

# Book of Acts

## Chapter 1

### *The Resurrection*

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## **Theme:** Preparation for the coming of the Spirit

**Introduction:** Often called Luke, Volume II, commonly known as "The Book of Acts," completes the "Pentateuch of the New Testament." Regarded by many as the most exciting and relevant book for the current believer, it is, indeed, one of the most rewarding and instructive.

### **Pre-Trial Documents?**

Roman law required written documents, containing all the pertinent background regarding a case, to precede an appellant's appearance before Caesar. There are some scholars who suspect that the two volumes penned by Luke were to comply with those requirements.

In a world denied the conveniences we currently take for granted with copiers and fax machines, it is hard for us to appreciate a culture entirely dependent upon handwritten documents (that's why we call them manu-scripts). To compile a comprehensive history of the facts surrounding Paul's appeal to Caesar was an expensive undertaking, and some assume that the official known as Theophilus was Luke's sponsor.

(We now understand that Matthew was among those skilled in shorthand: it was a requirement for his profession as a customs official. That's why his Gospel includes the extensive discourses: he would have been able to take them down verbatim. Without the discourses, Matthew's Gospel would be shorter than Mark's.)

An analysis of Luke's writings seems to support the pre-trial thesis. His consistent emphasis in the various episodes always focuses on establishing the responsibilities of the Jewish leadership in instigating the numerous uprisings, rather than Paul. The avoidance of civil unrest would have been the primary concern of the Roman administration. It is also interesting to note that, in Luke, centurions are always presented as "good guys."

### **The "Acts of the Apostles"?**

The traditional title of this book is, in some respects, a misnomer: it primarily deals with the "acts" of Peter (Chapters 1-12) and Paul (Chapters 13-28). It really should be called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." Jesus had indicated that the next phase of God's program would be "The Comforter's":

**(John 16:7)** *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

Certainly He, the Holy Spirit, is the principal mover behind the scenes. (It is interesting that the Holy Spirit is always modeled as "an unnamed servant" in Biblical typology. Jesus also explained why:

**(John 16:13)** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

A more accurate name might be "A Few Acts of a Few of the Apostles." Peter and Paul are particularly prominent; the other apostles play little or no role. The book describes some developments in detail, but sometimes skips several years at a time.

"Acts of the Risen Jesus" might also be an appropriate name for this book. Luke tells us that his first book (the Gospel of Luke) was "about all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven" (Acts 1:1-2). Acts, the second volume of

Luke's history-writing project, is about what Jesus did *after* his ascension into heaven — he directed and taught the apostles through the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus had promised (John 16:7, 13), he sent the Spirit to guide the apostles after he returned to heaven. Since this book frequently reminds us that the actions of the apostles were inspired and guided by God's Spirit, "Acts of the Holy Spirit" has also been suggested as a descriptive title.

### **Some Amazing Chapters**

Among the pivotal passages are several that have significance far beyond the immediate narrative. Perhaps foremost of these is Chapter 2, in which we see the fulfillment of the prophetic significance of the Hag Shavout, "The Feast of Weeks" (or "Pentecost"), in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, generally regarded as the birth of the Church.

Another chapter with special revelations is Chapter 7, where young Stephen has the chutzpah to give a review of the Old Testament to the most august body of the Jews, the Sanhedrin. Hidden behind the subtleties of the text are clues that reveal a number of surprises, such as Abraham's delay in responding to God's call in Genesis 12,<sup>1</sup> and the fact that the Pharaoh that oppressed Israel prior to the exodus was not Egyptian!<sup>2</sup>

Another of the pivotal chapters in Acts is the famous "Council of Jerusalem" in Acts 15, at which James adjudicates the debate over what a Gentile must do to be saved. It is also significant in underscoring that God is not finished with Israel. His quoting from Amos 9 provides a prophetic overview of what is still ahead. (James uses the strange phrase, "the Tabernacle of David." It almost seems like an oxymoron, like "the seed of the woman" in Genesis 3:15. The Tabernacle was Levitical; the kingship was of Judah. Is there a prophetic relationship between this peculiar phrase and the visit of Philip with the Ethiopian treasurer in Acts 8? Why is the "Mercy Seat" covering the Ark of the Covenant always described separately in the Torah? We'll explore some provocative conjectures surrounding this and related topics in our Acts Study.

### **Remaining Mysteries**

There are some other lessons hidden within this fabulous book. For example, what Bible study, repeatedly recorded in the Book of Acts, was given by seven different people on twelve different occasions, and always proved extremely fruitful, yet is rarely given today? The answer: presenting Jesus Christ entirely from the Old Testament. It was the only "Scriptures" they had then; the "New Testament" was still in the process of being compiled. Could you do that? Could you present, to your Jewish friends, Jesus as the Messiah-entirely from the Old Testament? It's not hard if you are prepared. In the meantime, I encourage you to dig into this uniquely relevant and rewarding book of God's Word.

The Book of Acts is continuing. It is a transition between the Kingdom message and the Church. The Kingdom was offered to Israel first and they rejected it. That opened the

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham, contrary to God's instructions, simply moved "up river," to Haran until his father died; and then moved on to Canaan. But his sins, too, have been "blotted out."

<sup>2</sup> Acts 7:18—"another" king arose: the Greek has two words of "another": *allos*, another of the same kind; and *heteros*, another of a different kind. Stephen uses the latter, highlighting that the Pharaoh was of a substantially different kind. Isaiah tells us that he was Assyrian (Isaiah 52:4). That explains why the Pharaoh was so insecure with the growth of the Hebrew nation within Egypt's borders.

door to the Gentiles and the story of the Book of Acts is all these different things that occur to fulfill the promise of God to all flesh, not just Israel.

However, don't fall into the trap that the promises of God to Israel are forfeited; they are yet to be fulfilled. If the book of Acts is a transition from the Kingdom to the Church, the Book of Revelation is a transition from the Church back to the Kingdom.

**McGee Introduction:** The Book of Acts, sometimes called the fifth gospel, is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. Dr. Luke is the writer, as he states in his introduction (v. 1). Sir William Ramsay, after making a critical study of Luke's writings, declared that Luke was the greatest historian, ancient or modern.

The Book of Acts is remarkable in many ways. It is a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles. The New Testament without the Book of Acts leaves a great yawning gap. As Dr. Houson puts it, "If the book of Acts were gone, there would be nothing to replace it." The last recorded fact about Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew is the Resurrection, which is recorded in Acts 1. In the Gospel of Mark, the last recorded act of Jesus is the Ascension, which is also recorded in Acts 1. In the Gospel of Luke, the last recorded fact is the promise of the Holy Spirit. That is also in Acts 1. And in the Gospel of John the last recorded fact is the second coming of Christ. You guessed it—that is also in Acts 1. It is as if the four Gospels had been poured into a funnel, and they all come down into this jug of the first chapter of the Book of Acts. Also the great missionary commission, which appears in all four Gospels, is confirmed in the Book of Acts.

The Book of Acts furnishes a ladder on which to place the Epistles. It would be an enriching experience to read them together, as Acts gives the history of the founding of the churches to which the Epistles are directed.

The Book of Acts records the beginning of the church, the birth of the church. The Book of Genesis records the origin of the physical universe. Acts records the origin of the spiritual body which we designate as the *church*.

The theme or key to the Book of Acts is found in 1:8: "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."

The book divides naturally according to this key verse. The first seven chapters record the Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in *Jerusalem*. Chapters 8 through 12 record the Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in *Judea* and *Samaria*. The remainder of the book is devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles unto the *uttermost part of the earth*.

The Book of Acts is not complete. It breaks off with Paul in his own hired house in Rome. It has no proper ending. Do you know why? It is because the Book of Acts is a continuing story. Perhaps the Lord has Dr. Luke up there writing the next chapters now. Perhaps he is recording what you and I do for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. I hope so.

Some special features of the Book of Acts are:

1. Prominence of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus has left His disciples now. He is gone. He has ascended in the first chapter of the book. But He is still at work! He has just moved His position, His location. He has moved His headquarters. As long as He was here on this earth, His headquarters were in Capernaum. Now His headquarters are at

the right hand of the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ is prominent. He is at work from the vantage place of heaven itself.

2. Prominence of the Holy Spirit. Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit. This promise is mentioned in the Gospel of John four times (John 1:33; 7:37–39; 14:16–17; 20:22). The same promise is given in the Book of Acts (Acts 1:8). You and I are living in the age of the Holy Spirit. The great fact of this age is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers.

3. The power of the church. There is a power in the church, and, of course, this is the working of the Spirit of God. That power of the early church is not manifest in churches today. Why? Because the early church operated on a high spiritual level which has not again been attained in any age since then. However, it is the Holy Spirit working through the believer when any service brings honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Prominence of the church, visible and invisible. The church is a new institution. It has come into existence in the Book of Acts.

5. Prominence of places. The book begins at Jerusalem and ends in Rome. Sir William Ramsay checked all the places mentioned by Dr. Luke and found them to be accurate.

6. Prominence of persons. Dr. Luke mentions 110 persons by name, besides the references to multitudes or crowds. I believe that by the end of the first century there were millions of believers in the world. The church had a phenomenal growth in those first two to three hundred years. It certainly has slowed down today, exactly as our Lord said it would.

7. Prominence of the Resurrection. The Resurrection is the center of gospel preaching. In too many churches today, we have one Easter sermon once a year. As a pastor, many times I have featured Easter in August. People would come just to find out what had happened to the preacher. They thought the heat was getting to me. However, in the early church the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the very center and heart of the message, and no sermon was preached without it. The theme of Peter on the Day of Pentecost was the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He explained that what was taking place was because Jesus was now in heaven at the right hand of God and had sent His Holy Spirit into the world. It was all due to the Resurrection. You will find that the Resurrection is the very heart of the messages of Paul.

There are a great many people and preachers who like to “ride a hobby.” Some people like to ride the hobby of prophecy; others dwell on the Keswick message or some other facet or phase. Now, if you want to ride a hobby, let me suggest one for you: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the early church, every Sunday was Easter, a day to proclaim the Resurrection. “He is risen!” was proclaimed everywhere (see Matt. 27:64).

8. There is a prominence of Peter in the first section of the book and of Paul in the last section. There is a strange omission of the other apostles. God had good reasons, I am sure, for emphasizing the ministry of these two men.

Also there is a human reason. I believe that Dr. Luke was acquainted with the ministries of these two men. He was an associate of Paul.

Some people hold the idea that there was a disagreement between Peter and Paul. Very candidly, I am of the opinion that Dr. Luke and Peter and Paul got together a great many times and had many talks.

The proper title for this historical book has always been a problem. The Bible which I use is the authorized version and there it is called *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Codex Vaticanus and the revised versions also call it *The Acts of the Apostles*. Robert Lee called it *The Acts of the Ascended and Glorified Lord*. The Bantu title is *Words Concerning Deeds*.

I would rather think that the key is given to us in the first two verses of the first chapter. On the basis of this, I would venture a title which is a rather long one: *The Lord Jesus Christ at Work by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles*.<sup>3</sup>

### **AUTHOR: Luke**

External and internal evidence confirm that Luke the physician, author of the Gospel which bears his name, is also the author of Acts. As early as c. A.D. 170 the Muratorian Canon asserts the Lucan authorship of the third Gospel and Acts. The testimony of the early church fathers (A.D. 100-500) clearly affirms that Luke wrote Acts.

