

Acts 1

Verse 1

Who is this book written to and why was it written?

This book was written by Dr. Luke to Theophilus - a Greek believer, explaining what God was doing to build his church. Dated somewhere around 56 - 58 AD. It is the record of the early church and the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

The former book, the gospel account by Luke, was an account that told what Jesus began to do and to teach. The implication is that this account called the Acts of the Apostles, now shortened to just ACTS will tell us the continuing saga of the result of that teaching and work which Christ did.

These works and teachings were written down so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that, believing, we might have life through His Name. (Jn 20:31) Luke tells us that he did thorough research into what Christ did by interviewing the people who were with Christ and saw Him do the miracles and heard the teaching. This is one proof for the accuracy of the Word of God. (Rabbit trail- How do we know the accuracy of writing and transmission of the Word of God.)

Christ set the foundation for the church and the message of salvation for everyone who believes. The miracles that Christ did were a sign that the power of the Holy Spirit was upon Him. This brought a confirmation that what He said was not just like any other man but He truly was the Son of God. As sons of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit we too can do the work that God ordains for us. (John 14:12)

Notice it is not just teaching but doing as well. We can talk and not show by our works that God is a powerful God. Most religions are just philosophy, man's thinking. On the other hand we could do a lot of wonderful things but if we do not explain what the motivation or why it is being done, God will not get the glory. (Mt 5:16)

When we believe we are to do what Christ commanded and bring God glory. He will empower us with His Holy Spirit to do miraculous things to show that He is the Almighty God and to prove to the world that He is the only God and Saviour. As we live out an extension of the book of Acts, God will show us that we too can live the kind of life that we read about here.

Verse 2

What did Jesus do between the time He was resurrected and the time that he was taken up into heaven?

Jesus continued being active until the very end of His physical presence on earth. (I Corinthians 15: 3 - 8) Whatever Jesus instructed them during this time was a preparation for the ministry which they were to participate in. (Mathew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20) Perhaps it was the instruction on how Christ's death and resurrection fulfilled Old Testament prophesy.

Verse 3

If Jesus was appearing to his disciples and teaching them, what does this prove? What is the implication for us?

This proves that He is alive. Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead and not die again giving Christianity a unique message. No other faith system has a message of hope and the forgiveness who died and rose from the dead never to die again. We have a living Saviour.

Verse 4

a. What did Jesus command the disciples to do?

He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem. Previously he had told Mary Magdalene that He would go ahead of them to Galilee (Mark 16:7). From the various accounts of Jesus appearing to people after His resurrection it is difficult to create an accurate time line but from the gospel of John we see that Jesus met them on the sea shore of Galilee where Jesus asked Peter to “feed His sheep and lambs.” They had returned to Jerusalem after that event as we read that he ascended after He led them out to Bethany (Luke 24:50) which is where this event in Acts 1 took place.

b. What was the promise that Jesus had told the disciples about that had come from the Father?

At the Last Supper Jesus told his disciples that the Father would send the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7)

Verse 5

a. What is the origin of the word baptism? What was the purpose of John’s baptism?

Baptism comes from the Greek ‘baptizo’ meaning to wash, launder, or immerse. John baptized at the Jordan River not in a fancy church. The location is not important but the heart must have confessed and repented and Jesus invited in to forgive, cleanse and possess your life. John’s baptism was for repentance and symbolized being washed clean in the inner heart.

b. What would the meaning of being baptized with the Holy Spirit?

Being baptized with the Holy Spirit would be to be completely immersed in the Spirit. When we give total control of our being in submission to God, the Holy Spirit would be in charge of our life. In the Greek language, whenever this expression is used ‘baptized in Holy Spirit’ we do not have the definite article ‘the’ in the Greek phrase. Other places the article ‘the’ appears with ‘Holy Spirit’ but in the seven places in the New Testament where scriptures use both baptism and Holy Spirit in a phrase the article is missing. Some scholars believe that when the article is missing it is not referring to the person of the Holy Spirit but the qualities, gifts and power of the God’s Spirit. So we are to be immersed in the power, filling, gifts and qualities of the Holy Spirit.

c. Are you immersed in the Holy Spirit?

