

WHAT DO WE SEE FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS?

TEXT:

“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: 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.” (Acts 1:1-4)

INTRODUCTION:

- 1) A book that has often been studied is the book of Acts (rightly so!)
- 2) It is the right place, follows the life of Christ.
 - (1) Matthew, Mark, Luke, John - the life of Christ (resurrection).
 - (2) Book of Acts opens with Jesus having been resurrected and giving instructions to his apostles, then his ascension.
 - (3) Jesus Christ is glorified, set on his Father's right hand.
 - (4) “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;” (Acts 2:30)
 - (5) “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)
- 3) The book of Acts is an inspired account of the work of Christ - by disciples - after Christ's ascension.
- 4) The inspired penman is Luke.
 - (1) “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.” (Luke 1:1)
 - (2) “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,” (Luke 1:3)
- 5) What are some things we see from the book of Acts? (Acrostic - A.C.T.S.).

ACTIVITY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

- 1) Apostles have been commissioned.
 - (1) “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.” (Acts 1:8)
 - (2) This would be carried out.
 - (3) “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” (Colossians 1:13)

2) So active that opposition set in, yet they kept being active

(1) "But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:17-20)

(2) When we are opposed - we can be tempted to stop being active.

(3) They kept on keeping on

(4) "And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." (Acts 5:40-42)

3) When a need arose or a problem, they went to work to correct it.

(1) "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." (Acts 4:34-37)

(2) "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." (Romans 6:1-4)

4) Book of Acts records the activity of the apostles and other disciples carrying out the will of God (missionary journeys, etc.).

5) God wants us to be active.

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

(2) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

(3) Note: not just being active (devil is active).

(4) But active in that which is right.

(5) "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46) ("I say").

II. CONVERSION OF SINNERS TO CHRIST

1) Book of Acts has been called "the book of conversions".

2) If you want to know how to be saved, go to the book of Acts for examples.

3) The Lord had said”

(1) “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15-16)

(2) Acts gives examples.

(3) “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:36-38)

(4) “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:47)

(5) “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12)

(6) “And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.” (Acts 8:26-40)

(7) Acts 9, 10, 16, 18:8, (hear, believe, repent, confess, be immersed.).

4) No direct operation, but word of God being taught and obeyed.

III. TRIBULATION OF SAINTS

1) Everything wasn't easy for early Christians - tribulation, opposition, persecution.

2) Jesus had warned and prepared them, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in

heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

3) Trouble came:

(1) “And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.” (Acts 4:1-3)

(2) threatened, “And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?” (Acts 4:7)

(3) beaten, “And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.” (Acts 5:40)

(4) killed, “Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:57-60)

(5) “Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.” (Acts 12:1-2)

4) God was with them.

IV. SUCCESS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

1) Even though opposed by Jews, then Rome - Christianity prevailed.

2) Early church grew.

(1) “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41)

(2) “Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.” (Acts 4:4)

(3) “And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.” (Acts 5:14)

3) Even under persecution, they kept on, “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” (Acts 8:4)

4) Christ promised to be with them, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

5) These same teachings and examples hold true for us.

(1) “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Hebrews 13:5-6)

(2) "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."
(2Timothy 4:16-17)

6) They were successful because God was with them and they had heaven in their hearts.

CONCLUSION:

- 1) We can learn many valuable lessons from book of Acts.
- 2) What do we see? Review.