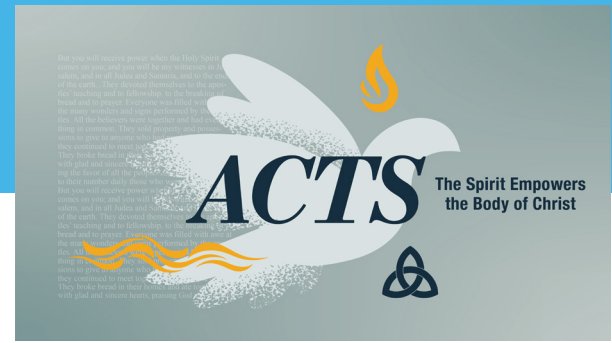


Discussion Questions

January 7, 2024

Introduction to the Book of Acts: The Spirit Empowers the Body of Christ



1. Read Acts 1:1-2 and then the following quote from the scholar F.F. Bruce in his commentary on Acts.

In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:1-2

The implication of Luke's words is that his second volume [Acts] will be an account of what Jesus continued to do and teach after his ascension - no longer in visible presence on earth but by his Spirit in his followers.

F.F. Bruce

What are the implications of seeing Jesus' ministry on earth as being finished when he ascended vs, as Bruce describes, Jesus' ministry continuing by the Spirit through the church?

2. In the sermon James looked a bit at the background of Acts. We saw that the church was growing during a time of increasing persecution. Acts tells us that Christians were hated by Romans, and soon Rome would seek to wipe out Christianity all together, yet the church grew by leaps and bounds.

Why it is that historically the church has been at its best and flourished during times of persecution and hatred?

Why has the church struggled historically when in positions of power and comfort?

3. In the sermon James spoke about the Bible being written with different types of literature or genres.

What are some examples of different genres in scripture?

Discuss what the difference of approach should be in looking at a narrative like Acts vs an epistle like Ephesians.

4. The sermon encourages us to view Acts as our story, part of a continuing narrative of Jesus' work through the Holy Spirit. How can we individually and as a community contribute to writing Volume 3 of this story in our time and context?

Acts 1:1–2 (NLT)

In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit.

F.F. Bruce - The Book of Acts - New International Commentary on the New Testament

The implication of Luke's words is that his second volume [Acts] will be an account of what Jesus continued to do and teach after his ascension - no longer in visible presence on earth but by his Spirit in his followers.

N.T. Wright - Acts for Everyone

Luke.. is telling us with his opening sentence one of the most important things about the whole book which is now beginning. It is all about what Jesus is continuing to do and to teach. The mysterious presence of Jesus haunts the whole story. He is announced as King and Lord, not as an increasingly distant memory but as a living and powerful reality, a person who can be known and loved, obeyed and followed, a person who continues to act within the real world. That, Luke is telling us, is what this book is going to be all about. We call it 'The Acts of the Apostles', but in truth we should really think of it as 'The Acts of Jesus [part 2]'.

Acts 1:1 (NLT)

In my first book I told you, Theophilus,

Luke 1:1–4 (NIV)

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Acts 28:22 (NLT)

..we want to hear what you believe, for the only thing we know about this movement is that it is denounced everywhere.

Acts 28:30–31 (NIV)

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ - with all boldness and without hindrance!

