



ORIGINS (Part 1) - “It’s A Bear”

Acts 1:1-8 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.”

Daniel 7:13-14 NIV

13 In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Key Points

- In our efforts to convince or persuade, we use the truth as a tool in our belt, rather than the foundation upon which we walk.
- The resurrection isn’t a culmination but a beginning - the beginning of the New Creation.
- The Bible is a collection of writings that reveal God’s love, pursuit, and promise of redemption. God-breathed and sovereignly preserved, the Bible reveals to us who God is and what He has to say, ultimately pointing us to Jesus Christ as our clearest revelation of God.
- We are His temple, and His Spirit dwells in us. We are designed to live filled with His life, and He uses our lives to fill everything in every way.
- We are a part of a cloud of witnesses—bringing our witness to bear on the world.
- We are witnesses of what repentance and forgiveness do.
- Bearing witness is not about convincing or proving. To bear witness is to allow that which we are giving witness to be the primary thing.

READ

Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages on Page 1. Then, take a moment to consider what you just read:

- What do you think Luke means by describing his former account (referring to the Gospel of Luke) as a record of "all that Jesus began to do and teach" in Acts 1:1? How does this set the stage for the events that follow in Acts?
- In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus tells his disciples to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. Why do you think Jesus instructed them to wait in Jerusalem rather than immediately beginning their mission?
- Reflect on the significance of Jesus' words in Acts 1:8. How does this verse shape our understanding of the mission of the early church and our own mission as believers?
- Daniel 7:14 speaks of an everlasting kingdom that will never be destroyed. How does this promise bring hope and assurance to believers? In what ways does this truth influence our understanding of God's plan for redemption and restoration, both in the present age and the age to come?

REFLECT

- Reflect on the statement, "The resurrection isn't a culmination but a beginning - the beginning of the New Creation." How does this perspective shift our understanding of the significance of Christ's resurrection?
- What does it mean to be a part of a cloud of witnesses, and how does this concept influence our role and responsibility as believers in the world?

RESPOND

- Share instances from your life where you have witnessed the transformative power of repentance and forgiveness.
- Discuss the idea that bearing witness is not about convincing or proving, but rather allowing the truth to be the primary focus. How can we cultivate a mindset of bearing witness in our daily lives? How can we ensure that we are living filled with God's life, allowing Him to use our lives to fill everything in every way?

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.