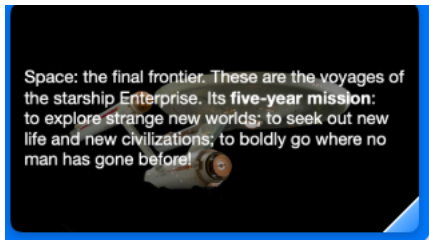


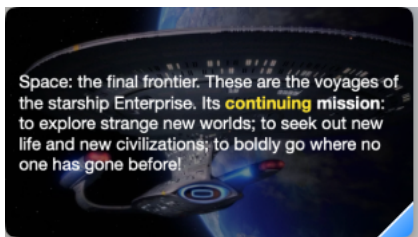
## The Mission Continues Acts 1:1-3 (January 5, 2025)



Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its **five-year mission**: to explore strange new worlds; to seek out new life and new civilizations; to boldly go where no man has gone before!

Now I know – for a fact – that I am not the only Trekkie nerd here who can recite verbatim those famous introductory words from the original *Star Trek*.

And then twenty-eight years later – *Star Trek: The Next Generation* aired. Its introductory words were slightly different but some of you are just nerdy enough to know what changed.



Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its **continuing mission** ...

Captain Kirk did a number of spectacular five-year missions – but there were still worlds to explore, life to find and civilisations to contact and there were still unknown areas of the universe.

And so, the baton was passed from Kirk to Picard.

In a sense – this is the message of the book of Acts.

Great things were done in the days of Jesus – but the mission was far from done.

In fact, it is not done until Jesus returns.

And so, Jesus gave the church a **continuing** mission.

Today we will look at the opening three verses of the book of Acts – the introduction – where Luke tells us:



**The mission of Jesus is not finished, it is urgent ... and it is ours.**

Jesus has commissioned us – His church – you and me – to take the gospel to every nation.

And there is an urgency. Eternal life and death literally hang on this mission.

In fact, it is so urgent that in this book whenever the church bogs down in its mission – Jesus acts to keep the mission moving.

The church age is not a time for complacency – how nice – Jesus has come. No – it is a time for action – Jesus has come – we have to get going.

As the book of Acts opens – Luke makes it clear to the church – the kingdom mission of Jesus is not done.

The glory of God demands more people be reached, more nations hear the gospel – more are to be gathered in as part of the multitude who will praise Jesus for eternity.

So, I have titled this whole series:



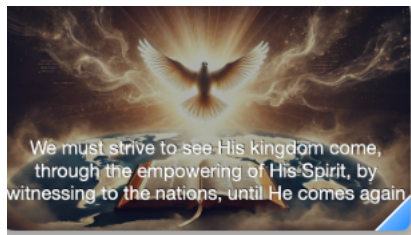
**Acts: The Mission Of The Church**

Israel had a mission. On many levels you would have to say they failed.

The church has a mission. Individual Christians and churches *will* fail – but this mission cannot and **cannot** and **will not** fail.

The only question is whether we will be obedient to be part of this mission or not.

Here is the way I want to summarise this whole book:



**We must strive to see His kingdom come, through the empowering of His Spirit, by witnessing to the nations, until He comes again.**

Now on every level – this is a huge task – it doesn't get any bigger.

In fact, it is so big – our temptation is to say – it is too big for little ol me.

I am an attender, giver, prayer – the actual witnessing – I will leave it for the professionals – pastors and missionaries.

No – Jesus reaches the nations one soul at a time and He uses nobodies like you and me to do it.

The question Acts asks is whether you intend to obey this command or not?

Right up front I want to say this. We often read Acts as a mere historical novel – the history of the early church.

It is that – but it is far more.

In this book – Jesus commands His church and deploys them.

But – as many point out – the book of Acts does not end with a period – a full stop. It ends with a comma. The mission of Acts continues today.

The gospel reaches Rome – the centre of the Empire – but there are more nations, more peoples that Jesus desires to be part of His kingdom.

It is why people speak of our day as Acts 29.

So, the mission remains for each member of GBC Holland Park – today!

It is a big mission – reach the nations.

It is given to weak and often disobedient sheep.

But our God is bigger than our failures.

Our mission **will not** fail.

In the weeks to come we will see Jesus give His instructions and then form His church.

This book is a page turner – action on every page.

Miracles, opposition, imprisonment, deceit, shipwrecks, death.

