

## **ACTS: I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH (PART 1)**

To understand the book of Acts, we have to start BEFORE the book of Acts, with a conversation Jesus has with His disciples ...

**Matthew 16:13-21** When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

- This is the first time “CHURCH” is used in the New Testament.
- The church is built on the REVELATION of who Jesus is.
- That revelation cannot be understood – or obeyed – without the DEATH, BURIAL and RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ.
- The words “bind” and “loose” are perfect passive participles in the Greek, indicating things that have ALREADY been bound or loosed.
- We must build the church according to God’s BLUEPRINT if we want His BLESSING, according to His PATTERN if we want His POWER.
- Ultimately, God does the building – “I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH.”
- If Peter was given the KEYS of the kingdom of heaven, we need to obey what he says and do what he does in the book of Acts!

### **THE CHURCH IS THE ONLY THING GOD EVER HAD TO BUY.**

God created everything else, but the church cost Him dearly! We are privileged beyond measure to be part of the Church of the Living God!

**Acts 20:28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

If a contractor builds a house for someone, he sticks to the blueprint, which is the will of the purchaser. If we want to build a church, we need to stick to the blueprint (Bible), which is the will of the purchaser (God).

## **ACTS is the blueprint for the First Century Church!**

The Bible translators called this book “The Acts of the APOSTLES,” but really it is “The Acts of the HOLY SPIRIT through the Apostles.”

The author of the book of Acts is LUKE. His gospel talks about God WITH men (Emmanuel); Acts talks about God IN men (the Holy Ghost).

**Luke 1:1-4** Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

**THEOPHILUS** means “lover of God,” and Luke is instructing him in the basics of the faith. Luke is an eyewitness to these things, having traveled with the Apostle Paul (narrative changes from “they” to “we” in Acts).

**Acts 1:1-3** The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began **both to do and teach**, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Jesus’ ministry was all about **DOING and TEACHING**. Jesus did not work miracles just for miracles’ sake, but He used them to teach doctrine (i.e. healed blind man and taught “I am the light of the world,” fed 5000 and taught “I am the bread of life”). He also did not teach just for teaching’s sake, but “he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” (Matthew 7:29)

**1 Timothy 4:16** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

**James 1:22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

**John 4:24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

**2 Corinthians 3:6** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

What are the “commandments” that Jesus gave to the apostles just before He was “taken up” (Acts 1:2)?

**Luke 24:44-49** And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Jesus said, “I will be crucified, be buried and then rise again” ... and because of this I want you to go out and preach REPENTANCE, BAPTISM (“remission of sins”) in My name, and the baptism of the HOLY GHOST (“the promise of my Father”).

THE VERY LAST THING JESUS DID ON EARTH WITH HIS DISCIPLES WAS TO EMPHASIZE HOW TO OBEY THE GOSPEL – AND PETER PREACHED THIS VERY SAME MESSAGE IN ACTS 2:38!

Jesus “shewed himself alive” for forty days after His resurrection, and gave His disciples “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). The official position of the Jews was that the disciples had merely stolen Jesus’ body – and if Jesus was dead, the gospel had no power. All of Jerusalem knew that Jesus had been crucified – few knew that He had risen from the dead.

The last the world saw of Jesus was on the cross, CRUCIFIED. The last the disciples saw of Jesus was on the Mount of Olives, RESURRECTED.

**BY THEIR WORDS, THEIR WALK, AND THEIR WORKS, THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH PROVED THAT JESUS WAS ALIVE!**

**Acts 1:4-5** And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

The Holy Ghost is the resurrection power of Jesus in every believer!

**Romans 8:11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

**Acts 1:6-8** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The Jews always had a wrong concept of the Kingdom of God, confining it to a nationalistic, materialistic, political and physical sense. Because Jesus did not come to establish that type of earthly kingdom, the crowd that cried “Hosanna!” eventually cried “Crucify him!” And even the disciples were impacted by this mentality – that’s why they argued over which one of them would be greater – but it was GOD’S kingdom!

IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO KNOW THE **TIMES (CHRONOS)** OR THE **SEASONS (KAIROS)**, WHICH THE FATHER HATH PUT IN HIS OWN **POWER (EXOUSIA)**. BUT YE SHALL RECEIVE **POWER (DYAMIS)** ...

**God has two words for TIME:**

- CHRONOS – time governed by the clock
- KAIROS – special moments of visitation by God

**Ephesians 5:15-16** See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time (KAIROS), because the days are evil.

**Galatians 6:9** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season (KAIROS) we shall reap, if we faint not.

When the disciples asked when Jesus was going to “restore the kingdom” (send revival), He told them that it was not for them to distinguish between the “times” (CHRONOS) and the “seasons” (KAIROS), because only God controls times of supernatural visitation!

**God has two words for POWER:**

- EXOUSIA – authority, or “restraining” power
- DYNAMIS – ability, or “doing” power

**Acts 4:33** And with great power (DYNAMIS) gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

**Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power (DYNAMIS) of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

**1 Corinthians 4:20** For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (DYNAMIS).

**2 Corinthians 4:7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power (DYNAMIS) may be of God, and not of us.

Only God has power (EXOUSIA = AUTHORITY) over the results of our prayer, our worship, our work, and our lives. But He has given us power (DUNAMIS = ABILITY) to be witnesses.

**The key to revival is for the church to exercise its ABILITY until God exercises His AUTHORITY.**

Luke 24:47 said this would happen “beginning at Jerusalem.”

Acts 1:8 says “ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Acts is centered around TWO APOSTLES and TWO CITIES:

- Acts 1-12 is about Peter, the apostle to the Jews, and Jerusalem
- Acts 13-28 is about Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, and Antioch

Peter’s ministry reaches Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria.

Paul’s ministry reaches the uttermost parts of the earth – even to Rome!

Rome, the world empire that crucified the Nazarene and stamped its seal on His tomb to prevent the resurrection, hadn’t heard the end of JESUS!

If we want to know what Jesus intended preaching, or miracles, or repentance, or baptism, or receiving the Holy Spirit to look like, we must turn to the book of Acts. It is the BLUEPRINT for the church!

If we want to know how the disciples interpreted the Great Commission, we must turn to the book of Acts. It is the BLUEPRINT for the church.

**YE SHALL BE WITNESSES (ACTS 1:8) = MARTYS (MARTYR).**

A martyr is one who literally “lays down their life” for the gospel. This is not just being willing to DIE for the Lord, but also being willing to LIVE for Him in the face of opposition, persecution and tribulation.

WITNESS is a key word in Acts (29 times in 28 chapters), and is used as both a NOUN and a VERB. It is important to BE a witness with your LIFE, but it is equally important to GO witness with your TESTIMONY.

**Proverbs 14:25** A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.

**ARE YOU A TRUE WITNESS?**