

Lecture 13 – Acts: A Challenge to Mission for Every Age of the Church

“In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach...” Acts 1:1

“This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.” Acts 9:42

Key Terms

The Great Commission, Pentecost & the ministry of the Spirit

Objectives

- *Summarize the Great Commission and the exhortation to mission in the book of Acts.
- *Describe and provide examples of its application to the present age of the church.
- *Describe and demonstrate from Scripture the reluctance of the early church to follow the commission and explain what we can learn from them.

Introductory Review

Acts: A Challenge to Mission

Acts begins: “In my former book I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven.” Luke, in effect, is titling his work *The Continuing Work and Words of Jesus*.

1. The Great Commission and the power of the Spirit
 - a. Who was this commissioner?
 - 1) The crucified, resurrected, ascended, and returning Lord
 - 2) The human one who did His work in the power of the Spirit
 - b. What was His instruction?
 - 1) The kingdom of God has invaded history.
 - 2) Wait before you work.
 - 3) Be My witnesses to the whole world.
 - c. When and how did the work of the Spirit begin?
 - 1) The day of Pentecost: the first fruits of God’s harvest
 - 2) The ministry of the Spirit
 - Wind
 - Fire
 - Tongues - Babel reversed - the new humanity
 - First fruits of the many tongues on earth
 - First fruits geographically
 - First fruits of the descendants of the sons of Noah
2. Out from Jerusalem at last! (or) the reluctant missionaries
 - a. Transformed men
 - 1) Powerful preaching
 - 2) Faith in God’s power to heal
 - 3) Courage to face opposition and suffering
 - b. What was missing? No attempt to go out from Jerusalem
 - 1) Persecution drives the church to mission (not the apostles).
 - 2) A deacon ministers in Samaria.
 - 3) What about the Gentiles? What it took to get Peter moving (Prof. Barrs goes over these points once in general, then again in much more detail).
 - Peter in a tanner’s home

- A vision for Cornelius
- A vision for Peter - no, two visions! - make it three!
- A message from the Spirit
- An invitation from the Gentiles
- Cornelius' house & Peter's response: Won't someone tell me why I'm here?
- 4) Peter's message and the Jewish Christian's reaction
- 5) New plans for a Gentile mission?
- c. The reluctant missionaries throughout church history
 - 1) Israel in the Old Testament – Jonah's mission to Nineveh
 - 2) Ulfilas' mission to the Goths
 - 3) Aedius and Frumentius to Ethiopia
 - 4) The apostle Thomas to India (King Gundaphoras)
 - 5) Patrick to Ireland
 - 6) The conversion of the Vikings
 - 7) The Crusades: the anti-mission mission
(Points 8 & 9 are not on the CD lecture)
 - 8) The Reformers' failure to reach beyond 'Christendom'
 - 9) William Carey's booklet: *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*