Through it all – Jesus empowers His church to do the impossible.

This mission seems to have everything stacked against it.

The church is small and without resources.

It is strongly opposed by powerful forces among the Jews and the Gentiles.

It doesn't want to go to the Gentiles.

It is made up of groups who don't play well together and divide.

It is sent to peoples who find the message foolish and weak.

It is given to men and women who are slack and don't always obey.

It is subject to sin and division.

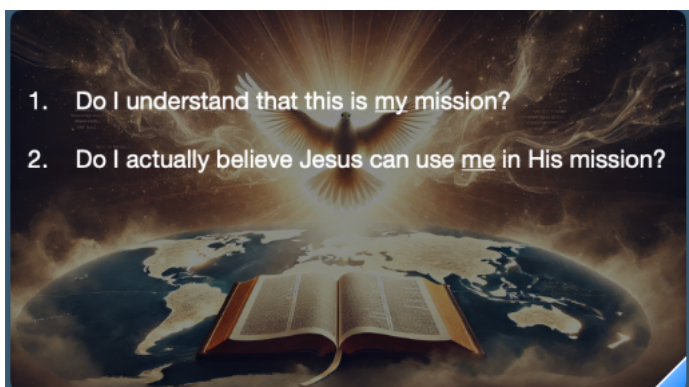
In other words, we will read about a church that is **pretty similar to us**.

But, in the name of the King – the gospel **does** go forth in power to the nations.

Against every odd – the church turns the world upside down.

And the book ends with the mission still continuing.

So, as we read Acts – you need to keep asking yourself two questions:



### 1. Do I understand that this is my mission?

This is not just the church's mission – or something for the Elders and evangelists and missionaries to do – it is **my** mission.

If you are a Christian – this is **your** mission.

Spurgeon said it this way:

Every Christian is a missionary or an imposter.

He does **not** mean every Christian is called to go as an international cross-cultural missionary.

He **does** mean you are called to be a witness to your neighbour and colleague.

To find a way to reach the other cultures here in Brisbane.

And even if you are one who goes – to pray for and give to international missions.

This book asks – are you longing to see one more person saved, one more church planted, one more missionary sent?

Every Christian is a missionary **or** an imposter.

Which are you?

## **2. Do I actually believe Jesus can use me in His mission?**

We believe he used Paul and Luther and Carey.

We believe He uses church planters like Andy.

But we think – I am a nobody – I can't do much.

I can't answer all their questions.

I have a deep fear of man.

Well – congratulations because nobodies are just who Jesus uses.

If you believe the Spirit is within you – He will empower you to be part of the Great Commission.

Maybe it is years since you led someone to faith – maybe you never have.

Fine – but do you believe God **can** use you to that?

Do you trust God to empower you to invite one neighbour to dinner where you find a way to talk about how Jesus transformed your life – how He means the world to you?

Do you believe God may use your witness to open one set of eyes to the truth?

If you just read Acts like a historical novel – rather than a command – then you don't understand the mission of Jesus.

If you don't really believe the same God who took 120 weak men and women and changed the world can use **you** to advance His kingdom – then you don't understand the power of Jesus.

Acts is as relevant today and powerful today as the day Luke put down His quill.

How powerful?



We will see the gospel – the message of salvation through Jesus – start in one small group in **one room** – then spread into a city **Jerusalem** – then into a province **Judea** – then into foreign territory **Samaria** – and finally to the **Ends of the earth** – *Asia, Europe and Rome*.



The gospel goes forth in power and turns an Empire upside down.

In 30 years – the period since we started our church – it moves from a nothing outpost to reach the heart of the most powerful nation on earth.



It is also structured around two Apostles. It initially centres around **Peter** and then around **Paul**.

However, what is also clear is that the power and the direction come from **Jesus**.



At times we will see the mission stalling, so it is Jesus who acts through a series of **God-ordained sovereign actions**. He gives visions and instructions that lead the church to take the next step.

For example – without Pentecost – the church would stay a few frightened people huddled in a room.

Without Jesus sending persecution to drive believers out of Jerusalem – the gospel would stay in that city.

Throughout this book we keep being told that the Spirit moves or Jesus Acts.

Every progress the church makes is a Jesus thing.

It is **His** gospel, **His** Spirit, **His** Power, **His** Plan, **His** Church.

Without Him – this mission stalls and fails.