Although Luke never names himself as the author, evidence within the book itself further confirms the external testimony. Luke was an eyewitness to many of the events in Acts, as is confirmed by his use of “we” in many sections (16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16). As the traveling companion of the apostle Paul, Luke was undoubtedly present when these events in the “we” sections occurred. In addition, Paul refers to Luke as a “physician” in Colossians 4:14, and the vocabulary of Luke and Acts seems to suggest that the author was a physician. Finally, Acts 28 makes it clear that Luke was present with Paul upon the latter’s arrival in Rome as a prisoner. Philemon and Colossians (along with Ephesians and Philippians) were written from Rome during Paul’s first imprisonment there, and both these books identify Luke as present with Paul (Col 4:14; Philem. 24). Acts concludes with Paul in Rome, most likely because the narrative has been brought up to the time of writing. On the basis of this, Luke fits all the circumstances as the author of Acts.

Traditionally Luke has been considered to be a Gentile, though this is never stated to be the case by any of the early church fathers (see Luke, “Introduction: Author”).

### **RECIPIENT: Theophilus**

Luke’s Gospel, as well as his history of the early church, is addressed to Theophilus. Beyond knowing that this is a Greek name meaning “lover of God,” precise identification is impossible. Several possibilities, however, have been proposed: (1) Theophilus is a new convert in need of full knowledge concerning the initiation and growth of Christianity. (2) Theophilus is Paul’s attorney for his defense in Rome, and Luke-Acts is a defense brief. (3) Theophilus is an interested, but yet unconverted, Greek to whom Luke has addressed an apology with the intent of winning Theophilus for the kingdom. (4) Theophilus is a friend of high Roman office to whom Luke dedicates his books, which are intended for a general audience. (5) Theophilus refers not to a specific individual, but to anyone who is a “lover of God.” Though no solution is available, option (1) is the most likely.

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<sup>3</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:507). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## **THEME AND PURPOSE: History and Theology**

Acts is both history and theology. It is history in that it narrates the birth and growth of the early church from Jerusalem to Rome, spanning a period of thirty years. It is theology in that Luke's purpose is to show God's plan of salvation through Jesus and the establishment and growth of the kingdom of God (cf. Luke's use of "kingdom" in Acts 1:3 and 28:31). Acts cannot be understood apart from the Gospel of Luke in the matter of theme and purpose. The prologues to each book reveal that Luke intended them as a two-volume work. From a comparison of the prologues, a third and practical purpose emerges for Luke-Acts: Theophilus needed to be encouraged and challenged in his faith. Other purposes suggested by scholars: (1) to demonstrate the universality of Christianity, (2) to provide an apologetic for Paul's apostleship, and (3) to provide an apologetic for Christianity, in order to establish its character as nonthreatening to the Roman Empire.

### **KEY VERSE: "To the End of the Earth"**

The key verse in the book is 1:8, showing the threefold geographic description of the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. The title of the book, "The Acts of the Apostles," is very old (at least as old as the second century), but perhaps, on the basis of 1:8, a more accurate title would be "The Acts of the Holy Spirit."

### **IMPORTANCE**

Acts is a crucial book in the canon of Scripture in that it serves as the bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles. It narrates the continuing work of the resurrected Jesus through His church. Furthermore, it provides present-day churches with the pattern of church growth principles in evangelism, missions, and discipleship. The speeches in Acts present a clear indication of early Christian doctrine regarding the Person and work of Christ, as well as the nature of salvation.

### **SOURCES**

Possible sources for Acts include Luke's eyewitness experience; written documents available to Luke, such as the apostolic decrees from Jerusalem; and oral sources, such as Mary, Paul, Philip the evangelist, and James the Lord's brother. Luke is a dependable historian who has carefully researched and studied the material before composing his two-volume work (cf. Luke 1:1-4).

Luke was one of the few writers to explain why he wrote his works, and this helps us to know what his purposes were. Knowing his aims makes us better able to understand Acts.

To perceive Luke's aims and what he hoped to accomplish in Acts, we must go back to his dedication at the beginning of his Gospel (Luke 1:1-4). There Luke told us that during his research and gathering of material for Acts he personally and "carefully investigated everything from the beginning" (verse 3).

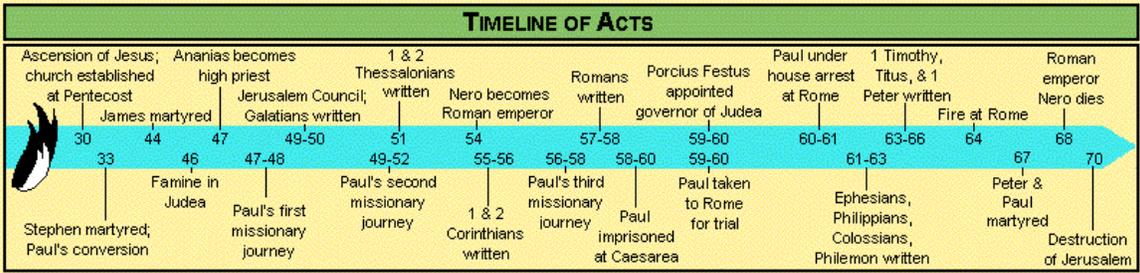
## An Overview of the Book of Acts

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in *Jerusalem*, and in all *Judea* and *Samaria*, and to the *end of the earth*.”  
(Acts 1:8)

	Acts 1–7	Acts 8–12	Acts 13–28
<b>Spread of the Church</b>	The church witnessing in Jerusalem	The church witnessing in all Judea and Samaria	The church witnessing to all the earth
<b>The Gospel</b>	Proclaimed in the city	Proclaimed in the provinces	Proclaimed in the world
<b>Theme</b>	Power and progress of the church	Expansion of the church	Paul’s three journeys and trials
<b>People Addressed</b>	Jews	Samaritans	Gentiles (Hellenists)
<b>Key Person</b>	Peter	Philip	Paul
<b>Approximate Time</b>	2 years (c. A.D. 33-35)	11 years (c. A.D. 35-46)	15 years (c. A.D. 48-63)
<b>Development</b>	Triumph	Transition	Travels and trials

**DATE: A.D. 63**

There are two primary views regarding the date of Acts: c. A.D. 70 or later and c. A.D. 63. The date of c. A.D. 63 is to be preferred, due to the lack of any reference to four significant events: (1) information concerning the outcome of Paul’s imprisonment and trial; (2) the Neronian persecution in A.D. 64-68; (3) the death of Paul in A.D. 66-67; and (4) the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. If Luke had known the outcome of Paul’s trial, he most certainly would have recorded it.



## **Acts 1:1**

**The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,**

The writer is Luke. He wrote the Gospel according to Luke and the Book of Acts.

**[former treatise]** refers to the Gospel of Luke.

**(Luke 1:3)** *It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,*

**[treatise]** Greek: *logos* (GSN-3056), used 330 times with 3 main ideas of expression:

1. In respect to speech: a word (James 3:2); saying (Matthew 19:22); discourse (2 Cor. 10:10); doctrine (1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13); narrative (Acts 1:1); report (John 21:23); and discussion by which the inward thought is expressed (Hebrews 4:2)
2. In respect to the mind alone: the reasoning powers (Hebrews 4:12)
3. In respect to a person: the essential living Word of God (John 1:1,14; 1 John 1:1; 1 John 5:7; Rev. 19:13); the embodiment of and expression of all wisdom and prudence (Ephes. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3)

*Logos* (GSN-3056) has to do with a concept, an idea; the Greek: *rhema* (GSN-4487) has to do with the expression of that idea in proper, intelligent, and grammatical form in words and sentences. *Logos* is translated "word" 225 times; "saying" 50 times; "account" 8 times; "speech" 8 times; and in other ways, 39 times.

**[Theophilus]** name means "lover of God"; may have even been a nickname. A common Roman name. Mentioned only here and in Acts 1:1. Josephus mentioned two men of this name who were high priests. He was a man "instructed" in the life of Christ (Luke 1:4).

Luke 1:1-3. Luke has an agenda with this Gospel. "Most excellent Theophilus" is a title generally used of a Roman official. He probably was a governor of a province. Theophilus may be an intimate name and not his formal name.

One speculation is that Luke Volume 1 (the Gospel) and Volume 2 (Acts) were written to Theophilus, who prepared the accounts necessary for Paul's appeal to Rome. One of the undercurrents seen throughout the book of Acts is the continual uprisings that occur. The book makes it clear that Paul was not the instigator of these riots. Also throughout both books, Romans are not portrayed as "the bad guys," but rather as the good guys.

In Acts 1:1, Luke does not include the words "most excellent" before "Theophilus." This makes some scholars presume that he probably was a believer or had become one by reading Volume 1, because Luke is more intimate here.

**[do and to teach]** note the order of these verbs, do first, teach second.

Acts records the continuation of His ministry through believers. See John 14:12; Mark 16:15-20.

The subject of Volume 2 is the same as Volume 1. Same writer: Luke; same reader: Theophilus; and same subject: Jesus Christ. Note that this book is about Jesus Christ, and not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is very prominent and we will learn a great deal about Him, but as is consistent with His Mission, He bears testimony of the Son, Jesus of Nazareth!

**Barnes:** *That Jesus.* The Syriac version adds, "Jesus our Messiah." -This version was probably made in the second century. <sup>4</sup>

The book of Acts continues the story Luke began in his Gospel, covering the 30 years after Jesus was taken up into heaven. During that short time the church was established, and the gospel of salvation was taken throughout the world, even to the capital of the Roman Empire. Those preaching the gospel, though ordinary people with human frailties and limitations were empowered by the Holy Spirit to take the Good News "all over the world" (Acts 17:6). Throughout the book of Acts we learn about the nature of the church and how we today are also to go about turning our world upside down.

Acts 1:1-11 are the bridge between the events recorded in the Gospels and the events marking the beginning of the church. Jesus spent 40 days teaching his disciples, and they were changed drastically. Before, they had argued with each other, deserted their Lord, and one (Peter) even lied about knowing Jesus. Here, in a series of meetings with the living, resurrected Christ, the disciples had many questions answered. They became convinced about the resurrection, learned about the kingdom of God, and learned about their power source—the Holy Spirit. By reading the Bible, we can sit with the resurrected Christ in his school of discipleship. By believing in him, we can receive his power through the Holy Spirit to be new people. By joining with other Christians in Christ's church, we can take part in doing his work on earth.

**JNTC: Everything Yeshua set out to do and teach** is the content of the Gospel of Luke. Luke's subject in the present book is the accomplishments of the early believers, in particular how they succeeded in bringing Gentiles into the framework of Messianic faith without their having to convert to Judaism, so that trust in Yeshua would not be for Jews only. Today the problem is exactly the opposite: the cultural and religious superstructure of faith in Yeshua the Jewish Messiah has become so "Gentilized" that most Jews find it hard to believe that the New Testament is as much for them as for Gentiles; see 11:18&N, 15:1&N. On the name "Yeshua" ("Jesus") see Mt 1:1N. <sup>5</sup>

**ESV: Luke's first book** is the Gospel of Luke, which gives an account of what Jesus **began to do and teach**. This suggests that the book of Acts is going to be about what Jesus *continued* "to do and teach" in the world. Though physically he had ascended into heaven (v. 9), yet spiritually he was still present on earth (cf. Matt. 28:20). When one

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<sup>4</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>5</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:1). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

realizes that the term “Lord” (Gk. *Kyrios*) in Acts usually refers to Jesus, it becomes evident that the entire book tells how Jesus was building his church: selecting an apostle to replace Judas (Acts 1:24), pouring out the Holy Spirit in new power (2:33), adding people to the church day by day (2:47), appearing to Ananias (9:10) and to Paul (9:5; 18:9), healing a paralyzed man (9:34), receiving worship from the church (13:2), stopping a magician who was opposing the gospel (13:11), and opening people's hearts to believe the gospel (16:14). (See also 1:2 on the Holy Spirit's role.) It is the execution of the divine program that Jesus directs and mediates. Luke's Gospel was also dedicated to **Theophilus**, either an actual person or a symbolic name for any Christian seeker or convert.

