

Day 29, Acts 1

by David Servant

The book of Acts shows us the characteristics of the church in the early days of Christianity and the importance of the Holy Spirit in its ministry.

Scripture: Judges 6:36, Matthew 28:19, Luke 24:49, John 15:5, Acts 1:2-8, Romans 8:14

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Great Commission"

Description

David Servant emphasizes the importance of following the pattern set by the early church in the book of Acts, highlighting the obedience to Jesus as Lord, the focus on expanding God's kingdom globally, and the supernatural empowerment through the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Great Commission. He stresses the need for modern churches to be wholly dependent on the Holy Spirit for true effectiveness in building God's kingdom, contrasting the lack of supernatural manifestations in some churches today with the miraculous acts recorded in Acts. Servant also cautions against seeking God's will through methods like drawing lots or fleeces, encouraging believers to rely on the inward witness of the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Transcript

The book of Acts was authored by Luke, the physician, who accurately recorded the first 30 or so years of the early church's history, particularly highlighting the ministries of Peter and Paul. God's purpose for preserving the historical account of the early church is so that each generation of Christians will not deviate from the pattern revealed there. It is still God's intention that the same methods be followed to make disciples of all nations. As we read through this amazing book, I encourage you to compare your Christian experience with that of the first believers.

Foremost, the church of the book of Acts is one that took orders from the church's Head (1:2). I cringe when I hear preachers talk about what Jesus "is asking us to do." Perhaps American Jesus asks His followers to do some things, but Bible Jesus doesn't ask anyone to do anything. Bible Jesus commands people. He is Lord, and His true followers obey Him.

Second, the book of Acts shows us that the church of Jesus Christ is one that is focused on expanding God's kingdom around the world. Inward-focused social clubs that meet for an hour each week in a special building do not resemble the church Jesus started. The New Testament believers were intent on obeying the Lord and fulfilling His commission to make disciples of all nations. Any church that is not vitally involved in the Great Commission is falling short of God's will. The book of Acts is a missionary story.

Third, it is apparent that the early church was supernaturally empowered to fulfill the Great Commission. We read of miracles in almost every chapter. According to Acts 1:1, Luke's Gospel was a record of "all that Jesus began to do and teach." The book of Acts is simply the continuation of Jesus' supernatural ministry through the church, His body according to the New Testament epistles. Jesus lives in all of us who are born again, and we should be wholly dependent on Him to work through us to build His kingdom. Apart from Him we can do nothing (see John 15:5). We certainly have a whole lot of "nothing" happening in many modern churches. As two Christians from China said after a tour of American churches, "It is amazing how much they can do without the Holy Spirit!"

Jesus considered the help of the Holy Spirit to be so essential that He commanded His disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit (1:4-5). Similarly, Jesus did not begin His ministry until He was baptized in the Holy Spirit (see Matt. 3:16). Certainly we also need to be "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). If we removed the miracles and their effects from the book of Acts, there would be no book of Acts.

What is "a Sabbath day's journey" (1:12)? It's about two-thirds of a mile, the maximum Jews were permitted to travel on the Sabbath according to their tradition.

Today is the only time in the New Testament that you'll read of anyone determining God's will by drawing lots. Although it may have worked for the apostles on that occasion (and who can say with certainty that it actually did?), I would not recommend trying to determine God's will in that manner or any similar manner. You might get fleeced when you "put out a fleece," a phrase that is often borrowed from the story of Gideon as he sought assurance about God's direction (see Judg. 6:36-40)!

God has not promised to guide us by fleeces or by drawing straws. Most mature Christians have discovered that God leads them by less spectacular means, what is often referred to as "the inward witness." It takes practice to discern that inward witness, and it is particularly difficult to discern when you are not wholly submitted to the Lord. How many of us have thought that God was leading us and later discovered that we were actually following our own desires? That is a common error that seems to be part of the universal learning process as we grow in Christ. When it happens, we should just admit it and keep trying!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/day-29-acts-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net