

## **The Programme – Acts 1:1-8; Genesis 12:1-3; Revelation 7:9-12**

**Krakatoa** is an island volcano along the Indonesian arc. Krakatoa erupted in 1883, in one of the largest eruptions in recent time. The name has since become a byword for a cataclysmic disaster. It was followed by an immense tsunami that killed nearly 40 000 people (almost all of whom died from tsunamis generated by the unimaginably strong shock waves of the eruption). Dust swirled round the planet for years, causing temperatures to plummet and sunsets to turn vivid with unsettling displays of light. The effects of the immense waves were felt as far away as France. Barometers in Bogotá and Washington, D.C., went haywire. Bodies were washed up in Africa. The sounds were heard in Australia and India.

Ships were thrown miles inshore, endless rains of hot ash engulfed those towns not drowned by 100 foot waves. The eruption's shock wave travelled around the world seven times.

Here are some highlights from their summary of effects:

1. The explosions were heard on Rodriguez Island, 4653 km distant across the Indian Ocean, and over 1/13th of the earth's surface.
2. Ash fell on Singapore 840 km to the N, Cocos (Keeling) Island 1155 km to the SW, and ships as far as 6076 km WNW. Darkness covered the Sunda Straits from 11 a.m. on the 27th until dawn the next day.
3. Giant waves reached heights of 40 m above sea level, devastating everything in their path and hurling ashore coral blocks weighing as much as 600 tons.
5. When the eruption ended only 1/3 of Krakatau, formerly 5x9 km, remained above sea level
9. Unusual sunsets continued for 3 years.
10. Rafts of floating pumice reached Melanesia, and were still afloat two years after the eruption.

Last week we thought about the lightning of the event of Jesus coming to earth and the thunder of the Holy Spirit coming after His ascension. This was the moment that marked the continuation of the work of Jesus through the Apostles by the Holy Spirit.

### **How will this happen? What's the programme?**

**It will be like the eruption of Krakatoa that was felt around the world.**

#### **1. to the ends of the earth**

**Read it: 1:8**

**This is the consistent message of the Bible.**

**Why? Because it has always been on God's heart to reach all people.**

This verse is like a Table of Contents for the book.

It is like the programme of what is going to happen in the book.

Chapters 1-7 describe the Gospel in Jerusalem

Chapter 8-12 what happens in Judea and Samaria

Chapters 13 -28 to the ends of the earth. And the ends of the earth are not reached. The continuing work of Jesus is still going. The mission goal is never completed. It remains open. We are writing Acts 29.

#### **Like a 40m wave created by Krakatoa**

Waves build and build until they peak. Then the lip curls over. Then it is on its way to breaking. It breaks and then churns into shore.

So the events of Jesus coming to a peak in his death. All these events that follow happen as a matter of course. Just like the wave peaking, the lip curling and then the wave breaking and churning to shore. The Spirit comes, the New Age is here, the Word must be preached to all nations until Jesus comes to our shores again.

**This has been the Programme of the Bible from the beginning to the end where you see the results.**

#### **2. from the beginning**

**Read: Genesis 12:1-3**

This is God's calling of Abraham as his chosen one and the promise of blessing him and his family, as well as all peoples on earth.

After a series of disastrous human failures God begins again and introduces a new phase of history by calling Abraham into a relationship with and giving him a role.

The focus of the attention is on what God will do in and through Abram showing his intentions for his world.

One of the promises includes that around him and his family a great nation will be gathered. This will be the core of the people who will form the new people of God.

Abraham will become the means of the blessing for all humanity.

The many nations Abraham will bless are not just his own descendants.

This is why God changes his name from 'Abram' to 'Abraham' which means 'father of many.'

### 3. to the end

#### Read: Revelation 7:9-12

Here we have the results of the work of Jesus through the witnessing disciples to the ends of the earth. This will be the results of Christian mission at the end of time as we know it. Representatives from all nations will be gathered around God's throne worshipping Him. Those who believed in Jesus will be saved and those who didn't will be judged.

Mission as the church's crucial task between Jesus first and second coming will have come to an end. There is a limited time-frame for mission. It is not going to last forever. Mission only exists now because worship doesn't.

