

# O Theophilus

## A Communion Message

Acts 1:1-5



### Rock Hill Baptist Church

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**FOCAL TEXT** (Acts 1:1-5 KJV) The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, {2} Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: {3} To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: {4} And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. {5} For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

The wonderful Book of Acts begins with ...

**The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus**

the name **Theophilus**. The blessed physician Luke wrote both this Book, as well as that which he refers to as

**the former treatise**

that Book we call **Luke**, also to **Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4 KJV)**. So who was Theophilus? We're not really sure, though we do know that the name Theophilus means "friend of God". That *personalizes* the Book for us all.

The Bible says that Christians are a **peculiar people** who are not only the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, but are a people who are to strive to *become* the friends of God. Friends gather around the Communion Table, sharing a memorial of what Jesus Christ did for us. We gather around the Table in one accord, at one place - I pray - for this is what Jesus taught us to do. Friends of God realize that *Christ is the Rock the Church is built on*, but also realize that each person, saved by Grace, is a *necessary component* in the Church that Christ loves. We are called **lively stones from the Living Stone**:

**1 Peter 2.4-5 To whom coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.**

Whoever he was, no matter who he was, the name

1. So who was Theophilus? We're not really sure, though we do know that the name Theophilus means "\_\_\_\_\_".

2. Friends of God realize that *Christ is the Rock the Church is built on*, but also realize that each person, saved by Grace, is a *necessary component* in the Church that Christ loves. We are called \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(1 Peter 2:4-5)

*Theophilos* personalizes the Book of Acts for us. I believe you came to this service today so you could learn more about God. You want to know God as a Friend. You are saved by faith, if you know Jesus Christ as your Savior ... now the Book of Acts, this Precious Word, will help us draw closer to God - to become friends of God.

**1. To Be A Friend of God You Must Believe IN God**

The beginning of friendship with God is *believing* that He is faithful and true, believing that He has done as He said He would do. Our focal text reads:

**FOCAL TEXT** (Acts 1:1-3 KJV) The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, {2} Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: {3} To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion<sup>1</sup> by many infallible proofs<sup>2</sup>, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

<sup>1</sup> Aorist Active Infinitive pascho {pronounced pas'-kho}, suffering, to suffer sadly, be in a bad plight  
<sup>2</sup> polus {pronounced pol-oos'} + tekmerion {pronounced tek-may'-ree-on} = through many things that were *common knowledge*, indisputable proofs, certain evidences

The sheer *magnitude* of what our Friend Jesus did for us is summed up in the word **pascho**. **Though we translate the word as *passion*, the Greek **pascho**, means *terrible suffering, shocking torment, agonizing torture*.** What Jesus went through on the Cross for you and I was unimaginably terrible! The Bible says:

**(Isaiah 50:6 KJV) I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.**

**His beard was literally torn off of His precious face.** Consider the indignities that our Savior bore for us. The murderer *Barabbas* was released, and Jesus died in his place. Stripped naked of His clothes, He was inhumanly beaten. A crown of thorns - these thorns nearly one inch long each - was forced down over His skull. He was mocked, spit on, nailed to a tree, given vinegar to drink when He asked for water. His companions were thieves, one on each side. Roman executioners, men who had seen and sadistically carried out many such killings, came around at the end of the day to *break the legs* of the victims. They did this to hasten their deaths. Did Jesus merely *swoon* and did He revive later in the tomb? No, dear Beloved of God, no! The guards found Jesus dead, and determined His death with the final indignity of *piercing His side with a spear*:

**(John 19:34 KJV) But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.**

When the Roman executioners saw the blood and water run out of His wound, the separation of blood cells from the body's serum, they knew He was dead. The **pascho** of Christ was horrible, but here is it's beauty:

**Jesus laid His life down for you and for me. He voluntarily went to the Cross for your sins and for mine.** Jesus said:

**(John 10:17-18 KJV) ... I lay down my life, that I might take it again. {18} No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. ...**

The Father left the choice in His hands, to die or not to die for us. Jesus had the power to die for us, or He had the power to refuse the shame of the Cross. It was His choice. He chose to lay down His life for all who want to be His friends:

**(John 15:13-15 KJV) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. {14} Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. {15} Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.**

That word **pascho** emphasizes the suffering, but also **the**  
6

**surrender** of Christ for us. The beatings, inhuman beatings, were seen by **many witnesses** in the Gospels. His death was *witnessed, and proved, by many witnesses*. But His *resurrection* was proved when He Himself rose from the grave, and was seen by many witnesses over a period of **forty days**.

