

The Acts of the Apostles

LESSON 4-6

General Outline of Chapter 1

- The Prologue to the Book (1:1-3)
- Jesus' Final Instructions (1:4-8)
- Jesus' Ascension into Heaven (1:9-11)
- The Upper Room Prayer Meeting (1:10-14)
- The Selection of Matthias to Replace Judas (1:15-26)

The Prologue to the Book (Acts 1:1-3)

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The author of the Book of Acts was a man by the name of Luke. Luke was not only the author of the book, but he was a player in the book

He was born in Antioch of Syria (at least this is where his parents resided [Eusebius]). He was not a Jew (Col 4:11, 14). He was educated in the science of medicine (Col 4:14).

- He was, in this sense, distinct from the twelve apostles.
- He was, therefore, more concerned about historical records.
- He was, therefore, a likely candidate for close fellowship and relationship to Paul.
- His writing is, therefore, more lofty and technical in its design.
- He, therefore, gives a great place to and detailed description of the healing power of the Lord (all of us see things through different eyes).

He was very likely a convert of the apostle Paul.

- He was not an eyewitness of Christ in His earthly ministries (Luke 1:2).
- He may have been converted in Antioch or later in Troas.

He was a companion of Paul.

- His first linking up with Paul seems to have been at Troas on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:18-11).
- He accompanied Paul to Philippi (Acts 16:10-12).
- He seems to have remained in Philippi (Acts 17:1).
- He rejoined Paul whenever he got near to Philippi (Acts 20:5).

He was most likely disciplined into leadership by Paul.

Paul seems to have sent him with Titus to carry the second letter to the Corinthians (subscription to that letter). Luke seems to have developed into an influential church leader in Macedonia (II Corinthians 8:18 - Early tradition applies this passage to Luke).

He was one of Paul's most intimate friends.

- Paul refers to him as beloved (Col 4:14).
- He met Paul and traveled with him anytime Paul got close to his home.
- He was with Paul on his last trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:6-21:18).
- He was shipwrecked with Paul on the prison ship to Rome (Acts 28:2).
- He stayed with Paul in Rome during his imprisonment there, and was a fellow-laborer with him when he wrote Colossians (Col. 4:14) and Philemon (Phm. 24).
- He was with Paul during his second imprisonment in Rome when Paul wrote II Timothy (II Tim. 4:11).
- He remained faithful to Paul to the end when others were forsaking him (II Tim 4:11).

There are other traditions regarding Luke that have some credibility.

- He never married.
- He most likely returned to Philippi after Paul's death.
- He is believed to have died in Bithynia of natural causes (although there are some less-reliable traditions that suggest he was martyred at the age of 80 by crucifixion).

The author of the book makes a reference to a previous work. This is most likely the Gospel that bears his name—the Gospel according to Luke.

Luke's gospel was to be an orderly account (Luke 1:3-4). Luke was a stickler for detail. As such, Luke's gospel is the fullest account we have of the life of Christ. It begins with the birth announcement for John the Baptist and extends all the way to the ascension of Jesus.

There is a widely held view that Luke intended to write a third book. Two reasons are given for this view:

- The use of the superlative "first" (Gk. *proton*) instead of the comparative "former" (Gk. *proteron*) is strictly used only when more than two are in mind.
- Acts ends abruptly (Acts 28:30-31) without revealing whether Paul was released or was put to death. It is said that he left his readers in suspense, which would be relieved in his third book, which was apparently never written.

The author of the Book of Acts wrote to a man by the name of Theophilus. It is difficult to know to whom this title or name refers. Theophilus may be a general title and not a name at all.

Since oldest manuscripts of our Bible are written in all capital letters, it cannot be determined certainly whether THEOPHILUS is to be taken as a proper name, and, therefore, a Christian friend

by that name (Luke 1:3), or to be treated as a common noun, and translated “friend of God” or “lover of God.”

