



# MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

## Read: Luke 24 & Acts 1:1-7

### Plug In...

We start a new series today in the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts is *Part Two* of Luke's Gospel. Read first the final chapter of Luke's Gospel.

Luke writes part one: Jesus' life, ministry, death, resurrection. Then he writes part two: Jesus' ascension and reign and the implications for Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the whole world.

### Chew It Over...

People often call the book of Acts "the acts of the apostles", or "the acts of the early church". Consider these common titles and reflect on what you might title the book based on Acts 1:1 and what Luke implies to Theophilus the rest of the narrative is about.

### Prayer Suggestion

Praise God for the risen and reigning Jesus. Ask that we will have our confidence that Jesus continues to teach and do things with us as He fulfils the promises of salvation for people to the ends of the earth.



# TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

## Read: Acts 1:1-7

### Plug In...

As we enter the book of Acts, we'll spend most of our time here focusing on the opening verses of the chapter. These verses explain truths about Jesus and the promises of salvation from the Old Testament demonstrated through the rest of the narratives.

Today, being Halloween, notice the emphasis on Jesus' resurrection in the opening verses. The Old Testament told people to expect that at the time of the 'last days' the resurrection will happen. [See: [Deuteronomy 32:39](#); [Isaiah 26:19 – 27:1](#); [Psalm 16](#); [Ezekiel 36-37](#); [Daniel 12](#)].

All of the Gospels climax with the resurrection of Jesus. With Jesus' resurrection the last days begin. Acts proclaims the resurrection and reign of Jesus as the marker of the beginning of the last days (*cf.* [Acts 2](#)).

### Chew It Over...

Halloween is becoming more popular in Australia. It is done playfully and suggests a cavalier attitude to ghosts, spirits, demons. Yet, many are worried about the influence of these powers. The Bible affirms their reality. We often focus rightly on the atonement when talking about Jesus. The resurrection declares the victory of Jesus over all powers and those that hold the keys to death. Reading the Isaiah 26, Psalm 16, and Daniel 12 passages mentioned above we see that the spiritual dimension is part of the landscape.

Today take courage that Jesus has defeated all powers. The proof is His resurrection. Jesus reigns and He will raise you up ([John 6:35-40](#)).

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Ask that God makes you aware of people who live in fear. May God grant you confidence to explain the victory of Jesus and that He is the strongest power and the safest power for those who trust in Him.



# WEDNESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

## Read: Acts 1:1-11 & Isaiah 32

### Plug In...

After Jesus' resurrection, He spends 40 days talking about the kingdom of God. This would be the topic of conversation for Jews waiting for the promised kingdom and one of the big events of the end times had occurred – a resurrection!

God promised some key things that will occur at the time of the last days: He would cause His Messiah to reign (e.g. [Isaiah 32:1](#)); there would be resurrection (e.g. [Isaiah 26:19 – 27:1](#)); the Holy Spirit poured out (e.g. [Isaiah 32:15](#)); and Israel restored (e.g. [Ezekiel 37:11-28](#)).

Jesus takes one of these regular kingdom conversations and focusses down to the promise of the Father. He tells them to stand by for receiving the Holy Spirit.

### Chew It Over...

The disciples ask Jesus a question (v.6). Regarding Jesus' answer, you may have heard different explanations:

- Jesus doesn't actually answer them but says they will find out in due time or
- Jesus rebukes them, the assumption is that the disciples are too focussed on national Israel (missing the universal scope of Jesus' ministry) and Jesus goes on to change the topic or
- Jesus is directly answering their question.

What do you think is the strongest option?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Declare the wonders of God that we on the Central Coast have been reached with the Gospel and included in God's kingdom. Ask that the Holy Spirit will make you a witness and that you will see opportunities for people to be reached in our own back yard.



## THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

### Read: Acts 1:9-11 & 2 Kings 2:1-15

#### Plug In...

The opening section strongly emphasises that the disciples saw Jesus taken up into heaven (vv. 1, 9, 11). Interwoven is the topic of waiting to receive the Holy Spirit from the Father (*cf.* [Luke 24:48](#)).

#### Chew It Over...

We will see that Luke saturates the book of Acts with Old Testament quotes. Mostly we will hear speeches from Peter and Paul citing Scripture to say all that Jesus did and what happened to Him conforms to God's plan told beforehand. Likewise, that their preaching to the ends of the earth – with Gentiles becoming Christians – also conforms to Scripture.

