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# The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 1 Notes, by Warren Doud

## Course Description

This course is a wide-ranging exposition of the Acts of the Apostles and the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. The materials have been compiled from many sources, from Bible teachers past and present, from language scholars, and from the works of historians and biographers.

Because the book of Acts does not describe all of the activities of Paul, Peter, John, Barnabas, Titus, and other important characters, the historical account will be supplemented by including much material from the Epistles to supply many details. The result is that, on finishing this course, the student will have had a thorough survey of a major portion of the New Testament.

This course is very suitable for both teenagers and adults. Studying this course will give any Christian a solid understanding of the New Testament roots of the Church, the Body of Christ, and many of the practical truths which are so essential to Christian maturity and production.

The Acts course is arranged as a series of lessons. Each lesson deals with a passage in Acts, and contains definitions of terms, discussions of the events occurring, along with comments designed to direct your thinking and to suggest applications. Most lessons contain scripture references outside of Acts (parallel passages) which illustrate and clarify the concepts in Acts. These are very important and should be carefully studied as well.

Many of the lessons include topical (categorical) or historical studies, relevant to the subject matter in the verses covered by the lessons. For example, Lesson 1, which covers Acts 1:1-4, includes additional files on the subjects of The Ascension and Session of Christ, The Holy Spirit's Sustaining Ministry, and The Resurrection of Christ. The whole course includes more than 250 of these topical studies,

in addition to the verse-by-verse expository materials.

When a topical or historical study is called out in a lesson, you are expected to study that material with the lesson. You don't have to drop everything to study a topic, but you should study them at about the same time you study the verses. This will help you to get a broad picture of what the whole Bible says about the concepts in the verses. Remember that you are intent on building a Christian "vocabulary," line upon line, precept upon precept. As you learn the categories, you will begin to correlate the ideas into a larger doctrinal frame of reference.

The Lord bless you in your study of Acts. This book is the record of the heroic men and women of the early Church, who accomplished so much, in times of great hardship and persecution, and who stand as our examples in Christian living and ministry.

## The Importance of the Book of Acts

One can hardly overstate the importance of the Book of Acts or its contribution to the canon of Scripture. A few of the reasons why Acts--and thus our study of this book--is so important.

Acts (combined with the Gospel of Luke) makes up over one-fourth (28%) of the entire New Testament. Luke/Acts is really one work in two volumes. If this one work makes up over one-fourth of the content of the New Testament, the principle of proportion alone tells us that it must be very important material.

A vivid account of the radical change which took place in the attitudes and actions of the disciples, who were passive and almost invisible after our Lord's death, as described in the Gospels, is given in the book of Acts.

The Peter who would deny his Lord in the courtyard of the high priest, who would hide behind locked doors after Jesus' death, and who would "go fishing" after His resurrection, is a very different man in Acts 2, where he boldly

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proclaims Jesus to be the Christ and announces to his audience that they were guilty of His death and were facing divine judgment.

Acts is a crucial book because it is the only book in the New Testament which fills in the gap between the Gospels and the Epistles.

The Gospels end in Jerusalem with no church, a few Jewish believers in Jesus, and a group of disciples who are still living, as it were, in the past.

The Epistles, on the other hand, depict a growing number of churches made up of mainly Gentile believers and a group of disciples who are boldly proclaiming Christ as Israel's Messiah, and as the Savior of the Gentiles as well.

The Book of Acts is an inspired account of the transition of the gospel from a largely Jewish context to a gospel which is universal: geographically, from Jerusalem to Rome; theologically, from Israel to the church; and racially, from Jews to Gentiles. We begin in Jerusalem with a handful of Jewish followers of Jesus. Acts ends in Rome, with a number of Gentile churches having been founded, and a largely Gentile Christian community.

Acts and Luke give us the history of the origin of and nature of the opposition against the gospel by the Jews. One of the greatest and most frequent problems the New Testament church had to deal with was the opposition of the Jews, who resisted the gospel, and the Judaizers, who sought to pervert it.

