

# Acts of the Apostles – 1

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- II. Exposition and Observations
  - A. Luke is the author by virtue of the connection to the gospel bearing his name (Luke 1:1-4).
    - 1. Luke was a companion of the apostle Paul (Col 4:14; II Tim 4:11; Philemon 1:24).
    - 2. You may observe first person pronouns (16:10-16; 20:6,13-15; 21:1-17; 27:1-28:16).
  - B. Theophilus, one of the few noble called and chosen by Christ, is the reader (Luke 1:3).
    - 1. Theo + philus combines God and love for either God is love or Beloved of God.
    - 2. Luke addresses him in his gospel as "most excellent" indicating importance (23:26).
  - C. The Purpose of Acts is to present the certain facts of the apostles' ministry in the churches.
    - 1. Acts begins where Luke ends – our Lord's ascension – and ends with Paul at Rome.
      - a. Luke records all Jesus began both to do and teach until His ascension (1:1-2).
      - b. Before ascending, He gave them a promise (Lu 24:49) and charge (24:44-48).
    - 2. There is no reason for us to doubt the identical purpose to the writing of his gospel.
      - a. The gospels declare those things most surely believed among us (Luke 1:1).
      - b. God's authors were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word - Jesus (Luke 1:2).
      - c. Luke had perfect understanding of all things from the very beginning (Lu 1:3).
      - d. He wants Theophilus to know the certainty of the things he had heard (Lu 1:4).
      - e. Luke's plan, as the others, was to write an orderly history of events (Lu 1:1,3).
      - f. With the added value of Paul's superior knowledge, Luke is very qualified.
    - 3. The church of Jesus Christ was built by the efforts of the Lord and His apostles (1:2).
      - a. They were chosen and ordained men (Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Lu 6:13-16).
      - b. Their office was the highest in the church (I Cor 12:28-30; Eph 4:11; Gal 2:9).
      - c. Their importance is indicated by their role as foundation (Ep 2:20; Rev 21:14).
      - d. Jesus and His apostles gave irrefutable evidence (Heb 2:1-4; Acts 10:39-42).
  - D. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is of great importance to the gospel of God.
    - 1. Before ascending, our Lord gave many infallible proofs of it to His apostles (1:3).
      - a. He showed Himself alive to their eyes for forty days (I Cor 15:4-7; Act 13:31).
      - b. He spoke verbally of the kingdom of God (Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:44-49).
      - c. They touched His living body after His resurrection (Matt 28:9; Luke 24:39).
      - d. He showed them His several wounds (Luke 24:36-40; John 20:19-20,26-28).
      - e. He ate and drank with them (Acts 10:41; Luke 24:41-44; John 21:9-15).
      - f. There were many other proofs, which were not recorded (John 20:30; 21:25).
    - 2. Christ's resurrection was denied by Sadducees (23:8) and false teachers (I Cor 15:12).