If it is a general designation, it is a universal letter, written to all Christians everywhere who were eager to learn more about the work of God.

Theophilus may be a specific individual to whom Luke was writing. If Theophilus was a specific individual (which is most likely the case), there are many theories as to who he might have been.

- He may have been a Roman official such as a governor or procurator (For Luke’s use of “most excellent” see Luke 1:3; Acts 23:26, 24:2, 26:25.).
- He may have been some person of standing in Rome whose influence was sought for Paul’s trial.
- He may have been the magistrate who was due to hear Paul’s case.
- He may have been a Gentile of rank who came under the influence of Luke or under that of Paul in Rome, and was converted to the Christian faith.
- He may have been a person of nobility who was the patron of Luke, and who funded the production of this book.

Certainly, for the purpose of our reading and study, we will take this to be a book personally written to us.

The author of the Book of Acts indicated that his former work or account only contained what Jesus began to do and to teach (Acts 1:1). It is interesting the order that Luke uses in relation to Jesus—doing first and then teaching.

- The Pharisees taught but they did not practice or “do” the word (Mt. 23:3).
- Jesus “did” the word for thirty years before he ventured to teach the word.

It is interesting that even though Luke’s gospel is the most complete gospel he indicates that it only represented what Jesus “began” to do and to teach. It is interesting because the implication of this statement is that Jesus is continuing to work and minister.

Even though Jesus ascended into heaven, He still has a vested interest in what goes on in relation to the building of the Church. He is still working in the Church through the Holy Spirit and through His followers.

The former account (Luke) was concerning all that Jesus began to do and teach, and this new account (Acts) is concerning the things He continues to do and to teach. The Gospel, therefore, was only the first chapter of the long story of the work and teaching of Jesus which is still being written today. The Book of Acts represents the second chapter in Jesus’ ministry. Many other chapters of His achievements through His Church have been written in the past 2,000 years.

“Hence, the grand history of what Jesus did and taught does not conclude with His departure to the Father; but Luke now begins it in a higher strain; for all the subsequent labors of the apostles are just an exhibition of the ministry of the glorified Redeemer Himself, because they were acting

under His authority, and He was the principle that operated in them all.” **(Jamison, Fausset & Brown)**

It is interesting to see how the Lord Jesus Christ functioned as a principle worker in the Book of Acts. Jesus is seen as the:

- Commander and Instructor of His people (1:2-9)
- Great Hope of the Church (1:10-11)
- Guide to His people in church matters in times of perplexity (1:24, 10:13-16, 16:10, 22:18-21)
- Giver of the Holy Spirit (2:33)
- Burden of all sermons and addresses (2:22-36, 3:13-15, 4:10-33, 5:30, 6:14, 8:5, 35, 10:36, etc.)
- One who added to the Church (2:47)
- Only Hope for a perishing world (4:12)
- Active Partner in our service (3:16, 26, 18:9-10)
- Personal Agent in the conversion of Saul (9:3-6)
- Encourager of His much-tried ones (7:55-56, 23:11)

The author of the Book of Acts indicated that Jesus spent a good deal of His time between the resurrection and ascension giving commandments to His apostles.

Jesus gave these commandments through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2). The emphasis here is on Jesus' utter dependence on the Holy Spirit. All that was lacking for Jesus to complete His earthly mission was His physical ascension and His glorification by the Father. This power and ability to depend on the Spirit is what He intended His Church to have throughout the Church Age (John 3:1-5; Eph 3:17-19; I Pet 1:11-12; Acts 8:5-7; II Cor. 1:21; Rom. 8:2, 13; John 5:19).

Jesus gave general commands relative to their mission. He commissioned or commanded them to:

- Preach the Gospel in all the world and to every creature (Mark 16:15).
- Be witnesses to Him from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47-48).
- Bring deliverance and healing (Mark 16:17-18, See Luke 9:1-6; 10: 1-12). Make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:18).
- Baptize those who respond (Mt. 28:19, Compare Acts 2:38-39). Tend to them as a shepherd (John 21:15-20).
- Teach them the whole counsel of God (Mt. 28:20, Compare Acts 20:27).

