

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts

W.O. Vaught Archive

1-1-1982

The Power to See It Through

W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_acts



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), and the [Liturgy and Worship Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "The Power to See It Through" (1982). *Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts*.

1.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_acts/1

This Sermon Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the W.O. Vaught Archive at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

THE POWER TO SEE IT THROUGH

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF THE ACTS
NUMBER 1
ACTS 1:1-3

Dr. W. O. Vaught, Jr.
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

Verses 1 through 3 of this first chapter of Acts clearly indicate this is Volume 2 of the writings of Luke. The Book of the Acts contains the sacred history of the early church before the canon of scripture was completed. The Book of the Acts is the history of the early church before it had a Bible. Most of the Epistles and other books of the New Testament had not been written by this time, and when in Acts you read "They Searched The Scriptures" it means they were studying Old Testament Scriptures.

Dr. Luke wrote both the Third Gospel, the Gospel of Luke, and this book, The Acts. It was written between 61 and 63 A.D. Luke was with Paul in Rome during Paul's first imprisonment, and while Paul was writing the Prison Epistles - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon - Luke was writing The Acts.

Acts 1:1 "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." This is a formal Greek prologue. "Former treatise" refers to The Gospel of Luke. In The Gospel of Luke, Theophilus is addressed as "most excellent". This would suggest that he was a Knight of the Roman Empire and a very wealthy man. Under the free enterprise of that time the Roman Empire rose to her greatest height. Hundreds of Romans were very wealthy and some had as many as 100,000 slaves. There has never been before or since such great wealth in the world, and their wealth was not in credit or paper, but in silver and gold coins. The primary reason for the collapse of the Roman Empire was their lack of manufacturing industry. They turned to India and China for the products their wealth could provide. They learned how to ride the trade winds to India, and China brought their manufactured goods into India and both India and China sold billions of dollars of produce to Rome. They would not take paper money, only silver and gold. In this way the Roman Empire drained off their gold during a period of about 150 years and soon economic collapse came to the Roman Empire. In this collapse the Roman Government took over recreation and entertainment for the people and millions were given bread and placed on welfare rolls.

But at the time when Luke and Paul were writing these books the Roman Empire was in her Golden age, which was the Augustian Age of the Empire. Indeed, The Most Excellent Theophilus was a very wealthy man and would be able to finance the printing and circulation of these books Luke wrote. We can also surmise that he became a believer in Christ and cooperated with Dr. Luke because of his own personal faith.

In the phrase "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach", we learn two things. The things Jesus began to do as described in the Gospel of Luke, and The Book of The Acts, is simply what Jesus continued to do after his Resurrection and Ascension. This phrase also illustrated the order of Christ's work - he did before he taught. In other words, his miracles came first, then the teaching followed. He performed the miracles to catch the attention of the people, then he taught them once he had gotten their attention. Our procedure is quite different - we teach then do. The Greek language here clearly indicated that the purpose of his miracles was to get a hearing. Miracles were important and had their place, but the miracles were not an end in themselves.

Acts 1:2 "Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." Here we have a transitory sentence, "until the day he was taken up". Volume 1, The Gospel of Luke, tells us what he did before he was taken up. Volume 2, The Book of The Acts, tells us what he did after he was taken up. So this phrase divided the two books. Volume 1 ends with the Ascension, and Volume 2 begins with the Ascension. Luke is moving on to begin the story of how Christ formed the body called the Church. "After he had given commandments" refers to the work he did during those 40 days between his resurrection and his Ascension. He gave them commandments on how they were to live, but two things he did were more important than all the others.

1. Acts 1:5 "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." This refers to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. There are seven baptisms outlined in the Bible, but the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the most important. Israel is to be scattered in 70 A.D. and the body of Christ, the Church, must step in and give the message of salvation to the world. They could only do this as they were baptized by the Holy Spirit.
2. Acts 1:8 "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This refers to the fact that every believer in the earth is in full-time Christian service. The work of the believer was to be done in and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is also true that the humanity of Christ was sustained by the Holy Spirit during his entire life.

THE SUSTAINING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DURING THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

1. This is prophesied in Isaiah.
Isaiah 11:2-3 "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears."
Isaiah 61:1-2 "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."
2. The Holy Spirit was given to Jesus without measure.
John 3:34 "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."
3. The Holy Spirit had a special relationship to the ministry of Jesus.
Matthew 3:16 "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."
4. The Holy Spirit was specifically related to the outreach of the ministry of Christ.
Matthew 12:18 "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles."
Luke 4:14-15 "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all."
5. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit ceased on the cross during the time Christ was bearing our sins - both the Holy Spirit and God the Father forsook him. When Jesus cried "My God (addressed to the Father), My God (addressed to the Holy Spirit), Why hast thou forsake me?", he actually died spiritually and bore our sins.
6. The Holy Spirit had a part in the resurrection of Christ.
Romans 8:11 "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."
1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."
7. The Holy Spirit filled the resurrected humanity of Christ as illustrated by this passage.