### **Acts 1:2**

**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:**

**[taken up]** occurs four times in this chapter alone, refers to the ascension. Christ did His works until He ascended. After that He continued doing them through believers by the Spirit baptism they had received (Acts 1:2,8; Luke 24:49; Mark 16:15-20). Acts 1:9-11; Acts 2:33; Acts 7:56; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Romans 8:34; Ephes. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 4:14; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 12:2.

**[Holy Ghost]** The Holy Spirit is now the agent and executive of God in earth to carry on the work that Jesus "began both to do and teach" (Acts 1:2-8; Acts 5:9; Acts 8:29,39; Acts 10:19; Acts 11:12; Acts 13:2-4; Acts 15:28; Acts 16:6; Acts 20:28; Acts 21:4-11; 1 Cor. 2:1-14; 1 Cor. 12:1-30; 2 Cor. 3:8; Ephes. 2:22; Ephes. 3:5).<sup>6</sup>

**[commandments unto the apostles]** This, with other passages in the new testament, shows that the Ten Commandments are not the only ones God ever gave.

**Clarke: After that he, through the Holy Ghost, etc.**—This clause has been variously translated: the simple meaning seems to be this—that Christ communicated the Holy Spirit to his disciples, after his resurrection, as he had not done before. In Luke 24:45, it is said that he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and in John 20:22, that he breathed on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Previously to this, we may suppose that the disciples were only on particular occasions made partakers of the Holy Spirit; but from this time it is probable that they had a measure of this supernatural light and power constantly resident in them. By this they were not only able to proclaim the truth, but to discern the meaning of all the Old Testament Scriptures which referred to Christ; and to appoint whatever rites or ordinances were necessary for the establishment of his Church. There were many things which the apostles said, did, and decreed, for which they had no verbal instructions from our Lord, at least, none that are recorded in the Gospels; we may therefore conclude that these were suggested to them by that Holy Spirit which now became resident in them, and that it is to this that St.

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<sup>6</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

Luke refers in this verse, After that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles.<sup>7</sup>

**McGee:** The “former treatise” was Luke’s gospel, which also was directed to *Theophilus*—whose name means “lover of God.” I totally reject the idea that just any lover of God is intended. Obviously Luke knew a man by the name of Theophilus, and undoubtedly the name was appropriate—a lover of God. Luke’s gospel was “all that Jesus began both to do and teach,” and in the Book of Acts Jesus *continues* to do and to teach. Today He is still at it, if I may use that expression, and He will continue on with this present program until He takes His own out of the world.

“Until the day in which he was taken up, *after that* he through the Holy Ghost [Spirit]” makes it clear that just because Jesus was taken up into heaven didn’t mean He ceased doing and teaching. But now, from the vantage place of the right hand of God, He is continuing to work through the Holy Spirit. As in the army where commands pass from one man to another, so the Lord Jesus Christ is working through the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit operates through the apostles and on out to you and to me where we are today. This is a remarkable statement here.<sup>8</sup>

**ESV: The day when he was taken up** refers to Jesus' ascension into heaven (Luke 24:51). The beginning of Acts parallels the conclusion of Luke's Gospel (Luke 24:36–53). Through the Holy Spirit means that as Jesus gave instructions and commands to his disciples, the Holy Spirit accompanied his teaching, empowering the disciples so that they would rightly understand it and obey it.

### **Acts 1:3**

**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:**

**[forty days]** only place that mentions the period of time between the resurrection and the ascension. For forty days Jesus was among them, (the Emmaus Road and several times to the disciples). Some of these incidents are recorded, some are not.

**[passion by many infallible proofs]** Referring to His sufferings and death (1 Cor. 15:3-8; 1 Peter 1:11).

**Barnes: He shewed himself.** The *resurrection* of Jesus was the great fact on which the truth of the gospel was to be established. Hence the sacred writers so often refer to it, and establish it by so many arguments. As that *truth* lay at the foundation of all that Luke was about to record in his history, it was of importance that he should state clearly the sum of the evidence of it in the beginning of his work.

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<sup>7</sup> Adam Clarke’s Commentary

<sup>8</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:510). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**Barnes: Speaking to them,** He was not only *seen* by them, but he *continued the same topics of discourse* as before his sufferings; thus showing that he was the same person that had suffered, and that his heart was still intent on the same great work. Our Saviour's heart was filled with the same design in his life and death, and when he rose; thus showing us that we should aim at the same great work in all the circumstances of our being. Afflictions, persecutions, and death never turned him from this great plan; nor should they be allowed to divert our minds from the great work of redemption.

### **The Twelve Appearances of Christ:**

1. To Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:15-16)
2. To the women at the tomb (Matthew 28:9)
3. To two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31)
4. To Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5)
5. To the ten apostles (John 20:19)
6. To the eleven apostles (John 20:26)
7. To the seven apostles (John 21:1-22; this was after the second Sunday)
8. To the eleven apostles on a certain mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16)
9. To the twelve apostles, including Matthias (1 Cor. 15:5; Acts 1:26)
10. To five hundred brethren (1 Cor. 15:6)
11. To James, the Lord's brother (1 Cor. 15:7; Galatians 1:19)
12. To all the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7; Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-12,26)

**[speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God]** Fifteen things discussed during the 40 days:

1. Physical resurrection of Christ (see note, <sup>□</sup>John 21:14)
2. His rightful authority (Matthew 28:18; Acts 1:4-8; Luke 24:49)
3. Worldwide preaching of the gospel (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8)
4. Water baptism (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16)
5. Observance of every command of Christ (Matthew 28:20)
6. Age-long gospel program (Matthew 28:20)
7. Signs of the gospel (Mark 16:17-20)
8. Prophets were true (Luke 24:25-27,44)
9. Sufferings necessary (Luke 24:46)
10. Resurrection and ascension necessary (Luke 24:26,46; cp. 1 Cor. 15)
11. Christ, the central theme of the Scriptures (Luke 24:27,44)
12. Reality of resurrection bodies—eat food, etc. (Luke 24:39-43; note, <sup>□</sup>John 21:14)
13. Scriptures have literal fulfillment, not spiritual (Luke 24:27,44-46)
14. Tarry for the impartation of power to propagate the gospel (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8)
15. Carry out the New Testament program:
  - (1) Preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8)
  - (2) Confirm the gospel (Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:17-20; Luke 24:49; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:1,4-8)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

**Clarke: To whom—he showed himself alive—by many infallible proofs—**Πολλοὺς τεκμηριοὺς; by many proofs of such a nature, and connected with such circumstances, as to render them indubitable; for this is the import of the Greek word τεκμηριον. The proofs were such as these:

1. Appearing to several different persons at different times.
2. His eating and drinking with them.
3. His meeting them in Galilee according to his own appointment.
4. His subjecting his body to be touched and handled by them.
5. His instructing them in the nature and doctrines of his kingdom.
6. His appearing to upwards of five hundred persons at once, 1 Corinthians 15:6.
7. Continuing these public manifestations of himself for forty days.

***The reality of His resurrection (v. 3a).*** Some of the believers may have had their doubts forty days before (Mark 16:9–14), but there could be no question now that Jesus had indeed been raised from the dead. To strengthen their faith, He gave them “many infallible proofs” which Luke did not explain. We know that when Jesus met His disciples, He invited them to touch His body, and He even ate before them (Luke 24:38–43). Whatever proofs He gave, they were convincing.

Faith in His resurrection was important to the church because their own spiritual power depended on it. Also, the message of the Gospel involves the truth of the Resurrection (Rom. 10:9–10; 1 Cor. 15:1–8); and, if Jesus were dead, the church would be speechless. Finally, the official Jewish position was that the disciples had stolen Jesus’ body from the tomb (Matt. 28:11–15), and the believers had to be able to refute this as they witnessed to the nation.

These believers were chosen to be special witnesses of Christ’s resurrection, and that was the emphasis in their ministry (Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:30–32). Most of the people in Jerusalem knew that Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified, but they did not know that He had been raised from the dead. By their words, their walk, and their mighty works, the believers told the world that Jesus was alive. This was “the sign of Jonah” that Jesus had promised to the nation (Matt. 12:38–41)—His death, burial, and resurrection.<sup>10</sup>

***The coming of His kingdom (v. 3b).*** This refers to the reign of God over the hearts and lives of those who have trusted Him (see Matt. 6:33; Rom. 14:17; 1 John 3:1–9). When you read the four Gospels, you discover that the Apostles had a strongly political view of the kingdom and were especially concerned about their own positions and privileges. Being loyal Jews, they longed for the defeat of their enemies and the final establishment of the glorious kingdom under the rule of King Messiah. They did not realize that there must first be a spiritual change in the hearts of the people (see Luke 1:67–79).

Jesus did not rebuke them when they “kept asking” about the future Jewish kingdom (Acts 1:7). After all, He had opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44), so they knew what they were asking. But God has not revealed His timetable to us and it is futile for us to speculate. The important thing is not to be curious about the

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<sup>10</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Ac 1:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

future but to be busy in the present, sharing the message of God's *spiritual* kingdom. This is another emphasis in the Book of Acts (see Acts 8:12; 14:22; 20:25; 28:23, 31).<sup>11</sup>

**ESV:** Jesus appeared multiple times to his disciples and gave them many proofs to strengthen their faith. Solid evidence and knowledge of facts increase faith (an idea contrary to some modern views of "faith"). Only Acts provides the specific time reference of a 40-day period for the resurrection appearances, a number that evokes thoughts of many biblical events, such as the wilderness wanderings of Israel and the temptations of Jesus. Though common in the Gospels as the main theme of Jesus' preaching, the phrase kingdom of God occurs only six times in Acts (1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23, 31). Significantly, two of the six are at the beginning and end of Acts, indicating that the proclamation of the gospel in Acts represents the beginning of the fulfillment of God's kingdom promises. The "kingdom of God" means not an earthly political or military kingdom but the present spiritually directed reign of God, gradually transforming individual lives and entire cultures through the power of the Holy Spirit. Cf. Matt. 6:33.

### **Acts 1:4**

**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.****

That's the end of the sentence—these first four verses are all one sentence! The apostles are to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Until that event takes place, His command is to wait.

Luke 12:49-50. Jesus was constrained as a man; for example, he could only be in one place at a time. Yet, in Acts, Jesus is free of that restraint through the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:7-11. Jesus continues to talk of His "going away." Jesus needs to go away to allow the Holy Spirit to come. The Holy Spirit is seen from the beginning (Gen 1:2). All through the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is very busy, He doesn't just appear in Acts, He is busy from the beginning. However, Jesus does note that the Holy Spirit is sent in a very special and unique way to the Church.

**[promise of the Father]** The "promise of the Father" or the promised Holy Spirit and the baptism in the Spirit are the same.

**[ye have heard of me]** Christ had spoken of this Spirit baptism on several occasions (John 7:37-39; John 14:12-17,26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15).

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<sup>11</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Ac 1:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

**4-5** The *Trinity* is a description of the unique relationship of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If Jesus had stayed on earth, his physical presence would have limited the spread of the gospel, because physically he could be in only one place at a time. After Christ was taken up into heaven, he would be spiritually present everywhere through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent so that God would be with and within his followers after Christ returned to heaven. The Spirit would comfort them, guide them to know his truth, remind them of Jesus' words, give them the right words to say, and fill them with power

“Gathering together” (NASB) is literally “took salt together,” an idiom for table fellowship. This act was the ultimate sign of physicality (in many Jewish traditions, angels could not genuinely eat human food) and intimacy<sup>12</sup>

### **Acts 1:5**

**For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.**

**[not many days hence]** 10 to be exact.

Who is going to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit? The Apostles, 120 of them? The Baptism is of the Body of Christ on Pentecost.

**[ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence]** The 1st New Testament prophecy in Acts (Acts 1:5, fulfilled, Acts 2:1-39). The next prophecy in Acts will be in Acts 1:8.

**shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit:** The passive tense of the verb indicates that baptism does not depend upon our efforts to obtain the promise, but upon the Lord's will. The simple future tense demonstrates that there is no uncertainty or doubt in the promise. The Greek word for *baptized* means “to immerse” or “to dip.” It also connotes being identified with someone or something. Spirit baptism means we have been placed in spiritual union with one another in the body of Jesus Christ, the church (see 1 Cor. 12:12, 13).

**JNTC: Immerse** or “baptize.” See Mt 3:1N. Yochanan's water immersion accomplished ritual purification of the body for *chozrim bitshuvah* (“persons who turn from sin to God in repentance”). Yeshua's promised immersion in the Holy Spirit would give power from God to continue living a holy life and to bring the Gospel effectively to others. This verse condenses Lk 3:16.<sup>13</sup>

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NASB New American Standard Bible

<sup>12</sup>Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Ac 1:4). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>13</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:5). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

## **Gifts and Fruit: First Eight Chapters**

1. Tongues (Acts 2:3-11)
2. Prophecy (Acts 2:16-21; Acts 3:19-21)
3. Word of Knowledge (Acts 2:23-36; Acts 5:3-11; Acts 8:22)
4. Word of wisdom (Acts 2:37-40; Acts 3:19; Acts 4:8-12; Acts 5:29-33; Acts 6:3-10)
5. Miracles (Acts 2:43; Acts 3:6-16; Acts 4:22; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 6:8; Acts 8:6-17)
6. Healings (Acts 3:6-8,16; Acts 4:22; Acts 5:16; Acts 6:8; Acts 8:6-13)
7. Discernment (Acts 5:3-11; Acts 8:22)
8. Faith (Acts 3:3-16; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 6:8)
9. Fruit of the Spirit (Acts 2:1,42-47; Acts 3:3-20; Acts 4:29-33; Acts 5:12-16,26-42; Acts 7:54-60; Acts 8:8)

**McGee:** The risen Jesus appeared to the apostles and gave them these instructions. He tells them that something is going to happen to them. They are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. This baptism of the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father, and Jesus had previously told them about it.

It is very important to point out that this is not talking about water baptism, which is *ritual* baptism. This is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is *real* baptism. It is this baptism of the Holy Spirit which places a believer into the body of believers, which we sometimes refer to as the church.

When we get to the second chapter, which tells of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, we will learn that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Filling was necessary in order that they might serve. The fact that they were filled with the Holy Spirit for service indicates that the other ministries of the Holy Spirit had been performed.<sup>14</sup>

**ESV: Baptized with the Holy Spirit** looks forward to Pentecost (see ch. 2). John had contrasted his “repentance” baptism with Jesus’ “Holy Spirit” baptism (Mark 1:8). Throughout Acts, baptism and the gift of the Spirit are closely related. Repentance, forgiveness, water baptism, and reception of the Spirit comprise the basic pattern of conversion.

### **Acts 1:6**

**When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?**

“**Restore at this time**” - Many promises in the Old Testament of the Kingdom, this was a natural question for them to ask. This makes it clear that they did not know His plans, nor were they equipped for what is coming.

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<sup>14</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:511). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**[wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?]** This is question 1 in Acts. The next question is in Acts 1:11. This question was not answered by Christ other than that all events are in the power of the Father (Matthew 24:32; Mark 13:32).

**Clarke: When they therefore were come together**—It is very likely that this is to be understood of their assembling on one of the mountains of Galilee, and there meeting our Lord.

**Barnes: Wilt thou at this time,** The apostles had entertained the common opinions of the Jews about the *temporal* dominion of the Messiah. They expected that he would reign as a prince and conqueror, and free them from the bondage of the Romans. Many instances of this expectation occur in the Gospels, notwithstanding all the efforts which the Lord Jesus made to explain to them the true nature of his kingdom. This expectation was checked, and almost destroyed by his death, Luke 24:21. And it is clear that *his death* was the only means which could effectually check and change their opinions respecting the nature of his kingdom. Even his own instructions would not do it; and only his being taken from them could direct their minds effectually to the true nature of his kingdom. Yet, though his death checked their expectations, and appeared to thwart their plans, yet his return to life excited them again. They beheld him with them; they were assured it was the same Saviour; they saw now that his enemies had no power over him; that a Being who could rise from the dead, could easily accomplish all his plans. And as they did not doubt now that he *would* restore the kingdom to Israel, they asked whether he would do it *at this time*? They did not ask whether he would do it at all, or whether they had correct views of his kingdom; but taking that for granted, they asked him whether *that was the time* in which he would do it. The emphasis of the inquiry lies in the expression, "*at this time*," and hence the answer of the Saviour refers solely *to the point of their inquiry*, and not to the correctness or incorrectness of their opinions.

**Barnes: Restore.** Bring back; put into its former situation. Judea was formerly governed by its own kings and laws; now it was subject to the Romans. This bondage was grievous, and the nation sighed for deliverance. The inquiry of the apostles evidently was, whether he would now free them from the bondage of the Romans, and restore them to their former state of freedom and prosperity, as in the times of David and Solomon. See Isaiah 1:26. The word "restore" also may include more than a reducing it to its former state. It may mean, Wilt thou now *bestow* the kingdom and dominion to Israel, according to the prediction in Daniel 7:27?

During the years of Jesus' ministry on earth, the disciples continually wondered about his kingdom. When would it come? What would their role be? In the traditional view, the Messiah would be an earthly conqueror who would free Israel from Rome. But the kingdom Jesus spoke about was first of all a *spiritual* kingdom established in the hearts and lives of believers (Luke 17:21). God's presence and power dwell in believers in the person of the Holy Spirit.

**wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?**—Doubtless their carnal views of Messiah’s kingdom had by this time been modified, though how far it is impossible to say. But, as they plainly looked for *some* restoration of the kingdom to Israel, so they are neither rebuked nor contradicted on this point.<sup>15</sup>

The disciples’ question, **Lord are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?** is most illuminating.

The sentence is introduced by the connective **so** (*men oun*), which associates the thought of verse 6 with verse 5. In the disciples’ minds the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the coming of the promised kingdom were closely associated. And well they should be, because the Old Testament frequently joined the two (cf. Isa. 32:15-20; 44:3-5; Ezek. 39:28-29; Joel 2:28-3:1; Zech. 12:8-10). When Christ told the disciples of the soon-coming Spirit baptism, they immediately concluded that the restoration of Israel’s kingdom was near in time (cf. comments on “restore” in Acts 3:21).<sup>16</sup>

**JNTC: Self-rule.** According to Arndt and Gingrich’s *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Greek *tên basileian* here means “the kingship, royal power, royal rule,” and not “the kingdom” in the sense of the territory ruled by a king.

**Lord, are you at this time going to restore self-rule to Israel?** The expectation of virtually all Jews was that when the Messiah came he would deliver Israel from Roman oppression and become king over a Jewish nation reunited and sovereign as it had been under Kings Saul, David and Solomon, and again under the Maccabees (see Yn 10:22N) and their Hasmonean descendants (164–63 B.C.E.). This is seen clearly at Yn 6:15, when “they were on the point of coming and seizing [Yeshua], in order to make him king,” to force God’s promise concerning the Messiah that “the government shall be upon his shoulders” (Isaiah 9:5–6(6–7), Lk 1:79N). No one grasped Yeshua’s teaching that he had not come this first time to rule, but to die “a ransom for many” and be resurrected the third day (Mk 10:33–34, 45). Even his *talmidim* misunderstood and continued to do so after the predicted events had taken place. At vv. 7–8 Yeshua filled this gap in their knowledge, focussing their attention not on his return but on their task; and we learn later (3:21) that Kefa got the point.

Nevertheless, there is a different point which many Christians need to learn from Yeshua’s answer, namely, that God will indeed restore self-rule to Israel. There is an ancient, widespread and pernicious Christian teaching that the Church is the “New” or “Spiritual” Israel, having replaced the Jews as God’s people. In this view—known variously as Replacement theology, Covenant theology, Kingdom Now theology, Dominionism, Reconstructionism and (in England) Restorationism—God’s promises to Israel were nullified when “the Jews” refused to accept Jesus (never mind that all the first believers were Jews). This false theology, impugning the character of God by suggesting that he will welch on his promises, has provided apparent justification for many

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<sup>15</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 1:6). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

cf. *confer*, compare

<sup>16</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:354). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

antisemitic acts in the Church. It also lies behind most Christian protestations that the present-day regathering of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel is without theological or biblical significance.

Yeshua's answer to his disciples' question as to whether he will now restore self-rule to Israel is, "**You don't need to know the dates or the times; the Father has kept these under his own authority.**" From this we learn, contrary to the teaching of Replacement Theology, that the kingdom certainly *will* be restored to Israel. The only question is when, and that is not presently ours to know. "The secret things belong to *Adonai* our God" (Deuteronomy 29:28(29)).

For a modern presentation of the Replacement theology heresy see David Chilton, *Paradise Restored* (Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1985). A book by a popular Christian author refuting Reconstructionism and revealing its antisemitism is Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989); another refutation is H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1988).<sup>17</sup>

**McGee:** You will find that some of the commentators rebuke the apostles for asking this question—they feel the apostles made a mistake. I believe that the answer the Lord gives them indicates they made no mistake. Their question was a legitimate question, a natural question, and one that our Lord answered as such. He did not rebuke them. He did not call it a foolish question.

The apostles were brought up and schooled in the Old Testament. They had waited for the coming of the Messiah. They understood that the Messiah is the One who will establish the kingdom upon this earth. That was their hope. It is still the hope for this earth. God is not through with this earth. God does not intend to sweep this earth under the rug. Although it is small enough to be swept under His rug, He is not going to do that. God has an eternal purpose for the earth. It was the kingdom of God that they talked about, which involves the re-establishment of the house of David. These were the things He talked about after His resurrection—we see in verse 3 that He spoke of things "pertaining to the kingdom of God."<sup>18</sup>

**ESV:** The place of the disciples' assembly was the Mount of Olives (v. 12), at the foot of which lay Bethany (Luke 24:50). The disciples asked Jesus when he would **restore the kingdom to Israel** because they concluded from his resurrection and the promise of the Spirit that the messianic era had dawned and the final salvation of Israel was imminent. However, they were probably still expecting the restoration of a military and political kingdom that would drive out the Roman armies and restore national sovereignty to Israel, as had happened numerous times in the OT. Jesus corrected them, not by rejecting the question, but by telling them (Acts 1:8) that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit, not in order to triumph over Roman armies but to spread the good news of the gospel throughout the world. In other words, the return is in God's timing; in the meantime, there are other key things believers are to do.

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<sup>17</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:6). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>18</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:511). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## Acts 1:7

**And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.**

[not for you to know] Mt 24, “No man knoweth the day or the hour, only the Father.” Notice how this verse is recorded in Mark 13:32. “No man” nor the angels, neither the Son! That means there is something that the Father knows that the Son doesn’t, at least at that particular time.

Note that Jesus did NOT cancel the Kingdom of Israel. The issue here is the timing, not the event. There are promises to Israel that are yet to be fulfilled, Jesus is yet to sit on David’s Throne.

Matthew 10:5-6. Jesus sends the disciples out on a field trip, specifically sent to Israel, and *not* to the Gentiles. This is in contrast to the mission which they are about to get, which was to go into Jerusalem and Judea first, then into Samaria, then to the uttermost part of the world.

The Kingdom message was first of all aimed at Israel *exclusively*. John 1:11 states that Israel did not receive it, and because they rejected Him, Israel is set aside for awhile (see Romans 11:25).

Acts is a transition between the Kingdom message, which is the primary thing we see in the Gospels, and the peculiar mystery which we call the Church. The Book of Revelation is going to be the transition from the Church (Chapters 2-3) and the ushering in of the Kingdom.