The Gospel of Luke (and the other Gospels as well) describe the roots of this opposition, which began as a resistance to Jesus' actions and teaching. The Book of Acts shows how this opposition continued on against the gospel and the church after the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord.

The Book of Acts provides us with a historical background for many of the churches which are dealt with in the Epistles of the New Testament. When we read the Epistles of Paul to the church at Thessalonica, or Ephesus, or Philippi, we know much about the church and how it started

from the account which Luke has provided for us in the Book of Acts. Acts provides valuable background information for the churches that are addressed in the Epistles.

Acts supplies us with some excellent examples of the apostolic preaching of the gospel. Gospel preaching is modeled in Acts.

The Book of Acts contains a dramatic portrayal of the power of God at work in the church through the Holy Spirit which began at Pentecost and which will continue until the return of our Lord. If the Gospels contain the account of God's working through Christ (empowered by the Holy Spirit), the Book of Acts depicts Christ at work in the church through His Spirit. The beginnings of the "age of the Spirit" are found in Acts, and only in Acts. A small, fearful, unpromising group of men and women become a revolutionary force, transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit (including the resurrection of Christ by the Spirit--cf. Romans 8:11).

The Book of Acts is an account of the fulfillment of our Lord's promises to His disciples concerning the coming of the Spirit and His ministry in the world to and through them. During His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit. Near the time of His death, He spoke in much greater detail concerning the Spirit. After His resurrection, He commanded His disciples to "make disciples of all nations," but not until after they were endued with power, for which they were to wait.

Acts is a forceful defense of the apostleship of Paul. If one were to read the Epistles of Paul apart from the Book of Acts, one would wonder who he was and what right he had to speak with such authority. The Book of Acts not only contains the account of Paul's conversion (in three accounts), but it is an account of the way in which God appointed him as an apostle, in spite of the actions and early resistance of the other apostles. Acts provides Paul and his epistles with a credibility and authority which enhances their impact on those who would read them.

The Book of Acts describes how the purpose of God to save the Gentiles through Israel was accomplished, but in a way no one would have expected. It was not through the obedience of Israel that the Gentiles received the gospel but actually through their disobedience. The book gives us the incredible account of how God achieved the beginnings of a world-wide religion (rather than a small Jewish sect) by the opposition of the Jews, by their persecution of the saints, and even in spite of the actions and example of the Jerusalem church. It is an account of the sovereignty and power of God, using even men's sin to accomplish His purposes.

Acts is vitally important because it has become a battleground for evangelical Christians. The charismatic Christians make it their textbook, while anti-charismatics try to minimize it as merely transitional. Neither position is totally correct. Christian living is intended to be more supernatural than many non-charismatics say, and it is not as continually miraculous as some charismatics maintain. (Acts itself is not riddled with the spectacularly miraculous).

## Acts 1

### Acts 1:1

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

**the former treatise have I made** – refers to the Gospel of Luke. (**ton men proton logos**)

The use of (**logos**) for “treatise” or “account” is common in Greek.

Luke was with Paul in Rome while writing Acts. Paul wrote the prison epistles at about the same time, 61-63 AD.

The Gospel of Luke and Acts are Volumes I and II of the same work. Acts is a continuation of the activities of the Lord Jesus Christ until His Ascension. Then, the book is a narrative of the activities of the early church until the time of Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

### O Theophilus

In Luke 1:3, Theophilus is referred to as “most excellent”, the title of a knight of SPQR. He was, therefore, a prominent citizen and well respected. He might have been the patron of Luke's writings and travels; thus the books are addressed to him as to a patron; a dedication, so to speak.

**[Most excellent Theophilus]** The name means “god-lover” or “god-beloved.” He may have been a believer already. He was probably a Gentile. Some scholars say that “most excellent” was a title like “Your Excellency” and shows that he held office, perhaps a Knight. So of Felix (Acts 23:26) and Festus (Acts 26:25). This adjective does not occur in the dedication in #Ac 1:1.

Acts is a history of the early church before the canon of Scripture was complete.

