

Acts 1:1–3

Jesus Is Still Doing and Teaching

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Main idea: As the salvation of Jesus Christ continues to be applied to all for whom He died, it is still Jesus Who is working and teaching by His Spirit.

¹The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ²until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Introduction: “Please read more...!” ... “to be continued.”

1. The Former Account (cf. Luke 1:1–4)
 - a. The gospel of Luke, written to a lover of God and honored by God
 - b. Orderly and well-researched
 - c. By a man who completely understands what he’s writing
 - d. In order to increase confidence in that in which he had already been catechized.
 - e. “all that Jesus began both to do and to teach until the day that He was taken up”
2. The Current/Latter Account
 - a. What Jesus *continues to do and to teach*... (persistence and continuity). The other thing that the Scriptures taught was necessary (cf. Luke 24:46–47).
 - b. “through the Holy Spirit.” The teaching and work that Jesus did by His Spirit in Acts was a continuation of what He did and taught in His earthly ministry by His Spirit and after His resurrection, by His Spirit. And so He is still doing and teaching now, by His same Holy Spirit.
 - c. “to the apostles whom He had chosen.” Christ is the initiator and the great Actor in all the apostolic work. And also in each believer’s life.
 - d. “commandments” ... “speaking”. By what means does Jesus work by His Spirit in those whom He has chosen? By His Word. So it was for the apostles. So it continues to be for every genuine “Theophilus.”
 - e. “presented Himself alive after His suffering,” etc.
 - i. The certainty that He has risen
 - ii. The certainty that it is He Who is still working (“speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”)

Conclusion: Him in Whom we must hope. The extent to which we ought to hope. The praise with which we ought to respond.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Acts 1 verses 1 through 3 and is be careful in our hearing for this is the word of God, The former account I made of theophilus of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up.

After he threw the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the Apostles. Whom he had chosen to whom he also presented himself. Alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs being seen by them during 40 days. And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, the sins, this reading of God's inspired and inerrant word.

Please be seated.

I once loaned a book historical fictions set in Covenanting Scotland to one of my brother elders in the session of church that I served in Iowa and about three or four days into that week. A couple of his sons were over at our house. I think, delivering something with their mother.

I don't remember what the occasion was for them to be over at his house, but the second oldest son, who ordinarily, had a ton of energy was just drooping and exhausted. And I asked Caleb, what's wrong? You, you don't seem very energetic today and he said all I'm not sleeping.

And I said, why aren't you sleeping? It's very unusual for a child. I often think to myself, I wish I could sleep the way, a young man of Caleb's age is ordinarily able to sleep. He said someone loaned dad this book and he gets so into it every night that he just won't stop reading.

And Apparently they had finished the book and four nights and I don't know if he didn't know that, I was the lender. If he was just being respectful, It's usually the other way around. In my house, we will be reading a story in the story, will be good. And maybe the author of the story will conclude each chapter with a little bit of a tease, a little bit of a cliffhanger.

And in our house, it's become a little bit of a catechetical tradition when I finish it and I say, and that's the end of the chapter, the chorus rings out, and all of the young voices, say, please read more, and it's usually the exhausted father. Who says that's enough for one night or the indulgent.

Father, who who says, okay, we'll read one more. Whichever God gives him the grace to be at that particular moment. One of the glorious things about the end of the gospel of Luke is that there is another volume, It ends as it were with a cliffhanger about what is to come.

That there were these two things that we heard in the end of the Gospel of Luke that were necessary. And one was that the Lord Jesus would suffer and rise again, on the third day. But the other, you remember, I hope is that repentance. And remission of sins would be proclaimed in his nation.

In his name to all the nations. And so there's that cliffhanger, this other thing that was necessary and these apostles who are supposed to be his witnesses, but thus far by the end of the gospel of Luke don't appear to be witnessed to Christ material and and what will be the outcome of these things.

And the spirit grants to us, the more, the to be continue And he comes as he carries Luke along. He comes out of the gate as it were in the book of Acts. Connecting those two things making that connection the former account, I made Oathiophilus of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach and so forth.

And so there's this, there's this very clear teaching that this is the second volume of a two volume work and we want to know what we are to be getting out of the book of Luke and the book of Acts. These two volumes that God has given by the pin of the evangelist by the by the pin of Luke whom the church new as Luke.

The physician the first couple centuries very early on. He was known that way. And so it's probably true and rooted in history, But one of the points of the gospel of Luke, and the book of Acts Is that you don't have to say, probably true about anything that Luke writes.