Jesus gave specific commands regarding the next few days (Acts 1:4). He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem (Luke 24:49).

Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49

He instructed them to wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8).

The author of the Book of Acts indicated that Jesus appeared to a number of people providing

many “infallible proofs” of His resurrection

We know of at least twelve appearances of Jesus during this time.

- He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9).
- He appeared to women (Mt. 28:9).
- He appeared to Peter (I Cor. 15:5).
- He appeared to two disciples (Luke 24:15-31).
- He appeared to ten apostles without Thomas (John 20:19, 24).
- He appeared to the eleven with Thomas (John 20:26-28).
- He appeared to seven disciples who were fishing (John 21:1-24).
- He appeared to eleven apostles (Mt. 28:16-17).
- He appeared to five hundred people (I Cor. 15:6).
- He appeared to James (I Cor. 15:7).
- He appeared to the eleven apostles (Acts 1:4).
- He appeared to the eleven apostles again (Acts 1:6, implied).

Luke is the only writer who gives this information, and the Greek makes it clear that Jesus did not remain with His disciples continuously, but appeared from time to time. This is part of God’s fullness of times. Jesus was very much aware of the ordained times and seasons (see vs. 7).

The author of the Book of Acts indicated that Jesus spoke of many things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

- Jesus began His ministry preaching the Kingdom (the rule of God in men’s lives).
- Jesus gave His apostles the keys of the Kingdom (Matthew 16 and 18).
- Jesus prepared His apostles for His departure with a Kingdom message (Acts 1:3).
- The Apostles preached the kingdom throughout the Book of Acts as they build the Church—God’s instrument of the Kingdom (Acts 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).
- Jesus is seen in the Book of Acts as the King of the Kingdom (Acts 17:7).

Jesus’ Final Instructions (Acts 1:4-8)

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 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.”

Jesus would give His final instructions to His apostles as He was assembled together with them.

The Greek word used here to describe this meeting is used only once in the New Testament. It literally means “to have salt together.” The Phillip’s Translation states, “while He was at a

common meal with His disciples.”

In this setting Jesus commanded them. This Greek verb occurs three times in the Book of Acts relative to the Lord making commands and, therefore, expresses the Lord’s threefold charge to His people.

He charged people to repent of sin (Acts 17:30).

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent...

- He charged His followers to wait for the Spirit (Acts 1:4).
- He charged His followers to preach the Gospel (Acts 10:42).

And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.

In this setting Jesus commanded them to wait. Why wait? They were to remain in Jerusalem because it was to be from Jerusalem that the word of the Lord would go forth (Is. 2:3).

Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was extremely important as the center of the Jewish religious world.

- This city was captured from the Jebusites about 1,000 B.C. by David.
- It was made the capital of the Hebrew monarchy.
- It became the Holy City when Solomon's Temple was built there.
- It was the scene of all the writing prophets except Amos and Hosea.
- It remained the capital of Judah after the split.
- It fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
- It was rebuilt after the exile by Nehemiah about the mid-fifth century B.C.
- It was destroyed by Titus, the Roman general, in 70 A.D.
- According to the Gospels, Jesus visited the city seven times:
 - At the presentation (Luke 2:22-39)
 - At the Passover when he was 12 years old (Luke 2:41-50)
 - At the Passover near the beginning of His ministry (John 2:13-22)
 - At the unnamed feast (John 7:1-8:59, most likely the Feast of Tabernacles).
 - At dedication (John 9:1-10:39)
 - At another visit to the Temple (Mark 11:11)
 - At His final visit at Passover (John 13:1; Mark 11:27f)
- The first Christian Church was founded there.
- It was the scene of the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60).
- It was the scene of the martyrdom of James (Acts 12:1-2).
- An important Church council was convened there (Acts 15).
- Paul made five visits (that we know about) to the city after his conversion.