**Barnes: It is not for you to know.** The question of the apostles respected the time of the restoration; it was not whether he *would* do it. Accordingly, his answer meets precisely their inquiry; and he tells them *in general* that the time of the great events of God's kingdom was not to be understood by them. A similar question they had asked in Matthew 24:3, "Tell us when shall these things be?"

Jesus answered them *then* by showing them certain signs which should precede his coming, and by saying, (Matthew 24:36) "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." God has uniformly reprov'd a vain curiosity on such points, 1 Thessalonians 5:1,2, 2 Peter 3:10, Luke 12:39,40.

**It is not for you to know the times, &c.**—implying not only that this was *not* the time, but that the question was irrelevant to their present business and future work.<sup>19</sup>

Some conclude from the Lord’s response that the apostles had a false concept of the kingdom. But this is wrong. Christ did not accuse them of this. If the followers of the Lord Jesus had an incorrect view, this would have been the time for Him to correct it.

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<sup>19</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 1:7). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

The fact is, Christ taught the coming of an earthly, literal kingdom (cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke 19:11-27; 22:28-30). Acts 1:3 states that the Lord instructed the disciples about the kingdom; He certainly gave them the right impression as to its character and future coming. What Jesus discussed here (v. 7) was the *time* of the coming of the kingdom. The Greek word for **times** (*chronous*) basically describes duration of times, and the word for **dates** (*kairous*) refers to both length of times and kinds of times (as in, e.g., “hard times”). The disciples were **not . . . to know** either the times or the critical periods **the Father had set by His . . . authority**. Later, further revelation would be made concerning these (cf. 1 Thes. 5:1).<sup>20</sup>

**McGee:** He let them know, at this particular time, that the kingdom would not be established. Rather, He would call out a people to His name, the church. In chapter 15 of Acts, when the apostles met for the first council in Jerusalem, James pointed out this fact: “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:14–18). This is what God is doing today. He is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people to His name. That is, God is calling out of the world those people who will trust Christ, and the Holy Spirit baptizes them into the body of believers, the church.

So when the apostles asked Jesus whether He would restore the kingdom “at this time,” His answer was that this was not the subject for discussion at that time. Nor is it the subject for discussion today. There are a great many people who say to me, “Don’t you think the Lord will be coming soon?” Well, now, I’ll let you in on something that is confidential between you and me: I do believe that He is coming soon. However, I don’t have any authority to tell you that He is coming soon, because I don’t know. Our Lord said it is not for us to know the times or the seasons. That is not the important part for us.

I do believe in prophecy. However, I think one can overemphasize it. To be built up in the faith you need more than a prophetic study.

Then what is our business today? Notice again that the Lord did not rebuke them. Instead, He showed that He had something else in mind. There is something else for us to do. It is not for us to know the times nor the seasons—the Father has put those in His own power—but here is your commission:<sup>21</sup>

**Spurgeon:** Humble waiting upon God, and joyful work for him, are the best cures for excessive curiosity.

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cf. *confer*, compare  
v. verse

e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

<sup>20</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:354). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>21</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:511). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## Acts 1:8

**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.**

[shall receive power after..] Didn't they already have power? They went around Judea casting out demons, healing the sick...

Jerusalem and Judea - Acts 1 through 7

Samaria - Acts 8 through 12

Uttermost parts - Acts 13 - 28 and continuing!

“Be my witness” - note that He doesn't say “witness,” but “BE my witness.” Be His evidence, His credentials, His arguments..., be His representative!

[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] The 2nd New Testament prophecy in Acts (Acts 1:8, fulfilled Acts 2:1-39 and to be completely fulfilled in the tribulation and Millennium. The next question is in Acts 1:11.

[power] Greek: *dunamis* (GSN-1411), inherit power capable of reproducing itself like a dynamo.

Translated "power" 75 times (2 Peter 1:3,16; Matthew 6:13; Matthew 22:29; Matthew 24:29-30; Matthew 26:64; Mark 9:1; Mark 12:24; Mark 13:25-26; Mark 14:62; Luke 1:17,35; Luke 4:14,36; Luke 5:17; Luke 9:1; Luke 10:19; Luke 21:26,27; Luke 22:69; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Acts 3:12; Acts 4:7,33; Acts 6:8; Acts 8:10; Acts 10:38; Romans 1:4,16,20; Romans 8:38; Romans 9:17; Romans 15:13,19; 1 Cor. 1:18,24; 1 Cor. 2:4-5; 1 Cor. 4:19-20; 1 Cor. 5:4; 1 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:24,43; 2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Cor. 6:7; 2 Cor. 8:3; 2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Cor. 13:4; Ephes. 1:19; Ephes. 3:7,20; Phil. 3:10; 1 Thes. 1:5; 2 Thes. 1:11; 2 Thes. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:7-8; 1 Tim. 3:5; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 6:5; Hebrews 7:16; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 Peter 3:22; Rev. 4:11; Rev. 5:12; Rev. 7:12; Rev. 11:17; Rev. 13:2; Rev. 15:8; Rev. 17:13; Rev. 19:1); "ability" (Matthew 25:15); "strength" (1 Cor. 15:56; 2 Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 12:9; Hebrews 11:11; Rev. 1:16; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 12:10); "might" (Ephes. 1:21; Ephes. 3:16; Col. 1:11; 2 Peter 2:11); "mighty" (Romans 15:19; 2 Thes. 1:7); "mightily" (Col. 1:29); "mighty work" (Matthew 11:20,21,23; Matthew 13:54,58; Matthew 14:2; Mark 6:2,5,14; Luke 10:13; Luke 19:37); "mighty deed" (2 Cor. 12:12); "wonderful work" (Matthew 7:22); "miracle" (Mark 9:39; Acts 2:22; Acts 8:13; Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 12:10,28; Galatians 3:5; Hebrews 2:4 "worker of miracles" (1 Cor. 12:29); "abundance" (Rev. 18:3); "violence" (Hebrews 11:34); "virtue" (Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19; Luke 8:46); and "meaning" (1 Cor. 14:11).

[uttermost part of the earth] The great commission and gospel benefits were to be worldwide, not to the Jews only, or for the first century only.

**[all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us]** This divine power is capable of giving one all things of life and godliness through the proper knowledge.

**[to glory and virtue]** The object of Christian calling.

**Barnes: Ye shall be witnesses.** For this purpose they were appointed; and for this design they had been with him for more than three years. They had seen his manner of life, his miracles, his meekness, his sufferings; they had listened to his instructions, had conversed and eaten with him as a friend; they had seen him after he was risen, and were about to see him ascend to heaven; and they were *qualified* to bear witness to all these things in all parts of the earth, They were so numerous, that it could not be pretended that they were deceived; they had been so intimate with him and his plans, that they could testify of him; and there was no motive but conviction of the truth, that could lead them to all these sacrifices in making known the Saviour.

Power from the Holy Spirit is not limited to strength beyond the ordinary—that power also involves courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority. The disciples would need all these gifts to fulfill their mission. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you can experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Jesus promised the disciples that they would receive power to witness after they received the Holy Spirit. Notice the progression: (1) they would receive the Holy Spirit, (2) he would give them power, and (3) they would witness with extraordinary results. Often we try to reverse the order and witness by our own power and authority. Witnessing is not showing what we can do for God. It is showing and telling what God has done for us.

Jesus had instructed his disciples to witness to people of all nations about him (Matthew 28:19-20). But they were told to wait first for the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49). God has important work for you to do for him, but you must do it by the power of the Holy Spirit. We often like to get on with the job, even if it means running ahead of God. But waiting is sometimes part of God's plan. Are you waiting and listening for God's complete instructions, or are you running ahead of his plans? We need God's timing and power to be truly effective.

**and ye shall be witnesses unto me ... in Jerusalem ... in all Judea ... and unto the uttermost part of the earth**—*This order of apostolic preaching and success supplies the proper key to the plan of the Acts*, which relates first the progress of the Gospel “in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria” (the first through ninth chapters), and then “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (the tenth through twenty-eighth chapters).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 1:8). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

**JNTC:** To be Yeshua's **witnesses** in both word and deed means communicating the verbal content of the Gospel and living God's way and not our own (Lk 9:23–25&N). This is the central task of the people of God, but it can be accomplished only with power from the *Ruach HaKodesh*. Compare the Great Commission (Mt 28:18–20, Mk 16:15–18, Lk 24:47–49, Yn 20:21–23).

The *talmidim* are to start evangelizing where they are, **in Yerushalayim**, the center of the Jewish people. Then they are to move out into **all Y'hudah** (Judea, the Jewish countryside) **and Shomron** (Samaria, populated by half-Jews; see Yn 4:9N), and finally, **in fact**, to go **to the ends of the earth**, that is, to reach Gentile peoples. The verse serves as a table of contents for the book of Acts. Chapters 1–6 deal with Yerushalayim, 6:1–8:3 shows how the Yerushalayim community was forced into the surrounding area, and chapters 8–9 include several instances of ministry in Y'hudah and Shomron. Beginning with chapter 10 we are introduced to the gradual spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, first through Kefa but especially through Sha'ul. Numerous successes are reported, and the book concludes with Sha'ul's successfully communicating the Gospel in the very heart and center of Gentile civilization, Rome.

The Body of the Messiah has for the most part not taken seriously Yeshua's injunction to communicate the Gospel first to the Jewish people; see Ro 1:16&N. In one sense the Gospel has already reached **the ends of the earth**—the Bible, or at least parts of it, have been translated into some 2,000 languages. Yet this does not excuse what has been, by and large, the Messianic Community's failure to reach the Jewish people with the Gospel. The Church, instead of developing mistaken theology to excuse its neglect (Yn 14:6N) or becoming exasperated when Jews reject their message, should communicate God's love and truth while seeking his wisdom on how to address issues Jewish people raise in connection with Yeshua, the New Testament, Christianity and religion in general. My own books, including this one, aim to forward the endeavor.<sup>23</sup>

**McGee:** This is the commission that still holds for today. This is not given only to a corporate body, to the church as a body; it is not a corporate commission. This is a very personal command to each believer—personally, privately. This was given to these men even before the Holy Spirit had come and formed the church. It is a direct command for you and for me today. It is our business to get the Word of God out to the world. We can't say that it is up to the church to send missionaries and to give out the gospel, and then sit back and let others do it. The all-important question is whether *you* are getting out the Word of God. Have you gone to the ends of the earth as a witness to the gospel? Or do you support a missionary or a radio program that does? Are you personally involved? Today there are a great many people who want to talk about the times and seasons of His coming, but they don't want to get involved in getting out the Word of God. But that is His commission—not only to the apostles—that is His commission to you and me. I am of the opinion that if the Lord should suddenly appear to you or to me right where we are at this moment, He would not talk about the time of His coming, but He would talk about getting out the gospel. He wants people to be saved. This is our commission.

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<sup>23</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:8). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

In order to get this gospel out, we need power. That was His promise: “Ye shall receive power.” And we need the leading of the Lord. Although it is our business today to get out the Word of God, there is no power in us, there is no power in the church, but there *is* power in the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who moves through an individual or through the church or through a radio program. The question is whether we permit Him to do so. “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”

“Ye shall be witnesses unto me.” Our witness is to Christ. He is the center of attraction. “In Jerusalem,” which applied to us means our hometown, there should be a witness to Christ. “All Judaea” is equivalent to our community; “Samaria” represents the other side of the tracks, the folk we don’t associate with. Although we may not meet with these people socially, we are to take the gospel to them. Of course we can’t associate with everybody. We can select our friends as everyone else does. That is part of the freedom which we have. There are folk who wouldn’t want to associate with us. There are lots of folk who wouldn’t want me around; I would crimp their style. But we have both the privilege and the responsibility to get the Word of God out to folk whether or not we associate with them socially.

