

Acts Chapter 28

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[0 : 00] Well, guys, right up front, let me mention that this is December 4, and we will be here for December 11, and also the 18th, which will also fall on a Thursday.

But then the following Thursday, of course, is Christmas Day, and the restaurant will be closed, and you'll all have other things you'll be wanting to do anyway. So we will not be meeting on Christmas Day, but I can't think of a better way to start the new year than to be here on New Year's Day.

And they've already informed me that the restaurant will be open on New Year's Day, January 1, with regular operating hours. So if you can think of a better way to start January and a new year than being here, then that's what you ought to do.

But I can't think of a better way, so I'm going to be here. And however many of you can make it on New Year's Day, we'll start the day off right. And we will kick off the very first chapter and first introduction to Paul's letter to the Galatians.

And it is a dynamite epistle. You will really appreciate it. So we've got that to look forward to, and I trust you'll be able to join us. And if you want to, this would be an excellent time to encourage other guys who haven't been here to consider coming and starting the new year off right on January 1.

[1 : 23] So we hope that you'll invite others and feel free to bring others. Love to have them. As you look at the sheet that has been distributed already, you'll note that it is the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 1.

And we have spent, I don't know how long in this. Does anybody remember when we started? Did you have a note made of that? Two years ago. Two years ago. Okay. I know some of you.

The book of Acts encompasses 30 years of history. And some of you were thinking that it was going to take us as long to get through the book as it took the apostles to live in those 30 years.

But we just cut it down to one-fifteenth of the time. See? Got through it in a couple of years. So I told you that we wanted to use these last couple sessions of the year since we finished Acts to highlight some of the more important portions of it.

And the first one that surfaces is right here in Chapter 1. So let's just begin, if we may, with verse 1. And when Dr. Luke, who is writing this epistle, begins with verse 1 and a reference to the former treatise, he is talking about the gospel that bears his name.

[2 : 41] This Acts is a follow-up or a continuation of the gospel of Luke. And if you want to gain the maximum appreciation for the continuity, you should just read Luke's gospel, then skip over John and start right in with the book of Acts.

Because Acts is a continuation of the gospel of Luke. And it was Luke, the beloved physician, who wrote both of those documents originally.

We don't know for sure, but he was probably a Gentile convert to Judaism. That would make him a proselyte. No place does it say that in Scripture.

But Luke does have a Gentile name, and it's entirely possible that he was a Gentile converted to Judaism, and he is writing from that basis.

We don't know much about Theophilus. The name in the Greek, Theophilus, simply means lover of God. It's a compound word. You see, the theo, that's the word from which we get the word theology, which is in reference to the study of the doctrine of God.

[3 : 55] And the philos is a word from phileo in the Greek, and it means to love. It is a brotherly kind of love, the kind that is found in the name of the city Philadelphia, which is referred to as the city of brotherly love, and it comes from the Greek word philos.

So this Theophilus is a lover of God, and he is talking about the gospel that he wrote earlier, or Luke's gospel. The former treatise, Luke's gospel, Have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up.

That simply means that Luke, in his gospel, covered the earthly ministry of Christ, from the time he was born until the time he ascended.

And here in the Acts chapter 1 passage, we find another reference to the ascension in a little more detail. It is until the day in which he was taken up physically. After that, he, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, that means after his death, by many infallible proofs.

In other words, there was a ton of evidence as to his having been resurrected from the dead. And no one was in a position to deny that, that this was, in fact, the very same person, plus a glorified body, that had been placed in that tomb three days earlier.

[5 : 46] Now they saw him alive. And he was alive after his passion, by many infallible truths, being seen of them, 40 days. Think of that, fellas.

That's almost six weeks that he moved in and out and among them, appearing and reappearing in a completely different fashion than what he had before.

Because now he has a glorified body, and it does not have the limitations that his body had before his crucifixion and his resurrection.

So there are many infallible proofs, incontrovertible evidence, being seen of them 40 days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Can't emphasize that enough.

Guys, this is what everything is all about. It's this kingdom of God business that is so radically misunderstood by so many today.

[6 : 44] This kingdom of God concept is precisely the same thing as the kingdom of heaven. It is not talking about heaven where God dwells, where believers go when they die.

Not that heaven. This kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God is earthly. It's physical. It's going to be realized right here on this planet.

After the planet is purged and refurbished. This will be at the end of the tribulation period going into the millennial reign. The kingdom of God is that time when things are going to be made right.

When this sin-sick, weary world is restored. It is a time that Peter will be talking about when he delivers his Pentecostal address, and then he will follow it up in the third chapter referring to it again.

This is the same thing that Jesus was referring to in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

[7 : 51] Thy kingdom come. That's a prayer. It is a prayer for God to bring the kingdom. Thy kingdom come.

What's going to be different about that? Because, as it goes on to say, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And it is too much of a stretch to try to convince anybody that the will of God is being done on earth. Now, I know there is a sense in which God is sovereign and He is the ruler over all and nothing is out of His control at any point in time.

But at the same time, He has relinquished an element of control on this earth because when He originally gave it to man and told man to have dominion over the earth, over animals, over everything, that simply meant God was telling Adam, you're the boss.

You're the boss. You have dominion over the earth. You are, as it were, king of the earth. And then we saw in chapter 3, Adam forfeited that.

[9 : 12] He surrendered it. He gave up His dominion over the earth to Satan. And that was involving the temptation and the fall.

And when the fall occurred, everything came crashing down. Nothing remained the same as it was when God created it. Including Adam and Eve.

Now, they have a seed of death in them. And part of that was realized right away when communion was broken with fellowship with the Lord in connection with their sin.

and they began to die physically and eventually did die physically. But spiritually, they died right away. And this new master of the universe, the new master of the prince and the power of the air, the new master of this earth is Satan himself.