There are some things unique to this interim period, such as: **apostleship, miracles, tongues**. These things were discontinued when the canon was complete.

When believers in Acts “searched the Scriptures” they were actually studying the Old Testament. They received church age doctrine from the apostles and other Bible teachers in the local churches.

Example: Paul => Priscilla and Aquila => Apollos

TOPIC: APOLLOS

### Acts 1:2

**Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:**

**Until the day He was taken up** – Christ's ascension.

The Gospel of Luke ended with the ascension; Acts begins with it. The verb is passive voice, indicating that Jesus was taken up by God the Father, the Author of the plan of God.

**after He, through the Holy Spirit**

TOPIC: THE HOLY SPIRIT'S SUSTAINING MINISTRY

**had given commandment** – refers to the Lord's briefing of the apostles during the last days of His ministry before the Ascension.

He gave them many instructions, the **two** most important of which were:

**Acts 1:5**, instructions re: the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and by implication, Positional Truth

TOPIC: BAPTISM

TOPIC: HOLY SPIRIT

TOPIC: UNION WITH CHRIST (POSITIONAL TRUTH)

**Acts 1:8**, instructions re: the filling of the Holy Spirit, the **power** for the believer's ministry.

TOPIC: FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This is the event which places every Christian in full-time Christian service.

The command is in Luke 24:49 ff, to "stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

READ Luke 24:45-53

The command involved:

A Promise – they are waiting for the fulfillment.

Waiting – "sit". It points out that God's program is Grace; the disciples are learning that when God makes the promise, they are to wait patiently until He keeps the promise.

A Place – "in the city", i.e. Jerusalem

A Blessing – being clothed with power from on high.

### 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:**

**passion** = "suffering" (NAS)

**proofs** = – acc. to Aristotle, the strongest proof to which anything can be put. NAS: "convincing" proofs.

"Unassailable proofs" => He was seen by them!

By these proofs, the apostles and disciples are going to become absolutely convinced about something: by what they saw, and by what they heard.

They saw the resurrected Christ. They talked with Him, they ate with Him, some of them even touched Him. At one point he appeared to as many as 500 people at the same time. And He continued this for forty days.

The Resurrection became the great baseline doctrine of Apostolic teaching. Topic: Resurrection

The Resurrection became the great baseline doctrine of Apostolic teaching.

READ Acts 2:22-37

### **and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God**

There are three kingdoms on earth at the present time:

The kingdom of God – made up of everyone who is Union with Christ. The universal Church, the Body of Christ.

Any national entity is known as a kingdom in the Bible – the USA, etc.

The kingdom of Satan, including all of the evil hierarchies such as religion and internationalism.

Jesus' purpose in making His appearances was to teach about the Church Age.

For example: He would have taught about the seven things the Holy Spirit does at salvation:

Efficacious Grace: the HS makes the Gospel clear to unbelievers; and He makes a person's faith effectual. He gives our faith life.

The HS brings about regeneration: Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit: 1 Cor. 12:13

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit: 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19,20

The Filling of the Holy Spirit: Eph. 5:18

The Sealing Ministry of the Holy Spirit, Eph. 1:13,14

## Spiritual Gifts

He taught Ecclesiology: Grace | Plan of God | True Spirituality | Faith-Rest | Occupation with Christ | Edification . . . in short, he taught them everything related to the Plan of God for the Church, from Pentecost to the Rapture.

**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, said he, you have heard of me.**

READ: John 14:16,17 for promise of the HS.

Notes:

The coming of the HS relates to His prayer, not theirs!

Acts 2 is not a prayer meeting. There is no begging for the HS.

They are going to receive a helper, parakleitos.

When the HS comes to abide, it is "forever." So it won't happen again. There are no second Pentecosts. Pentecost is no more repeatable than Bethlehem or the Cross.

The HS is the "spirit of truth." The HS does not help by providing an emotional experience. He is not a crutch to lean on. He is a teacher who leads into Truth, who stabilizes us by leading us into divine viewpoint.

The promise involves a new relationship. "The Holy Spirit is now with you; He shall be in you!"

