

The Church Age

Lesson for Sunday, May 21, 2023

REVIEW:

Genesis 1:31 – God created it all

Genesis 1:27 – We are all created in God’s image

Genesis 3:6 – The Fall changed it all

Genesis 3:15 – God’s promise of redemption

Genesis 12:2-3 – The Seed of Abraham

Genesis 49:10 – Judah’s Royal Seed

Exodus 12:23 – The Passover Lamb

2 Samuel 7:13 – The Line of David

Isaiah 53:5 – The Suffering Servant

Deuteronomy 7:9 – God is true to His Word

Matthew 1:16 – The time is fulfilled

John 19:30 – It is finished!

Matthew 28:5-6 – The Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – The Complete Gospel

TODAY: Acts 1:8 – The Church Age

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ We are almost to the end of our series. We have started with creation of all things; we have seen how the Fall impacted every part of God’s creation; we have seen God’s promise to send the Suffering Servant to reverse the curse; and we have seen how Jesus Christ fulfilled God’s promise through His death, burial and resurrection.
- ⇒ If we were making a movie of our series, it would seem after last week’s lesson we would fade to black and the graphic would be, “The End.” In reality, God’s story was just beginning!

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Introducing Acts

- a. Acts is often referred to as “The Acts of the Apostles.” It would be more accurately titled, “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.”
- b. The Book of Acts traces the history of the church from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) to its spread throughout the western part of the Roman Empire.
- c. In Acts, the church starts with about 120 people who were primarily Jewish, and experienced astronomical growth with primarily Gentile people.
- d. Acts covers about 30-35 years of history, probably between 30-60 AD.
- e. Here’s a simple outline to remember when studying Acts:
 - i. Acts 1-7 – The Church spreads through Jerusalem
 - ii. Acts 8-9 – The Church spreads through Judea and Samaria
 - iii. Acts 10-28 – The Church Spreads to the Gentiles and to the ends of the earth.
- f. There are several key people to remember as you study Acts:
 - i. The first section is dominated by Peter.
 - ii. The transition to the second section is dominated by Stephen.
 - iii. The last section is dominated by Saul/Paul.

2. The Theme of Acts

- a. The theme verse of Acts is found in chapter 1, verse 8. As you can tell from the outline above, the story of the early church is the application of this verse. Let’s analyze this verse.
- b. The People – “Ye” (or You!)
 - i. Jesus is speaking to His followers.
 - ii. His direct audience were the apostles and disciples from the first century.
 - iii. Here’s the key: Their marching orders are our marching orders! This verse is just as relevant for the Florence Baptist Temple today as it was on the day Jesus spoke these words.
- c. The Promise – “Ye shall receive”
 - i. Getting technical: This is a future tense verb without any connotation of doubt.
 - ii. Jesus is promising that His followers would most definitely receive what they needed to fulfill His command.

- d. The Power – “Ye shall receive *power*”
 - i. From the Greek word, *dunamis*, which we get our English word, dynamite.
 - ii. It is a reference to the divine power that stems from God Almighty.
 - iii. Our mission is a serious mission that requires a serious power.
 - e. The Person – “that the *Holy Ghost is come upon you*”
 - i. Before His death, Jesus had promised His disciples that the Father would send the Holy Spirit (see John 14:16-18; 16:7-11; 16:13-15).
 - ii. For the Christian to do the Lord’s work, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is not a luxury; it is an absolute necessity!
 - f. The Plan – “*ye shall be witnesses unto Me*”
 - i. A witness is someone who sees something and tells others about it.
 - ii. God has called us to tell the world what we have witnessed in our personal relationship with Him.
 - iii. If you are saved, you are to be a witness!
 - g. The Places – “*in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and into the uttermost...*”
 - i. If you look at a map, this is a geographic plan.
 - ii. It begins at home (Jerusalem) and moves its way out from there.
 - iii. The application for us today:
 1. Jerusalem would be our city, Florence.
 2. Judea would be our country, the USA.
 3. Samaria would be our own continent, North America.
 4. The Uttermost would be the world.
3. The Application of Acts
- a. The Book of Acts is the early church following this plan.
 - b. Our location is different, but our mission is the same. We are all called to be witnesses.
 - c. Are you a faithful witness? We are witnesses. The question is what kind of witness are we?
 - d. Who has the Lord put on your heart and in your path to love and to introduce to Jesus?

APPLICATION:

- ⇒ Does your class have a list of people you are praying for to come to know Christ?
- ⇒ Discuss the evangelistic efforts of your class. What are they? What can you do collectively?

CONCLUSION:

- ⇒ Some have referred to Acts as the “Unfinished Book.” Why? Because the mission continues today. We are the “to be continued” of Acts! Will we be faithful to the mission?
- ⇒ We must be focused on our mission because time is running out! That will be the theme of our last lesson in the series...