Finally, this witness to Christ is to go to the uttermost part of the earth. We never should lose sight of the fact that this is the Lord’s intention. He has told us if we love Him to keep His commandments. His command is personal. We can’t pass this off on the crowd, and say “The church is doing it; so I don’t need to get involved.” How much are *you* involved, friend? What is *your* witness to Christ?<sup>24</sup>

**ESV:** Jesus corrected the disciples' questions (v. 6) with a commission: “this time” (v. 6) would be for them a time of witnessing for the gospel, and the scope of their witness was not to be just Israel but the world. Verse 8 is the thematic statement for all of Acts. It begins with the Spirit's power that stands behind and drives the witness to Jesus. Then it provides a rough outline of the book: **Jerusalem** (chs. 1–7), **Judea and Samaria** (chs. 8–12), and the **end of the earth** (chs. 13–28). **you will receive power.** Interpreters differ over whether the Holy Spirit was at work in the lives of ordinary believers prior to Pentecost in a lesser way or not at all, except for empowering for special tasks. On either view, something new that needed to be waited for was here. This powerful new work of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost brought several beneficial results: more effectiveness in witness and ministry (1:8), effective proclamation of the gospel (cf. Matt. 28:19), power for victory over sin (Acts 2:42–46; Rom. 6:11–14; 8:13–14; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10), power for victory over Satan and demonic forces (Acts 2:42–46; 16:16–18; 2 Cor. 10:3–4; Eph. 6:10–18; 1 John 4:4), and a wide distribution of gifts for ministry (Acts 2:16–18; 1 Cor. 12:7, 11; 1 Pet. 4:10; cf. Num. 11:17, 24–29). The disciples likely understood “power” in this context to include both the power to preach the gospel effectively and also the power (through the Holy Spirit) to work miracles confirming the message. The same word (Gk. *dynamis*) is used at least seven other times in Acts to refer to power to work miracles in connection with gospel proclamation (see Acts 2:22; 3:12; 4:7; 6:8; 8:10; 10:38; 19:11).

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<sup>24</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:512). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## Acts 1:9

**And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.**

Apparently on the Mount of Olives (we know this from other passages). While He was speaking to them, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. This is important as this is how He is coming back!

**while they beheld, he was taken up**—See on Lu 24:50–53. Lest it should be thought He had disappeared when they were looking in some other direction, and so was only *concluded* to have gone up to heaven, it is here expressly said that “*while they were looking* He was taken up, and a cloud received Him *out of their sight*.” So Elijah, “If thou *see me* when I am taken from thee” (2Ki 2:10); “And Elisha *saw* it” (Ac 1:12). (See on Lu 9:32.)<sup>25</sup>

**JNTC: A cloud hid him .... Yeshua ... will come back in just the same way**, fulfilling Daniel 7:13 and Yeshua’s predictions (Mt 26:64; Mk 14:62; Lk 21:27; Rv 1:7, 13; 14:14). In the *Tanakh* a cloud often expresses God’s glory (e.g., the pillar of cloud, Exodus 13:21), his *Sh.khinah* (“manifest presence,” MJ 1:2–3N).

The reply of the **two men dressed in white**, evidently angels (see 7:53N, MJ 13:2N), supports our hope (Ti 2:13) that Yeshua is coming back and at the same time implies a partial answer to the disciples’ question in v. 6: Yeshua will restore self-rule to Israel and bring peace to the earth when he comes **back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.**<sup>26</sup>

**McGee:** The ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ is an important and significant miracle in the ministry of the Lord. This is especially true for our space age when eyes are turned aloft and we are talking about travel in space. Space travel isn’t really new. The Lord Jesus took off, and He didn’t need a launching pad or a space suit or a missile.

There was a cloud to receive Him. What kind of a cloud was that? Was it a moisture cloud? No, this was the same *shekinah* glory cloud that had filled the tabernacle. In His high priestly prayer He had prayed: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). When He was born into this world, He was wrapped in swaddling clothes. When He left this earth, He was wrapped in glory clouds. This is the way He returned to the Father’s right hand.

While the apostles are watching all this, two angels appear to them. They look like men, and they have an important message.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 1:9). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>26</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:9). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>27</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:513). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**[taken up]** He ascended (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; John 3:13; Ephes. 1:20; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22).

**[cloud received him]** Literal clouds, not angels (Daniel 7:13-14; 1 Thes. 4:17; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 11:12; Rev. 14:14).

**ESV:** Elsewhere in Scripture a **cloud** is often associated with a manifestation of God's presence (Luke 9:28–36). This was not an ordinary rain cloud but the cloud of glory that surrounds the very presence of God. **as they were looking on, he was lifted up.** This visible ascension of Jesus into heaven indicates that Jesus retains a physical human body, as a man, though he is exalted to the right hand of God, i.e., given direct executive rule in God's spiritual kingdom (Matt. 28:18). When coupled with Acts 1:11, it also indicates that he will someday return in the same physical body. The amazing miracle of the incarnation is not only that the eternal Son of God took human nature on himself and became a person who is simultaneously God and man, but also that he will remain both fully God and fully man forever.

### **Acts 1:10**

**And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;**

**“Two men in white apparel”**- Moses and Elijah? They are seen in Rev 11, perhaps also in Gen 18? We don't know for sure who these men are in this scene, but it is an interesting thought. Two is the number of witness and it may be nothing more than that.

**[toward heaven]** Toward the spot where He had disappeared into the cloud.

**[two men stood by them]** Many believe that these were two angels who had not been seen descending, showing angels can appear and disappear (Hebrews 13:2).<sup>28</sup>

**[white apparel]** Angels and God have always appeared in white garments (Daniel 7:9; Matthew 17:2; Matthew 28:3; John 20:12; Rev. 4:4). The redeemed will also be dressed in white (Rev. 3:4,5,18; Rev. 6:11; Rev. 7:9,13; Rev. 19:8,14).

### **Acts 1:11**

**Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**

They do give us this interesting prophecy that apparently, Jesus will come in the same way He left! He will come in a cloud, and when His foot touches the Mount of Olives there will be an earthquake, and it will split (Zech 14:4).

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<sup>28</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

**(Zechariah 14:4)** *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

**[men of Galilee]** The word "men" was a common term in addressing a company (Acts 1:11,16; Acts 2:14,22,29,37; Acts 3:12; Acts 5:35; Acts 7:2; Acts 13:15,16,26,38; Acts 15:7,13; Acts 17:22; Acts 19:35; Acts 21:28; Acts 22:1; Acts 23:1,6; Acts 28:17).

**[why stand ye gazing up into heaven?]** This is the second question in Acts. The next question is in Acts 2:7.

**[this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come]** The 3rd New Testament prophecy in Acts (Acts 1:11, unfulfilled; will be fulfilled at second advent, Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21). The next prophecy will be in Acts 2:17. "This same Jesus," not another; His own flesh and bones, not a spirit (Luke 24:37-43).

**[in like manner]** The descent will be exactly like the ascension: actual, physical, literal, visible, with clouds, and to the exact place. Men will again see Him with the natural eyes (Acts 1:12; Daniel 7:13-14; Zech. 14:1-5; Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 19:11-21).

## **Acts 1:12**

**Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.**

**[Olivet]** The place of His second coming (Zech. 14:4). Therefore, He will not come to America or any other place to reign.

**(Zech. 14:4)** *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

**[sabbath day's journey]** About one mile.

After Christ was taken up into heaven, the disciples immediately returned to Jerusalem and had a prayer meeting. Jesus had said they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days, so they waited and prayed. When you face a difficult task, an important decision, or a baffling dilemma, don't rush into the work and just hope it comes out the way it should. Instead, your first step should be to pray for the Holy Spirit's power and guidance.

**JNTC: The *Shabbat*-walk distance from the Mount of Olives.** The Mount of Olives is east of what is today called the Old City, which corresponds (very approximately) to what was meant anciently by Yerushalayim. The rabbinic rules for *Shabbat*, with certain exceptions, limit walking outside a walled city to 2,000 cubits (about 0.57 mile). According to Lk 24:50–51 Yeshua left his *talmidim* and ascended into heaven from Beit-Anyah, which is on the mount's south slope. The olive grove in the garden of Gat-Sh'manim, on its west slope, has trees that may have been living in Yeshua's time. Jewish tradition, based on Zechariah 14:3–5, says that the Messiah will appear on the Mount of Olives; vv. 9–12 tie Yeshua's first coming and his departure with his reappearance in a manner that will fulfill that expectation.<sup>29</sup>

**ESV: A Sabbath day's journey** was the maximum distance one could travel on the Sabbath without it constituting work. This was not an explicit OT law but a later Jewish tradition. The rabbis set the limit at 2,000 cubits (about 0.6 miles or 1 km). Jews at Qumran had a lower travel limit.

### **Acts 1:13**

**And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Simon *Zelotes*, and Judas *the brother of James*.**

**[upper]** Greek: *anogeon* (GSN-508), above the ground, the second floor of a building. The Hebrew word is *ʿaliyah* (HSN-5944). Most Eastern houses had the upper room on the roof with outside stairs (2 Kings 1:2; 2 Kings 23:12; 2 Chron. 3:9; Ezekiel 42:5; Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12; Acts 1:13; Acts 9:37-39; Acts 20:8). It was usually well furnished and carpeted if it belonged to the wealthy class. Some think this upper room was in the wealthy home of John Mark in the temple area where the Holy Spirit fell and which became a meeting place for early Christians (Luke 24:8-12; Acts 1:13; Acts 12:12). At the passover it was customary for homes in Jerusalem to have chambers prepared for the many people who attended the feast from all parts of Judaism.

**[abode both Peter, and James ...]** Shows that the upper room of Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12; Acts 1:13 was in a private residence where the disciples lived during these days. They also spent regular times in the temple courts in prayer and praise during this period (Luke 24:53).

**JNTC: The upstairs room where they were staying,** possibly the same as in Lk 22:12, possibly another house or apartment in the city (2:2 below), or possibly a room in the Temple complex made available for meeting (Lk 24:53).

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<sup>29</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:12). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

The traditional English names of the eleven emissaries named are Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, Simon the Zealot and Judas the brother (or son) of James.<sup>30</sup>

### **Acts 1:14**

**These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.**

Scholars are divided as to where Chapter 2 happens, some feel that because of this verse, it happened in the Upper Room. Other scholars believe that while they abode here, they had their meetings in the Temple. One reason for the Temple stance is that it would have to be a place where you could baptize 3000 people, that would be a bit tough in the Upper Room.

The disciples are listed here. Note that Bartholomew and Nathaniel are two names for the same guy. Philip is the “press agent,” as every time you see him he is introducing someone to Jesus Christ. Thomas is the skeptic.

**[with his brethren]** In this verse His brethren are his disciples and His followers.

**(Matthew 12:46-50)** <sup>46</sup>While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. <sup>47</sup>Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. <sup>48</sup>But he answered and said unto him that told him, *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?* <sup>49</sup>And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, *Behold my mother and my brethren!* <sup>50</sup>*For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

**[with his brethren]** Mary had other children. Jesus did have brothers and sisters (Mt 13:55; Mark 6:3). John 7:5 notes that they did not believe in Him, yet after His resurrection two of them become very prominent, James and Jude. It is plainly stated that Jesus had four brothers (i.e., half brothers), James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. He had at least three half sisters also: "are not his sisters here with us?" These are referred to as "his own kin." His mother, brethren, and sisters are used literally (Matthew 13:55-56; Mark 6:3).

Mary (Jesus' mother) is praying with them to the Father, NOT praying to Mary! (And this is the last time we read of her in the scripture.)