We all need subjective help – a sense that God is doing something about problems. But, subjective help comes through objective truth.

The purpose of the local church and Bible study is to provide objective truth that people can use to get help with making decision and solving problems.

This is the most important theme of the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry: example, the parable of the sower.

Sometimes the truth we learn can be applied immediately. Sometimes doctrine is not immediately applicable. At such times we do

not "feel fed." So it has to be put on the shelf, like a can of Ranch Style Beans.

But the sower has planted the seed, and with watering it will germinate and grow.

**Acts 1:5**

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

Seven types of baptism in the Bible.

TOPIC: BAPTISM

"you shall be baptized"

This is the future, passive, indicative of BAPTIDZW.

Future => this had never occurred before. It will occur on the day of Pentecost, in ten days.

Passive => the subject (you). Indicates the subject receives the action. The question here is: if a person receives the action of the baptism, who carries out the action? Who does the baptizing?

"with the Holy Spirit" – might suggest that the Holy Spirit is the medium in which a person is immersed.

But, the grammar is EN plus PNEUMATI, the instrumental case of PNEUMOS. Therefore, it is the Holy Spirit who carries out the baptism.

And we see this in ...

**1 Cor. 12:13**, For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

"not many days hence" – ten days later, on the day of Pentecost.

After Pentecost – after the beginning of the Church Age – every Christian has been placed in Union with Christ by the Holy Spirit, at the moment of salvation. The very second you placed your faith in Christ, you received a tremendous Salvation Package. You received a great number of unique and permanent blessings. Did you feel anything when you accepted Christ? A bump? A warm glow? Nevertheless ...

TOPIC: SALVATION DOCTRINES

TOPIC: INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Definition: The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is that particular work of the Holy Spirit that takes the new believer and places him in union with Jesus Christ.

The baptism of the HS did not occur in Old Testament times or during the life of Christ. It occurred for the first time on the day of Pentecost.

It was prophesied by John the Baptist, Matt. 3:11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire..."

The mechanics of the baptism are described in 1 Cor. 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

The BHS unifies all believers, Eph. 4:5, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" While people are diverse in race, culture, personality, geography.

**Gal. 3:26-28, "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."**

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the great emancipator: of slaves, of women, and especially of those bound up in religion.

This is a key doctrine. It supports many other concepts.

It is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that makes a person a new creature.

**2 Cor. 5:17, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature."**

Being a new creature is not a product of how you have changed your life or cleaned up your act. You are a new creature the moment you are saved, before you even have a chance to turn over a new leaf.

Life changes are based on consistency in walking in fellowship, being occupied with Christ, and by the ministry of the Holy Spirit over time, as He teaches and edifies.

**Acts 1:6**

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

They were probably assembled at the Mt. of Olives, and they were probably called there by the Lord. We know that this conversation ended with the Ascension.

How many were out there, and how many saw the Ascension? Not known.

There is every indication that they have learned very little to this point, in spite of all the teaching. Christ is teaching Church Age doctrine; they are ignoring that and thinking about details of life, the physical kingdom of Israel.

They're Jews, and the Jews are hoping that the Romans will be destroyed. They are also hoping that the Jewish political structure itself will go away.

But none of that is going to happen! What actually will happen will surprise them and shock them! Because God's intention is that the Gospel go to the Gentiles! As we shall see, even Pentecost was not enough to change their focus. Pentecost was for Jews; those who were saved (the 3000) were Jews, pilgrims from all parts of the Mediterranean world.

Notice how dramatic an event was required to get the Apostles started in thinking about the Gentiles.

READ Acts 10:1-48.

**Acts 1:7**

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

There seem to be some questions implied by the Lord's answer:

Why do you want the kingdom? Desire for revenge against the Romans or Jewish leaders? Or desire to be like the Romans?

Do they have the desire for a king that Samuel faced?

Desire for status? Remember some of the apostles had already been jockeying for position at the Lord's right hand.

What benefits are you seeking? And what's your hurry.

