

Acts: “The Spirit’s Fire in the Church”

Class 1: The Birth of the Church (Acts 1-2)

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A beginning, an end, and a continuation

Acts 1:1-6 Continuation

- Of Luke's story (cp Luke 1). Apologetic theme
- Of Jesus' ministry – through the Spirit, rather than in body (v1, 8)
- Covers ~30-60AD (see handout)

v6-8 Apostles confused – Jesus was their leader, then died, then was resurrected, and now leaves again!

- Is this the end, the beginning, or a continuation? What rules still apply, what's different?
- We have experienced similar emotions over the past five years, and have been asking ourselves when is it time to “move on”.
- v7 God's in control of timing, but my opinion: five years is enough – now is the time!
- Like the first Christians, we have the gift of a new start, and must build on sound foundations

v8 is a key verse: “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. This provides a structure for the rest of the book of Acts

- Jerusalem: chapters 1-7
- Judea and Samaria: chapters 8 - 11:18
- To the ends of the earth: chapter 11:19 – 28:

Rebirth of Peter...

Twofold Transformation of Peter

- 1:15-26 first transformation: Reflective, secure, wise – “the scripture had to be fulfilled”
 - Getting the foundations right: guided by scripture, prayerful preparation, leadership with the right qualifications, involvement of the wider group
- 2:1-36 second transformation: Bold, secure, outward focused
 - Calling people to God, not himself (v22, 36)
- In both cases, overflowing with scripture

He risked his life to proclaim boldly that the facts called for a personal response

- v22 you know this to be true
- v36 you are personally responsible for Jesus’ death –

What transformed Peter from the zealous but insecure figure in the gospels?

- Experienced his slavery to his sinful nature (Denial: Jn 18)
- Saw the cost of his sin: Jesus on the cross
- Witnessed the power of the resurrection (John 20-21)
- Experienced accountability and grace from Jesus (John 21:15ff)
- Called to service by Jesus (John 21)
- Prayed for preparation (and presumably immersed himself in Scripture) (Acts 1)
- Filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)

... and the (re)birth of God's movement in the NT church

v37-47

- The spirit convicted their hearts (John 16:8)
- They acted on their convictions
- God bound them together – tremendous spirit of unity

Why were they so unified? They were from more than 15 different countries!

- Awareness of being rescued together (cf [Galunggung Gliding Club](#))
- Gratitude
- Spent lots of time together
- Sense of common purpose

What are our great memories of this kind of spirit?

What stops us from experiencing this today?

Peter's transformation shows that through the Spirit we can respond in humility to the cross and the resurrection to experience the personal and community transformation we see in Acts 1-2