Now, we know that because it's sacred scripture, and because he wrote under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and he is not writing from himself, but holy men called by God and carried along by God, right by the Holy Spirit so that every word of Scripture, every word that is inscribed.

On the pages of the Bible is as much and completely the Word of God as if he personally is breathing it out to you But it's Luke himself who underlines the historicity, the accuracy of what he writes as an encouragement to believers at the beginning of his gospel and there are a number of things that he says at the beginning of the two volumes that will help us understand what he is pulling into the beginning of volume two.

As we begin acts this week And so be helpful to us to look back at the first four verses of the gospel of Luke, in which he wrote, and which he introduced in this way. And as much as many have taken in hand to set in order, a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us.

And that language, of course, is important because he's going to end the gospel as we heard with Jesus saying that if they had understood the scriptures and as he taught them in the, the law and the prophets and the writings that the whole Scripture had taught them, that it was necessary, that Jesus Christ should suffer in the third day, rise again, and that repentance and remission of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations.

And so volume, one is a fulfillment of the one and volume. Two is a fulfillment of the other And as much as many have taken in hand and to set in order a narrative of those things, which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, delivered them to us.

It seemed good to me. Also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first to write to you and orderly account. Most excellent theophilus that you may know the certainty of

those things in which you were instructed. So Luke sets down his method and his purpose and we learn something about to whom he is writing and what we are to get out of it.

At the beginning of the gospel of Luke and since he connects the two volumes this way, in our short three verse texts, this morning will consider it first by considering those four verses at the beginning of Luke, to understand what he's pulling in by referring, to the form of volume.

And then we will consider the not just the former account, which is the gospel. But also the latter account or what is for us, the current volume volume two, as he adds, then to his reference to the gospel of Luke. So first, in the former account, he identifies who is writing to some extent or at least that he is writing to this theophilus.

And so, we have some author and recipient questions, or indications, He tells us much about his method. The that is a designed to be in orderly account and a well researched account By a man who. And of course, if you read the Gospel of Luke and you read second volume acts, you would already know this.

But especially if you read the letters that are written by Paul with whom Luke ministered, You would know this only by the grace of God, does he have this understanding? But a man who completely understands now, what he is writing and that he's writing in order that believers may have their confidence in what they have been taught increase.

And then, and then we'll consider in the last place, what our text acts, one one through three tells us by way of summary about the Gospel of Luke. So first, it is written to a man who is a lover of God and honored by God. He is, there are many people who have written but Luke now is writing and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, his writing to a most excellent theophilus.

And this is similar, except for the one phrase, most excellent, the beginning of our passage. He says, the former account I made O theophilus. Now most who read that name believe that this was an actual particular individual. Perhaps an individual of of some wealth because that or power because that which is said later in the book of Acts of Felix as said here of him and Luke 1 verse 3.

Most excellent theophilus. But if that is true, then he has a rather odd Greek name for. And it is a Greek name. Because his name means lover of God. Many of your probably familiar with the fact that Philadelphia is the city of Brotherly Love. Well, Theos And filler are combined in theophilus to mean one, who loves God.

Now, that may not have been his given name, it might have been a new name that was given to him when he was converted upon the conclusion of his catechesis, which by the way, Luke refers to at the end of verse 4, when he says the things in which you are instructed of the many, many New Testament words for teaching and instruction, it is one behind the word for catechizing.

That is that he uses in chapter 1 and verse 4. And we know that very late in the first century and early in the second century that there was catechizing that ordinarily proceeded baptism. And so, you're starting to get a composite picture of who this this man is God in his providence, causing him to receive a Christian name.

Oh, that means lover of God. So that we will all know that we who are being catechized in this method of teaching by questions and answers. That's all catechi. Catechism means and catechizing is it wasn't invented by, you know, Presbyterians in the or even before that reformers. Or even before that, the papists catechizing is something that that the apostolic church was doing as it was being formed and grown and directed by the Holy Spirit but we have Luke and Acts written for those who have come to know and believe in Jesus Christ and know that God has loved us because God shows His love and Christ's dying for us and we love Him because He first loved us.

And so if you're a Christian you're given name might be something else, but it's not a bad name or title to give to yourself a theophilus. One who loves God and we know that love is grown by knowledge. You remember the apostle praying that their love would increase and knowledge and understanding.

And so God, the Holy Spirit is going to increase the love of the God-lover by giving him more understanding and more confidence in that, in which he has been instructed in that, which he has been catechized. And so that carries forward because as the former volume was all that Jesus began to do into teach as we start to understand, then that acts is what Jesus continues to do.