Richard II, born in 1367, was ten years old when he succeeded his grandfather, Edward III as King. Richard asserted royal authority during an era of royal restrictions. Economic hardship followed the Black Death, as wages and prices rapidly increased. Richard's unwise generosity to his favorites led Thomas, Duke of Gloucester and four other magnates to form the Lords Appellant. The five Lords tried and convicted five of Richard's closest advisors for treason. In 1397, Richard arrested three of the five Lords, coerced Parliament to sentence them to death and banished the other two. One of the exiles was the future Henry IV. Richard travelled to Ireland in 1399 to quell warring chieftains, allowing Henry to return to England and be elected king by Parliament. Richard lacked support and was quickly captured by Henry IV. Deposed in 1399, Richard was murdered while in prison, the first casualty of the Wars of the Roses.

This is the story of what happened to one King. It is the story of a King who left His kingdom and in his absence he was overthrown. His Kingdom was taken over. His plans brought to an end. He was out of sight and he quickly became out of action. This is not the case for King Jesus.

There were only 17 Christians from Islam in **Afghanistan** in 2001. But there are more than 10,000 believers at present.

In **Iraq** more than 5,000 Muslim converts to Christianity have been identified since the end of major combat operations with 14 new churches opened in Baghdad, and dozens of new churches opened in Kurdistan, some of which have 500 to 800 members. Also, more than one million Bibles shipped into the country since 2003, and pastors report Iraqis are snatching them up so fast they constantly need more Bibles.

Around a million believed in Jesus over the past decade in **Egypt**. The Egyptian Bible Society used to sell about 3,000 copies of the JESUS film a year in the early 1990s and now they have sold 600,000. There were only 500 Christians in **Iran** in 1979, but today, interviews with over two dozen Iranian pastors and church leaders reveals that there are at least 100,000 and possibly many many more, most of whom meet in underground house churches.

In **Sudan** more than one million have converted since 2000, and some 5 million have become Christians since the early 1990s.

**India:** More than 10,000 Muslims accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour throughout India during the last year.

Missions researcher David Barrett says the country with the most rapid Christian expansion ever is **China** where there are 10,000 new Christian converts every day.

In 1989 there were only 4 known Christians living in **Mongolia**. Now there are an estimated 10,000

**The Programme of God continues to day to the ends of the earth.**

**WHY?**

### 3. The GSC!

**THERE IS A CRISIS!!!** It's not financial as we keep being told but *spiritual*. We know there is a Global Spiritual Crisis because the Bible tells us so.

The backdrop to all the passages above that speak about the nations being reached is the fact they are all lost. Think about Genesis 12. These promises come after we see humanity bring themselves under God's judgement. Adam and Eve reject God. This rebellion the Bible calls sin spreads and a rapid rate. By the time you get to Genesis 11 you reach a point where humanity is a fractured and disastrously broken society that has lost any sense of life with God at the centre. Men and women are in proud independence from their creator. Living only for themselves as if God does not exist. The promises of Genesis 12 break into this scene with a shout of hope. According to the Bible we are still in this fractured and broken society that has lost any sense of life with God at the centre.

According to the Joshua project website there are 6,649 unreached people groups. That amounts to 2.75 million individuals. The largest least-reached group is the Japanese, with over 120,000,000 individuals.

**God in Jesus steps onto the earth and then dies shouting a chorus of hope to humanity who are facing God's judgement.** This hope is summed up in Romans 1:16 *"I am not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew and then for the Gentiles."*

Jesus continues his work of giving hope through his disciples. Disciples who are his witnesses to the good news of the risen Jesus.

When is the church most authentic? What is a 'good' church? When it has the most meetings? Is it when we have the largest congregation? Is it when we have the most beautiful and inspiring music? The most compelling preaching? The most theologically articulate members?

You already know the answer. It is when we give an authentic and honest witness to the risen Christ working in our lives and in our community. It is our nature. We will do it because we can't help but witness to the one thing that has become the deepest reality of our lives. And we will do it both locally and world-wide.

We all know what a witness does. When a witness takes the stand, we are not interested in the personality of the witness. We are not interested in whether the witness is well-heeled, well dressed, or well-educated. Our concern is whether or not the witness is well-informed and if that witness is telling the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth. A witness is a person who has experienced something and tells about it. A witness is a person who is asked to tell the truth about what he or she has seen or heard.

**The programme for the continue work of Jesus is to go to 'the ends of the earth.'**

**MISSION EXISTS BECAUSE WORSHIP DOESN'T!!**

#### Discussion questions:

1. What is 'the Programme' of Acts?
2. How is this continuation of 'the programme' of the Bible from the beginning?
3. How is this reflected in the results of the plan of God seen in Revelation 7:9-12?
4. What is our part in the 'programme of God' for the world?
5. Why does 'mission' continue?