

JOURNEY
into a
Mission-Minded
LIFE



Living Close to the
Heart of Jesus

Studies from the Book of Acts

CLARK TATUM

*Journey into a
Mission-Minded
Life*

*Living Close to the
Heart of Jesus*

Studies from the Book of Acts

Clark Tatum


SUNSET
INSTITUTE PRESS

3710 34th Street • Lubbock, TX 79410
(806) 788-3280 • www.extensionschool.com

Contents

Acknowledgments	v
Introduction	vii
1. Jesus Energizes Our Lives <i>(Acts 1:1 – 2:21)</i>	1
2. God Builds a Great Church <i>(Acts 2:22 – 2:47)</i>	19
3. The Name Above All Names <i>(Acts 3:1 – 5:11)</i>	37
4. Living Wise in Trying Times <i>(Acts 5:12 – 7:60)</i>	57
5. Beyond Our Comfort Zone <i>(Acts 8:1 – 9:43)</i>	75
6. Getting Our Priorities Straight <i>(Acts 9:20 – 9:43)</i>	93
7. The Vision Clarified the Mission <i>(Acts 10:1 – 12:25)</i>	109
8. What it Means to Love Jesus <i>(Acts 13:1 – 15:41)</i>	127
9. The Right View of God Is Imperative <i>(Acts 16:1 – 17:34)</i>	145
10. Tentmakers on Mission for God <i>(Acts 18 – 19:41)</i>	161
11. The Heart of a Servant Leader <i>(Acts 20:1 – 21:26)</i>	175
12. Christianity on Trial <i>(Acts 21:27 – 26:32)</i>	187
13. Shipwrecks and the Will of God <i>(Acts 27:1 – 28:31)</i>	207

Journey into a Mission-Minded Life
Living Close to the Heart of Jesus

© Copyright, 2022
Sunset Institute Press

All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this book may be reproduced or used in any form, including translations into other languages, without written permission from the publisher.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *The Holy Bible: New International Version*®. © Copyright, 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

ISBN # 978-0-9841606-5-5

Printed and bound in the United States of America

Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated in memory of

Wilbert Hall

in appreciation for the spiritual encouragement, guidance, and
friendship he showed me.

I offer my deepest gratitude to

Dr. Terry Boring

for reading my manuscript and assisting with the editorial
process. His comments were especially helpful. His knowledge
of the Scriptures, his insight into the Christian perspective, and
friendship are a constant encouragement to me. He is one of the
most mission-minded Christians I have ever known.

A special “thank you” to

Pat Hall

for her helpful proofreading
contribution to this book.

Introduction

This *Journey into a Mission-Minded Life* will explore concepts and principles on church growth and Christian maturity we can put into practice in our individual lives and in the local church family. The good news of Jesus was embedded in the hearts of the early Christians and that led them to mature in the faith and develop a mission-minded life. I believe this thirteen-chapter book and the discussion questions at the end of each chapter will enlighten, encourage, and equip us so we can develop a mission-minded life and heart. A working knowledge of the events and teaching from Acts will help us experience a spiritual freshness in our Christian walk.

Now, after making those promises I admit we preachers often claim we are going to share something helpful to our hearers, or in this case readers, but frankly sometimes we do not succeed in our goal. I am sure that is why I appreciate the story I heard about two fellows who went up in a hot air balloon. One man

had a lot of experience in these types of adventures since it was his job to give rides to paying passengers. The other fellow had never been up in a hot air balloon paid his money, climbed aboard, and soon they were flying a couple thousand feet above the ground level. The man enjoyed floating through the air with his pilot taking in the scenery.

The man felt great he could check the balloon ride off his bucket list. Everything was fine for a while and then an awful wind blew in and moved the balloon way off the original course. So far off in fact, that even the pilot was not sure where they were. Finally, the wind subsided enough that they were hovering above some farmland when they saw who the pilot thought was a farmer down below leaning on his fence. The pilot leaned over the balloon and yelled to the man, "Hey Mister, where are we?" The farmer looked up towards the men in the balloon and shouted back, "You are in a hot air balloon!" The other fellow in the balloon said to the pilot, "Why that fellow is not a farmer at all, he is a preacher." The pilot asked, "How could you possibly know that?" He said, "Because what that man said was accurate, but absolutely worthless."