- To visit Peter (Gal 1:18; Acts 9:26-30)
- To give famine relief (Gal 2:1; Acts 11:27-30)
- To attend the council (Acts 15:1-35)
- At the close of his second missionary journey (18:22)
- At the close of the third journey to carry the offering he had gathered among the Gentiles (Acts 21:17)

They were to wait because there was a “fullness of time” in God’s timetable that needed to occur (Acts 2:1; Gal. 4:4). They were to wait until the promise of the Father (i.e. the baptism of the Spirit) became part of their experience. The command to preach is not enough; we must also be equipped or empowered by the Holy Spirit to do so. They were to wait until Jesus ascended to the Father, which was a prerequisite to the Holy Spirit’s outpouring (Acts 2:33).

In this setting Jesus made reference to them receiving the Promise of the Father. This is a reference to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which is clarified in the next few verses.

The Promise of the Father, mentioned earlier by Luke in his gospel (Luke 24:49), refers to a promise made to Jesus by the Father prior to His incarnation. It would be Jesus’ reward for His obedience in His redemptive work.

Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.

The Promise of the Father was collected by Jesus and rewarded by the Father after the ascension of Christ (Acts 2:33).

Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

The Promise of the Father would later be poured out upon the Church by Christ as the Church entered into the fulfillment of Pentecost (see also John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7). The Baptism of the Holy Spirit had been clearly promised (Mt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

In this setting Jesus made it clear that the outpouring of the Spirit would happen in “not many days.” It should be noted that no specific time was given. It should be noted that ten days would actually transpire (Compare Acts 1:3-4, 2:1-4; Lev. 23:15-16).

In this setting the disciples asked Jesus about the restoration to the Kingdom to Israel. This statement reveals several things about the disciples both negative and positive.

On the negative side it reveals their lack of understanding in regard to the Kingdom of God.

The disciples, as Jews, still conceived of the Kingdom of God in terms of a material kingdom centered in Jerusalem, free from Roman domination (Mark 10:35-41). It reveals that they had no conception of the new spiritual mission to which they were called. It reveals their need for the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

On the positive side it reveals that they recognized Jesus’ Lordship, addressing Him as Lord. It

reveals that they understood Jesus' power or ability to bring the ancient economy back into reality (compare Mt. 16:22 and Luke 24:21).

Jesus knew that their understanding would change when the Holy Spirit came upon them. In a sense, He put them off implying that this was not only not the time, but that the question was irrelevant to their present business and present work.

It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

In this setting Jesus made it clear that when the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit they would receive power (Acts 1:8). There are two different Greek words for power—*exousia* and *dunamis*.

- In this case it is not *exousia*, meaning “privilege or authority” (John 1:12; Mt. 10:1). This is the authority that is ours through the new birth as we find ourselves “in Christ.” It is the authority of Christ that is given to His followers (Mt. 28:18).
- In this case it is *dunamis*, meaning “power or ability” (Luke 4:14). This is power or divine ability that is ours through immersion in the Holy Spirit. It is the ability of the Spirit.

In this setting Jesus challenged them to be witnesses. The Greek word for “witness” is *martyr*. It includes opposition, persecution and tribulation for the name and cause of Christ. As true witnesses, they were not to testify to themselves, but to another (as Christ did in relation to the Father in John 5:30-40; 15:26-27).

They were to be witnesses in four identifiable areas:

- Jerusalem (Acts 1:4, 8; Luke 24:47)
- Judea (Acts 2:9, 14; 8:1; 9:31; 10:37; 11:1, 19; 15:1)

This term is used in three senses in the New Testament.

- The district about Jerusalem originally occupied by the tribe of Judah
- The province of Judea, embracing the districts of Samaria, Judea and Idumea
- The whole of Palestine (most likely it is used here in this sense)

Samaria (Acts 8-10)

This term is also used in three senses in the Bible.