Acts 1:2

Through the Book of The Acts we are going to find the word "Holy Ghost". In the translation of the King James Version there were three groups working on the translation - a group at Oxford, another group at Cambridge, and a third group at Westminster. The scholars at Cambridge translated the Greek word "Pneuma" as Ghost. The scholars at Oxford knew better. They knew this word should have been translated spirit. There is no such thing as "Holy Ghost" and where you find this word in the New Testament it always refers to the Holy Spirit.

"The apostles whom he had chosen" - In Acts 1:24 of this chapter you read "Shew whither of the two thou hast chosen". At the end of this chapter there is the story of the election of Matthias to take the place of Judas as one of the Apostles. But his name falls out of the divine record and you never hear his name again. Jesus didn't choose Matthias and the group made a mistake by electing him.

Ephesians 4:11 says "He gave some apostles, and some prophets", etc. It is clear that Christ is the one who does the calling and the electing these for special service.

The twelfth Apostle to replace Judas was not Matthias, but Paul the Apostle, one born out of due time, who became God's great servant. God calls and chooses his own. They are chosen and perpetuated by him, and it is strictly the sovereign decision of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:8-10 "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

1 Timothy 1:11-14 "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me fruitful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

WHOM HE HATH CHOSEN

1. This verb "hath chosen" shows the divine prerogative in the selection of apostles and illustrates the great failure of the believers who take this task into their own hands.
2. The selection of the twelfth Apostle to replace Judas is the prerogative of divine sovereignty and is not left to the weakness of human skill.
3. In other words, the election of Matthias was a farce. They simply got the wrong man.
4. Paul, not Matthias, is the twelfth Apostle. We have already seen this in scripture from 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Timothy 1.
5. The verb "he chose" emphasizes the sovereignty of Christ in the selection of apostles.
6. An election, like the one here in Acts 1, cannot give Matthias the gift of an Apostle. Neither can people call a man into the ministry if God has not called him. Just because a man has a good personality, and can get along well with people, and has a Madison Avenue gift of salesmanship, all these things combined do not constitute a call to religious service. Be sure he has the call of God before you call.
7. All spiritual gifts are the sovereign decision of Jesus Christ and are given to man even at the time of his birth, and renewed at the time of his re-birth.
Ephesians 4:11-12 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."
1 Corinthians 12:11 "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."
You will notice that the second and third persons of the Trinity are involved in the call.
8. Jesus, in his departure from the earth, made provision for spiritual gifts including apostleship.
9. These gifts are specifically distributed by the Holy Spirit. "Man looketh on the outward appearance but God looketh on the heart." Christ knew the ability of Paul, and Jesus took the worst man and made him into the greatest person, and chose him. Christ knew that Paul would produce the greatest letters in the New Testament, for Paul had the keenest mind on doctrine in all the earth. Matthias was probably a very sweet and gentle person, but he was not the one Christ chose.

Acts 1:3 "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Jesus arose on Sunday. We know this because he arose on the day of the feast of the first fruits, and this was always on Sunday. The scripture says he arose on the first day of the week. The Church was started on Sunday. Let us look at the resurrection appearances up to the time of the ascension. There are eleven of them.

1. He appeared to Mary Magdalene first. She understood more doctrine than any other one person. She was at the tomb at the right time. Her sordid past was behind her, and she had become a devout believer. She learned the inner doctrine of the Christian faith and Christ appeared to her first. It took Simon Peter 25 years to learn the deep things of doctrine she already understood. Simon Peter was always talking and so seldom listening.
2. The second appearance was to the other women. Matthew 28:9-10.
3. He appeared to Simon Peter.
4. To two on the Road to Emmaus. Names of them not known.
5. To ten disciples. (Doubting Thomas not there.)
6. To the eleven disciples.
7. To the seven by the sea of Galilee.
8. To 500 on a mountain in Galilee.
9. To his step-brother, James.
1 Corinthians 15:7
James became a believer after the resurrection of Jesus.
John 7:3 tells us that the brothers of Jesus didn't believe in him, but in the list of believers in Acts 1:14, James is in the group. James became a leader in the Jerusalem Church. He was a practical man and wrote a practical letter we have in the New Testament. He was the strength of the Jerusalem Church but later on was the downfall of the church.
10. To the eleven on a mountain in Galilee.
11. Appeared at his Ascension.

Second Category of His Appearances - His Post-Ascension Appearances

1. To Stephen.
2. To Paul - on the Road to Damascus - in Arabia - in the Temple.
3. To John - on the Isle of Patmos.