What is clear in this book is that the One who designed the mission and brings it to pass – is not Peter or Paul – or Luther or Calvin – or you or me. It is Jesus.

Jesus is also clear – our mission is not an easy one.

When you read Acts – you find the church making great sacrifices for the mission.

You see the saints giving their wealth, being imprisoned, beaten, left for dead and dying.

You read Acts and any sane person would say – I am not signing up for this. Why give my life, my money to this cause only to face persecution, rejection and possible death?

Well, I remind you of two facts.

*First* – you **cannot** say no to King Jesus. This is not an optional mission. You cannot have Him as Saviour but not Lord. So, the only response to His command is – yes Lord.

*Second* – we do **not** face this task alone. We have His Spirit and His church. Persecution, death, apathy, sin – nothing cannot stop us.



The book of Acts opens with the **first God-ordained sovereign move**. It is where **Jesus Acts To Begin His Church**.

The first thing we will see is that we are told:



### 1:1-3 The Mission Continues

These first three verses function as an introduction to the book of Acts and they tell us why this book was written.

Please look with me at Acts 1:1:

I wrote the **first** narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus **began** to do and teach.

I wrote the first narrative.

Who is this writing this book? And what is this first narrative?

Church history and many literary proofs tell us that this is Luke.

I trust you know Luke wrote more of the New Testament than anyone else. He contributed more verses than Paul or John.

Luke is the one Paul calls the believed physician. When Paul was in Rome nearing death – only Luke was with him.

He was a well-educated doctor.

Most likely he was a Gentile converted when Paul was in Troas.

Crucially, Luke is not just a historian – he actually participated in many of these events.

In Acts 16:8–10 there is a change from third person – **they** to first person – **we, us**.

It is here that Luke joins the team. He is not just telling us about what the Spirit and the Word did in others – he tells us what it did in him and through him.

Luke most likely wrote this book around 62-64 AD at the end of Paul's ministry.

He writes to Theophilus – a name which means *loved by God* or *lover of God*.

In Luke 1:3 he calls him – most honourable Theophilus. This is how you address a man of significant rank. In Acts it is used to address governors.

It seems likely that Luke or maybe the whole missionary party had encountered Theophilus.

He showed great interest in Christ and the gospel – but it seems he may have had some questions.

As a man of rank – he had a lot to lose.

How do I know the events of Jesus' life actually occurred?

How can I trust these enough to give my life to?

Since Jesus is gone – can He still save today?

So, Luke wrote his Gospel for Theophilus but also for those like him who need to know that they can trust the truths about Jesus that save.

**First:**



**1:1-2 Luke's Gospel gives us a record of the acts and words of Jesus that save.**

Acts 1:1–2:

I wrote the **first narrative**, Theophilus, about all that Jesus **began** to do and teach until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

The Gospel of Luke – is what he means when he says – my first narrative.

It is an account of the works and words of Jesus – up until His ascension.

Basically, it is a record of the things Jesus did that actually save us.

As the church grew and the news of Jesus spread – you had people who had never met Jesus who were taking the gospel to the nations.

How could those they shared with know Jesus actually lived – or that He rose from the dead?

Imagine you are Theophilus – living in a major Roman city – you are man of some importance.

Then some guys – Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke turn up talking about a man who was also the one true God who came to this world. Was killed by the Romans – but rose again.

They say – believe that and you will escape the coming judgment.

They were earnest and obviously believed it.

Turns out – none of them actually saw this Jesus when He lived.

Paul claims he later saw the risen Jesus – but He did not meet Him during His ministry.

You ask Luke – you are a doctor – you seem a fairly intelligent person – why do you believe this?

Luke says – I trust the word of the Apostles and the Spirit of God testified to me that this is true. You can trust it.

It seems this was not enough for Theophilus. So, sometime later Luke got to work.

He sought out as many firsthand eyewitnesses as he could.

He tested their accounts and wrote out a record, a narrative – the Gospel of Luke.

Did this convince Theophilus? We don't know.

I would hope someone named *loved by God* – would have come to true faith.

I would hope Theophilus would realise that like any event where you are not physically present – you have to trust the account of those who were there.

We have good reason to do so.

The Gospels are attested by more witnesses and evidence than any event in ancient history.

And – we know that the Spirit also testifies that this is true.

Today, there is no one who saw Jesus in the flesh that you can go to and speak with.

So, how can you **know** these are not just myths and stories to gather followers? How do you stake your life on it?

