

## 1. Proof of his resurrection. (Acts 1:1-3)

Let's look at the first verse.

What book is the author talking about? He's talking about the gospel of Luke, which we finished a series in, The Certain Gospel, last May. Luke wrote both the gospel of Luke and Acts. Both are addressed in their introductions to "Theophilus." Luke is a physician, a historian, and joins Paul later in Acts (Acts 16-28; Col 4:14). Luke lives and breathed life in and among Paul and the other early believers. We can trust him and his accuracy and the proofs he presents. The proof he presents is Jesus himself rising from the grave.

## 2. Power for our mission. (Acts 1:4-8)

Look at the absolute power Jesus promises to send to his disciples as they wait in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit is not some mystical force we can move with our minds if we pray hard enough. The Holy Spirit is God himself, the third person of the Trinity. He is as much God as the Father and the Son. Jesus is promising to send his Holy Spirit to fill up his disciples and empower them for ministry. Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit is going to come on them, which we'll see in Acts 2 at Pentecost, and that he's going to send them out on mission to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth. As we read Acts we'll see the outward expansion of their witness from Jerusalem in Acts 1-7, to Judea and Samaria in Acts 8-12, and the ends of the earth (to Rome) in Acts 13-28.

This is first a geographic plan of expansion for the early church, but I think there's something in this for us. Just because something is recorded in Acts doesn't mean it's a set pattern, but the Bible does communicate theology through history, and we find a pattern for our outward mission. How so?

Who do you feel most different around? Whose your Samaria? Maybe it's a group of people that hold a different political opinion or ideology about life than you, or it's someone who doesn't have your best at heart, but it doesn't have to be a negative. It just might be someone you're unfamiliar with or don't live close to so you don't really know them. Jesus calls us to people like these, maybe not to every single one, but to our Samaria, wherever that may be. It's good to see how we're beginning to reach out to some of these areas, but we need to keep going, keep striving, empowered by the Holy Spirit to reach our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. In seminary one of my professors said that pastors often overestimate what they can do in 3-4 years and underestimate what they can accomplish in 10-15 years. That really applies to us more as a church. Let's not underestimate what God can do through us in the next 10 years. Jesus gives us everything

we need to be his witnesses in our world—proof of his resurrection, power for our mission, and...

### 3. Motivation to go. (Acts 1:9-11)

This text ends with Jesus ascending into heaven and all the disciples standing there waiting for Jesus to return. So two angels appear and send them to Jerusalem because Jesus is coming back!

Acts 1:9-11 (NIV) After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Jesus is coming back, and the disciples hadn't even started on the mission. I don't want to get to Sunday December 30th, 2029, 3,647 days from now, and still be standing here looking into the sky. I want to get going! I want to have something worth celebrating. I want to tell others about the resurrection of Jesus and see what the Holy Spirit does. Jesus gives us everything we need to be his witnesses in our world.