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<sup>30</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:13). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

[**continued**] Greek: *proskartereo* (GSN-4342), to preserve in a thing, or to adhere firmly to (Acts 2:42,46; Acts 6:4; Acts 8:13; Acts 10:7; Romans 12:12; Romans 13:6; Col. 4:2; Mark 3:9).

[**with one accord**] With one mind (Acts 2:1,46; Acts 4:24; Acts 5:12; Acts 7:57; Acts 8:6; Acts 12:20; Acts 15:25; Acts 18:12; Acts 19:29; Romans 15:6).

[**women**] The women that followed Christ from Galilee (Matthew 27:55-56).

**Barnes: With one accord.** With one mind; unitedly; unanimously. There were no schisms, no divided interests, no discordant purposes. This is a beautiful picture of devotion, and a specimen of what social worship ought now to be, and a beautiful illustration of Psalms 133. The apostles felt that they had one great object; and their deep grief at the loss of their Master, their doubts and perplexities, led them, as all afflictions ought to lead us, to the throne of grace.

**Barnes: With the women.** The women that had followed the Lord Jesus from Galilee, Luke 8:2,3, 23:49,55, 24:10, Matthew 27:55. The women particularly mentioned are Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, the mother of Zebedee's children, Joanna the wife of Chuza, and Susanna. Besides these, there were others whose names are not mentioned. Most of them were relatives of the apostles or of our Saviour; and it is not improbable that some of them were wives of the apostles. Peter is known to have been married, (Matthew 8:14,) and had his wife in attendance, (1 Corinthians 9:5;) and the same was doubtless true of some of the other apostles, (1 Corinthians 9:5.) Mary is here particularly mentioned, the mother of Jesus; showing that she now cast in her lot with the apostles. She had, besides, been particularly entrusted to the care of John, (John 19:26,27,) and had no other home. This is the last time she is mentioned in the New Testament.

**JNTC: Singlemindedly.** Greek *omothumadon*, used 10 times? in Acts. The community of believers must be united in heart and mind in order to have power in prayer. The word is used in the Septuagint at Exodus 19:8, where the people of Israel “answered together [Hebrew *yachdav*, Greek *omothumadon*], ‘All that *Adonai* has said we will do.’ ”

**Along with the women.** Judaism always granted an important place to women; however, in the synagogue men and women are traditionally separated by a dividing wall or curtain (*m. chitzah*; see Ep 2:14N). The reason given is that it diminishes sexual attention and passion, which interfere with prayer. But in a powerful prayer meeting such concerns vanish as all turn to God. Moreover, this group functioned more like a family than a congregational assembly. Nevertheless, it is not clear that the phrase, “**along with the women**,” implies that women and men were together.

**Miryam (Yeshua’s mother), and his brothers.** See Mt 1:16–2:11, Lk 1:26–2:52, Yn 2:4, 7:3–5 and notes there. Yeshua’s family, however uncertain they may have been before, were convinced of Yeshua’s Messiahship after his resurrection.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:14). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

**McGee:** I rejoice that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. Her reputation has now been cleared. At this point it was obvious that Jesus was the Son of God, and virgin born, as she had claimed.

The attitude of the apostles and the other believers was that of oneness, of prayer, and of waiting.

There is no way that we can duplicate this period today. Remember that this is in a time period, a time capsule, between His ascension into heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit. You and I do not live in that time period. It cannot be duplicated. We are not waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit; He came over nineteen hundred years ago.<sup>32</sup>

### **They Believed in Each Other (Acts 1:12–14)**

They obeyed their Lord's commandment and returned to Jerusalem "with great joy" (Luke 24:52). It is likely that the group met in the Upper Room where the last Passover had been celebrated, but they were also found at worship in the temple (Luke 24:53).

What a variety of people made up that first assembly of believers! There were men and women, apostles and "ordinary" people, and even members of the Lord's earthly family (see Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3). His "brethren" had not believed in Him during His ministry (John 7:5), but they did come to trust Him after the Resurrection (Acts 1:14). Mary was there as a member of the assembly, participating in worship and prayer along with the others. The center of their fellowship was the risen Christ, and all of them adored and magnified Him.

How easy it would have been for someone to bring division into this beautiful assembly of humble people! The members of the Lord's family might have claimed special recognition, or Peter could have been criticized for his cowardly denial of the Saviour. Or perhaps Peter might have blamed John, because it was John who brought him into the high priest's house (John 18:15–16). John might well have reminded the others that *he* had faithfully stood at the cross, and had even been chosen by the Saviour to care for His mother. But there was none of this. In fact, nobody was even arguing over who among them was the greatest!

The key phrase is "with one accord," a phrase that is found six times in Acts (1:14; 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; and note also 2:44). There was among these believers a wonderful unity that bound them together in Christ (Ps. 133; Gal. 3:28), the kind of unity that Christians need today. "I do not want the walls of separation between different orders of Christians to be destroyed," said the godly British preacher Rowland Hill, "but only lowered, that we may shake hands a little easier over them!"

It is not enough for Christians to have faith in the Lord; they must also have faith in one another. To these 120 people (Acts 1:15) the Lord had given the solemn responsibility of bearing witness to a lost world, and none of them could do the job alone. They would experience severe persecution in the days ahead, and one of them, James, would lay down his life for Christ. It was not a time for asking, "Who is the greatest?" or, "Who committed the greatest sin?" It was a time for praying together and standing

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<sup>32</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:513). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

together in the Lord. As they waited and worshiped together, they were being better prepared for the work that lay before them.<sup>33</sup>

### **Acts 1:15**

**And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)**

**[those days]** The ten days waiting for the Spirit (cp. Acts 1:3 and Acts 2:1 with Leviticus 23:10-16).

**[together]** In the same place (Acts 1:15; Acts 2:1,44; Acts 4:26).

**[hundred and twenty]** This was the number of men that the Jews required to form a council in a city.

**Barnes: The number of the names.** The number of the *persons*, or *individuals*. The word *name* is often used to denote the person, Revelation 3:4, Acts 4:12, 18:15, Ephesians 1:21. In Syriac it is, "the assembly of men was about an hundred and twenty." This was the first assembly convened to transact the business of the church; and it is not a little remarkable that the vote in so important a matter as electing an apostle was by the entire church. It settles the question that the election of a minister and pastor should be by the church, and not be imposed on them by any right or presentation by individuals, or by any ecclesiastical body. If a case could ever occur where a minister should be chosen by the ministry only, such a case was here in the election of another apostle. And yet in this the entire church had a voice. Whether this was *all* the true church at this time, does not appear from the history. This expression cannot mean that there were no more Christians, but that these were all that had convened in the upper room. It is almost certain that our Saviour had, by his own ministry, brought many others to be his true followers.

### **Acts 1:16**

**Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.**

**[this scripture must needs have been fulfilled]** Referring to Acts 1:20.

**The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David**—This is a strong attestation to the Divine inspiration of the book of Psalms. They were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and spoken by the mouth of David.

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<sup>33</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Ac 1:12). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

### **Acts 1:17**

**For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.**

**[obtained part of this ministry]** From this it is clear that Judas had actually obtained part in the ministry. (Acts 1:17,20,25; John 6:70; John 17:12; Psalm 41:9; Psalm 69:22;). **He was numbered with us.** He was chosen as an apostle by the Lord Jesus, Luke 6:13-16, This does not mean that he was a true Christian, but that he was reckoned among the apostles. Jesus knew that he never loved him. Long before he betrayed him, he declared that he was a devil, John 6:70. He knew his whole character when he chose him, John 2:25.

### **Acts 1:18**

**Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.**

**[Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity]** No doubt this refers to the Pharisees taking the money of Judas and buying his burying place (Matthew 27:6-8).

**[falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out]** Lightfoot says that the devil took Judas up in the air and dashed his body on the ground after strangling him. Luke records that some extraordinary catastrophe occurred and he fell, thus mutilating himself (Acts 1:18-19; cp. Matthew 27:5). There are some who believe that “falling headlong he burst” refers to self impalement.

How could someone who had been with Jesus daily betray him? Judas received the same calling and teaching as everyone else. But he chose to reject Christ’s warning as well as his offers of mercy. Judas hardened his heart and joined in the plot with Jesus’ enemies to put him to death. Judas remained unrepentant to the end, and he finally committed suicide. Although Jesus predicted this would happen, it was Judas’s choice. Those privileged to be *close* to the truth are not necessarily *committed* to the truth.

**JNTC: Fell to his death** (or: “swelled up”). At Mt 27:3–10 we read that the *cohanim* bought the **field** and used it as a cemetery for foreigners, hence its name (v. 19), and that **Y’hudah** from K’riot died by hanging himself. The differences between the two accounts can be resolved thus: the *cohanim* considered the money Y’hudah returned as his and bought the field in his name. The Greek for “fell to his death” means, literally, “having become prone.” Augustine harmonizes by suggesting he hanged himself and then fell.<sup>34</sup>

### **Acts 1:19**

**And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.**

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<sup>34</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:18). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

**It was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem**—The repentance of Judas, his dying testimony in behalf of our Lord’s innocence, and his tragic death, were publicly known, as was also the transaction about the purchase of the field, and hence arose the name by which it was publicly known. These circumstances must have lessened the credit of the chief priests, and have prepared the public mind to receive the Gospel of the kingdom, when preached to them after the day of Pentecost.

**Field of Blood**, bought with blood-money, where Y’hudah spilled his own blood, and/or where foreigners were buried. All three explanations are apposite.<sup>35</sup>

**JNTC:** *Chakal-D. ma* is Aramaic.

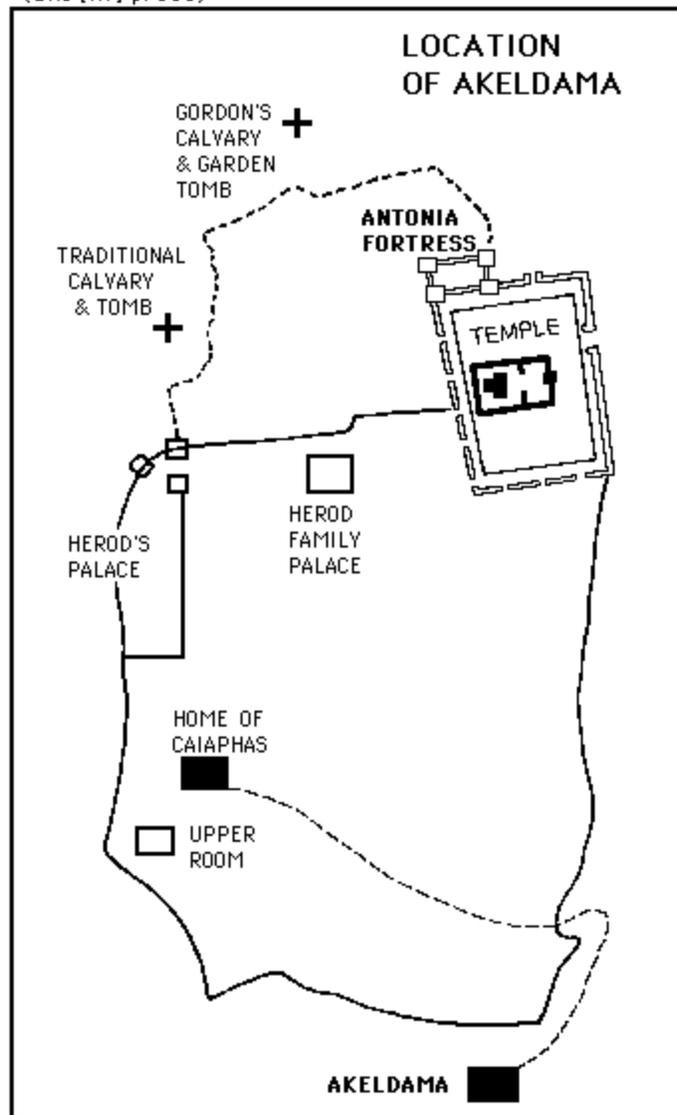
**Their language.** People spoke both Aramaic and Hebrew; the New Testament quotes words from both languages.