You need to read the accounts and decide if you can trust those eyewitnesses.

If you are not a Christian – I urge you read Luke – examine his claims yourself.

Find out how the life and death and rising from the dead of Jesus is the one hope any of have.

Luke was a very detailed investigator. He went and spoke to eyewitnesses and carefully investigated the life of Jesus and wrote it down – for Theophilus – for us – and for those we share with.

Listen to Luke 1:1–4:

Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us. So it also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, **so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.**

I went and spoke to the original eyewitnesses. I investigated everything. Why?

**So that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.**

These records are not just for Theophilus – they are for us – both to believe and to use in sharing with others.

Imagine you live in 50 AD and Phillip comes walking up the road and shares the gospel.

You are intrigued – but is it true?

You could put on your sandals and march for months – and you could go to Jerusalem and Nazareth and find people still living who actually saw Jesus and interview them.

Now, almost no one would do that.

You either trust the accounts of the eyewitnesses – – or not.

Nothing has changed – we come to faith today by trusting the eyewitness accounts of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

These are the truths that save. In 1 Corinthians 15:3–4:

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

How can we know they are true?

1 John 1:1–3:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Eyewitnesses who saw, heard, touched Jesus – testified to the truth – so we can **know** these events occurred and we can believe them and receive eternal life.

But there is one other witness.

In John's Gospel and in 1 Corinthians we are told that the Holy Spirit **also** testifies to the truth of who Jesus is and what He did.

The Spirit tells us – this is truth.

Today, it is exactly the same. You can sit with someone and open Luke or another Gospel and work through it.

You can assure them that these accounts were written by those who saw Jesus or spoke firsthand to those who saw Jesus.

It is important to remember that there were many still alive when the Gospels circulated who saw or heard Jesus.

There is no other historical book of the time that had this number of witnesses when it was circulated.

Imagine if someone wrote a tell all book about Bill Clinton and the White House and it is filled with so many stories that defy belief.

If it contained falsehoods – there are literally tens of thousands alive who could say – this is not true.

When the gospels and Acts were written – tens of thousands still lived who had seen these events.

You could not get away with writing this unless it was true.

**And** God sends His Spirit to open our eyes and testify – this is truth.

**But** crucially, the work of Jesus did **not** end with His ascension.

Imagine there is a deadly viral outbreak.

Let's call it NOVA 25.

Our brilliant immunologists at the University of Queensland develop a vaccine.

Is the job of saving the world now done?

No – they have to get the cure out to the world.

That is the message of Acts.



### **1:3 Acts gives us our mission to build the kingdom by taking that testimony to the nations.**

This life-saving gospel has to get out to the world.

Acts 1:3:

After he had suffered, he also presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking about **the kingdom of God**.

The Disciples weren't thinking there was still kingdom work to do.

In their mind – the coming of Messiah meant the end of this world and the arrival of Messiah's kingdom on earth.

But that was **never** the plan.

Listen to the last words of Jesus recorded in Luke. Luke 24:46–49:

He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins **will be** proclaimed in his name **to all the nations**, beginning at Jerusalem. **You are witnesses** of these things. And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are **empowered** from on high."

It is important to understand that these words would have hit the Disciples like a sledgehammer.

Remember, as the time of Jesus' death grew closer – these guys began arguing more and more about who would be great in the kingdom.

They are certain there is an imminent political, national kingdom about to be set up by Jesus – and they want a prime position in it.

They had no care for the nations.

They thought – I have done the yards following Jesus around – now it was time to put my feet up and enjoy kingdom spoils.

But Jesus says – it **is** kingdom time – but it is **not** a restored Jewish kingdom.

It is not enjoy the spoils time – it is build My kingdom time.

You are to build My spiritual kingdom time by taking the gospel to the **nations**.

One of the shows Dena and I have watched from time to time is *The Amazing Race*.

One of the twists that the racers find most crushing is when they slog it out and hit the mat exhausted – thinking they had earned rest at the pitstop – only to hear – this is not a pitstop – the race continues.

The is the Disciples.

It isn't sit on thrones time – it is suffer for the kingdom time.

It isn't victory time – it is grow the kingdom by blood time.

Go into the world. Preach repentance and forgiveness. Be His **witnesses**.

And that includes witnessing to Gentiles – something they really did not want to do.

Notice that Jesus also drops this bombshell – wait and you will be empowered from on high.