**FOCAL TEXT** (Acts 1:3 KJV) To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

(1 Corinthians 15:6 KJV) ... he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

Jesus Christ laid down His life for all who will come to

3. Though we translate the word as *passion*, the Greek **pascho**, means \_\_\_\_\_

(Isaiah 50:6; John 19:34)

4. Jesus *laid His life down for you and for me*. He \_\_\_\_\_ went to the Cross for your sins and for mine. (John 10:17-18)

salvation through Him. He laid down His life for His friends, and we can believe in Him, believe that our Friend has never changed. Take that first step and believe in Him, and believe Him to be a Friend closer to you than any brother, any parent, any other friend. Be a

Theophilus, a Friend of God. We sing:

**Blessed be the tie that binds, Our hearts in Christian love; The fellowship of kindred minds, Is like that to that above.**

## **2. Friends of God Work TOGETHER FOR God**

**FOCAL TEXT** (Acts 1:4 KJV) And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

Jesus was getting ready to leave His Church, to ascend to Heaven to the right hand of God the Father. So the Lord told His Church to go to Jerusalem and *wait* (this was about 7 days prior to the Day of Pentecost). As the Day of Pentecost approaches, however, we see about 120 believers gathered together in one accord and in one place. That's what we're told in verse 15:

**(Acts 1:15 KJV) the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty...**

Wait a minute! Didn't we read early that *above five hundred people* saw and heard the resurrected Savior?

**(1 Corinthians 15:6 KJV) ... He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ...**

Where were the other **380 people**? **If above 500 saw Jesus, and only 120 people** are in the Upper Room, **there are 380 people unaccounted for.** Why were around 75% of the believers - all brothers in Christ according to Paul - NOT doing what **Jesus** said to do? If they had been doing what He said, I am certain that five hundred people would have been gathered in that place.

Think on this, Beloved. God moves in *His way and in His own time*. When the believers were told to go to Jerusalem and wait for the Promise, the Spirit of God, perhaps some believers had *other obligations* they felt more pressing. These Upper Room believers had to wait for about *seven days* until God came. You can imagine the first day passing, and some leaving. Others began to think about things they could be doing, rather than waiting on God. Others began to think of places where they could be more comfortable, a place they'd rather be. Being in that Upper Room was outside their comfort zone. You know what I mean when I mean *the comfort zone*. There is a place where we are comfortable, where we are at ease. Many of us have places we are accustomed to being in, even in the Church. We like to sit in familiar places, places we are *used to*. Yet this is not what the believer is called to. **Friends of God will follow God**, even if we must step outside of our comfort zones.

Day by day a few more left, discouraged that the Promise of God didn't come at the "right time". **The greatest tool the Devil uses is discouragement and our perception of time.** Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock. The Church isn't moving fast enough. God isn't moving here now, so let's run to another place, another time. People hop from Church to Church looking for something, always moving before they are blessed of God. Yet sometimes the blessing only comes *when you wait like you're told to do*.

Noah worked, doing the things God told Him to do, then he got in the Ark and waited *seven days* **until the rains began (Genesis 7:4)**. Why did God wait seven days to send the rain? God can do anything, so why did He wait? Why not let the rains come just as soon as the Ark was sealed? Why not send the Power of God on those on the Upper Room *the very day they go up the stairs*? I honestly don't know, but I do know this.

5. If above 500 saw Jesus, and only 120 people are in the Upper Room, there are 380 people unaccounted for. Why do you think the 380+ people were not in the Upper Room? (Acts 1:15; 1 Corinthians 15:6)

6. The greatest tool the Devil uses is \_\_\_\_\_ and our perception of \_\_\_\_\_

God loves you, and God loves me, and God wants us to love one another. Friends work together, trusting one another. That's the point of the Ark, the point of the Upper Room, the point of the Lord's Table. We call this

Table the *Communion* because it emphasizes *one accord with God and with one another*.

When God's people bond themselves together *in one accord and in one place*, focused on God's will, then that Church cannot be defeated. The power of God came when the flock *was in one accord and in one place*. Listen to the testimony of Scripture:

**(Acts 1:14 KJV) These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...**

I mentioned a few weeks ago that we are called *to a long obedience*, and this is what those in the Upper Room were doing. They were unified, in one accord, and bound together in such a way that the Spirit of God *literally baptized them, drenching them with power* on the Day of Pentecost.

**(Acts 2:1 KJV) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.**

If we are to summarize the Book of Acts, it would be summarized with the word ONE. God our Friend died for us, and God our Friend wants to be ONE with us. Not only that, God wants us to be ONE with each other. In ONE accord, in ONE place. Focused on the **promise of the Father** because we love Jesus.

The *principle of Theophilus* continues throughout the

Book of Acts. We read:

**(Acts 2:46-47 KJV) And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, {47} Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

and again,

**(Acts 4:24, 31 KJV) And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord .... {31} And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.**

and again,

**(Acts 5:12 KJV) ... by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.**

and again,

**(Acts 8:5-8 KJV) Then Philip went down to the city**

of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. {6} And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. {7} For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. {8} And there was great joy in that city.

