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## LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

### ACTS OF HOLY SPIRIT: THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

(Acts 1) Lord's Day, March 6, 2016

#### OVERVIEW

"Session 1" for this week in the *Explore the Bible Series*

Acts is the second volume of a two-volume set written by one Luke, declared a physician and one of his fellow missionaries by Paul. Luke provided a history of the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to

**A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:**  
**WHY WOULD YOU HAVE STAYED IN JERUSALEM AFTER PASSOVER? AND, IF YOU WERE FROM ALEXANDRIA OR ROME?**

the remainder of the known world. While his initial audience was Theophilus, it appears Luke wrote to provide not only a description of how Christianity came to be, but to explain it to primarily a Gentile audience. It was this audience who would eventually determine the earthly fate of Paul. As noted in the Background on Acts,<sup>1</sup> Acts may be viewed as an amicus brief designed to show that Christianity was a legitimately acceptable religion to Rome because it was a natural fulfillment of Judaism, a currently accepted religion in the Empire.

Before His first ascension (Luke 24:50), the Eleven were advised to stay in Jerusalem until what Father God had promised to come did in fact come forth. "Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Acts 1-5 is the first act of a multiple act, an eternal play which ends when the Christ returns to meet His bride. Chapters 1 through 5 set the stage—the prequels are over, the trailers have been viewed, and the blockbuster begins ... God is among us, forever.

#### PREAMBLE

The success of any Bible study is entirely dependent upon three entities: you, your teacher and Holy Spirit. He therefore exhorts you to study—do your homework; encourage your teacher by prayer and active participation; most importantly, continually pray to Father God for Holy Spirit to guide us as we learn what He taught Luke 1900+ years ago.

<sup>1</sup>See <http://DThomasPorter.com/BibleStudies>

# TEXT ISSUES ACTS 1

## CONTEXT

After the two believers on the road to Emmaus met a man who turned out to be the risen Christ, Cleopas and his friend returned to Jerusalem where they informed the Eleven. While they were telling them, Jesus Himself stood among them and encouraged them amidst their doubts. Jesus was hungry, and He ate. Afterwards, He taught them more about how repentance and forgiveness of sins would be preached throughout the world, beginning at Jerusalem.

They were instructed to stay in Jerusalem until they have been clothed with power from on high. When He led them outside Bethany, He blessed them. While doing so, He ascended into heaven. They worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem, this time with full joy, continually praising God at the temple.

## TEXT

Acts 1. *After giving more encouragement and instruction Jesus the Christ ascends for the last time within the time of the disciples.*

The Text...	Suggested Questions and Issues ...
<p><b>1</b><sup>1</sup>In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach</p> <p><b>2</b>until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. <b>3</b>After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. <b>4</b>On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, about which you have heard me speak. <b>5</b>For John baptized with/in water, but in a few days you will be baptized <i>εν</i> Holy Spirit.”</p> <p><b>6</b>So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”</p> <p><b>7</b>He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <b>8</b>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”</p>	<p>Q 1 What is his “former book?”</p> <p>Q 2-3 What parameters does Luke use to delimit the ending of this “former book?”</p> <p>Q 3 What were some of the “convincing proofs?” For what purpose? (Consider Matthew 28:1-20; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1-29; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8)</p> <p>Q 4-5 What did Jesus command the Eleven to do? Why?</p> <p>Q 5 What does it mean to be baptized “<i>εν</i> Holy Spirit?”</p> <p>Q 6 What was their response to His command about staying in Jerusalem and why? So?</p> <p>Q 7 <u>Why</u> doesn’t the Christ know when He will return to earth?</p> <p>Q 8 What does Holy Spirit give God’s believers? [<i>δυναμιν</i>, 1411] What does this <i>δυναμιν</i> do for the believer?</p> <p>C 8 Many state this is the outline of the book of Acts as a history work. There are also Christian organiza-</p>



<sup>9</sup>After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

<sup>10</sup>They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup>"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

<sup>12</sup>Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

<sup>13</sup>When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup>They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

<sup>15</sup>In those days Peter stood up among the believers [αδελφῶν, 80] (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) <sup>16</sup>and said, "Brothers, [αδελφοί, 80] the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—<sup>17</sup>he was one of our number and shared in this ministry."

<sup>18</sup>(With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. <sup>19</sup>Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language *akeldama* [Aramaic], that is, Field of Blood.)

<sup>20</sup>"For," said Peter, "it is written in the book

tions who use this verse as their name—  
<http://ActsOne8.com>, for example.

- Q 9-11 What are the differences between His first ascension in Luke 24:51 and this one? Why do we think there is but one ascension?
- Q 9-11 What can we know about Jesus' return from this passage?
- Q 12 How far was the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem proper?  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile—So? Why? This distance was drawn from rabbinical reasoning based on several Hebrew Scriptures (Exodus 16:29; Numbers 35:5; Joshua 3:4). A faithful Jew was to travel no farther on the Sabbath. So?
- Q 13-14 Who all was there together? Name and number. Eleven + Mary + 4 brothers (James, Joe Jr., Simon, Judas/Jude) + "the women." So?
- Q 15-20 Why did the Scriptures have to be fulfilled?
- Q Was it really necessary to replace Judas Iscariot?