3. In order to be an apostle, you had to be an eyewitness of the resurrection to so witness.
  - a. They chose two men to replace Judas from those who had seen Him (1:21-22).
  - b. Paul was the greatest of the apostles, so he also saw Him (I Cor 9:1; 15:8-10).
- E. Jesus charged His apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Ghost (1:4-5).
  1. Jesus had promised a gift from the Father – the Spirit (John 14:16-18,25-26; 16:5-14).
  2. John had testified in the beginning of this Spirit baptism to the Jews (Matthew 3:7-12).
    - a. He knew his baptism of water to repentance was different to Christ’s baptisms.
    - b. Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost (Pentecost) and with fire (70 A.D.).
    - c. The tongue of fire on their heads at Pentecost was not the baptism with fire.
      - (1) The prophecy of John was fiery judgment. See Malachi 3:1-3; 4:1-6.
      - (2) The context of John was fiery judgment on those Pharisees (3:10,12).
      - (3) A cloven tongue of fire on their heads was not an immersion or burial.
  3. They were already baptized, and they already had the Holy Ghost. It would be special.
    - a. John baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize with the Spirit (Matt 3:11).
    - b. Jesus breathed on them and gave the Spirit in a measure (Jn 20:22; Lu 24:45).
  4. It was a baptism – immersion – by the inundation or flood of the Spirit’s Presence.
    - a. If enough of something is poured (Acts 2:17-18; 10:45), it can easily bury you.
    - b. When something is over and around you, it may be called baptism (I Cor 10:2).
- F. Jesus taught them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God, which they later preached (1:3).
  1. Daniel prophesied the God of heaven would set up a kingdom under Rome (Dan 2:44).
  2. This permanent kingdom would be the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven.
    - a. Mr. Scofield claims the two names are two different kingdoms (SRB, 1003).
    - b. But his wrong division is confusion (Matt 19:23-24; 3:1-2 cp Mark 1:14-15).
  3. The kingdom of God is not some future millennial kingdom of Jewish preeminence.
    - a. John the Baptist announced this kingdom under Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1-3).
    - b. Faith, repentance, and baptism enter it (Luke 16:16; Matt 11:12-13; 21:31-32).
    - c. Jesus proved God’s kingdom had come by His power over Satan (Luke 11:20).
    - d. It is not a visible kingdom but a spiritual kingdom (Luk 17:20-21; John 18:36).
    - e. The kingdom the Jews had as God’s people was taken from them (Matt 21:43).
    - f. The Pharisees did not enter the kingdom nor allow others to enter (Matt 23:13).
    - g. The kingdom is now made up of Jews and Gentiles (Mat 8:10-12; Rom 15:12).
    - h. The kingdom came in great power after 70 A.D. (Mark 9:1; Luke 21:29-32).
    - i. We worship in this kingdom today, and it shall be forever (Hebrews 12:22-29).
    - j. You are in God’s kingdom by baptism in Jesus’ name and obedience to Him.
- G. The disciples asked Jesus about the coming of the kingdom and its national prospects (1:6-7).
  1. The disciples were still ignorant, confused, and nationalistic waiting for the Spirit.
  2. They were confused at His death and resurrection (Lu 24:1-12; Mark 16:14; Jn 20:9).
  3. Jesus did not correct them here but simply acknowledged His sovereignty over events.
- H. He promises kingdom power from the Holy Ghost and commissions them as witnesses (1:8).
  1. This is known as the Great Commission (Mat 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Lu 24:46-48).
  2. This Commission was given to the eleven (Mat 28:16; Mark 16:14; Lu 24:33; Ac 1:2).
  3. The Commission included great power (Mat 28:18; Mark 16:17-18; Lu 24:49; Ac 1:8).
  4. The apostles went and did exactly as commissioned (Mark 16:19-20; Hebrews 2:1-4).
  5. Jesus foretold its completion, and they met it (Matt 24:14,33-34; Mark 13:10,30-31).
  6. Consider (Rom 1:8; 10:18; 16:19,26; Col 1:5-6,23; Tit 2:11; Acts 17:6; 21:28; 24:5)!
  7. There is not one single verse in any epistle transferring this commission to others.
  8. No one for 2000 years has had a ministry even close to that of the apostles of Jesus.
  9. We convert our brethren (James 5:19-20) and prepare to answer (Col 4:6; I Pet 3:15).
  10. Not a soul is lost by rightly applying the Commission (John 6:39; 17:2; Rom 8:29-39).
  11. For more information on this subject, see the seminar folder “The Great Commission.”