Where *one accord* is, where the Church is bound together in one place, with one mind to glorify Jesus, then God is magnified! Where ONE ACCORD is, God's power will come. Where ONE ACCORD is, love is, God is. The Apostle's desire for every local Church that they be in *one accord*:

(Philippians 2:2 KJV) Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

We truly need God and one another. God is calling, wooing us to fall in love with Jesus **and with one another** all over again! We affirm our need at this Lord's Table. We must bind to one another **and with God** in love. The Table emphasizes a *threefold cord* that God honors:

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 KJV) Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. {10} For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but

woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. {11} Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? {12} And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

When Christians bond together *in one accord* with one another *and with Christ*, we become invincible. This is what our Lord was teaching us when He said:

(Matthew 18:20 KJV) For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

The common purpose, our *threefold cord*, is to be in one accord with one another, and to be in one accord with

7. Theophilus is not only a person, but it is a principle that the early Church grew on. We truly need \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. God is calling, wooing us to fall in love with Jesus **and with one another** all over again! (Acts 1:14; 2:1; 2:46-47; 4:24, 31; 5:12; 8:5-8; Philippians 2:2; Ephesians 4:9-12)

Jesus Christ our Lord. The Lord's Table we will have in a few minutes reminds us, shouts to us "You need one another, and you need Jesus!" Again we sing that blessed song:

Before our Father's throne, We pour our ardent prayers; Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our comforts and our cares.

### 3. Friends of God Work Together WITH God

**FOCAL TEXT** (Acts 1:4-5 KJV) And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. {5} For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

I will not argue, either *pro or con*, about the gifts of the Spirit in the context of this message. That is for another time. I will say this though: I believe in the Power of God. The Power of God saved me, and the Power of God energizes me. The Holy Spirit *came and indwelt* me when I was saved, *fills* me to empower me for service, and I pray, *covers me like water* covered me when I was baptized in a little lake outside of Raleigh, North Carolina, years ago. God the Holy Spirit is not only the *Promise* of God to the Christian, He is the *Power* of God enabling us to do His Work. Jesus ordered:

(Acts 1:8 KJV) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part

of the earth.

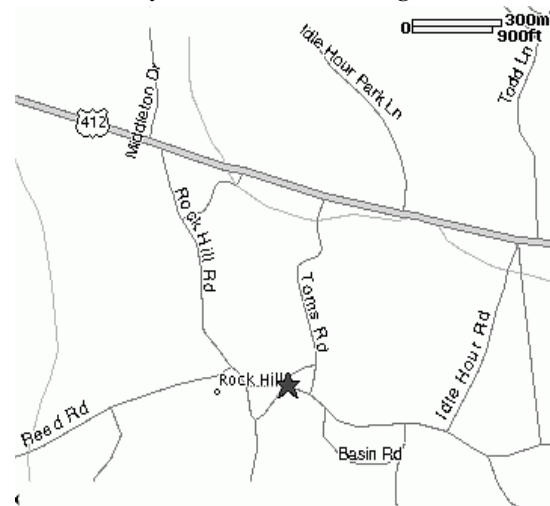
**Ye shall receive power.** The Church was designed by God our Savior to be *a Body, a unified Body, with Christ as its Head and the Holy Spirit of God as its power.* Friends of God are called to work TOGETHER - that is, you and I must pull the load *equally* - and Friends of God are called to work TOGETHER with God Himself. Christians must not shape Christ to fit their lives, we must shape our lives to fit Christ. We must not merely imitate Jesus, we must *allow Jesus to be formed in us.* God in His sovereignty has willed that the Church who submits to Him is the Church that grows for Him. Each member of this Body must make a *heart decision* to follow Him. Then as we follow Him together, helping one another, God will bless our every effort. This is God's Will for His Church, for Rock Hill. Listen:

(Romans 8:29 KJV) For whom he did foreknow, he also did **predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,** that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

8. **Ye shall receive power.** The Church was designed by God our Savior to be a \_\_\_\_\_, a unified \_\_\_\_\_, with Christ as its Head and the Holy Spirit of God as its power. Friends of God are called to work \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 1:8; Romans 8:29)

When you step outside of Rock Hill today you will see a beautiful hill covered with graves. What a lovely cemetery! When you walk through that place you can read the names carved in stone. Some people, as you read their names, are strangers to you. Others are people you knew. Some of these people - be honest now - left no more of a mark for Christ on this world but their gravestone. One rock, and that's it, is all the memorial they left. But others left wonderful, great, lasting marks on this old world. Jesus Christ left a great mark on this life - not a gravestone, but a Table. The 120 in the Upper Room left a great mark on this life as well. They were obedient, and because they stood together in one accord and in one place, Christianity continued to move forward. Our Church exists today because of those faithful 120. God asks you to continue to walk in friendship with Him, remembering what He has done for you. May God bless your heart with this message.

Rock Hill Baptist Church is located between Parsons and Lexington, Tennessee, on Highway 412. Look for our sign! We have services on Wednesdays (Adult, Youth, and children's Bible studies) at 7:00 PM, Sundays at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Rock Hill is a family oriented Bible believing Church - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday,



today, and forever! Our Pastor, Brother David Buffalo, will answer any questions you have about our Church if you contact him at 731-845-6104, or through his website at [bibleteacher.org](http://bibleteacher.org); or e-mail him by writing [webmaster@bibleteacher.org](mailto:webmaster@bibleteacher.org) Rock Hill is an independent Church affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and is a regular contributor to missions through the Cooperative Program.



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