<p>of Psalms,  “May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,” [Psalm 69:25] and, “May another take his place of leadership.” [Psalm 109:8]</p> <p>21Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."</p> <p>23So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." 26Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.</p>	<p>Q 21-22 What requisite are the Eleven using to select a substitute for Judas Iscariot? Why was this so important? Was not eleven enough?</p> <p>Q 23-26 What preceded their selection of Matthias over Joseph Barsabbas Justus?</p> <p>Q 25 Where does Judas belong?</p> <p>Q 26 Was this result an act of God action, or their action?</p>
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## ADVANCED BIBLE COMMENTARY FOR ACTS 1<sup>2</sup>

**1:1** *my former book.* The Gospel of Luke. Acts was addressed to the same patron, Theophilus (see Appendix A). *began to do and to teach.* An apt summation of Luke's Gospel, implying that Jesus' work continues in Acts through his own personal interventions and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**1:2** *through the Holy Spirit.* Jesus' post-resurrection instruction of his apostles was carried on through Holy Spirit, and succeeding statements make it clear what the apostles were to accomplish was likewise to be done through Holy Spirit (vv. 4-5,8; see Luke 24:49; John 20:22) Luke characteristically stresses Holy Spirit's work and enabling power (e.g., v. 8; 2:4,17; 4:8,31; 5:3; 6:3,5; 7:55; 8:16; 9:17,31; 10:44; 13:2,4; 15:28; 16:6; 19:2,6). Luke also emphasized the work of Holy Spirit in his gospel—Luke 1:35,41,67; 2:25-27; 3:16,22; 4:14,18; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10,12); in Acts, Holy Spirit is mentioned by name 57 times.

**1:4** *the gift my Father promised.* Presence of Holy Spirit (see John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:12-13).

**1:5** *John baptized with water.* See Luke 3:16. *in a few days.* The day of Pentecost came ten days later, when baptism by Holy Spirit occurred (2:1-4).

**1:6** *restore the kingdom to Israel?* Like their fellow countrymen, they were looking for the deliverance of the people of Israel from foreign domination and for the establishment of an earthly kingdom. The reference to the coming of Holy Spirit had caused them to wonder if the new age was about to dawn. This was not as irrational as we might think (we have 20-20 “hindsight”). Consider this passage from Ezekiel 37—

<sup>2</sup>Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’<sup>12</sup>Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.’<sup>13</sup>Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.<sup>14</sup>I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.’“

And Ezekiel 39...

<sup>25</sup>“Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name.<sup>26</sup>They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid.<sup>27</sup>When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations.<sup>28</sup>Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind.<sup>29</sup>I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

**1:8** A virtual outline of Acts: The apostles were to be witnesses in Jerusalem (chs. 1-7), Judea and Samaria (chs. 8-9) and the ends of the earth—including Caesarea, Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece and Rome (chs. 10-28). They were not, however, to begin this staggering task until they had been equipped with the power of the Spirit (vv. 4-5).

*witnesses*. An important theme throughout Acts (2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; 13:31; 22:15). *Judea*. The region in which Jerusalem was located. *Samaria*. The adjoining region to the north.

**1:10** *two men dressed in white*. A common description of angels.

**1:11** *Men of Galilee*. All the Twelve were from Galilee except Judas, and he was no longer present. *in the same way*. In the same resurrection body and in clouds and “great glory” (Matthew 24:30).

**1:12** *Mount of Olives*. The first ascension occurred on the eastern slope of the mount between Jerusalem and Bethany (Luke 19:28-29,37; see notes on Zechariah 14:4; Mk 11:1; Luke 19:29).

**1:13** *room*. Probably an upper room of a large house, such as the one where the Last Supper was held (Mk 14:15) or that of Mary, mother of Mark (Acts 12:12). *Bartholomew*. Apparently John calls him Nathanael (see John 1:45-49; 21:2). *James son of Alphaeus*. The same as James the younger (Mark 15:40). *Judas son of James*. Not Judas Iscariot, but the same as Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18).

**1:14** *with the women*. Possibly wives of the apostles (cf. 1Co 9:5) and those listed as ministering to Jesus (Mt 27:55; Lk 8:2-3; 24:22). *Mary the mother of Jesus*. Last mentioned here in Scripture. These brothers would include James, who later became important in the church (12:17; 15:13; Gal 2:9).

**1:16** *the Scripture had to be fulfilled*. Both before and after Christ came, numerous psalms were viewed as Messianic. What happened in the psalmist's experience was typical of the experiences of the Messiah. No doubt Jesus' instruction in Luke 24:27,45-47 included these Scriptures.

**1:18** *Judas bought a field*. Judas bought the field indirectly: The money he returned to the priests (Matthew 27:3) was used to purchase the potter's field (Matthew 27:7). *fell headlong*. Matthew 27:5 reports

that Judas hanged himself. It appears that when the body finally fell, either because of decay or because someone cut it down, it was in a decomposed condition and so broke open in the middle. Another possibility is that "hanged" in Matthew 27:5 means "impaled" (see Esther 2:23) and that the gruesome results of Judas's suicide are described here.

**1:19** *Akeldama*. An Aramaic term, no doubt adopted by people who knew the circumstances, for the field was purchased with Judas' blood money (Matthew 27:3-8).

**1:22** *a witness with us of his resurrection*. Apparently several met this requirement. On this occasion, however, the believers were selecting someone to become an official witness to the resurrection—thus, a 12th apostle (v. 25).

**1:23** *Barsabbas*. Means "son of (the) Sabbath." This patronymic was used for two early Jewish Christians, possibly brothers. One was Joseph (here); the other was Judas, a prophet in Jerusalem who was sent to Antioch with Silas (15:22,32).

**1:26** *cast lots*. See Pr 16:33. By casting lots they were able to allow God the right of choice. The use of rocks or sticks to designate the choice was common (see 1Chronicles 26:13-16; see also Nehemiah 11:1; Jonah 1:7). This is the Bible's last mention of casting lots.