- Originally Samaria was the name of the city founded by Omri in about 880 B.C. situated about 35 miles north of Jerusalem. It became the capital of Israel after the nation divided
- Samaria came to be applied to the whole Northern Kingdom (Amos 3:9).
- At the time of Jesus, the name was limited to a district, twenty miles by forty miles, lying between Galilee on the north, and Judea on the south. Here it seems to be used in this sense.

The Ends of the Earth (Acts 11:19, 23:11, 28:14-31)

This could mean the whole world, but an interesting use of this phrase is found in apocryphal literature in Psalms of Solomon, written about 50 B.C. In 8:16, it uses this phrase in the sense of Rome, referring to Pompey who came from Rome; it said that he came from “the end of the earth.” If this is true, this goal of reaching Rome was accomplished in the book of Acts.

Jesus’ Ascension into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11)

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Jesus was taken up.

This is a reference to His ascension into heaven. This going up was different from Old Testament translations. Here, Jesus ascended of His own power. This “ascension” was the act of going back to the Father in His resurrection body.

He came as God in the incarnation and went back to God in the ascension. This was not His first ascension (See John 20:17). The Lord ascended for several purposes.

- To receive again the glory which He had with the Father before the world began (John 17:5)
- To be our intercessor and High Priest at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34)
- To prepare a place for us (John 14:2-3)
- To rule all things on our behalf (Eph. 1:20-23)
- To await the preparation of His Bride—the Church

Jesus was received by a cloud.

What cloud? Just any cloud?

The “cloud” had significance in the Old Testament.

- The cloud led Israel out of bondage was called “the Lord” (Ex. 13:21-22).
- The cloud led them through the Red Sea (I Cor. 10:1-4).
- The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud (Ex. 16:10).
- The cloud rested on Sinai and received Moses (Ex. 19:9-19; 24:15-18; 34:5-7).
- The cloud filled the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-38).
- The cloud filled Solomon’s Temple (I Kgs. 8:10-11; II Chr. 5:13-14).
- The cloud departed from the Temple (Ezek. 10:1-22).

The “cloud” has significance in relation to Christ.

- He was overshadowed by a cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:5; Mark 9:1-7;

Luke 9:28-36)

- He went up in a cloud at His ascension (Acts 1:9).
- He is clothed with a cloud (Rev. 10:1).
- He is seated upon a white cloud (Rev 14:14-16).
- He will come in a cloud of glory (Luke 21:17).
- He will also come in the clouds of glory with His saints (Mt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; I Th. 4:17).

The glory-cloud speaks of the presence of the Holy Spirit. He is the Cloud of God's presence who fulfills, in ministry and operation, all that the typical glory-cloud foreshadowed.

Jesus was taken from their sight (Acts 1:9).

This was their last glimpse of "Christ after the flesh." He ascended with His resurrection body. That body did not cease to be, but for their sakes, it vanished from sight to make way for the Body in which He would continue to do and to teach, which is His Church, the "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:23).

The disciples looked steadfastly toward heaven as He ascended (Acts 1:10).

In this sense the apostles were true "witnesses" of the ascension. It occurred while they were watching. Christ did not merely slip through the crowds as He had done on previous occasions, and so was only concluded to have gone into heaven. It is expressly said that while they were looking, He was received out of sight.

In this sense the apostles were much like Elisha of old who watched his master go up before him (II Kgs. 2:9-14).

And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." 10 So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." 11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. 13 He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. 14 Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.

- As such, the apostles were anxious about His departure.
- As such, they were waiting for his mantle to fall on them.
- As such, they were waiting for the double portion of the Spirit.

Two other mysterious men were witnesses of the ascension. It is significant that all through the

life of Jesus, there were at least two witnesses, men or angels (messengers), at the most important events.