If you were reading Luke's Gospel – you are meant to say – hey you can't end the book here – what did God promise – what is this power?

How many TV shows end with a cliffhanger?

I have something crucial to tell you.

You won't believe what is about to happen.

Well, we don't have to wait for season 2 – because Acts has been written.

Acts 1:1-11 is in many ways a recap of the end of Luke – Previously on the Gospel of Luke. It picks up where Luke ended.

**But**, there is something we are meant to note. Luke says, in my Gospel I wrote about all that Jesus **began** to do and teach until the day he was taken up.

If I asked you tell me about the works of Jesus – you would probably talk about His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension.

These are the works of Jesus that provide salvation for us.

But, Jesus didn't just come to provide a way of salvation – He also came to actually save the people given to Him by the Father – the ones who will glorify the Father eternally.

This word indicates that the work of Jesus is **not** finished.

The works that provide salvation are finished – but the work of saving lost sheep is **not** finished.

Acts describes the **continuing** ministry – the **continuing** works of Jesus.

But now He does those works not in a body of flesh – but through a different body – the church.

We call this book Acts – but Luke didn't give this book a title.

In the late second century Irenaeus called it – **The Book Of The Acts Of The Apostles**.

This title stuck.

But it is not really about the Apostles – only Peter and Paul really feature.

So, some have called it – The Book Of The Acts Of The *Holy Spirit* – or – The Book Of The Acts Of The *Church*.

But, really it is a book about what Jesus did. If you want to call it Acts – call it – The Book Of The Acts Of *King Jesus*.

### **What acts? Building His kingdom acts.**

After Jesus rose from the dead – He appeared to differing groups on at least ten occasions.

In Acts – the resurrection becomes proof that Jesus is King.

If you are the risen King – what do you do? - - - **You build Your kingdom.**

Remember, that for three years Jesus had taught them about the kingdom. He gave them parables of the Kingdom.

In Luke 17:21 He said:

The kingdom of God is not coming with something observable; ... For you see, the kingdom of God is in your midst.

My kingdom is not palaces and armies – it is a spiritual kingdom inside believers.

Jesus told Pilate – My kingdom is not of this world.

But, these guys couldn't get their heads around this. They still thought earthly kingdom. They still thought thrones and power.

Notice in verse 3 that for *40 days* the risen Jesus spoke to His Disciples.

You are Jesus – You have risen from the dead – You know after 40 days – You will be gone.

What do You want to say to these guys?

**Build My Kingdom – to glorify My Father.**

He knew these guys still had the wrong idea of kingdom.

Did the forty days fix this?

No!

Next week we will see – their one final question is – are you restoring the kingdom to Israel now?

**Restoring** – like David's kingdom only greater.

After three years and then another forty days of teaching on the kingdom – they still don't get it.

Jesus has to be shaking His head as He ascends.

It takes this entire book for them to get it. I trust we get it much faster.

Jesus' is a spiritual kingdom – it is a kingdom inside us – it is the church.

**And** – crucially – it is for Jews **and** Gentiles.

And it doesn't come in one rush of power – it grows slowly like a mustard seed.

This kingdom grows soul by soul as each person trusts the gospel of Christ.

Acts 8:12:

But when they believed Philip, as he proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

And this kingdom is **not** something powerful in human terms.

In Acts 14:22 Paul says:

“It is necessary to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”

In Acts the kingdom is not political – they don’t try and take over nations – they build churches in nations.

Kingdom is a theme that runs right through this book. It starts here in Acts 1 verse 3 and continues until the very last words of this book – Acts 28:31:

[Paul was] proclaiming **the kingdom of God** and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

This is the purpose of our mission – **To see His kingdom come.**

We will see an ever-growing multitude from every tribe and tongue who come to know Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

It comes slowly – one conversion at a time, one church plant at a time, one nation reached at a time – but it comes.

Every time you share the gospel – God may open blind eyes. And when they open – the kingdom spreads.

Every church we plant – hurts and costs – but the kingdom spreads.

Every missionary we send or support – takes the gospel to the nations – and the kingdom spreads.

So why do we need both the Gospel of Luke **and** Acts today?

If the only ones who could witness about Jesus were those who saw Him – then the last witness would die around the end of the first century.

But Jesus designed it such that those who did not see, hear, touch Him – those like Luke or you and me – could come to faith based on the testimony of those eyewitnesses.