People are always eager to fix dates to the events which are prophesied, whether it's regarding the political Messianic kingdom here, or the Second Coming of Christ, in our day.

The Lord's emphasis is on the spiritual kingdom; the work of God in the heart. This is a gentle hint to people today about limiting one's curiosity about things which the Father, in His sovereignty, keeps to Himself.

The disciples had more than enough teaching on the subject during Christ's ministry.

**Luke 17:20,21, "And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God comes not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! Or Lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."**

The desire for a sign is categorized as springing from evil. The Lord called the scribes and Pharisees an "evil and adulterous generation" for seeking a sign.

READ Matt. 12:38-41

But they have all the valid signs that they need. The Lord Jesus Christ, His miracles, His death, burial, and resurrection, and in just a few moments, His ascension and the appearance of the angels.

The true sign is validated for those who have positive volition.

READ John 2:18-22

READ 1 Cor. 1:17-25.

Jesus Christ crucified is the answer to every type of "sign seeking." It's a "stumbling block" to Jews because of legalism; it is "foolishness" to Gentiles because of the pride of intellect.

### Acts 1:8

**But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

Acts 1:8 is an outline for the rest of Acts.

Chap. 1-7, Jerusalem and Judea

Chap. 8 – Samaria (Philip)

Chap. 9-28, the rest of the Mediterranean world, and finally Rome.

Note: Acts 1:8 is not a command. It is a promise!

Notice how they accomplished their evangelism!

READ Acts 2:40-47

TOPIC: HOLY SPIRIT, FILLING

Spirituality, or the filling of the Holy Spirit, links salvation to Christian maturity. To move from salvation to maturity requires the filling of the Holy Spirit and the consistent intake of Bible truth.

We are always indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

We are not always filled with the Holy Spirit.

The filling of the Holy Spirit means God the Holy Spirit controls the soul; and He does not control when we sin (grieve Him) or perform human good or evil (quench Him).

When we confess our sins (1 John 1:9), God forgives the sins and "cleanses" us; and the Holy Spirit is in control again and able to carry out His work.

TOPIC: CONFESSION OF SIN

The following passages of Scripture describe various synonyms for being filled with the Holy Spirit. Note that these are commands and require a Christian to have a positive mental attitude and to take positive action.

Walking in the Spirit: Gal 5:16-26

Walking in the light: 1 John 1:6-10

Imitating Christ: Eph. 5:1-18

Partakers of the divine nature: 2 Pet 1:1-4

**Prov. 1:22, 23**, "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

**Eph 4:30**, "Stop grieving the Holy Spirit, the God by whom you have been sealed for the day of redemption."

**1 Thess. 5:19**, "Do not quench the Spirit."

The carnal believer is in the same condition as the unbeliever, except for Divine Discipline!

The carnal believer is always miserable and doesn't know why.

TOPIC: VOLITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

**The Law of Volitional Responsibility:** People who choose for God are blessed; those who choose against Him suffer.

The Law of Volitional responsibility is well documented by Scripture.

**Job 4:8-9**, "As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish.

**Prov 11:18**, "The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.

1. The deceptive wages are the result of bad decisions.

2. The deceptive wages shortchange the work of sin, making sin never worth it.

**Prov 22:8**, He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

**Hosea 8:7**, They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no head; it will produce no flour. Were it to yield grain, foreigners would swallow it up.

**Hosea 10:12**, Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing

love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

**2 Cor 9:6**, Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

**Gal 6:7-8**, Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

**James 3:18**, Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

The law of volitional responsibility is a built in function of divine discipline (see below). It is a law as universal as gravity, and no less impressive in its effects.

The law of volitional responsibility can be summed up in the phrase, "You will reap what you sow" This means that the seeds that you plant in bad decisions will grow up to cause suffering in your life.

In the law of volitional responsibility, the suffering is always appropriate to the original bad decision.

1. If the decision is in the realm of finance, then you will suffer financially.
2. If the decision is in the realm of romance, then you will suffer romantically.
3. If the decision is in the realm of social life, then you will suffer socially.
4. If the decision is in the realm of your chosen profession, then you will suffer professionally.