- At His birth there were wise men, at least two of them, possible three (Mt. 2:1-2).
- At His temptation angels ministered unto Him (Mt 4:11).
- At His transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared (Mt. 17:3-12; Luke 9:28-35).
- At Gethsemane an angel strengthened Him (Luke 22:43).
- At the open grave two angels were present (John 20:12).
- At His ascension two men appeared (Acts 1:10).
- At His second coming there will be two witnesses (Rev. 11:1-14).

The two witnesses carried a Second Coming message.

This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

This message was no doubt said to comfort the apostles. The same friend who had been so faithful to them would return. This message was said, no doubt, in reference to the Second Coming of Christ. When Christ returns, it will be the same Jesus, not another Jesus (II Cor. 11:1-4).

The same:

- Virgin born
- Sinless
- Spotless
- Crucified
- Resurrected
- Ascended
- Glorified . . . Son of God!

This message was also an affirmation of Jesus’ immutability. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. This message was very specific about how Jesus would return again. He would return “in like manner” as He went into heaven. This tells us several about the second coming of Christ:

- He will come literally, or bodily.
- He will come personally.
- He will come visibly.
- He will come in the clouds.
- He will come gloriously.
- He went as the God-man and He will return as the God-man. See: I Thessalonians 4:15-17; Matthew 26:64; Revelation 10:1

The Upper Room Prayer Meeting (Acts 1:10-14).

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room

where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

How did the apostles respond to Jesus' command to wait? They went to Jerusalem (even though there may have been some danger involved). They went in immediate obedience to Christ's request (Acts 1:4) They went in a spirit of joy and rejoicing (Luke 24:52)

And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy...

They gathered together in the upper room instead of waiting in their own homes (Mt. 18:20).

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

This may have been the same "large upper room" in which Jesus and His disciples ate the Last Supper (Luke 22:12). Some think that this could have been the house of Mary the mother of Mark, in which the early Christians of Jerusalem met (Acts 12:12). However, the evidence is not positive.

They were gathered in one accord.

one accord This gathering was composed of the eleven apostles, Jesus' natural family and many others, making up about 120 people (Acts 1:14-15). The word "one accord" is a compound Greek word literally meaning, "with one heart and mind," indicating perfect unanimity of feeling and desire and purpose. There were no divisions, no divided interests and no personal ambitions. This word occurs only once outside of the Book of Acts (Rom. 15:6), but it is found often in Acts.

- With one accord in supplication (Acts 1:14)
- With one accord in expectation (Acts 2:1)
- With one accord in consecration (Acts 4:24)
- With one accord in separation (Acts 5:12)
- With one accord in cooperation (Acts 15:25)

See also: Acts 2:46; 7:57; 8:6; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29

- This unity was one of the secrets of power and blessing in the Book of Acts (Ps. 133).
- This type of atmosphere is necessary for any outpouring of the fire and blessing of God (II Chr. 5:11-14).
- Unity is a tremendously powerful force (Mt. 18:15-20; Dt. 32:30; Eccl. 4:9-12).
- Unity will be a witness to the world (John 17:20-24).

They waited on the Lord in prayer and supplication.

Supplication means humble (self abasement) and earnest prayer in worship. It means to kneel down, to entreat, to implore and to call upon humbly. Prayer here means to petition. This is how they tarried in persistent, earnest prayer (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:42, 6:4; Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2).

- They did not take the promise of Jesus for granted. They asked specifically for what Jesus promised. There was no presumption on their part.
- They understood their personal responsibility to enter into the promise of God.
- They fulfilled the conditions for answered prayer.
 - Prayer or Asking. You have not because you ask not (Jam. 4:2). Ask for rain in the time of latter rain (Zech. 10:1).
 - Unanimity (Mt. 18:15-20)
 - Perseverance (Luke 11:5-10)

The Selection of Matthias to Replace Judas (Acts 1:15-26)

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 16 “Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; 17 for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.” 18 (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. 19 And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms: ‘Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it’; and, ‘Let another take his office.’ 21 Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” 23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen 25 to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” 26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

The process for the replacement of Judas was initiated by Peter (Acts 1:15).