I am confident there are helpful things we will discover of a practical nature as we progress through a study of Acts. I am confident not because of my ability as a writer, or a preacher, but as one who believes in the power of God's Word to shape and strengthen our hearts for Christ – **A mission** that was in the heart of Jesus, **a mission** that was in every heartbeat that Jesus took after that, He robed Himself in the flesh.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the

Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). What was in the heart of God prior to Jesus coming to this earth? Mission. Why did Jesus come to this earth and take on human flesh? Mission. ⁴*"who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* ⁵*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,* ⁶*who gave himself as a ransom for all men the testimony given in its proper time"* (1 Timothy 2:4-6).

Jesus said it this way in Luke 19:10, *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."* Jesus had a mission-minded heart. The subtitle of this book – *Living Close to the Heart of Jesus* – is a simple phrase and descriptive within itself. It comprises our holding firm to God's Word and sharing His life-saving message.

The healthy values the Christians practiced in The Book of Acts was the result of embracing the mission-minded heart of Jesus and holding firmly to the faith. *"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess"* (Hebrews 4:14). We find the mission of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Inside those four books we read about the depth of Jesus' love for everyone. It is an incredible and exhausting love that drove Him to complete His earthly mission. He communicated to His closest disciples, before and after His resurrection, that He wanted them to continue His mission.

We have often referred to this mission for the church as the Great Commission. Notice the mission is connected to a message. ¹⁸*"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.* ¹⁹*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of*

the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and ²⁰*teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age*” (Matthew 28:18-20). The word translated “nations” in Matthew 28:19, is from the Greek word ETHNOS. We get our English word “ethnic,” from this Greek word. ETHNOS indicates what we are to do, so we can make everyone followers of Jesus. All peoples, all places, and all languages need to hear and obey the good news of salvation so they can rejoice in the Lord.

The disciples that first heard the words in Matthew 28:19-20, likely felt overwhelmed with such a command, but God promised He would be with them as they spread His powerful seed (Luke 8:11). May we find comfort; in that we are not alone in the greatest mission this world has ever known. The charge to the church is to make disciples and we are reminded of the Lord’s mission and our responsibility in the church. The ultimate mission God has laid upon our hearts in His blood-bought church keeps our lives from being routine and meaningless (Acts 20:28).

We, like the earliest Christians in Acts are blessed to do what we can individually and collectively to lift high the cross of Christ. We will discover practical ways we can do this in our daily lives as we journey through Acts. In the Book of Acts, we learn that Jesus’ vision for us, not only His apostles, was to carry on His mission-minded heart through the church. The Apostle Paul reminded the believers in Ephesus of this fact. ¹⁰*“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,* ¹¹*according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Ephesians 3:10-11). God’s purpose for Christians

in Ephesians 3:10, must not be overlooked. His eternal purpose is redemptive, and God predetermined His church would participate in and carry on His mission. May we come away from this study understanding the mission was more than a task for the early Christians; it was a lifestyle!

Ultimately whatever we do in our effort to share His message comes down to a choice. Choices have consequences. Today we have a choice in what and whom we believe. If we want to believe Phoenix, Arizona is not hot in the summertime that is our choice. It is not true, but it is our choice. I pray we will choose to believe in the One called Jesus, who said in John 8:24, *“I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins.”* Acts will illustrate that faith as the one called Jesus moves an individual to obey His message shared first by the Apostles and then by other Christians. By faith in Christ, we can join together in carrying on the Lord’s mission, which is tied to the foundational message of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection.

Chapter 1

Jesus Energizes Our Lives

(Acts 1:1 – 2:21)

WHAT IS IT ABOUT JESUS THAT ENERGIZES OUR LIVES? IS IT HIS love, His power, His gentleness, or His message? Yes, all of these and much more. As we begin our journey through Acts, we will explore what energized His earliest followers. These believers were driven by His love for them that encompassed events that not only changed their lives, but human history. The events of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection are the heart of the good news message of Acts. Thank God the grave could not hold Jesus. Thank God, He can move us from the lost in sin column, excluded from any hope of heaven, to the saved from sin column. We are heaven bound if our names are written in the book of life (Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5 and 21:27).