The Bible makes it clear – there were **primary** witnesses – those who saw Jesus in the flesh.

And **secondary** witnesses – those who trust those primary witnesses – and who have the testimony of the Spirit.

Luke wrote out the testimony of the **primary** witnesses – that is the Gospel of Luke.

But that message has to get out there.

Then He passed on the command to the church to be **secondary** witnesses – take the gospel to the nations – that is Acts.

The Spirit takes this witness and makes it live – and it saves souls.

It has been 2000 years – but Jesus still saves.

Every month or so we have testimonies – and baptisms.

Jesus still saves today. He still transforms lives.

We don't just say – Jesus saved the Apostles like Peter and John. We get to say – Jesus saved **me**.

We get to say with Paul in Colossians 1:13–14:

The Father rescued **me** from the domain of darkness and transferred **me** into the kingdom of the Son he loves. In him **I** have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

As I stand here, the most important thing about me is that I am a citizen of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is building a kingdom one soul at a time.

And His plan is to use you and me to do it.

Jesus could have commanded a legion of angels to mass produced copies of Luke's Gospel and have the Royal Roman Post deliver a copy to everyone in the Empire.

And some would have been saved.

There are many who will be in the kingdom because a Gideon gave them a Bible.

But that was **never** the primary plan.

The primary plan is for **you** to be a **witness**.

For you to take the gospel to the nations and you don't just hand them a copy of Luke's Gospel – you proclaim it – and you testify to its truth and how it changed you.

Acts records this command of Jesus and how His church used this plan to grow His kingdom – one soul at a time.

If you gave this plan to a business consultant, they would wet themselves laughing.

This task is not just hard – humanly speaking it is impossible.

And the church does not have the resources or people to do it.

In Acts 1:12-14 we find almost the entire resources of the first church.

120 people or so. Fishermen, tax collectors, some relatives of Jesus – a few women.

No one of influence among them.

Their leader – Jesus – is dead because hey this group had been fooled by one of their own number who betrayed Him to death.

No church building – they had to meet in homes or public places.

We will see this group have fears and doubts.

They will mess up badly – they won't want Samaritans let alone Gentiles in the church.

There will be divisions along ethnic lines.

There will be false converts, cowards, greedy, liars.

But Jesus knows all of this, and He knows they will turn the world upside down.

How? By the power of the risen Christ.

The Disciples struggled to get it. We should not.

Here is something else you need to know about this kingdom – Jesus designed it such that – **we – you and I – will do greater kingdom works** than Jesus did.

In John 14:12 Jesus says this:

Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also **do the works** that I do. And he will do **even greater works** than these, **because I am going to the Father.**

Hear that? You will do **greater** works than Jesus.

Why? – **because** He is going to the Father which in John means He sends the Spirit.

What are these works?

Some have said – they are miracles like tongues and healing.

They are not.

I am sorry but because Jesus fed 5,000 does not mean you can head to Suncorp Stadium with your lunchbox and feed 50,000 – saying I feed you in the name of Jesus.

Because Jesus healed a blind man – does not mean you can head to PA hospital and empty the place.

Tell me – which Apostle did miracles greater than Jesus? None.

Let alone what passes for miracles today.

John tells us what the works of Jesus are. In John 17 Jesus says His work is to save every soul given to Him by the Father.

When Jesus died on the cross – He said – it is finished.

When Jesus rose from the dead – death was defeated.

So, is every person given to Jesus saved? No.

But it is so certain that Jesus can say – **I completed the work.**

He completes the work through us.

So let me put this together – Jesus has done the works necessary for salvation – but now comes the work of kingdom building. But it will be His church empowered by His Spirit that will do these works.

And we will do **greater works.**

The church will see far more saved than in the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus' earthly ministry was largely limited to Galilee and Judea. And only a few believed.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, His followers numbered in the hundreds and were mainly centred in one city in one insignificant country.

All in all, a fairly uninspiring crowd to glorify the Lamb for all eternity.

But there must be more. Psalm 67:3–4 says:

Let the peoples praise you ... Let the nations rejoice and shout for joy.

So, the plan from eternity past was always for a number beyond counting to be saved out of the whole earth – from every tribe and language and people and nation.

And that work is ours.

120 to myriads of myriads – that is the greater works.

At Pentecost 3000 believed.

By the end of Acts, the gospel had made its way to Rome.