As was customary, Peter assumed the role of spokesman for the apostles. He stood up in the midst of the believers and related the facts of Judas’ treachery and terrible end (could it be that he had been recently found?).

This process was important for several reasons. The Scriptures needed to be fulfilled (See Ps. 41:9; 69:25; 109:8).

Judas’ office needed to be filled.

The Greek word used here for “office” is episkopos which literally means his “overseership.” The apostles felt on the basis of scriptural authority, that Judas’ position should be replaced because of his apostasy, not because of his death. They did not feel that later apostles who died or were martyred needed the same replacement (see Acts 12 in regard to James).

The number twelve was important as it related to the apostles.

There is no question that the Twelve Apostles were special in their day and they have been given a special place in the eternal plan of God. Because of their unique relationship to twelve thrones and twelve foundation stones, the number twelve was important.

The Twelve Apostles are eternally unique for the following reasons:

The Twelve Apostles have a unique title.

These twelve men are the only ones referred to as “Apostles of the Lamb” in the Scripture (Rev. 21:14). The word “apostle” is very common in the New Testament, but this special title is reserved for only the Twelve.

The Twelve Apostles have a unique function.

These twelve men are one day going to be involved with Jesus in judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt.19:28).

The Twelve Apostles will have unique placement.

These twelve men will find a unique placement in the twelve foundations of the Eternal City (Rev. 21:14). This position is theirs most likely because their ministry was foundational to the establishing of not just the first local church, but the universal or mystical church, which is called the City of the Living God (Heb. 12:22).

This process was handled with both natural and Holy Spirit direction. The qualifications were established for this unique role. This is a unique set of qualifications for a unique group of leaders (see Rev. 21:14; Eph. 2:19-22).

The replacement for Judas needed to be a companion of Jesus and the apostles from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry up to His ascension (Acts 1:22).

Jesus imparted much to this select group when He chose “to be with Him” (Mark 3:14). Before we can go forth in the power of the Spirit, we must have been “with Him”

The replacement for Judas needed to be a witness of the resurrection (Acts 1:22).

The seventy would be the most likely group from which to draw. Some use these qualifications as proof that there are no more apostles today since no one can possibly meet these criteria. However, if that were true, then Timothy, Paul, Apollos and others would be eliminated also. It is true that the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb is a closed group, but when Jesus ascended on high He inaugurated another level of apostolic ministry which He gave to us for our work today (Eph. 4:7-11).

The candidates were narrowed to two individuals based on a decision by the Twelve (Acts 1:23). The final choice was made by prayer and the activity of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:24- 26).

They prayed.

This is the first prayer specifically cited in which the disciples address their risen Lord. They are going to place the final decision into the hands of the Lord who personally chose the other eleven apostles. (Compare Acts 1:2 and Acts 1:24, same Greek word)

They cast lots.

It is to be remembered that the Holy Spirit had not yet been outpoured. The disciples were still in the transition period emerging from the Old Covenant in the New Covenant era. The choice of Matthias was by lot and of the Lord. The apostles had a precedent for the use of the lot.

- In choosing the scapegoat (Lev. 16:7-10)
- Of assigning the inheritance to the twelve tribes (Num. 34:13; Josh 14:2)
- See also Proverbs 16:33, Numbers 26:55-56 and Jonah 1:3-7.

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. Proverbs 16:33

According to ancient custom, names were written on paper or stones and then placed in the lap or an urn, which was shaken to and fro, and the first name cast out of the lap or urn was recognized as the choice of the Lord.

This is the last time in the scripture that decisions were to be made this way. The process was ultimately effective for several reasons.

- It was done in an atmosphere of prayer.
- It was done in an atmosphere of unity.
- It was done at the prompting of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.
- It was done in a manner befitting the time zone in which they lived.

