

HOW THE CHURCH GOT STARTED

Acts 1:1-8

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: The Book of Acts, written by Luke, spans some 30 to 35 years and the main focus is on the ascension and Lordship of Jesus. It is a history of the start of the Church and shows how God constantly cared for it and provided it as it got its start. Today, the Church is vastly different than the one described and outlined in the Book of Acts as people, not God, have made so many changes. Here are some foundational facts about the Church.

I. JESUS IS THE ONLY ONE TO TELL THE CHURCH WHAT TO DO

1. vv 1-2
2. The Book of Acts does not contain every word and thing that Jesus said or did before ascending, but does give all that the Holy Spirit inspired and in a sense, all that anyone needs to know about:
 - what Jesus did and said about salvation
 - Jesus' obedience to the Father.
 - Jesus' obedience to the Law.
 - Jesus' death and substitution for man's sins.
 - how Jesus brought everlasting righteousness and eternal life for believers.
3. Jesus gave His commandments through the Holy Spirit to those He chose.
 - Those He chose, then gave His commandments to the Church.
 - All the doctrines and ordinances of the Church are given by Jesus and recorded in the Word of God. *2 Timothy 3:16*

2. JESUS PROVED HIS RESURRECTION BEYOND ANY DOUBT

1. v 3
2. Jesus appeared publicly and privately to His disciples. *1 Corinthians 15:5*
3. Jesus spent 40 days eating, drinking, walking and talking with His disciples, showing them the scars on His hands, feet and side, teaching them what they needed to know about God's kingdom.
4. The testimony of those present with Jesus those 40 days cannot be rejected.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME AS PROMISED BY GOD, THE FATHER

1. vv 4-5
2. God had promised that He would pour out His Spirit in the last day and Jesus in turn promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit was coming. *Joel 2:28; John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7:7:37-39*

4. NOBODY EXCEPT JESUS IS PERFECT, EVERYONE ELSE MAKES MISTAKES

1. vv 6-7
2. More than once Jesus' disciples didn't understand what Jesus was trying to tell them.
 - They were faithful, loyal and believing.
 - They were human and became confused and in error at times.
3. There are NO perfect people in this world.
 - The apostles were not.
 - What they wrote (scriptures) was inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit, not of their own understanding or creation.
4. Jesus never got angry with His disciples for their weaknesses and neither should we with one another.
5. Jesus nor the Holy Spirit didn't tell the apostles or the Church everything at that time.
 - There are many things God has not revealed and nobody should try to imagine or invent what God has chosen to keep from us.
 - We are to study God's Word and learn what He HAS revealed and put it into practice.

5. JESUS TELLS THE CHURCH WHAT EVERY MEMBER IS TO DO

1. v 8
2. No Christian can be saved or serve God as God wants until the Holy Spirit comes upon him/her.
 - Doing what God wants done is done by God's grace alone. *Romans 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-9*
3. Every Christian/Church member is to be a witness.
 - We are to tell others what we have heard, seen and experienced personally - not something second handedly.
 - We are to tell others what we know for certain to be true.
 - Witnessing is a privilege, responsibility and honor for every Christian.
4. Every Christian is a missionary, an evangelist, a preacher, a "martyr."
 - We are to lay down our lives for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - We are to let nothing interfere with our being a witness.

CONCLUSION:

1. The Church was started by Jesus.
2. Only Jesus can tell the Church what to do or not do.
3. Every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
4. The Holy Spirit enables the Christian to be the witness he/she should be.