

This teaching is entitled thusly because today we start the Book of Acts, which is... but also because...

- **Video of the Book of Acts from the Bible Project.com**

**Matthew 28:18-20**, NASB

- In Part 1 we talked about how Christ has called us into this because He loves us (inclusion, purpose)
  - **And that Jesus is worth it! (and Rev 7 vision)**
- But we miss the beauty of the invitation and we take it as a suggestion—but it is a command & commission
  - **Commission** = to be given authority to act on behalf of another (command, authority, sent)
  - **John 20:19-22**, NASB
    - The tragedy is that most Christians have lost their **sense of sent-ness**
    - We do not see ourselves as included participants in God's work and purposes
    - We are pew potatoes and spectators rather than participants
    - But God loves you too much not to confront that! You are lovingly sent!
      - Versus living merely for self; the Great Commission saves us from that

**There are two ways to understand our sent-ness**

- **Locally** and **globally** (**Jerusalem to uttermost parts of the earth**)
- It is not and either/or concept
- We should be living out our sent-ness at witnesses of Jesus both here and there (**Matthew 28:19a**, NASB)
  - **Here** = everyone where they are
  - **There** = Someone needs to go where they are (**Romans 10:13-15**, NLT) (**Romans 15:20-21**, NLT)
    - **Did you know there are 6k UPG's?(40%) Did you know about 90% missionaries in reached PG's?**
    - **Did you know that Jesus has given us a task to finish? Matthew 24:14**, NASB
    - **Cf. Our goals as a church... (explain)**
      - Reality as a Sending Church:
        - **Locally** as sent-people
        - **Strategically** with church planting
        - **Globally** through missions

But this task of **making disciples of all nations** is enormous!

- So, everyone, that is a Christian needs to be involved in some meaningful manner (with global)
  - Going, sending, prayer network, giving

**How will you join with Jesus in His ongoing work in the world? (ask Him what He is up to; discern the call)**

**The Book of Acts is the story of the Gospels (Jesus) continued through the first Christians (how lived out GC)**

Supernatural power; violent demons; magical handkerchiefs; physical teleporting; death by sword; people getting stoned; arrests, trials & prison breaks; healings & resurrections; sorcerers, angels & visions; riots & mobs; collusion w/ corrupt gov's; religious conspiracies; amazing journeys; big fights; shipwrecks & snakebites; and true love (Sov. of God... from **J. to uttermost**)

**Acts 1:1-5**, NASB

- The person writing is Luke (of course under the inspired authorship of the Holy Spirit)
- His "**first account**" was the Gospel of Luke (**Luke 1:1-4**, NASB) (Papyrus scroll; 35 feet; together; separated)
- **Theophilus** means "Lover of God" or "Loved by God"
  - Generic for a believer?
  - "**Most excellent**" (**Luke 1:3**) makes us think otherwise (of some high societal place)
  - He was interested in learning about Jesus—and had already learned something (**Luke 1:4**)
  - Luke (a physician) writes to him as a historian, writing a historical account (**Luke 1:3-4a**)
    - He "**investigated everything carefully**" (**Luke 1:3**)
    - And wrote it out **consecutively** (**Luke 1:3**)
    - To communicate "**the exact truth**" (**Luke 1:4**)
      - **Same approach in Acts** (a historical, largely eyewitness account)
      - Of the continuing work of Jesus in the world

- Notice what Luke wrote about in his Gospel: “**All that Jesus began to do and teach**” (Acts 1:1, NASB)
  - This is practically the key to faithful Christian living and correctly understanding Acts
  - In English it sounds like it might be in the past tense (i.e. **all that Jesus did and taught**)
  - In the original, it is in the Greek imperfect tense = **an ongoing action** (**did, is and will cont. to do**)
    - Luke (Matthew, Mark and John) wrote gospel accounts about what Jesus started to do
    - Luke is writing in Acts about what Jesus **continued to do**
    - I.e. What Jesus was doing through His followers (**The Acts of Jesus through...**)
      - Part 1 = What Jesus had done – Part 2 = What Jesus’ followers did w/Him in response
- **My pastoral/missional hope for us in Acts...**
  - Impt: The book of Acts continues to be written
    - Jesus is still on mission – but He is doing His work through His people
    - Cf. The Great Invitation of **Matthew 28:18-20** (cf. the “orders” of Acts 1:2, NASB)
      - Saves us from selfish, bottleneck Christianity

**We will see in the Book of Acts the saga of how Jesus’ followers carried out those “orders”**

- Very importantly, we also learn that they were not supposed to do so in their own strength & ideas
- **Acts 1:4-5**, NASB
  - The Holy Spirit figures prominently in the Book of Acts
    - Luke introduces Him already in verse 2 (a great clue) (**The Acts of The Spirit through...**)
    - Our plan to lean into that this season
      - **Deep dives on Topics** (month: Baptism; filling; person; work. Then leading, gifts...)
      - **Tuesday nights** (Starting A week from Tues. Jan 16)

**The basic point is that Jesus’ followers were going to need a supernatural enabling to carry out His mission—and Jesus, and the Father would lovingly supply that in the Person, Power and Work of the HS**

- They were to wait for that (Pentecost)
- But, they already had **passion** (He was risen!); **purpose** (they’d been called to mission); **intent** (to obey call)
- We need the Power—but we also need the intent! w/o = never experience the Power (Renew our passion!)

**The Book of Acts continues to be written (so to speak) because Jesus is still on mission!**

Sometimes, it does not really seem that way

- We a lot hear about the growth of: Terrorism, Econ of China, Nuc. threat, Secularism, Consumerism...
- We hear a lot about how the church is not growing... (may be true here in America and Western Europe)
- But that is not true in the WORLD:
  - **We are living at the time of an unprecedented move of God among the lost!**
    - More people have **followed Christ in the last 100 years** than in all previous centuries combined
    - There are **more people alive today who call themselves Christians** than in all of the previous generations combined<sup>1</sup>
    - One out of every seven people in the world are now **active Christians** <sup>2</sup> **(A.D.100 = 1/360)**<sup>3</sup>

This has happened in large part in our lifetime!

- **Chart: Practicing Christians as a percentage of total world population since 1900**
  - It took 18 centuries (1,800 years!) for practicing Christians to grow from 0% of the world’s population to 2.5% in 1900
  - Only 70 years to grow from 2.5% to 5% in 1970.....**(double!)**
  - Just 40 years to grow from 5% to 12% by the year 2010.....**(more than double!)**

**POINT:** The continuing saga of Christ’s glorious work is unfolding and nearing completion right now!

- **Matthew 9:36-38**, NASB

**1 Peter 2:9**, NASB (you are **chosen**, you are **royal**, you are **holy**, you are **God’s own**... **so that!** – Don’t miss...)

<sup>1</sup> Perspectives Study Guide, 73.

<sup>2</sup> <https://josuaproject.net/asstets/media/articles/finsihing-the-task.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Perspectives Reader, 544.