return. But to the disciples, when heard the Kingdom of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, they started thinking of conquering the Romans and restoration to Israel. Building the Church wasn't even on their mind. It's amazing to see the transformation they had once they received the Holy Spirit, because after Pentecost, they started to get it, but this revelation wasn't fully given until the NT was complete at the end of the century.

But here at this time they think Jesus is going to start a revolution against the Romans. But you can't fault them because they are seeing all the pieces coming together: the Messiah is here; He has conquered death and risen from the dead; now Jesus tells them the Spirit is being poured out soon... so in their mind they're thinking... what's the hold up? Let's set up the Kingdom!

So the disciples ask Jesus a legitimate question in verse 6...

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

6 Οἱ μὲν οὖν συνελθόντες ἐπὶ ῥώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες, Κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ;

This was a reasonable question because Jesus had just told them in verse 5 that the Holy Spirit was to be poured out on them soon. And they would have remembered the Prophets correlating the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the restoration of Israel, **Ezekiel 36:26-27, 33; 37:14; Joel 2:28-3:2**. The disciples assumed that the outpouring of the Spirit meant a physical restoration to the Kingdom, but what they didn't understand was that these are two events separated by an entire Age in between. In Acts chapter 2, Peter, being filled with the Spirit after Pentecost, stands up and quotes this prophecy of Joel. But notice where Peter stops the prophecy, **Acts 2:16-21**. The remainder of Joel's prophecy won't be fulfilled until the Day of the Lord after Jesus comes to the earth a second time to set up His earthly Millennial Kingdom. The Age of the Church was left out of Joel's prophecy. This is common in OT prophecy. Many times, in the writings of the Prophets you will see a pause in the Prophecy concerning the Church. You will see the Prophecy of the Messiah and Salvation, and then immediately Judgement and the Day of the Lord, and it doesn't even

mention the Age of the Church. For example, remember when Jesus began His ministry and He read from the Prophet Isaiah in **Luke 4:18-19**. But if you read this in Isaiah, you will notice that Jesus stopped at a comma and didn't continue the prophecy of the Day of the Lord, **Isaiah 61:1-2**. Hidden within this comma is the Age of the Church that has lasted 2,000 years. Some other examples of this Church Age comma are in Daniel 9, in between verses 26 and 27; Isaiah 59 in between verses 16 and 17; and Isaiah 11 in between verses 2 and 3. You can see why the disciples thought that a physical restoration was coming soon after the outpouring of the Spirit.

So why wasn't the Church Age plainly revealed in the Old Covenant? Why was it kept a mystery? Paul explains this in **1 Corinthians 2:6-10**. The Church was a mystery, specifically Christ and Him crucified, but now this mystery has been revealed to us through the Spirit. Paul explains this further in **Ephesians 3:3-6; 2:14-18; Acts 15:6-9**.

The Church Age has been the longest dispensation since the world began, and it makes sense because this is the time that Jesus is building His Church. Peter tells us that it is His love and longsuffering toward us is why He has tarried so long, **2 Peter 3:9-10**.

Even though this was a mystery in the Old Covenant, now that we have the guidance of the Spirit, we can go back to the Scriptures and see Jesus and this mystery, this plan of Redemption clearly in the Old Covenant. This is how the Apostles began proving Jesus as the Christ foretold from the Law and the Prophets, Acts 2:22-33; 3:13-26; 4:10-12; 8:28-35; 10:39-46; 13:23, 27; 26:22-23; 28:23.

Now, going back to our text, in verse 6 the disciples ask the question, "**Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?**" Then Jesus gives His response in verses 7 and 8...

7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

7 εἶπε δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς, Οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστὶ γινῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ·

8 ἀλλὰ λήψεσθε δύναμιν, ἐπελθόντος τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς· καὶ ἔσεσθέ μοι μάρτυρες ἐν τε Ἱερουσαλὴμ, καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ, καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

Jesus says, the timing doesn't concern you, it is not for you to know, but rather focus on being My witnesses to the world. In this age, the mystery of the Church has been revealed, but the timing of the end is still not for us to know. Why is this? Because God knows that human beings by nature are procrastinators. God did not tell us the exact timing because He wants us to have a sense of urgency to proclaim the Gospel. He wants us to always be watchful, ready, and expectant of His return, **Mark 13:32-37**; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Thess 5:6; Rev 3:3; Matt 24:37-44; 25:1-13; Lk 12:35-40. Our concern is to live every day to its fullest and to be faithful with the time and resources He has given us, being watchful and expectant, proclaiming the Gospel until the end, Matt 24:13.

He says in verse 8, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me." This word "power" is dunamis, **δύναμις**. We get the word dynamite from this word. This is the supernatural ability of God, and He is giving us His ability so that we can be Ambassadors for Him. He is saying, "*You will receive My power because I am sending you My Spirit to empower you to be My witnesses to the world.*"

Jesus is telling His disciples and us; we are not going to start an earthly revolt. My Kingdom is not of this world. I am sending you out to preach the Gospel, to proclaim My Eternal Kingdom, and to be My witnesses to the ends of the earth, and you can do this because I am giving you My power to do this work.