In the law of volitional responsibility, bad decisions, like crime, never pay. You never 'get away' with a bad decision. You never slip a fast one by God, even on a small scale.

In the law of volitional responsibility, good decisions never go unnoticed by the omnipresence of God.



What is the result of failing to understand these things and apply them? What is the result of failing to make your children understand them?

### 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.**

They were looking directly at Jesus when He was taken up. He was “lifted up.” Paul adds the term “in glory” to this event.

**1 Tim. 3:16,** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

TOPIC: ASCENSION AND SESSION OF CHRIST

### Acts 1:10

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

“the looked steadfastly” – their eyes were glued on the place where Christ has disappeared in the clouds.

They probably didn’t even notice the two “men” who had moved in among them.

### Acts 1:11

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

Jesus had told them of His coming ascension, so they should have been prepared for it.

**John 6:62,** What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?”

**John 20:17,** Jesus said unto her, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father: and to my God, and your God.”

**Zech. 14:4,** And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the East ...

The angels’ use of Jesus personal name assures them that Jesus will always be in heaven, both a personal friend and a divine Savior.

**shall so come in like manner ...**

The fact and manner of Christ’s second coming are emphasized emphatically by this repetition.

### Acts 1:12

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

The eleven disciples returned to Jerusalem. The ascension did not occur on the Sabbath. This reference to a Sabbath’s day’s journey is only to give an indication of the distance the Mount of Olives is from the walls of Jerusalem, a matter of a few hundred yards.

### 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.**

In earlier Greek times, the upper room (EIS TO HUPERION) referred to the room upstairs where the women stayed. In the times of the early church, it was a small room under the flat roof, set aside for retirement or prayer (Acts 9:36,37). Sometimes it was a large third story room suitable for gatherings, as in Acts 20:9. It is even possible that this was the very room, the “large upper room,” of Mark 14:15 and Luke 22:12, where Jesus and His disciples met for the “Last Supper.”

The phrase “where abode” could possibly mean that the house was a place of permanent residence, but it is more likely that this house was a place where the disciples met frequently, for prayer and fellowship, some being on hand most of the time, as they came and went.

### 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.**

Other women; and undoubtedly Mary Magdalene.

**with one accord – (homothumos),** “with the same mind and spirit”. They were in unity; in fellowship. This means that they were operating under the control of the Holy Spirit, which Christ had “breathed on them.”

**with the women**

Furneaux: “Among the Jews women were lightly esteemed. In Temple and synagogue they worshipped apart. They took no part in public life. The disciples had marveled (John 4:27) that their Master talked with a woman. A Jew might not greet a woman, might not speak even to his wife or daughter, in the street. In his daily prayer he thanked God that he was not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. But at the very birth of the new Society they have their place ; an equality of privilege never before dreamt of. . . In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female (Gal. iii. 28).”

**and Mary the mother of Jesus** - Mary is here mentioned for the last time.

Her subsequent history is obscure. According to one tradition, she died in peace at Jerusalem ; and according to another, she accompanied the Apostle John to Ephesus, where she died in extreme old age.

**and with His brethren** – Jesus’ four half-brothers, sons of Joseph and Mary: James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon. Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3. His brothers had once disbelieved Him; now they continue in prayer for the power from on high.

**Acts 1:15**

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

**in those days** – that is, during the waiting period before the Day of Pentecost.

The “disciples” included all the 120, including the other apostles. Some Greek texts have

ADELPHI, “brothers,” instead of “disciples.” The number 120 has no particular significance; it’s just an estimate of the number of people present.

**Acts 1:16**

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

Peter’s statement probably comes from a combination of Psalm 41:9; 69:25; and 109:8.

David was a prophet. Peter is referring to passages in the Psalms which are prophecies concerning Judas. He assumes that Jesus is the Messiah, and he finds Scripture to illustrate the treachery of Judas.

By comparing with Matthew 16:21-23 we can see how far Peter had come in his understanding of the Lord’s mission of salvation.