And this is what Paul is referring to in 2 Corinthians 4 when he said, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost in whom the minds and the God of this world, the God of this world has blinded the minds of those.

[10 : 34] And that God of this world is Satan himself. That's what's responsible for all of the evil and the vice and the beheadings and the torture and the murders and everything else that's going on.

God has backed off of this situation allowing man's volition to run its course. And what we see taking place today by way of brutality and evil is simply God allowing man to have his own way with this world.

That's what the fall involves. And that's exactly what's taking place now. So, if you want to know, and by the way, God gets such a bum rap for this. Where is God?

Why doesn't God do it? God is saying, listen, I gave you volition. I gave you the power to make choices. I'm not going to take that from you.

I'm not going to make you do what you ought to do. I am going to show you the downside and the disadvantages of mankind having his own way and wanting to do his own thing.

[11 : 43] And that's the price we're paying. And ultimately, it ends with death. But even in the midst of that, God has provided a way out through a redeemer. And that too is part of grace.

So, he's talking about pertaining to the kingdom of God and being assembled together with them. he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.

Which, saith he, you have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

Now, they did not know what he was talking about. But what he was talking about was the day of Pentecost that's going to be coming ten days later. They don't understand that.

All they know is they are supposed to wait in Jerusalem for this promise that Jesus has given and they don't know how long they're going to have to wait. He just told them Terry in Jerusalem.

[12 : 44] And it just so happened that it was on the day of Pentecost because Pentecost follows the word Pentecost. You can see the word five in there. P-E-N-T-E is the word from which we get the word Pentagon which is a five sided building or pentagram which is a drawing of five sides and the five refers to fifty.

It will be fifty days after Passover and that's why it's called Pentecost because it is fifty days after.

And fellas understand this we're not going to get there but Pentecost is on the Jewish calendar.

The Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 is going to be radically different from any other Pentecost because it is going to be visited by the Spirit of God with the miraculous outpouring.

But understand and here's where a lot of people go astray that's not what made it the day of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost was on the Jewish calendar and it would have been the day of Pentecost had the Holy Spirit never visited because it was the same time every year.

It wasn't the visitation of the Holy Spirit that made Pentecost what it was. And that's caused a lot of confusion for people. They say we need another Pentecost. Well we don't.

[14 : 14] There's a Pentecost in the Jewish calendar and it's there every year and it'll be there until the Lord returns. So the thing that made this Pentecost really strikingly different is that the Spirit of God did come in an unusual way and He chose the day of Pentecost on which to do it.

That's when they are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. And of course that will give them a supernatural kind of endowment that will be in effect because Jesus who endued them earlier with supernatural power when He sent them forth two by two to raise the dead to create miracles.

They gave sight to the blind. They performed miracles as well. Remember when He sent the two teams or the six teams of two each out, sent the twelve out. He gave them power over demons etc. But Christ is going to be gone. Now the Holy Spirit is going to come and continue the ministry that Christ had with them here on the earth. Question? Is there any significance of the conversion happening on Pentecost?

God choosing that time to do it? I don't know other than to say that throughout history there have been a number of really significant events God intervention type things happening in connection with Jewish feast days.

[15 : 49] And this is another one. And you will see there will be more. Some are of the opinion that that will come into play in a very big way during the latter days.

I don't know that for sure but I wouldn't be surprised because God respects a calendar that He has established for the Jews and it may very well involve more things than that. So when they come

together and I want you to note the continuity of this in verse 6 here when they therefore were come together they ask of Him now here they are on the Mount of Olives all 12 of them well 11 of them Judas is dead now so there are 11 apostles and they are surrounding the Lord Jesus and He's giving them His last earthly instructions and I want you to note the question that they ask Lord wilt thou at this time now restore again the kingdom to Israel what are they talking about and what do they mean wilt thou at this time what do they mean the question is about the restoring of the kingdom he's talking about the kingdom to Israel because they don't have a kingdom they're ruled over by occupational troops of the Roman army and when they say wilt thou at this time what that means is we thought you were going to install the kingdom of God when you came into Jerusalem on that donkey on Palm Sunday we thought that was it and that's why the people were shouting Hosanna to the son of David save now and the crowd gathered and the palm branches and everything they thought he was going to go right into the temple establish the kingdom kick out the Romans all the rest of it but he didn't it ended in a crucifixion so now they are asking the question the logical question is we thought you were going to do it then are you going to do it now is this the time and the answer he gives is it is not for you to know it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the father hath put in his own power however you you twelve or you eleven you will receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you will be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem

Judea Samaria unto the uttermost part of the earth and when he had spoken these things while they beheld he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight and while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up behold two men well they weren't men they were angels but they looked like men stood by them in white apparel which also said ye men of Galilee why stand ye gazing up into heaven this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven and the implication of what the angel is saying to me is not only is an assurance of the fact that Christ is coming again and they can look for him to come physically and visibly just as he disappeared physically and visibly but in addition to that is as much as the angel is saying well you heard what he said about being witnesses Jerusalem Judea Samaria the uttermost parts of the earth what are you doing standing here get with it and the next verse says and they headed back to Jerusalem they're ready to get job one underway and when they get there they're going to begin proclaiming that Jesus has risen from the dead and salvation is available through him that's the message they're going to be proclaiming questions or comments anybody I cannot emphasize enough guys how important this kingdom thing is because that is where everything is going it is all headed toward a period of restoration and blessing this kingdom is identical with what is referred to as the millennium the millennial reign of Christ when he is ruling and reigning personally and things will be on this earth as they ought to be