And today, the church continues to extend His ministry to the uttermost parts of the earth.

It is **not** that we do greater miracles than Jesus.

It **is** that Jesus uses us to spread the gospel in a greater way than in His earthly ministry.

2000 years later, multitudes have come to faith.

Far more will come to faith this very day than in the entire earthly ministry of Jesus.

And this is not because we are so gifted, so faithful, so dedicated.

It is because Jesus went to the Father and sent His Spirit.

Brothers and sisters. When the last page of history is written – all that matters is who bowed the knee and belongs to Jesus.

You have the opportunity to witness which may lead to a soul may being in glory. And that soul may witness to others and so on.

You have the opportunity to pray and give and go to the nations.

You can be a part of these greater works of Jesus.

But, you do not want to be the one who buried their talents.

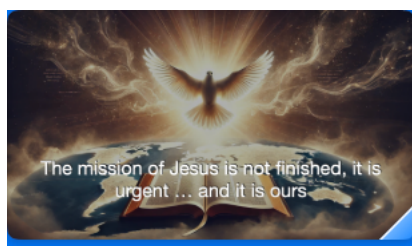
You do not want to get to heaven having wasted your life and not obeyed your King.

You do not want to turn up and say – look my psychologist said I fear man – so I was exempt.

You do not want to turn up and say – you don't know how busy my life was and the obstacles I faced.

You want to get to heaven and see the fruit of your ministry branching for generations praising the Lamb.

So:



## **The mission of Jesus is:**

### **Not finished**

Today, the gospel has reached every continent and every significant nation.

But clearly the mission is not finished – I know this for certain because Jesus hasn't come back.

There are people groups, language groups, sub-cultures without the gospel and without the gospel or churches.

And clearly, Jesus wants more churches and worshippers even in nations that have a gospel witness.

I don't believe we can even say Australia or Brisbane is reached.

## **The mission of Jesus is:**

### **Urgent**

The saints in heaven are crying – how long O Lord?

For 2000 years almost the only people saved were from one tiny nation – Israel.

Even today – 2000 years after the church was formed at Pentecost – it is still the minority of our planet who worship Jesus – and many – far too many – have never even heard of Jesus.

And without the beautiful feet taking the gospel to them – they will die – forever.

## **The mission of Jesus is:**

### **Is ours**

It is yours – it is mine.

You may never go to Mauritius or Mali – but you have your Jerusalem and Judea right here.

Neighbours, co-workers, friends, relatives.

You have people groups from Mauritius and Mali – and so many nations right here in Brisbane.

And you need to pray for and give to missions.

And who knows maybe you will be one who take those beautiful feet to a far-flung nation like Mali.

Members, you need to hold the feet of the Elders to the task of training men and women for mission and evangelism and praying, training, giving and sending them to the nations.


Mission drift kills churches – I pray we will not drift.

Understand all of this and you understand Acts.


Understand this and I wouldn't need to preach the rest of the book – but it is a ripping story – so we will.

This book is such an encouragement to the truth that Jesus saves today. Jesus uses nobodies to grow His kingdom. Jesus will triumph.

This book does not end with a period – a full stop – it ends with a comma – because the task is now ours.



Nations: the final frontier. This is the mandate of the local church Holland Park. Its continuing mission: to reach to strange new peoples; to seek out new converts and new tribes; to boldly witness where no one has gone before.



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Now comes the exciting part – we have to do it.

## **The Mission Continues**

### **Acts 1:1-3 (January 5, 2025)**

**Main Point:** The mission of Jesus is not finished, it is urgent ... and it is ours.

#### **General Questions:**

1. Who wrote Acts? Why did he write this book?
2. Why was Luke written?
3. What is the relationship between Luke and Acts?
4. What is the difference between reading it as a historical novel and a mission for today?
5. How can someone today know that the Gospels testify to true events?
6. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in witnessing?
7. Why do we say that the mission **continues**?
8. What is the kingdom in this age? How does this kingdom grow?
9. How is Acts an encouragement to evangelism?
10. What does Jesus mean we do greater works? John 14:12

#### **Application Questions:**

1. Do I understand that this is my mission?
2. Do I actually believe Jesus can use me in His mission?
3. What are your hindrances to evangelism?
4. How can the empowering of the Spirit help you to overcome these?
5. Who can you share the gospel with?

**What convicted me in the message?**

**What moved me in the message?**

**What will I do in light of the message?**