- I. Our Lord Jesus Christ will return bodily just as He ascended with great visibility (1:9-11).
  1. By our Lord's word we only have comfort and hope (I Thess 4:13-18; John 14:1-3).
  2. Our Lord's coming will bring the glorification of His saints (I Cor 15:22-26,50-57).
  3. It is our privilege to wait His coming (I Thes 1:9-10; 5:1-11; Tit 2:11-14; Heb 9:28).
  4. His coming for His saints includes horrible judgment (II Thess 1:3-10; II Tim 4:1).
  5. But our Lord's coming must FOLLOW the man of sin's 1260 years (II Thess 2:1-12).
    - a. Paul's strong warning of deception has been fulfilled by Scofield and others.
    - b. The man of sin is Rome's popes delayed by the caesars (Dan 7; Rev 13,17,18).
  6. Believers should rejoice in this coming of Jesus Christ (I Tim 6:13-16; I Pet 1:3-16).
- J. The apostles returned to Jerusalem and waited for the Spirit by our Lord's word (1:12-14).
  1. Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives, which was at Bethany (Luke 24:50; 19:29).
  2. A sabbath day's journey by the Spirit is about 15 furlongs – about 2 miles (Jn 11:18).
  3. They worshipped the Lord as He ascended and were filled with great joy (Luk 24:52).
  4. They were continually in the temple praising and blessing God for Jesus (Luke 24:53).
  5. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with other close disciples.
    - a. Mary and our Lord's brothers were there (Luke 8:19-21; Matt 1:25; Ps 69:8).
    - b. Women in Christ's church have important roles (I Pet 3:7; Ga 3:28; I Tim 5:5).
    - c. They had one mind without the usual carnal differences (Ep 4:1-3; Phil 2:1-2).
    - d. Spiritual saints fighting the real battle pray and supplicate (Ep 6:18; I Tim 2:8).
    - e. They continued in prayer for more than five minutes (Acts 12:5; I Thess 5:17).
- K. The apostles were special men chosen by God to declare the truth of Jesus to the world (1:13).
  1. They were ordinary men naturally, but they did extraordinary things by God's Spirit.
  2. Only Peter, James, and John of the eleven are mentioned after this reference in Acts.
  3. Peter, a son of Jonas, brother of Andrew, a fisherman (Matt 4:18), brought to Christ by his brother (John 1:35-42), a favored apostle (Matt 17:1), the leader of the original twelve, denied the Lord, was restored a few days later, a leader (1:15; 2:14,37; 3:12; 4:8; 5:3,9,15; 8:20; 10:5; 11:1-4; 12:5; 15:6-11), a pillar (Gal 2:9), humbly labored in obscurity, wrote two epistles, and died a martyr's death (John 21:18-19).
  4. James, a son of Zebedee, brother of John, fisherman (Matt 4:21), favored apostle (Matt 17:1), also called a son of thunder (Mark 3:17), guilty of a severe spirit (Luke 9:55) and self-seeking (Mark 10:41), gave his life for Christ shortly (Acts 12:2).
  5. John, a son of Zebedee, brother of James, fisherman (Matt 4:21), favored apostle (Matt 17:1), also called a son of thunder (Mark 3:17), guilty of a severe spirit (Luke 9:55) and self-seeking (Mark 10:41), beloved friend of Christ (John 13:23), wrote a gospel and three epistles and the Revelation, and is last observed exiled on Patmos (Rev 1:9).
  6. Andrew, a son of Jonas, brother of Peter, a fisherman (Matt 4:18), disciple of John (John 1:35), brought Peter to Christ (Jn 1:41-42), and nothing more is known of him.
  7. Philip, of Bethsaida as Peter and Andrew (John 1:43-44), brought Nathanael to Jesus (1:45-51), was tested before the feeding of the five thousand (6:5-7), sought clarification of Christ's relation to the Father (14:8-12), and nothing more is known.
  8. Thomas, also called Didymus, offered to die with Jesus (John 11:16), questioned Jesus about the place and way He went (14:5), doubted His resurrection (20:24-25), gave a glorious testimony (20:26-29), and nothing more is known in Scripture about him.
  9. Bartholomew, likely the same as Nathanael (John 1:45-51; 21:2), is not seen again.
  10. Matthew, also called Levi, a son of Alphaeus, a publican, entertained Jesus at a great feast where Jesus called sinners to repentance, wrote a gospel, and is not seen further.
  11. James, a son of Alphaeus, brother of Judas, of whom nothing more is certain.
  12. Simon Zelotes, also called the Canaanite, a member of the Zealots, is not seen again.
  13. Judas, Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus, son of Alphaeus, brother of James, is not seen again.