Luke, the author, guided by the Holy Spirit, recorded both The Gospel of Luke and The Book of Acts. He wrote this explanation of Jesus ministry to a friend or acquaintance called Theophilus (Luke 1:3-4). The word Theophilus means **lover of God** or

friend of God. Acts takes up where Luke's gospel ends. ¹"In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:1-3). The term **most excellent** connected to Theophilus was often used in Acts referring to a Roman official (Acts 23:26, 24:3, 26:5). The fact Luke drops the term "*most excellent Theophilus*" as he begins Acts has led some to suggest he likely had become a follower of Jesus by this time.

The phrases "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are often synonymous terms (Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:14,15). The kingdom of God or heaven signifies the redeemed of God in His church. Acts reveals how Jesus fulfilled His promise to build His church (Matthew 16:18). The word translated "church" comes from the Greek word EKKLESIA. Matthew 16:18 is the first time the word "church" is found in the New Testament. The word EKKLESIA or "church" refers to a "congregation" or an "assembly." The original Greek word is made up of two words. The preposition EK means "out of," and KLEISIS, "a calling." The word was used in the first-century Greeks to call people out of their homes and into an assembly for a public meeting. Literally, according to EKKLESIA the church in the New Testament is a group of people called out of the world of darkness through God's message and joined together in the kingdom of light. We will explain how we become members of the body of Christ, the church in the next chapter.

Here I want to emphasize that the church was not an afterthought in the mind of Jesus. The church was part of His original plan to seek and save. He is the great Rescuer of our souls. Consider how wonderful it is to hear about a lost person found, or a person rescued from a flooding river. It refreshes our hearts to hear stories about the drowning person going down for the last time and how at the last minute he was rescued. Fortunately, we live in a nation that is in tune with wanting to rescue those who are physically lost or in need. There is another type of rescue that should move our hearts as Christians because we know it moves the heart of God. The believers who were in the church in Colosse were reminded of their spiritual rescue.¹³ *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,* ¹⁴*in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”* (Colossians 1:13-14). Christians have been rescued from the grip of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:12). We have been called out of the world and transferred into the assembly of the saved – the church. It does not get any better than this, eternal life with God!

Perhaps the reason many people treat God so casually is because they think when we die, we are dead and that is it. No judgment, no heaven or hell, at death it is all over. That is a fatal mistake. It is the biggest mistake we can make, because death is not the end (Revelation 20:15). If a person goes through life turning a deaf ear to the good news of Jesus and kingdom of God and ignoring God’s rescue mission, it will not end well. Christians must never lose sight of what it means to be rescued and transferred into the kingdom of God.

This study will reveal by way of Scripture, how we can trust God to provide a way out of the biggest problem we will ever

face in this world, our sin problem. Jesus, who was life, died a sinless death on a Roman cross so we could be rescued from the condemnation of sin. All that Satan thought he had accomplished on the day Jesus was crucified in Chapter 23 of Luke was short lived because Jesus came forth from the grave as the Savior and Redeemer. We do not deserve eternal life, nor can we earn it in a meritorious way by our works, but genuine faith works. The conversion stories in Acts will repeatedly demonstrate how Bible faith moves a person to obey God. Jesus left the glories of heaven for a time and suffered much so He could rescue us, place us in His church, and we could one day be with Him in heaven.

The resurrection of Jesus proved He could rescue us for He was without question, the Son of God (Romans 1:4). The resurrection put an exclamation point on the faith of the early followers of Jesus and it should also attach an exclamation point to our faith. The empty tomb started a chain reaction through His disciples that the entire world would hear. Think about being an eyewitness to the daily ministry of Jesus as He showed compassion and care to people in need, that others went out of their way to avoid. His disciples had to face the realization that their friend and teacher, the one they called Lord, the King of Kings was nailed to a Roman cross. A few hours later there was no doubt about it; He was dead. His body was taken from the cross and put in a tomb sealed by the power of Rome; as the guards most trusted and trained, guarded that tomb. This was to assure that His followers could not possibly steal the body.

Things had not gone as the disciples had planned. Jesus was supposed to become the reigning king. After all, He was in their minds the Messiah, but now He was dead. Their lives were

devastated as all their hopes and dreams of victory over Rome were buried in a tomb. We can imagine, from their viewpoint at the time it seemed as though God's plan had failed. It was the biggest curve ball of their lives, one that had shaken them and left them mightily confused. Until three days later God's glory of resurrection was revealed for them to see in person. When the women arrived at the tomb in Luke 24:2 they found that the stone had been rolled away. The women soon heard these words from the angelic messengers, *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!"* (Luke 24:5-6). When they heard those words, take careful notice where they are standing. They are in an area equivalent to our modern-day cemetery. Let that sink in for a moment.