Much of what is shown in Acts includes symbolism and actions, even quotes, from the book of Isaiah. The big picture from Isaiah is God's Servant will cut a way through for God's people providing a 'new exodus' from their predicament. Luke shows this vision of the future from Isaiah is now happening in the stories of Acts.

Before Isaiah painted a future 'new' exodus, the first to announce it was Elijah, a prophet whose life mirrored the man synonymous with the exodus, Moses ([1 Kings 17-19](#)). The Gospels, no less Luke's, show Jesus doing the same miracles as Elijah to demonstrate the truth of a new exodus. [See examples: multiplying food [1 Kings 17:7-16](#) & [Luke 9:10-17](#); raising a widow's son – [1 Kings 17:17-24](#) & [Luke 7:11-17](#)). Moses and Elijah speak to Jesus about His coming 'departure' (lit. 'exodus') in the transfiguration accounts, e.g. [Luke 9:28-36](#).] At the end of Elijah's ministry, he commissions Elisha to carry on the mission. Elisha responds by asking for God's Spirit to equip him. Elijah tells his successor a sign will assure him he's received God's Spirit for the mission.

Luke's Gospel story flows into Acts. What parallel do you see here with the transition in ministry from Elijah to Elisha with Jesus to the disciples? What can they be assured of?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Ask God to make your life missional. Request the Spirit to equip you for whatever that involves.



## FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

### Read: Acts 1:12-26 & Psalm 69

#### **Plug In...**

Peter takes the initiative to rebuild the team of the 12 Apostles after Judas' betrayal of Jesus. The quest to replace Judas occurs while they are waiting for the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit on their mission. Peter seems to understand that they have witnessed Jesus going to heaven and He promised to send the Spirit, so the initial team Jesus established should be rebuilt. Peter joins lines from two Psalms, Psalm 69 and Psalm 109. Both Psalms show a person making statements, not plucked out of thin air, but because of their awareness of God's prior promises.

#### **Chew It Over...**

Peter doesn't engage in mere pragmatism (i.e. as if 12 was the proven number to have on a team for robust success). Instead, he shapes his next steps by theological truths.

We too should model Peter in this. Whatever situation we find ourselves in, knowing God's view of the world, accepting what He says, trusting in where He says the future heads, we let that shape our next move.

Isn't that how the disciples even approach rolling the dice? [*Cf.* [Proverbs 16:33](#); [Leviticus 16:8](#); [Numbers 26:55](#).]

#### **Prayer Suggestion**

Help us Lord to be so across what Your word says, may it envelope our minds and hearts, and may we walk directed by the lamp to our feet that it is.



The Lakes

## WEEKEND 4-5 NOVEMBER 2017

SERIES: ACTS – TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

### Read: Psalm 109 (quoted in Acts 1)

#### **Plug In...**

This Psalm is written by a person, most likely David, lamenting that enemies are engaging in character-assassination over him. David is hurt, because those opposing him are returning his love with attack (vv.4-5).

David's words are intense here (vv.6-15). He wishes his enemy a taste of his own medicine. Notice he asks God to make it so that an evil person rises up and confronts his enemy. David lists curse after curse and he implores God to bring them down on his enemy.

Then David asks the LORD to bless him; while they curse, may God bless (vv. 26-28).

David finishes by saying amongst the great throng of worshippers he will extol the LORD and he declares that God stands ready to save the needy (vv.30-31).

#### **Chew It Over...**

The final verse of the Psalm is important when considering Peter's use of it in Acts 1. The Psalm shows that the crisis of having opposition, and his desire that God curse them, is bound up with David being saved in order that the throng of worshippers benefit.

Peter's primary point from this Psalm is not that Judas has been repaid justly, but that the Psalm shows the removal of Jesus' enemies from the leadership of God's people, protects the leadership – or saves the leadership – for the benefit of God's people. Peter is concerned for the mission ahead – a job that requires collecting worshippers from all over the earth.

Can you think of Christian leadership, influence that is maligning the name of Jesus?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Where you see corrupt church leadership, ask that God will remove them from the position misleading God's people. Ask that God protect our church leadership for the benefit of the mission ahead.