**Akeldama** is Aramaic for **Field of Blood**. The exact location of that field is unknown, but traditionally it is believed to be near the Greek Orthodox Church and Convent of Saint Oniprius, where the Valley of Hinnom joins the Kidron Valley, southeast of Jerusalem (see map).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:19). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>36</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:356). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



### Acts 1:20

**For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take.**

Peter quotes from Ps 69:25; Ps 109:8 (from the Septuagint version).

**[For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein]** The 1st Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Acts (Acts 1:20; Psalm 69:25-28; Psalm 109:8-15). The next prophecy fulfilled will be in Acts 2:16. Note that in Psalm 69:25-28 Judas is referred to as having his habitation desolate and his name blotted out of the book of life (cp. Exodus 32:32-33; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 22:18-19).

**(Psalm 69:25-28)** *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. [26] For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. [27] Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. [28] Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

**(Psalm 109:8)** *Let his days be few; and let another take his office.*

**[bishoprick]** Greek: *episkope* (GSN-1984), "overseer" (Acts 20:28) or "bishop" (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 2:25).

### **Acts 1:21**

**Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,**

### **Acts 1:22**

**Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.**

Peter assumes that it must be someone who had been there for the whole tour of duty.

**[ordained to be a witness]** None of the usual Greek words for ordained are used here. It is *ginomai* (GSN-1096) which has the sense of being or becoming. Here it means to become a witness.

**[resurrection]** This was the great subject of the apostolic ministry (Acts 2:24,31-32; Acts 4:2,10,33; Acts 10:40; Acts 13:30; Acts 17:3,18,32; Acts 23:6; Acts 24:15,21; 1 Cor. 15; Hebrews 6:2; etc.).

**Beginning from the baptism of John**—From the time that Christ was baptized by John in Jordan; for it was at that time that his public ministry properly began.

### **Acts 1:23**

**And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.**

**[appointed two]** Chose or nominated two candidates: Joseph (some texts read Josés Barnabas as in Acts 4:36) and Matthias.

**JNTC: Yosef Bar-Sabba, surnamed Justus.** Like many Jews today he had both a Gentile name (Latin), meaning “righteous,” and a Jewish one (Aramaic), meaning “son of the elder”; or possibly it should be rendered “Bar-Shabba,” “son of *Shabbat*.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Acts 1:24**

**And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, show whether of these two thou hast chosen,**

#### **They Believed in Prayer (Acts 1:15, 24–25)**

Prayer plays a significant role in the story of the church as recorded in the Book of Acts. The believers prayed for guidance in making decisions (Acts 1:15–26) and for courage to witness for Christ (Acts 4:23–31). In fact, prayer was a normal part of their daily ministry (Acts 2:42–47; 3:1; 6:4). Stephen prayed as he was being stoned (Acts 7:55–60). Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans (Acts 8:14–17), and Saul of Tarsus prayed after his conversion (Acts 9:11). Peter prayed before he raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36–43). Cornelius prayed that God would show him how to be saved (Acts 10:1–4), and Peter was on the housetop praying when God told him how to be the answer to Cornelius’ prayers (Acts 10:9).

The believers in John Mark’s house prayed for Peter when he was in prison, and the Lord delivered him both from prison and from death (Acts 12:1–11). The church at Antioch fasted and prayed before sending out Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:1–3; and note 14:23). It was at a prayer meeting in Philippi that God opened Lydia’s heart (Acts 16:13), and another prayer meeting in Philippi opened the prison doors (Acts 16:25ff). Paul prayed for his friends before leaving them (Acts 20:36; 21:5). In the midst of a storm, he prayed for God’s blessing (Acts 27:35), and after a storm, he prayed that God would heal a sick man (Acts 28:8). In almost every chapter in Acts you find a reference to prayer, and the book makes it very clear that something happens when God’s people pray.

This is certainly a good lesson for the church today. Prayer is both the thermometer and the thermostat of the local church; for the “spiritual temperature” either goes up or down, depending on how God’s people pray. John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, said, “Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan.” In the Book of Acts, you see prayer accomplishing all of these things.<sup>38</sup>

### **Acts 1:25**

**That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.**

**[his own place]** The place suited or prepared for him and which he chose by sinning (Matthew 25:41; Matthew 26:24; Rev. 21:8; Psalm 9:17).

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<sup>37</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:23). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>38</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Ac 1:15). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

**[ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell]** Shows that Judas actually had a part in and "from which" he fell by sin.

### **Acts 1:26**

**And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.**

**[gave forth their lots]** Today we would vote, but then the common way was to put the names on stones, parchment, or wood into an urn and after prayer let somebody put his hand in and draw out one of the lots (cp. Leviticus 16:8-9; Joshua 14:2).

**[he was numbered with the eleven apostles]** This is the Holy Spirit's record of the choice of the twelfth apostle long after it was done by lot. That Paul did not take the place of Judas is clear from 1 Cor. 15:5-8 where he does not consider himself as one of the twelve.

Proverbs 16:33 ordains the use of the lot in the Old Testament. Often when they had something to decide they would cast lots. They cast lots for the land when Joshua conquered the land and had to divide the land, they did it by casting lots.

**(Proverbs 16:33)** *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.*

Most scholars believe that this was a gigantic mistake because they believe that the one God had appointed was Paul who was yet to surface. So most scholars view Paul as the twelfth apostle and not Matthias.

Some say Acts 2:14 speaks of "the eleven," and not "the twelve."

**(Acts 2:14)** *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

Also Paul wrote 14 epistles, nine of them begin with the defense of his apostleship. For example, Galatians 1:1, and also Romans, both of the Corinthian letters, Ephesians, all start off by Paul having to establish his apostleship. However, others appropriately point out that Paul was clearly appointed apostle of the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Rom 11:13; 15:16).

**(Galatians 1:1)** *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)*

**(Romans 1:1)** *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*

**(1 Corinthians 1:1)** *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,*

**(2 Corinthians 1:1)** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:*

**(Ephesians 1:1)** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

The disciples became *apostles*. *Disciple* means follower or learner, and *apostle* means messenger or missionary. These men now had the special assignment of spreading the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection.

With **two men** to choose from, **Joseph** (alias **Barsabbas** and **Justus**) and **Matthias**, the apostles did two things: **they prayed** (acknowledging the Lord's omniscience; cf. Ps 139:1-6; John 2:25; 4:29) and **they drew lots**. Probably the two names were written on stones placed in a container. When the stones were shaken out of the container, the first stone to fall out was considered the Lord's choice.

This is the last time in the Bible lots were said to be used to determine God's will. A couple of observations are in order. First, no moral question was involved here. It was a matter of making a choice between two men who were apparently equally qualified. Second, this procedure may have come from Proverbs 16:33 which says the decision of lots is from the Lord.

Some feel the choice of Matthias was a wrong one. It is contended that this was a poor method of choosing and Paul should have filled the vacancy left by Judas' apostasy. However, those who believe Matthias was a proper selection argue that Matthew 19:28 is Jewish in its orientation and Paul was to minister to Gentiles (Gal. 2:9). Furthermore Luke, Paul's friend and companion, acknowledged the Twelve as an official group (Acts 2:14; 6:2). Finally, there is no sense or spirit of censure in the Acts account on the selection of Matthias.<sup>39</sup>

**JNTC: They drew lots.** This was a recognized way of ascertaining God's will. Proverbs 16:33 says, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole decision is from *Adonai*," which means that what is attributed to chance, fate, luck or coincidence is determined by God. As Albert Einstein put it in objecting to quantum theory's use of probability mathematics, "God does not play dice with the universe."

This second **Mattityahu** (the first we encounter at Mt 9:9), **was added to the eleven emissaries**, not Sha'ul (Paul), as some Christians suppose. Sha'ul was indeed an emissary (see the first verse in most of his letters), but not one of the Twelve because he did not meet the requirements (vv. 21–22).<sup>40</sup>

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cf. *confer*, compare

<sup>39</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:356). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>40</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 1:26). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

**McGee:** I can't see that this was the leading of the Holy Spirit, nor that it was God's leading in the casting of lots. Is Matthias actually the one who took the place of Judas? I don't think so. I believe that, in His own time, the Lord Jesus himself appointed one to take the place of Judas Iscariot. We don't hear another word about Matthias—nothing is recorded of his ministry. I think the Holy Spirit ignored Matthias. It is my conviction that the man the Lord chose was Paul. You may ask, "Do you have an authority for that statement?" Yes. Listen to Paul as he writes to the Galatian believers: "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)" (Gal. 1:1). Paul is saying that he was chosen by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. How did He do it? Through the Holy Spirit whom He had sent into the world. The ministry of Paul certainly justifies the fact that he was the one to take Judas' place. Of course I realize that the majority of good Bible commentators disagree with me, but I am just passing on to you my own conviction.

It is remarkable, and I want to mention again how Acts 1 brings the four Gospels to a focal point. Matthew concludes with the Resurrection, Mark with the Ascension, Luke with the promise of the Holy Spirit, and John with the promise of the Second Coming. Acts 1 brings all four records together and mentions each of them. The four Gospels funnel into Acts, and Acts is the bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles.<sup>41</sup>

**Spurgeon:** No instance of the use of the lot occurs after the Spirit was given. It was an Old Testament custom, and to use it now would be idle superstition.

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<sup>41</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:514). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<b>SERMONS AND SPEECHES IN ACTS</b>						
	<b>Speakers</b>			<b>Occasions and/or Hearers</b>	<b>Cities</b>	<b>References</b>
	<b>Peter</b>	<b>Paul</b>	<b>Others</b>			
1.	Peter			Selection of successor to Judas	Jerusalem	1:16-22
2.	Peter			Signs on the day of Pentecost	Jerusalem	2:14-36
3.	Peter			Healing of lame man in the temple	Jerusalem	3:12-26
4.	Peter			Before the Sanhedrin for preaching the resurrection of Christ	Jerusalem	4:8-12
			Gamaliel	Before the Sanhedrin, regarding Peter and others	Jerusalem	5:35-39
			Stephen	Before the Sanhedrin, after Stephen was arrested	Jerusalem	7:2-53
5.	Peter			At Cornelius' house, to present the gospel to Gentiles there	Caesarea	10:34-43
6.	Peter			Defense to the church about what happened in Caesarea	Jerusalem	11:4-17
		1.	Paul	Sabbath sermon to Jews in the synagogue	Antioch of Pisidia	13:16-41
		2.	Paul and Barnabas	Crowd who wanted to worship them	Lystra	14:15-17
7.	Peter			Church council	Jerusalem	15:7-11
			James	Church council	Jerusalem	15:13-21
		3.	Paul	Athenians on Mars' Hill	Athens	17:22-31
			Demetrius	Workmen who were disturbed at Paul's preaching	Ephesus	19:25-27
			Town clerk	Riot at Ephesus	Ephesus	19:35-40
		4.	Paul	Gathering of Ephesian elders	Miletus	20:18-35
		5.	Paul	Mob of people who tried to kill Paul	Jerusalem	22:1-21
		6.	Paul	Defense before the Sanhedrin	Jerusalem	23:1-6
		7.	Paul	Defense before Felix	Caesarea	24:10-21
		8.	Paul	Defense before Festus	Caesarea	25:8, 10-11
		9.	Paul	Defense before Herod Agrippa II	Caesarea	26:1-23
		10.	Paul	Shipmates in a violent storm	Mediterranean Sea, between Crete and Malta	27:21-26
		11.	Paul	Testimony to Jewish leaders	Rome	23:17-20, 25-28

