

Acts 1:4-8 “Sent by the Spirit” February 11, 2024

### **Introduction:**

Two weeks ago, we started our series on the Book of Acts and focused on verse 3 discussing the “many convincing proofs” that Jesus was alive and the associated apologetic approaches to defending the faith. By way of quick introduction, I just want to say that my approach to that message was intentionally academic and meant to be a brief overview of the subject of Christian apologetics.

Let me further say that I don’t believe that most people will believe arguments even if they are proven wrong. In this sense, apologetics alone **won’t** work. The reason for this is because of what is called the Noetic effects of sin. As Bible believing Calvinists, we believe in the total depravity of mankind, meaning not that people are as bad as the possibly could be, but that every part of us is corrupt and bent towards sin. In other words, our desires and propensity for sin has also infected our ability to reason correctly. Paul, in Romans 1:21 says that “even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened.” The evidence for the truth of Christianity is undeniable but people don’t want to believe it. Jesus said that “even if someone rises from the dead” they won’t believe because they haven’t believed the law or the prophets (Luke 16). That said, we will get into answering the question as to how people will be converted today later in the message. So, if you’re saying, “if apologetics is not effective, why are we learning about it?”, hold on. We’ll get there. If you want to see a short article on the noetic effects of sin, see:

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/noetic-effects-sin>

### **I. Acts 1:8 is the **theme** and **outline****

Now, let’s dive into some of the main idea and structure of the book of Acts. 1:8 is the **theme** and **outline** of the book. We should all memorize it and know it by heart.

Theme: The title of the book is taken from the content and was originally called “The Acts of the Apostles” however, it is more accurately titled “What God, through His Son, and by the Spirit did immediately after the ascension of Jesus.”

We will come back to this Trinitarian formula in a minute. The mission of the people of God. The work of God through His **PEOPLE**.

Outline: I will lay out more of this as we go through the book but let us now look at the terms used. I would also suggest that you memorize this verse for being the theme and outline of the book.

1-7 **Jerusalem** (Characters Peter and John, culminating with the martyrdom of Stephen)

8-12 Judea & **Samaria** (Peter) Definite article before Judea but not Samaria

13-28 ends of the world (Paul & Gentiles)

## **II. Trinitarian formulation. See verses 1-8**

The Father is mentioned in verses **4** & 7.

The Son (Jesus) is mentioned in verses 1,2,3,4,6 & 7. Every vs except 5 & 8.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in verses 2, 5, & 8.

Why are we spending time on this now? Two reasons: First, because Luke is actually including this in the text as a literary emphasis. Second, because the doctrine of the Trinity is one of two primary beliefs that separate Christianity from every other religion. Our belief that there is one God, eternally existent in three separate but equal persons is not only what makes us **unique**, but it also undergirds everything we believe and practice. The other primary exclusionary belief of Christianity is the concept of divine grace.

While this is not a message primarily about the doctrine of the Trinity, it is necessary to point out the use of this formula in the text as an example of how the early church thought about **WHAT** God is in his essence.

Three persons, eternally existent, co-equal, one God.

You'll notice that is why in my conclusion at virtually every message, I close with a Trinitarian ending. Our prayer is to the Father, in the name of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Salvation itself is a trinitarian work that cannot be accurately understood without this doctrine. The Son gave his life to satisfy the wrath of God the Father against sin. The Spirit enables us to believe and repent and He then

applies this work to our account. The doctrine of the Trinity is necessary for **salvation**.

Additionally, and more pertinent to this text, this trinitarian work is one of sending or the **sending** nature of God. The Father sent the Son, the Son sent the Spirit, now the Spirit sends us (see also Jn 17:18). How does that sending happen? Let's read verses 5 & 8.

“Baptized with the Holy Spirit”... “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the end of the earth.”

### **III. The **Baptism** of the Holy Spirit**

The phrase “baptized with the Holy Spirit” in verse 5 and “when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (verse 8), are synonymous with each other.. They mean the **same** thing. These are not two separate things. Later, Paul will call this the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:11-14, 1Cor 3:16, 6:19, Eph 2:22).

**-He** not “it”. We will pick this topic up again in chapter 5 but for now, just note that the Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or feeling. He is the third person of the Triune God.

The phenomenon of Him coming upon someone is an occasion whereby a person is regenerated into the faith and is born again. God's Spirit comes on them and is given as a down payment or guarantee of their salvation. This is an irresistible and **permanent** thing.

It is not an extra ordinary, post salvation, experience as our Charismatic brothers claim. This phenomenon is not a “second act of grace.” It is the inauguration of the New Covenant as Hebrews tells us. It is something new and different from how things were in the past and, it is not to be ignored or downplayed.