It is an encouraging thought when we think about it. When the women hear what has to be life-changing words they are in an area called the tombs. Now graveyards or cemeteries are not usually associated with a celebration of joy or relief of any kind. When we are down and feeling bad, one of the least likely places we would consider finding encouragement is a place where we bury our loved ones. Yet it was such a place that brought a joy intermingled with hope to these women and they quickly told the Eleven and others (Luke 24:9). It was the best news ever. Christianity is about the celebration that can take place for the faithful of God even in a cemetery. When God is involved, good news can come out of the strangest places. The resurrection verifies love will eventually conquer hate and right will conquer wrong. God can bring victory out of defeat! Jesus' resurrection energizes believers to cling closely to their Lord and His message. Several things happened in the gospel of Luke, even prior to Jesus' resurrection that awakened the religious world in

their day. Between the birth and the death of Jesus, life-energizing words flowed out of His mission-minded heart. The words He spoke had power and authority like no one else. After all, Jesus was God in the flesh (Philippians 2:6-7, John 1:18). When the chief priests and Pharisees first sent the temple guards to arrest Jesus because they did not like the message He was sharing, the guards came back empty handed. John recorded, ⁴⁵*“Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, ‘Why didn’t you bring him in?’* ⁴⁶*‘No one ever spoke the way this man does,’ the guards declared”* (John 7:45-46). We can only imagine the expression on the faces of those men in authority who heard the guards answer to their question.

Jesus’ disciples witnessed the authority by which Jesus spoke, but even after His resurrection they still had a mental block as to what Jesus meant by the word *“kingdom.”* Even up until the first chapter in The Book of Acts the disciples expected Jesus to physically defeat the iron hand of Rome. We learn this from their question in Acts 1:6, *“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”* They are thinking surely now that you have risen from the dead, and energized us, it is time to instruct and gather your troops. They believed it was finally time for the rebellion and takeover to begin against the Roman oppression. They were locked into the false teaching that had circulated for some time that when the Messiah came, He would set up a physical kingdom.

The physical kingdom was never a part of God’s plan. Jesus had a different plan than a physical takeover of Rome. The kingdom Jesus spoke about was spiritual in nature. The apostles would soon figure it out through the help of the empowering Holy Spirit. *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send*

in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John (14:26). ⁴“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 1:4-5). This targeted baptism for the apostles was something more than the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that all believers receive when baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38, Acts 5:32). The Baptism of the Holy Spirit Jesus promised was designed to empower them to do their work as His chosen apostles. Earlier He said to this same group in John 16:13, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

During the days between His death and ascension ministry, Jesus gave the eleven apostles instructions. It would not be long before they would be spreading a message of hope that was to be taken to the entire world, beginning in Jerusalem. The Acts of the Apostles will continue the message of Jesus and embrace His missionary-heart. The key verse in the Book of Acts could be, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). It is significant that verse 8 reveals to the Apostles that when the Holy Spirit comes, it will be “on you;” and **not in you**. Making this distinction is important to correctly understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in Acts.

The words these men will share with the world by the power of the Holy Spirit offers an opportunity for people from every nation to believe in Jesus. God invites everyone to become part of His spiritual kingdom – the church. Jesus prayed for these

men and us specifically. ²⁰*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me”* (John 17:20-21).

After Jesus told them they will be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:9) He began to be lifted up from the earth. They watched Him go higher and higher being carried away in a cloud until finally He was completely out of sight. They heard a message from two men dressed in white and the message reminded them Jesus was coming back. They were going to be accountable to Jesus. These men had seen many things because of their closeness to Jesus.

They had witnessed blind people given sight. Crippled people who had never walked before, suddenly healed and able to walk. They had seen Jesus restore life to the dead (John 11:43-44). They had experienced the horrible crucifixion and now are witnesses of the resurrection and ascension. All of these things had a lasting impact on these men. No longer will we find them terrified with fear. No longer will we find them filled with doubt. They are going to be motivated to a greater commitment than ever before. Their minds will be driven to carry out the Lord’s will with a spirit of perseverance like never before.