And to teach that that we are to love the Lord Jesus and increase in that love by increasing our knowledge and understanding by means of not just the gospel account but also the account that we are beginning today The acts which you could probably start to hear already, You may have heard it called the acts of the Apostles but by Luke's introduction, it sounds a lot more like the acts of the ascended Christ, right?

He says the former account and the things that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day that he was taken up and there's that overlap, at the end of the Gospel of Luke, Luke being the only one who gives us an extended description of the ascension of Jesus Christ.

He gives us the day that he was taken up at the end of the first volume and they pick up in the second volume with another description of the ascension and combining those two things. And so the gospel of Luke is what Jesus did until the day. He was ascended and acts as what Jesus continued to do.

Once he had ascended and taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high and marvelous for us to study that. Because the Lord Jesus is still doing many of these things. There is a ministry of the Apostles that was promised and fulfilled and completed. But many of the things that he does, especially in the pouring out of his Spirit and in the working, by his word, are things that he continues to do.

And so, one of the points of the book of Acts, one of the things for us is to see and remember and be strengthened in the fact that it is the Lord Jesus himself. The self-same one who suffered on the cross and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

He is the one who is working. In you, believer. He is the one who not only gave his spirit once in that great day of Pentecost, but continues to give his spirit so that you may feel and see, personally the work of Jesus Christ in your life as a believer in his church's life in mission, work and evangelism and so forth.

So it is written to a lover of God and one who has honored by God, and it is written in a way to help instruction. It is orderly and well-researched. Don't know if you have at times fallen into the same folly that I really fell into during a couple of my high school years in which, in my sophomore and some of, you know, that means a wise fool, my sophomore spiritual growth, and I thank God.

He was growing me. And yet in my ignorance, I thought that things that were spontaneous and unprepared and unplanned were more spiritual than the less effort you put in the more of that was the Holy Spirit as if the Holy Spirit is glorified by unpreparedness and uncarefulness and disorderliness but here we have the evangelist who's writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit by the power of the Holy Spirit even as he is going to especially emphasize and next week's portion in verses 4 through 8 of chapter 1, that the same spirit by whom the Lord Jesus ministered in his earthly ministry, you guys left to right in his earthly ministry is the one who is the self-stained spirit by whom the Lord.

Jesus is ministering from heaven as he sits and he and he ministers in his church. God loves orderliness. It is not a special display of dependence upon the Holy Spirit to not study your Bible and not understand as well as possible from as many reliable witnesses. Whom the Lord has sent before you and to just spout off whatever occurs to you in the moment.

In fact, it is very foolish because our hearts are still deceitful above all things and desperately, wicked, and there are many things that occur to us in the moment and seem to be very spiritual or seemed to speak very well of the love of God. But are really hateful things that come from our own idea of what love is and are not what the Bible tells us about what God is like and about what his love is.

And we have seen the damage that that has done, especially in the last century or so in the church as the definitions of good and evil, and love, and hate have been turned inside out and upside down by a non-studying. People who blaspheme God by blaming their unpreparedness and spontaneity on the third person of the Trinity and they say I have a word from God but it's just a word from themselves and they haven't studied the scriptures to know that what they are speaking is a word from God.

Well, Luke doesn't do that. He, He gives an orderly and well searched. He says, Then as much as many have taken in hand to set an order a narrative, it seemed good to me. Also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first to write to you and orderly account.

And this is an orderly account that even as he writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he doesn't write it in isolation from others. Whom the Holy Spirit uses verse 2 just as those who from the beginning were I witnesses and ministers of the Word delivered them to us His even writing as an inspired Scripture writer, inspired by the Spirit is not done in isolation from others.

In the spirit has used. And so this insistence by some that they will, the that it is somehow less spiritual with a capital S to study what those whom the Spirit has used before is basically,

it's not saying I depend upon the Holy Spirit and his work. It's saying there's 2,000 years of the Holy Spirit and His work that I am discarding.

As if God was going to start all over with me from nothing, Does that honor God the Holy Spirit? No, it does not and it pulls the rug out from under those who would hear you, doesn't it? Because rather than being encouraged by the certainty because the same God, who sent his Son?

Who surely did die and rise again. And ascend has sent his spirit, who justice, surely did sustain the apostles and cause the New Testament to be written, and has protected and preserved his word throughout the centuries, and he has used that word in His people. So that the, you know, something that comes from the text of Scripture and has the churches understanding has developed over time and yet it was there in the Bible, You know, discard it because it was something that the Holy Spirit gave over time.

