

The Ascension

January 30, 2022

Acts 1:1-14

Acts tells the beginning of the New Testament Church.

Acts is vitally important as we see Jesus ascend to heaven and the Holy Spirit descend upon believers.

Luke is the writer of Acts, written around 61-64 AD. Luke also wrote the Gospel of Luke which he refers to in the opening verses of Acts.

The apostles had been readied, they had been set, the book of Acts was the “go” part.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the Disciples many times and was on earth 40 days before ascending (1-3). He was getting them ready, if you will, as what was to come.

Before Jesus ascended and after Jesus ascended, the disciples were together (vs. 4-5 and 12-14), that is key followers of Jesus knew the importance of gathering.

Remember, these were men who had walked with Jesus for three years, seen Him be crucified, rise again and now appear to them on many occasions. They are together in our beginning and ending of our passage today.

Believers need other believers, we need each other, we need God’s Church.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:24-25

But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.
1 Corinthians 12:20-31

The pandemic taught us, especially early on, being together is important but it’s also important to scatter, which we will get to in a minute.

The key phrase is “with one accord,” a phrase that is found six times in Acts (1:14; 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; and note also 2:44). There was among these believers a wonderful unity that bound them together in Christ (Ps. 133; Gal. 3:28), the kind of unity that Christians need today.¹

Even after all they had been thru with Jesus, they were still concerned about their own interests (v 6).

¹ Warren Wiersbe, BE Series

They wanted to know whether Jesus would now restore the kingdom of Israel. They wanted the political upheaval which would defeat Roman rule and exalt Israel's rule and kingdom. They were guilty of small thinking. Like us, they wanted Jesus to fix their little corner of the world. Many times, for purely selfish reasons, I have wanted Jesus to come and take the church out of the world and establish His kingdom. This is small-minded thinking. Jesus came for something much larger and far-reaching than that. He gave them a short answer which said, in my own words, "That is not for you to know. but soon you will be given power to get with the task of being my witnesses to the whole world."²

The Christian life is a life of learning to constantly die to myself.

We (I) can get so me focused that I lose sight of the bigger vision of making disciples and being a witness.

There've been more people saved, churches planted & expansion of the Kingdom of God in oppressed, impoverished nations than in America. They took to the streets to share the good news. We posted selfies, sipped on lattes & whined about lines at a drive through. Think about it. ~ **Michael Caff**

Instead of telling them a when, He told them a what (vs. 7-8).

This is what we need. We need a vision of all people having an opportunity to come to know Jesus personally and to become His disciple-followers. Jesus wanted His disciples to grasp the fact that a disciple of His was a disciple-maker. Think about it—you are, as His disciple, a disciple-maker.

Truth is every person in here is a disciple, every person. You are a disciple of something of someone and you best believe that your friends, your kids' friends and those you hang with are seeking to make you a disciple (of something). God, apart from His Word, has sent us a "disciple" in the Holy Spirit. We are to now make disciples.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you." **John 16:7**

"Witness" is a key word in the Book of Acts and is used twenty-nine times as either a verb or a noun. A witness is somebody who tells what he has seen and heard (Acts 4:19–20). When you are on the witness stand in court, the judge is not interested in your ideas or opinions; he only wants to hear what you know. Our English word *martyr* comes from the Greek word translated "witness," and many of God's people have sealed their witness by laying down their lives.³

With the help of two angels, the disciples were reminded Jesus would return (vs. 9-11).

We need to be reminded of this; are we ready? Are others ready?

We must be about the Lord's Business!

Prayer Focus:

- **Do I intentionally gather with other believers?**
- **Does God need to search and show me my selfish ways?**
- **Jesus is returning. Are we ready, are others?**

² Dennis Watson, The Dots Connected Devotion

³ Ibid.