They now wait in Jerusalem to receive the promised Holy Spirit. They will use the Spirit’s power to start the very first church of Christ. These men will be led by the Spirit to reveal God’s will on how we can become a member of God’s forever family. They begin to lay down a few blueprints for the eternal church and she begins to take shape in Acts 2. I heard a plea for the first

time about forty-two years ago that appealed to me, and it still does. The appeal was simplistic, but biblical, "Let us just get back to the Bible." If I had a Bible or spiritual question it made sense to go the Bible for the answer. No person, or group of persons, has the right to draw up a set of answers, rules, or instructions which people must obey to become a Christian outside of the Lord's teachings.

Following the ascension of Jesus, the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. It was less than a mile to where they were temporarily staying in an upstairs room (Acts 1:12-14). They along with some other believers joined together in prayer. The Eleven soon realized they needed to fill the void left in the apostolic team due to the actions of Judas. Peter explained to the larger group of believers their intention to fulfill the Scripture and they discussed the possible candidates. ²¹*"Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us"* (Acts 1:21-22). For one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection. Two men stood out that had been eyewitnesses to the Jesus' ministry and miraculous things He did. Some among the Eleven thought it was Matthias, others thought Barsabbas was the choice. They were both good men and were faithful, but after prayer they asked the Lord to help them choose who would join them in the apostolic ministry. Mathias was chosen and he was added to the apostles.

God's Word gets specific at times. There were several specific requirements in the choosing of the man to replace Judas. The applicants needed to have been among the disciples from the time of Jesus baptism in the Jordan until His ascension in

Jerusalem. Those specifics narrowed down the list. The specific nature of God's Word on occasions can be a difficult thing for us at times. Especially when we have thought one way for a long-time only to hear God tell us something different. When what we have formerly believed to be true and God's Word tells us something else, we need to accept the truth that can set us free (John 8:31-32).

God's specifics can be hard for us at times I think because we live in a world of generalities. We have options what we eat, what we wear, what we hear, where we live, and what we drive or if we drive. We have more options than probably any generation before us. I have read somewhere years ago that when Henry Ford began selling his Model T's, he was known to say, "You can have any color you want, as long as it is black." We live in a much different world. We have options and many choices on just about everything we buy. I enjoy having options and I am sure we all do. But I wonder sometimes if we have grown so accustomed to having options in so many things that Satan has not used this option mentality to distort some of the specific teachings we find in the Bible. Satan uses this freedom of ours in having options in life to tempt us to take the words of Jesus or the Apostles through the Holy Spirit as optional.

We need to read the Bible and make a regular reading schedule to listen to God speak to us through His Word. Reading the Bible is not optional if we are going to mature in Christ. My days used to revolve around my day planner. I found it to be a useful tool as its purpose was to give me more control over my day, but what sometimes happened is my daily planner ends up controlling me. We may pencil in Bible reading, but we must take the time to actually read it. Unless we are extremely careful, we can

fill those blank pages with a list of things that helps us make a living while taking us away from making a life with God. Satan is a liar and He is still lying to people when we think we can experience spiritual victory without Bible reading and study. I am not questioning the sincerity of any person, but when you get away from God's Word you do not have the Word. Even if you have some of the truth if it is mixed with error, it is no longer truth. God's truth is not just something we can know; it is something we can believe and apply by obeying the Lord as we live out the truth.

Religious people are not exempt from Satan's lies and deception. We can refuse to take a stand on the revealed Word of God and this will always be the wrong option. If we do not like the message that Jesus gave the Twelve, we can look around and find someone else to serve it up according to our preference. There are religious people, sincere as they may be, serving up all sorts of alternative teachings to what was taught by the authority of Christ. This is not something new in our day. ¹*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ²Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. ³For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:1-4).* As we make our way further into our study be on the lookout for specific teaching when it comes to obeying the apostle's commands.

In the Jewish calendar there were important feasts and festivals and then there were really important feasts or days - Pentecost was such a day. *"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place"* (Acts 2:1). It was also called the Feast of Weeks (7 weeks). Pentecost always came 50 days after Passover. It was a Jewish holiday where some Jews would have saved up all year to be able to travel to Jerusalem to glorify and worship God. Jews gathered together on this special day, only this day was going to be even more important than they could have ever imagined. It was the day toward which all the Old Testament prophets and the earthly ministry of Jesus had looked. The Day of Pentecost would soon have new meaning to the people attending the activities and ceremonies on this day. They would be witnesses and participants to the birth of the church.