This is a personal application question. Have you allowed the Holy Spirit to completely fill you and cover you with His power and presence? You must have asked Jesus to total cleanse you and

you need to turn your life over to Jesus to allow Him to guide you in every part of your life.

Verse 6

a. What were the disciples thinking might happen at this time?

The disciples thought that the Old Testament prophesied that the Messiah to come would restore the Nation of Israel by having a son of David set up a throne and remove all oppressors from Israel. The Babylonians, Greeks and Romans had subjugated the Israelites because of their disobedience to follow only the Creator God, Jehovah, God Almighty. They thought that Jesus would restore an earthly kingdom but Jesus set up a spiritual kingdom that would last forever.

Verse 7

a. Can anyone know when God is going to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel?

Jesus said that it was not for anyone to know the time or dates that the Father has set down for the future.

b. Should we be trying to figure out when Jesus is coming back? What is more important?

Because no one can know the times set down by God we should not waste time trying to figure out when prophesied events will happen. Instead we should be preparing to go to heaven for our reward and help as many people to become a part of the kingdom of God.

c. What does this tell us about God? Mk 13:32

Only God the Father knows, not angels or even Jesus when He limited himself here on earth.

Verse 8

a. What does the Holy Spirit give us? What does this tell us about God?

The Holy Spirit will give us spiritual power to be a witness for Christ. We can become like Christ if we are fully submitted to Him and seek to be like Jesus and do as Jesus did. We need to get rid of everything that does not reflect God's image.

b. Is there a choice whether we will be a witness or not?

This verse says that when we receive the Holy Spirit you will be my witnesses.

c. How well did the 12 apostles do in their day as witnesses?

They saw a great multitude follow Jesus in their communities (Jerusalem, Bethany, later Samaria, Damascus and across the world - toward Rome, Egypt, and India)

d. How are we doing today to fulfill this command?

We need to be diligent in telling others about Jesus. Who could you invite to follow Jesus and be free from their sins and past?

e. Where is our Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and world?

Jerusalem was where the apostles began the church. Although some apostles had come from Galilee they stayed and worked in Jerusalem after Christ left them to go to Heaven. Judea is the region around Jerusalem so it might be the county or region around you. Perhaps you can draw a circle of about 100 Km (60 Miles) around the place you live and that would become your Judea. Samaria would be further outlying areas outside of your “Judea” The world lay a couple hundred miles away from Jerusalem - other countries or places somewhat distant or in other cultures in your country.

f. What can we do about it?

We should be praying that God will move in mighty ways to give us power to be a strong witness for Him. We can give and go to places that have not yet heard about Jesus.

Verse 9

a. What happened to Jesus after He told them that they were to be His witnesses?

Jesus left them to fulfill what He had told them to do. He was taken up before them. Since Jesus was a spirit being He was able to travel in ways we cannot yet. When Jesus returns, the Bible says that those that are alive who believe in Jesus will meet Him in the air.

Verse 10

a. What happened when they were watching Jesus go up into Heaven?

As they were watching Jesus go, two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them.

b. Who do you think these men were?

Angel can take on the form of humans and appear to people. An angel appeared to the women who were coming to anoint Jesus' body at the tomb and spoke to them. (Mt 28:6; Mk 16:5)

Verse 11

a. What did the men say?

They told the apostles that Jesus was taken to heaven and that He would be returning the same way that they saw Him go.

b. To what do we have to look forward? What implications does this have for us?

We may see Jesus return but we need to either be ready to go and meet Him when we die or if He returns when we are still alive, we will get to see Him return. We do not know the time or the hour so we need to always be ready to meet Jesus, in whatever way He may come to get us.

Verse 12

a. What did the disciples do after Jesus left them?

The disciples left the Mount of Olives and went back to Jerusalem. Remember that Jesus had prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane which is on the Mount of Olives.

b. What is a Sabbath's day's journey?