This process was accepted by all and Mathias was numbered with the Twelve. Notice the later reference to “The Twelve.”

- The Twelve in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:14; 6:2)
- The Twelve acknowledged by Paul (I Cor. 15:3)

How are the two accounts of Judas’s death to be reconciled? There is an apparent contradiction between the account found in Matthew and the one found in Acts:

Matthew 27:3-10	Acts 1:18-19
-----------------	--------------

<p>³ Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,</p> <p>⁴ saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” And they said, “What is that to us? You see to it!”</p> <p>⁵ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.</p> <p>⁶ But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.”</p> <p>⁷ And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in.</p> <p>⁸ Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.</p> <p>⁹ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced,</p> <p>¹⁰ and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.”</p>	<p>¹⁸ (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.</p> <p>¹⁹ And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)</p>
--	--

When you study these two accounts there seem to be some conflicting issues. For instance:

- Who bought the field? Judas or the chief priests?
- How did Judas die? By hanging or by falling?
- Why was the place called a field of blood? Because it was purchased with blood money or because it was the scene of a bloody death?

When you study these two accounts you realize that there are pairs of things that have to be reconciled. There were two transactions.

In Matthew's account the chief priests “bought” a field. (Mt. 27:7).

The Greek word used to describe this purchase is agarazo which literally means “to buy on the open market.”

In the Acts' account Judas “purchased” a field (Acts 1:18).

The Greek word used to describe this purchase is ktaomai which literally means “to get, acquire, or procure a thing for one's self.” There were two purchases.

In Matthew's account the field was a vacant lot that was used for clay for pottery (Mt. 27:7).

The Greek word for field is agros and literally means “a piece of land, a bit of tillage, or a farm.”

In the Acts' account the field was a piece of land that Judas bought for himself (Acts 1:18).

The Greek word for field is chorion and literally means "a parcel of ground, a farm or estate" (see Acts 4:34; 5:3, 8; 28:7).

There were two sums of money that came from two sources. In Matthew's account the land was purchased with thirty pieces of silver that was given to Judas as "the price of blood" or the "value of Him who was priced" (Mt. 27:3, 6, 9). In the Acts' account the land was purchased with the "wages of iniquity" or the "reward of unrighteousness" (Acts 1:18). This was not the same as the thirty pieces of silver that the chief priests used to buy their field, but it was the "ill- gotten gain" that Judas obtained from stealing from the bag (John 12:4-6).

But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

There were two purchase dates. In Matthew's account the field was purchased after the betrayal of Jesus (Mt. 27:7). In the Acts' account the field was purchased much earlier during the 3½ years of ministry with Jesus and the other apostles (Acts 1:18). It was most likely a farmstead that Judas' purchased on which he would some day live.

There were two reasons for calling the field a "field of blood." In Matthew's account it was called the field of blood because "blood money" or betrayal money was used to purchase the field (Mt. 27:8). In the Acts' account it was called the field of blood because of the defilement caused to the land by the shedding of Judas' own blood (Acts 1:19).

When you study these two accounts you realize that the manner in which Judas died is consistent.

Judas hanged himself, not in the chief priest's field, but in his own field. The priest's field had not as yet been purchased. His body was evidently not discovered for a long time being in some quiet, out-of-the-way place. Because this was Judas' secret place, the corpse hung for quite some time before it was discovered. Due to the decomposition of his body and from its own weight the body fell rupturing the walls of the stomach with the result described here by Peter.

When you study these two accounts with the above understanding they can be easily woven together.

Acts' Account

Judas purchased a farmstead. Judas used money that he stole.

Judas fell headlong. Judas burst open
Judas was finally discovered.

Matthew's Account

Judas betrayed Jesus for money. Judas had remorse.
Judas returned the blood money.
Judas went and hanged himself on his property.

The priests bought a field with the blood money.