If it's from the Bible, You thank God for his work in those who have gone before. You even as Luke was doing at the beginning of his gospel. Now, what's the purpose? What are we supposed to get out of the books of Luke and Acts verse 4, that? You may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed or in which you have been catechized.

The many witnesses that that he is going to be referring to and the historical evidence that many proofs to which he refers in Acts chapter 1. These, these things are, especially for believers. Yeah, you can testify of them to unbelievers. You could talk to them about the historical reliability of the Bible as compared to the historical reliability of any other document from the ancient world and the nature of the testimony.

And and how there is there is nothing as more consistently and well preservedly and with as reliable witness from the ancient world nothing even comes close to the Bible. You know, events from the ancient world as far as as doing responsible history nothing else even comes close to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But those aren't things that they're going to suddenly say oh yes you're exactly right. Jesus is God and became a man and died and rose again for my sins except by the work of the Holy Spirit in them. So there is a usefulness in presenting the evidence and and testifies against them that they reject, the evidence that you present but that's not how Luke and acts are primarily designed to be used.

Are they What does he say that you God lover who have been instructed. Catechized may know the certainty of those things. The great value of the evidence that the Lord presents in his word and that the Lord has preserved in his world is for the help of the believer that those things that he already knows in, which he is already been instructed the Lord over and over and over again, gives us opportunity to see the accuracy of those things.

And to know that of which the Holy Spirit has already convinced us that he would grow us in our confidence. Well, that's that's what we glean about. Things that we need to understand about the book of Acts as being the second volume. That's two volume work. That was introduced that way and we continue in the text.

We see those things in, in our passage this morning, that both reinforce and add to what he had said at the introduction of volume. 1 The former account I made at the office of all that Jesus began, but to do unto teach until the day that he was taken up.

After he threw the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the Apostles whom he had chosen to whom. Also, he presented himself alive To whom he also presented himself. Alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs being seen by them during 40 days. And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

So those that which he had done in the past was by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, came upon him came down upon him made visible. Testimony of the fact that he was the one who had been sustaining Christ in his humanity. Not only up until the day that he was baptized.

But also in his earthly ministry and the Lord Jesus being in his humanity. Full of the Holy Spirit from the womb as an incredibly strengthening. And comforting thing for you believer. First that he was made like you in every way, except without sin. So the Jesus was not this half man.

Half God, who, you know, could always just tap into the half of him. That was God whenever he needed to because, you know what? You are not half man and half. God and you are not going to be able to tap into the half of you. That is God, But Jesus was fully God and became fully man.

And in his humanity, he was sustained and filled by the Holy Spirit the same. Holy Spirit, whom he pours out on you the same? Holy Spirit and Galatians 4 says, because you are children. He has sent

forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. And so it is incredibly encouraging to us that not only was Jesus sustained, even until his resurrection.

But between his resurrection and his ascension through whom is he still giving commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen. Here is now the glorified Christ having risen from the dead. No longer subject to the weakness of the humanity that belongs to this world. But now, the humanity to which we will be conformed that we may enjoy the next world and he is still teaching through the Holy Spirit.

He is still even in his glorified humanity, depending upon carried along by doing having fellowship with the Holy Spirit as he commands, the apostles and those 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension so that when he pours out the Spirit of the day of Pentecost, It's the same spirit that he has had throughout his earthly.

Ministry is the same spirit through whom he had instructed, the, the apostles and the time between his resurrection and the day he was taken up and he is the same spirit who leads you. Now If you are in Christ for, as many as our lead, As many as our sons of God are led by the Spirit of God.

So, the teaching and work that Jesus did by his Spirit and acts as a continuation of what he did and taught in his earthly ministry, by his spirit, leading up to his death and resurrection. And when we read that all believers are made believers by the same work by the work of the same.

Holy Spirit and all believers are grown in Christ by the work of the same. Holy Spirit, We rejoice as it were not fond of names. Like Acts 29 But I'm very fond of the concept that Christ is still working by his same spirit through His same word. There is no volume three, Luke wrote to and the Holy Spirits.

Wisdom is perfect, but it should be a great encouragement to us. There's the same spirit, the same Christ by the same Spirit, using the same word, who, who worked and taught in volume one, who was still working continuing to work and teach and volume two and whom we recognize is working and teaching still today until the end of the age Through the Holy Spirit to the Apostles whom he had chosen.