- L. The first business meeting of the early church was called by Peter to replace Judas (1:15-26).
1. Peter, always bold, takes charge with restored confidence (Jn 21:15-22; Lu 22:31-32).
  2. In addition to eleven were many women, our Lord's brethren, and the apostolic pool.
  3. Peter begins by admitting the sovereign purpose of God in prophecy (Matthew 26:24).
  4. Peter further points out the Divine Providence putting Judas in the ministry with them.
  5. With Holy Ghost understanding, he applies Psalm 69:25 and 109:8 to Judas (1:20).
  6. It did not need to be fulfilled, for it had already been fulfilled by his mutiny and death. Even his office was already vacant, so we need not quibble about the verb tenses here.
  7. Luke inserts narrative comment in 18-19 to fill in Theophilus as to his violent death.
    - a. There are two accounts: that of Luke here and that of Matthew (27:3-10).
    - b. His repentance was ungodly (II Cor 7:10-11; Heb 12:14-17; Num 14:40-45).
      - (1) Rather than seeking Christ's mercy, he confesses to his co-conspirators.
      - (2) And typical of false religion, they have neither time, comfort, or hope.
      - (3) Observe how quickly Satan can torment a man with guilt and torment.
      - (4) Judas was not saved (Matt 26:24; John 6:70-71; 17:12; Ps 109:1-20).
    - c. He returned the 30 pieces to the priests who purchase the field on his behalf.
      - (1) Whether he instructed them to buy the particular field we are not told.
      - (2) When an action is done on behalf of another, he may be said to do it.
      - (3) This price and transaction fulfilled Bible prophecy (Zech 11:12-13).
      - (4) While it was spoken by Jeremiah, it was written by Zechariah. Amen.
      - (5) Consider the vile hypocrisy of condemning the money but not murder.
    - d. He hung himself as Matthew declares to die of suffocation but also exploded.
      - (1) He hung himself by putting a rope around his neck and diving headfirst.
      - (2) He might have broken his neck and then hit hard against the ground.
      - (3) Enough rope and height falling headfirst could easily dash the bowels.
    - e. The field where Judas died was known to all Jerusalem as the field of blood.
  8. The qualifications of those appointed for the work remind us of the apostles (1:21-23).
    - a. Though women had and have a role, they were never considered for apostles.
    - b. They must have been personal companions of the apostles from the beginning.
    - c. They must have been observers of Jesus from John's baptism to His ascension.
    - d. The key qualification being to witness His resurrection (I Cor 9:1; 15:7).
    - e. From the 120 (less eleven and women), they chose two candidates for the lot.
  9. Then, as their own calling, they ask the Lord to show which was His choice (1:24-26).
    - a. As with David of old (I Sam 16:7), they seek the Lord's discernment of spirit.
    - b. The need was for one (of the two) to join their number and go to his own place.
    - c. His place being that part of the apostles' ministry he would have by himself.
    - d. As with all sober lots (Prov 16:33), the Lord chooses Matthias to be an apostle.
    - e. We are told nothing more about Matthias, but we know he had a lofty office.

### III. Application

- A. We should trust Scripture as sufficient certainty for the things most surely believed by us.
- B. God is able to use ordinary people for extraordinary work by the blessing of His Holy Spirit.
- C. We may be confident in the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus Christ for our deliverance.
- D. We have received the kingdom of God, where Jesus Christ reigns as king (Heb 12:22-29).
- E. The apostles obeyed the commission, spread the gospel everywhere, and left us free in Christ.
- F. Believers should encourage one another with hope and comfort in the return of Christ for us.
- G. Saints having been with Jesus and waiting for the Spirit show unity, prayer, and supplication.
- H. Jesus Christ is able to forgive the past and use great sinners for great work as He did Peter.
- I. Size means nothing. Our Lord had only 120 faithful, but they turned the world upside down.
- J. God is sovereign over wicked men like Judas. Flee to Christ to save yourself from judgment.

#### IV. Difficulties

- A. Do the words “go to his own place” (1:25) refer to Judas and hell or Matthias and ministry?
- B. Did the apostles have good reasons for presuming Israel’s restoration to preeminence (1:6)?
- C. Did Judas hang himself (Matt 27:5) or fall headlong and burst asunder in a field (Acts 1:19)?
- D. Where in Jeremiah is the prophecy given about the thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 27:9-10)?
- E. Identify James the brother of John, James the Lord’s brother, and James the son of Alphaeus.
- F. Why does Peter in Acts 1:18-19 describe to the disciples events about Judas they knew well?
- G. Which prophecy of David by the Holy Ghost about Judas was Peter referring to in Acts 1:16?
- H. Did Judas buy the field of blood (1:18) or did the priests buy the field (Matthew 27:6-7)?
- I. Why couldn’t Mary touch our Lord’s resurrected body until He returned to God (John 20:17)?
- J. Can we determine with good Scriptural evidence whether Judas Iscariot was saved or not?