¹*"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.*
²*Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.*
³*They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.*
⁴*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them"* (Acts 2:1-4). As we move through this passage keep in mind that the pronouns "they" and "them" refers to the Apostles in this passage. There were more people present on this day but the pronouns in Acts 2:1-4 specifically refers to the apostles, not the larger group of disciples. Notice the "they" in vs. 1 goes back to the closest noun and that would be the word "apostles" in Acts 1:26. The Holy Spirit baptism Jesus had promised came upon them. Not only did they hear the Spirit come, but Luke tells us they saw something as well. They saw a fiery flame that rested on them, not in them. Not only was there something audible that sounded

like the wind, but also there was something visible. The fire meant something important. We find in Exodus Chapter 3, that when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush – it meant that Moses was in God’s presence.

The power of the Holy Spirit exploded on the Apostles as the Spirit gave them the ability and power to speak by inspiration the very words of God. Luke now gives us a clearer perspective of what has just happened. ⁵“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’ ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’ ¹³Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine!’” (Acts 2:5-13).

Let us absorb the best we can what we just read. The Apostles received an empowering influence of the Spirit, not the 120 or anyone else in the context. The Apostles were baptized by the Holy Spirit with power just as the Father had promised. They are sitting there together and suddenly, they hear a sound. It was a sound like they had never heard at least not without blowing wind. The sound came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. The sound was so loud and unusual that the peoples described as God-fearing Jews from every nation who had come for Pentecost formed a crowd

and sought an answer for this sound. When they come to check out the source of the sound they are puzzled because they find twelve men (the apostles) speaking in other tongues. The footnote in most Bibles indicates “tongues,” could be replaced with the word “languages.” Languages is what the term tongues mean in this context.

I do not want anyone to be confused by this for there is really no need to be confused based on what is written. We find that the tongues spoken here by the apostles were distinct languages. We can know this because the crowd of people, some who had come from faraway places, heard these men speaking in their own native language and asked, “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? The significance of the question is understood best this way. There were no schools up in Galilee. The schools were down in Judea and Jerusalem not up north in Galilee. The Galileans in the minds of most could not have been able to speak in so many different languages without going to school or being educated in Jerusalem. All the apostles were from Galilee and this only adds to the evidence that it was only the apostles who received this explosive power of the Spirit on this day. Nothing is said of anyone else speaking in tongues here. No other men or women, not even Jesus’ brothers or mother spoke in tongues – just the apostles.

The crowd wondered what all this means. They heard the apostles speaking intelligible words they could understand in their own language (Acts 2:8). Jews from various nations understood in their own language that the words spoken by the Galileans were declaring the wonders of God (Acts 2:11). The people also heard something else, but they do not recognize it as a language for it sounded like gibberish. I guess it would be like us being at

an international airport and as we are waiting for our flight, we overhear people from all over the world talking to each other. In our ears it sounds like gibberish.

Some, hearing the sound of gibberish around them, were wrestling for an explanation. The best some could come up with was these men were intoxicated and made fun of them. It is absolutely ridiculous at times how far people will go to try and rationalize away God at work. We know what rationalizing is. It is when we do not want accept something and try to rationalize what is happening to get what we want or hold on to what we have. These people did not want to accept these Galileans were truly able to communicate in their own native language so they rationalize.

It is absurd when we pause to think about it. No one has ever heard, nor will they hear being drunk or drinking too much wine gives an individual the ability to speak clearly. Being drunk with alcohol does not help you speak distinctly in another intelligible language. Especially one we have never studied or previously spoke. We know the exact opposite is true. When a person becomes drunk, drunkenness only slurs their ability to think straight and it inhibits clear speech. Being drunk was a lame accusation for what was taking place. Drunkenness will distort the language a person has known all of their life.

Peter likely hears some in the crowd sincerely trying to understand while others are trying rationalize away what was happening. Some in the crowd were outright mocking the apostles. ¹⁴*“Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.* ¹⁵*These men*

are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶*No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel'" (Acts 2:14-16). Most of the activities of Pentecost and the feast of weeks would have been conducted in the Aramaic language. The Spirit guided Peter's words when he launches into a prophecy from Joel indicating certain things that were unfolding were a fulfillment of prophecy. He closes out Joel's prophecy in Acts 2:21, "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

In the coming chapters in Acts, it will be clear what calling on the name of the Lord to be saved means and how we become members of His church. Here is a preview of one verse from our next study. When some people heard the Apostles message on Pentecost, they believed Jesus was Lord and asked a soul-searching question. Peter replied, *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38). Today we believe in Jesus through the Apostle's message. We are not filled with the empowering Spirit as they were by the Holy Spirit baptism, but we can be filled with the indwelling gift of the Spirit.