Christ is the initiator and great actor in the Apostolic work. No one volunteered to be a disciple. Now, Luke does not hear dwell on the that the parallel between their call to the Apostle ship and every believers call unto Christ. But the scripture everywhere teaches that believers do not volunteer to become believers that we choose Him because He has chosen us, We believe in him because he gives us life to be able to believe in him that because he is the one.

The way the verse 2 functions in the book of Act is that because he had chosen these apostles and he had, he had laid the path out before them. He gave them the instructions, the commandments, and he gave them his spirit, by which that would happen, that we would know, for sure, that it is Jesus, who is doing it and that it must necessarily succeed and be done, But isn't that true for you?

Who have believed in Jesus Christ, that it is Jesus who has first chosen that you would become a believer and that it is Jesus, who is at work by His Spirit and that those things in which you seek to grow and, and those things that you hope at last to come into the resurrection of the body and and glorifying and enjoying God, fully body and soul forever and ever that a new heavens, and a new earth that it is in the G, it is Jesus who chose you for that?

And Jesus has given you His Spirit for that and Jesus has told you by His word, what those things are and it must necessarily be fulfilled. See is verse 2 isn't just giving us a historical detail about how the 12 were selected. It's setting. Before us a reason to be confident about what Jesus has continuing to do and to teach the apostles whom he had chosen.

And this work that he does by his spirit and those whom he has chosen is done by means of his word. Very briefly. You see the commandments in verse 2, that he was speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God in verse 3, that he was doing those things until the day that he was taken up.

And, of course, he by his spirit is still doing those things as acts as written and he by his Spirit is still doing these things. As acts as preached. Some 19 90 years later and Hollyoaka Tennessee in a different language, but it's still Jesus working by His Spirit through his word.

If you have a Bible in your lap, it pulls you into act one, one through three and it says that Bible in your lap and that preaching in your ear as part of the same project of the same Savior, by the same spirit using the same speaking. In the same Scripture.

He presented himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs being seen by them during 40 days, if you stop and list them all out, there are 10 different appearances that we know of from

the New Testament of the risen Christ that take place in this 40 days including an especially the one twitch acts sorry.

First Corinthians 15 especially refers where he's seen by 500 all at once. Almost all of whom are still alive at the time that first Corinthians is written so that we may be certain that he has risen so that we may be certain that is he? It is he who is still working And since it is, he who does the work by his spirit through his word, It is in him alone that we must hope for his work to be done, which means you use his word and you depend upon his spirit, because that's how Jesus works.

And if you are hoping in him Then you have a sure hope. Don't you? Because Christ cannot fail, Not only you must hope, but if you do hope in him, then your hope is sure. The book of Acts will end with Paul rejoicing that although he is bound. The Word of God is.

Not Why? Because it's the same now. Ascended and seated and reigning Savior working by the same spirit. Through the same unchainable scriptures, unchainable word and so you must hope only in him. But if your hope isn't him, you ought to hope completely and fully, and surely and if we're depending upon him and that way there is no room for boasting, but there is an unceasing and limitless call for praise for.

He is the one who is doing the work and we ought to respond with joy. Remember children always said in the class about how you pray and Lord help me to obey, mom and dad. Well, how does God make sinful children into real obeyers of mom and dad by His Holy Spirit, using his word who said, help me to obey my mom and dad, and help me do it for you.

That you would be glorified if you know that Jesus is the one who did it. That's what the beginning of Acts that we've just been hearing about for some 40 minutes. Says, if you know that it's Jesus, who did it? Then you're hoping that mom and dad will say thank you Lord Jesus that by your spirit.

Using your word. You've helped my child obey mom and dad, honor mom and dad and you too would spray the same thing. Thank you. Lord Jesus that by your spirit using your word. You help me obey, mom and dad and you give Jesus all the praise because upon Him working by His Spirit, through His Word.

It all depended. Let's pray.

Lord, Jesus. We look to you to work in us. We thank you that it is your work. So we ask that anything that comes from us and its own sinfulness weakness, that we were that we bring to the equation that you would. Cause that to be overruled set aside overcome, We pray that your Holy Spirit would keep working in us and applying to us the salvation that you have accomplished.

We thank you for the certainty that what you have earned for us. Must at last be fully applied to us. We thank you for the certainty that there are multitudes that we cannot count for him. You have died and driven again and who must absolutely must receive the salvation that you have earned for them.

So we pray that you would make us to live independence upon you and to be confident and then delighted and give you praise wherever. We see the fruit of your working big glorified in this way. We ask in your own precious name. Amen.