**The Book of Acts Sermon II**

**The Holy Spirit Sounds the Starting Gun**

Themes of Acts:

I. The work of the Holy Spirit in establishing the Church.

II. The Kingdom of God revealed.

III. The growth and development of the Church.

Luke: Jesus goes to Jerusalem.

Acts: Jesus goes out from Jerusalem (through his apostles)

Acts 1:8 A scary vision. But Acts is the story of this actually happening.

The Roman Empire was an amalgam of an ancient polytheism, local gods, Greek philosophies (Pytharorean, Epicurean, Stoic, Neoplatonist), Gnosticism, Greek, Egyptian and Persian Mystery religions and Persian dualist religions.

Logically, it makes absolutely no sense that a Jewish movement, led mostly by poor, uneducated people, from a relatively insignificant province in the Roman empire, with a world view diametrically opposed to that of the Roman/Greek world, following a leader who was executed at a young age—one who never wrote anything and who never left a 100 mile radius of his place of birth, who did not even speak Greek or Latin could conquer the entire Greco/Roman world.

Acts 8:4-5 Philip preaches in Samaria.

Now the unclean half-Jewish Samaritans hear the word of God.

Acts 8:26-29

v. 26 An angel tells Philip to go.

v. 29 The Holy Spirit told him to go.

The Ethiopian eunuch is probably a Jewish convert

Worse than that, he was a eunuch—which means he was unclean.

Acts 10 Now Gentiles will come into the church.

Acts 10:9-16 Peter has three visions. v. 13 GOD says “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat. Peter says to the God of the universe. “Surely not!!!”

Acts 10:19 The Holy Spirit tells Paul to go with Cornelius’ men.

Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking. The Holy Spirit interrupted his sermon in the middle!!!

Finally Acts 10:47-48 OK. I guess we better baptize Gentiles.

Acts 28:1,4 The barbarians. These are not Jews. They are not half-Jewish Samaritans. They are not unclean Jewish converts. They are not civilized Greco-Roman converts. They are barbarians.

Back to Acts 1:8 Jesus says “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Then….

Acts 1:9-11. The ascension. Imagine the scene!!!

Great. Now what?

An angel tells them: He will come back the way he went. So, don’t just stand there. Get about his business.

This is not the end. This is the beginning.

Now the process of spreading the Gospel “in Jerusalem.” begins

Q: What does he mean, “Jesus… will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven?”

Matthew 24:30-31

Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to another.

Q: What does this mean for us?

We should live our lives as if Jesus just might come back tomorrow. What would you do if you thought that Jesus was coming back tomorrow or next week? What if today was the last day of your life?

You would stop what you are doing and try to bring the lost across the finish line.

We should also live our lives as if he will not come back during our lifetime. How would you live in that case?

You would try to leave the church in the best possible shape so that it can be strong in the long run. You would build carefully.

Acts 1:13-26 Matthias chosen to replace Judas. They cast lots. We are not covering this.

Acts 2 The Church begins. The Holy Spirit Sounds the Starting Gun.

Some have described Acts 2 as the hub (ie hub of a wheel) of the Bible.

It is the essential turning point. It is the initiation of God’s final plan. Everything God had planned from the beginning is now in place.

There is before Pentecost……. And there is after Pentecost.

The final act of God to bring about his plan is completed. The “last days” have now begun (Acts 2:17). This is the starting gun for the church and a new chapter in the history of the kingdom of God.

The Day of Pentecost. This is one of the three great feast-days when Jews would come from all over the world to worship. (also Passover and Day of Atonement)

It is called Pentecost because it comes 50 days after Passover.

Why Pentecost?

1. Tens of thousands of Jews from all over the Near East are in Jerusalem for this event.

2. Because the Jewish festival Pentecost was a prefigure of the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost was a celebration of the harvest. This event is the beginning of the harvest of souls for eternity.

Every baptism is a reenactment of the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:1-14

This is why there was a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It was a great fanfare for the greatest event in history—the offering of salvation to mankind. All of salvation history pointed to this momentous event.

Acts 2:14-21

Notice, as predicted by Jesus in Matthew 16:19, Peter is given the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Peter unlocks the door.

Peter: No, we are not drunk. This is the fulfillment of God’s prophecies about his kingdom.

Spoken of by Joel

I told you that this great “Day of the Lord” will come with

v. 18 an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Well, it is here! The “last days” have begun.

v. 21 The plan of salvation of our God is now complete.

All nations!!!! (Isaiah 2)

Acts 2:22-35 The first gospel sermon.

Outline:

1. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.

2. Jesus did unprecedented signs, wonders and miracles.

“As you yourselves know.”

3. You killed him, but this was God’s plan.

4. Besides, God raised him from the dead!

5. Repent and be baptized into Christ.

(This is the Jesus Bible Study Series we use)

v. 25-35 Peter quotes OT prophecies predicting resurrection of Messiah.

Acts 2:36-41

v. 36 Do you understand that you crucified Christ?

You spit on him, mocked him, scourged him, beat him, and you pounded nails into his wrists and ankles.

You did this to God’s Son!

v. 36 But God was behind this whole plan.

What will you do about this?

v. 36 Who did we crucify? The Lord. The Messiah—Savior/Anointed One.

Q: Is Jesus your Savior? (very popular)

Is he you Lord? (not so popular)

If he is not Lord, he definitely is not Savior.

v. 37 Here is what you should do: You should say to God, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Is this you? Have you surrendered to God. Have you given your life to him?

Are you “All in?”

So, if you understand that you are responsible for the death of Jesus—that he died because of YOUR sin.

If you recognize that the only means of salvation is in Christ.

If you are willing, right here and now, to make him the Lord of your life.

Then what should you do?

Pray Jesus into your heart?

Say the Sinner’s prayer?

Ask for forgiveness?

Ask Jesus into your heart? NO!!!!!

v. 38 Two things:

Repent metanoeo Change of mind/change of understanding.

Be baptized baptizo Gr. be immersed.

Then God does two things:

Forgiven of sins

Receive the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:14 “who is a deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance until the [final] redemption of those who are God’s possession.)

That is it! It is simple and not hard to figure out.

v. 39 Q: Who does this apply to?

A: For all people for all time.

v. 40 Don’t wait. Put this corrupt generation behind you. Repent and be baptized. Save yourself.

Luke sees salvation not as a thing for the future, but something that is real right now. We are not just saved from hell. We are saved from living a corrupt and meaningless life NOW.

v. 41 Three thousand were “added to their number.” To whose number? To the church.

The Holy Spirit has sounded the starting gun for people to enter the kingdom of God.

Have you joined that race? Let us call others to join us in the kingdom of God.

Recognize Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God

Realize that, because of our rebellion and sin, we crucified Christ.

Be cut to the heart

Repent and be baptized

You can join the Holy Spirit’s army today.