When we are baptized into Christ, we become general witnesses for Jesus. We share the same gospel the Holy Spirit gave to the Apostles. The apostles spoke in different languages miraculously confirming it was God's message. Today we speak a language we have learned by reading the Word of God and letting the Spirit work in our hearts through that Word. We have a language for teenagers who have a low self-esteem and feel empty – God loves you! We have a language for drug addicts whose families are falling apart – God can deliver us from sinful addictions. We have a language for those in troubled relation-

ships – God cares and He can make a difference. We have a language for alcoholics – God can rescue and turn sadness into joy. We have a language for our neighbors who are always looking for something to fill the void in their hearts – Jesus. We have a language for those floating through life without an eternal purpose or heavenly direction – fear God and keep His commandments.

We do not have to be a slave to our sins and be lost in them, thanks to Jesus (Romans 1:17). Remember when God makes a promise, He keeps it. As a result, we better pay attention to how His promises apply to us. *“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ. And so through him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God”* (2 Corinthians 1:20). God keeps His promises, and one of those, for example, is Jesus is coming back (Acts 1:11). Jesus referenced that coming and the judgment in Matthew Chapter 25 – He promised that one day we will all stand before Him. *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad”* (2 Corinthians 5:10). On Judgment Day our belief system will be called into account and on that day the truth of what we have done with and for the One called Jesus, will be made known.

**CHAPTER 1 - QUESTIONS
TO ENLIGHTEN, ENCOURAGE & EQUIP**

1. What two words did Jesus use to sum up His mission in Luke? What foundational message is tied to our carrying on Jesus' mission? (See Introduction)
2. Where is the first time the word church appears in the New Testament? Explain how **EKKLESIA** was used in the first century. How does the word apply to Christians?
3. What proof do we have that Jesus is the Son of God? How did this proof put an exclamation point on the faith of the early followers of Jesus?
4. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was designed to do what for the Apostles?
5. What is the key verse in Acts as to the Apostles? What energizes all believers to cling closely to their Lord and His message?
6. Why might it be hard for us at times to accept God's specific commands? What is not optional for us if we are going to mature in Christ?
7. What words did the Apostles hear as Jesus ascended into the sky? Consider their impact?
8. What was the practical, but miraculous, nature of the Apostles speaking in tongues? Why was the crowd amazed that the men speaking in tongues?



CLARK TATUM has preached for churches of Christ for over 36 years. He graduated from Southland Arizona College of Medical and Dental Careers and was a certified dental technician when he became a Christian. He holds a Doctor of Ministry, Masters of Ministry, and a Bachelors of Ministry from the Theological University of America. He also has Bachelor of Biblical Studies from the Sunset International Bible Institute, as well as a Level III Certification in Ministry Practice, and a Level II Certification in Biblical and Ministry Studies from SIBI.

Journey into a Mission-Minded Life explores concepts on church growth and maturity we can put into practice in our individual lives and in the local church family. The thirteen-chapter book has discussion questions that are intended to enlighten, encourage, and equip us so we can develop a mission-minded heart.

Journey into a Hope-Filled Life directs us to the source of real hope. The thirteen-chapter book has discussion questions at the end of each chapter designed to help us discuss, develop, and determine how we can live with hope.

Journey into a Fruit-Filled Life exemplifies how successful servants will gladly serve God with fruit-filled hearts. The thirteen-chapter book has discussion questions at the end of each chapter designed to help us perceive, ponder, and practice living by the fruit of the Spirit.

Journey into a Faith-Filled Life explores the power of God's Word and the faithful example of the followers of God found in Hebrews 11. The thirteen-chapter book has discussion questions designed to help us examine, experience, and embrace faith.

Journey into a Joy-Filled Life takes us through Philippians exploring Bible principles that are sure to enhance one's joy and devotion to Christ. The thirteen-chapter book has discussion questions at the end of each chapter are designed to teach, train, and transform lives to the glory of God.

ISBN 978-0-9841606-5-5



9 780984 160655


SUNSET
INSTITUTE PRESS

3710 34th Street • Lubbock, TX 79410 USA
800-687-2121 • www.extensionschool.com