**Acts 1:17**

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

Judas was a traitor, yet he had been a disciple for all the time of Christ’s ministry.

**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.**

**Matthew 27:3-10,** “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

“And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury

strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

There are three points of difference between this verse in Acts and the description in Matt. 27:301.

1. We are here informed that Judas purchased a field with the wages of his crime ; whereas Matthew informs us that the chief priests and elders purchased the field with the money which Judas restored.
2. The death of Judas is here described as occasioned by a precipitous fall ; whereas in the Gospel we are told that he went and hanged himself.
3. According to the Acts, the field received its name, "the field of blood"; from the violent death of Judas ; whereas according to Matthew it was so called because the money with which it was purchased was the price of blood. <sup>1</sup>

These differences have never been fully explained, although there are various convincing arguments offered by commentators. For example, for [3] the verb "purchased" was probably used in the causitive sense, much as someone might say "I built a house" but meaning that money was paid to others who did the actual building. In reality, the field was not purchased by Judas Iscariot, but by the priests, who used the money Judas gave to them. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gloag, Paton James, Acts 1

<sup>2</sup> ibid

## 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.**

"Tongue" is DIALEKTOS, from the verb DIALEGOMAI, "to converse, or speak, between two." From this we have the English word "dialect." The word Aceldama is Aramaic, not Greek.

There may be two references here. First, from Matt. 27:7, the money which Judas flung down in front of the priests, was the "blood" money, the silver that Judas was paid to betray Christ. The place could also be called the "field of blood" because Judas died there. Commentators suggest that both views could be true, that the ill-omened name could be used with a double emphasis.

As late as the 17<sup>th</sup> century this field was used as a burying-place for Armenian Christians. Some have thought that the word "Aceldama" is related in some way to the Aramaic word for "cemetery".

## 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 office let another take.**

From Psalms 69:25 and 109:8.

The word "office" is EPISKOPOS, which is the usual word in the NT for bishop, or overseer in the local church. That is not the meaning here, however, because there was no local church at the time, and neither had the spiritual gift of governance been given nor the office of bishop established. Rather this speaks generally of overseer-ship in the sense of having a particular responsibility as one of the apostles. The ecclesiastical meaning comes later. It just means that Judas' duties are going to be taken over by another man.

**Acts 1:21, 22**

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

Judas accompanied Jesus and the disciples throughout all of Jesus' earthly ministry, up until the day he betrayed his Master. The ministry of Jesus began with the baptism of John and lasted until the Ascension.

**John 15:27,** And you also shall bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

Peter considers it essential that a successor to Judas must be one who is a personal witness who can speak from his own experience of Christ's ministry, resurrection, and ascension.

**Acts 1:23**

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

Here is where the group of disciples seem to reach beyond their authority, beyond their mandate. Some people in the group put forth two names, Justus and Matthias.

There was no command to fill the vacant position, and there is no Scripture requirement for it. In fact, they were told to wait ...

Also, Acts 1:8 made it plain that the "power" on which they would operate was in the future filling of the Spirit, so Christ's command to "wait" probably meant not to take action until the "power" would be available to them, as we

understand it now to mean, especially the enabling power of the spiritual gifts under which the apostles and disciples would begun to operate in just a few days' time.

Matthias is never mentioned again; but neither are several other apostles, so that's not significant by itself.

**Acts 1:24, 25**

**And they prayed, and said, You, Lord, which know the hearts of all men, show whether of these two you have chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.**

Well, they had part of it right. It is the Lord who chooses apostles, and every other spiritual gift, by the way. Whether Matthias was an apostle depends entirely on his spiritual gift. MEN can give people any title or office they want, but it is God that empowers for service according to His strict procedure.

**Read 1 Cor. 12:4-13****Acts 1:26**

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

And here they vote!

There are legitimate uses for voting; but using a vote or a lot to decide what God is thinking is not one of them.

Well, I suppose Matthias' name was entered on the roster somehow, or else the comment means that from that period he was considered by other disciples to be one of the twelve.