



ACTS OF GOD

God's First churches

YES, NO & MAYBE:

1. Many of the people in my life think that church-going Christians are nuttier than a squirrel's breakfast.
2. I have convincing proof that Jesus is alive and well.
3. Jesus gave clear instructions on how to start new churches.
4. God would prefer for us to get busy building churches than to watch us waiting on him.
5. God would prefer for us to go out, than to congregate.

NOTES:

DIG DEEPER:

∅ When people say that they don't attend church because they can have a more spiritual experience out in nature, do you agree or disagree? Why?

§ READ Acts 1:1-11 (NIV)

1 In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

∅ The first thing Jesus did to build the church was to give many convincing proofs (tekmēriois) that he was alive. What does it say about God's character that he gave "many" proofs to the exact same people? Do we live with the expectation of **any** proofs or **many** proofs? Why?

† The first thing Jesus wanted to talk about with the Apostles was the Kingdom of God. Luke doesn't expound, so we can safely conclude that Jesus was just reminding them of what he had previously said. So, during his ministry, what did Jesus tell us about the Kingdom of God?



THE BIBLE LAB

NOTES:

DIG DEEPER...continued:

- † What do you think Jesus was trying to say by staying exactly 40 days after his resurrection?
 - Are there any other 40-day parallels in Scripture that might help us understand?

∅ One of the first bits of instruction that Jesus gives is for the Apostles to wait. Jesus was right there with them. He could have helped them with their first church board meeting, building committee, church planting committee, etc. But instead of helping them launch right then and there, he told them to wait. Why do you think he did that?

- † The Apostles, of course, still misunderstand the purpose of church and they ask if now is the moment when God will restore their broken religion.
 - Jesus responds by saying that God's timing is on "a need-to-know-basis," and they don't need to know! But there are some things they **MUST** know about his church model:
 - ‡ Holy Spirit will give you power (dunamin) - not political power they are seeking. Something different.

‡ God's goal is not to bless one place, but many ("*...Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*")

- ∅ These were the final words before Jesus ascended to heaven. What does it say about God's character that he would leave such ambiguous instructions?

MY PRAYER THIS WEEK:

1. What convincing proofs has Jesus given me during my lifetime?
2. How can I help to build the church more closely to God's character?
3. What new things do I see of God's infinite character now?