There is continuity between the old and new testaments here. In the Old Testament the Spirit would “come on” people and empower them for a time for specific and powerful work. Think about the judges who were warriors and were

victorious over God's enemies, or the kings. However, the Spirit would leave them after the work was accomplished. This is why David prays in Psalm 55 "don't take your Holy Spirit from me." In continuity with the OT, we, likewise, we have been given His Spirit for a special mission.

I would like to focus for a minute on the word "power" in verse 8. Notice that he says that the result of the Holy Spirit coming on someone is power.

-transfer of power from a source to a need. **Power** is the ability to do something otherwise impossible. It is the energy, capacity, resources, strength or force. Greek word is "dunamis" which is the word we get our word dynamite from. However, this word does not mean explosive power as much as it just means general endowment with ability to do something.

The power is conveyed when the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Living God, - is about the testimony to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, end of the earth (Gentiles). Just like throughout the rest of the Bible, whether it be in the calling of Abraham, the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, His conquering of the promised land, to the judgement of Israel and the other nations, to the rising up of His Son at the appointed time, HE IS MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF. He is a warrior God who is conquering His enemies and calling to Himself a people from every nation and tribe and tongue. That is why the gospel will go from "Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." "The world will be full of the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Hab 2:14. This is a **worldwide Kingdom v3 & 6**, not just an Israelite kingdom.

Therefore, we must **Go**. We have been empowered from on high with the presence of the living God Himself. We go in the power of the Holy Spirit because He has not only commanded us but "the love of Christ compels us." (2Cor 5:14).

But, you say... Cody, you said that arguments won't work. They don't work... unless.... Unless the Spirit of the living God opens their hearts and minds to understand and believe the gospel. The Holy Ghost must deliver them from the power of darkness. He is the power. He, the Spirit of God, uses the word of God to transfer people from death to life. However, He uses us, in the power of the HS, to do His bidding.

We are agents of God, empowered by the Spirit to do His work which Jesus authorized us to do (Matthew 28:18-20).

### **Conclusion: Missionary Mandate**

Who are you going to with the gospel? Think in terms of concentric **circles**. Your children and grandchildren first. But, who else? Other family, friends, coworkers, neighbors? What are you doing intentionally to be a witness to them in the power of the Holy Spirit who resides in you?

### **Lyrics to Crawling by Lincoln Park:**

Crawling in my skin  
These wounds, they will not heal  
Fear is how I fall  
Confusing what is real  
There's something inside me that pulls beneath the surface  
Consuming, confusing  
This lack of self control I fear is never ending  
Controlling  
I can't seem  
To find myself again  
My walls are closing in  
(Without a sense of confidence, I'm convinced)  
(That there's just too much pressure to take)  
I've felt this way before  
So insecure

## **Acts 1:4-8 "Sent by the Spirit"**

**Intro and Review:** -Apologetics alone \_\_\_\_\_ work.  
-Noetic effects of \_\_\_\_\_.

### **I. Acts 1:8 is the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the book.**

-Theme: The work of God through His \_\_\_\_\_.  
-Outline: 1-7 \_\_\_\_\_  
8-12 Judea and \_\_\_\_\_.  
13-28 Ends of the earth.

### **II. \_\_\_\_\_ Formula (verses 1-8).**

-The Father (vs \_\_\_ and 7)  
-The Son (vs 1-4, 6 & 7)  
-The Spirit (vs 2, 5 & 8)  
-Notes on the Doctrine of the Trinity:

- The Trinity is what makes Christianity \_\_\_\_\_.
- The doctrine is about \_\_\_\_\_ God is.
- Three persons, coequal, coeternal, one God.
- Necessity of Trinity for \_\_\_\_\_.
- This text is about the \_\_\_\_\_ nature of God.

### **III. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.**

-The phrase "baptized with the Holy Spirit" in verse 5 and "when the Holy Spirit comes upon you" (verse 8), mean the \_\_\_\_\_ thing.  
(see Romans 8:11-14, 1Cor 3:16, 6:19, Eph 2:22)  
-"\_\_\_\_\_" not it.  
-Irresistible and \_\_\_\_\_.  
-Continuity and difference between the testaments (Ps 55:11)  
-"\_\_\_\_\_" the ability to do something otherwise impossible.  
-Hab 2:14, the worldwide \_\_\_\_\_ (v 3,6) and 2 Cor 5:14.  
-We must \_\_\_\_\_! (Matt 28:18-20)

### **Conclusion: Missionary \_\_\_\_\_.**

-Concentric \_\_\_\_\_.