From Exodus 16: 29 and Numbers 35: 5 - 2000 cubits. The Jews would sometimes put food down at that point a previous day. If they had a meal at the 2000 cubit mark this was considered a place where they could reset the counting and double the distance to 4,000 cubits or about 1 mile. Then they decided that they had to get home as well so in Jesus' day it became about 2 miles (8,000 cubit x 1.5' = 12,000 feet). 1 mile = 5280 feet. 2000 cubits is about 914.4 meters. The scribes and pharisees found ways in which they could re-interpret the law and push the boundaries. Do we ignore or find ways to justify doing things which are stretching the intent of the commands of Christ?

Verse 13

a. Where did the 11 apostles go in Jerusalem?

It speaks of an upper room. Could this be the room where they had the last supper with Jesus? We are never told who owned this place but it had to be sufficiently large to accommodate up to 120 people. (Verse 15)

b. Who was there?

Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

Verse 14

a. What did they do in the upper room? How long did they stay there presumably doing this?

They were continually devoting themselves to prayer. Although they chose a successor to Judas during this time, we do not read about any other activity that they were engaged in. Chapter 2:1 tells us that they were all in one place, so perhaps they were still in prayer for 10 days between the Ascension and Pentecost. They were obeying Jesus by waiting in Jerusalem. What better thing could they be doing but praying?

b. Who joined them?

The individuals which are specifically mentioned are the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus,

and with His brothers. The women could have been devote followers of Jesus including the spouses of the apostles.

c. How might we apply this concept to our lives?

Jesus told the disciples to wait until they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Many times we seek to do things in our own power. This often leads to pride or failure as we cannot carry on a spiritual ministry in our own strength. It is God who is at work in the hearts of people. We cannot change people, only the Creator God can change their hearts.

Verse 15

a. How many people were at the prayer meeting?

A gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together.

b. What do you think they were praying for? How well do we pray for those things?

They were told to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit. They probably were praying for exactly that until He came on the day of Pentecost. We should be praying for the filling of the Holy Spirit and to receive His power for our walk and witness.

Verse 16.

What was Peter's claim about what David had written in the Psalms?

Peter felt that David had prophesied concerning Judas betraying Jesus and leading the guards to where Jesus was praying with his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Verse 17

What had Judas done with the money that he got from betraying Jesus? See also Matthew 27: 3 - 5

When Judas was remorseful for what he had done to betray an innocent man he was smitten to the core of his being and realized he had sinned. He tried to return the 30 pieces of silver but the chief priests and elders did not accept it. Judas ended up throwing the pieces on the temple floor and walked out. He was so despondent that he took his own life.

Verses 18 - 19

What do these verses say was done with the money that Judas received to betray Jesus?

Matthew 27: 6 - 10 tells us that even before Jesus was crucified, Judas was remorseful and returned the money to the Priests at the temple. Since it was "blood money" used to destroy someone the Jewish religious leaders did not want to use it for "God's work" so they bought a field to bury foreigners who had come to Jerusalem and died there. Verse 18 tells us that Judas bought the field but indirectly he did. The field that he died on was probably the place that was

bought where foreigners were to be buried. Perhaps Judas was considered a foreigner and a field that had been desecrated by a suicide might not be a good plot where someone would want to build a home.

Verse 20

Where were the passages from that Peter quoted to initiate a replacement for Judas.

Peter quoted from Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8. This is an interesting way to use these verses.

Verses 21 -22

a. What were the criteria Peter thought important to replace Judas?

Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us - beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us - one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

b. What do these criteria tell us about people who followed Jesus?

There were not just 12 men who followed and were taught by Jesus. Many others listened and obeyed the teachings of Jesus. These others were followers but not considered chosen by Jesus to be his disciples.

Verse 23

a. What were the names of the men which they put forward?

Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.

b. Do we find these men anywhere in scripture or early church fathers?

These men were never mentioned again in the New Testament writings. Some traditions say that Matthias went to Ethiopia as a missionary there.

Verses 24 - 26

a. How did they end up making the decision who was going to replace Judas?

They prayed and then they drew lots. Both men were as equally qualified. Note also that this was not just a “everybody throw your name in the hat” lottery draw. By drawing lots they were at the point where they would allow God to determine which of two should replace Judas.

We do not read of any other place in the New Testament or early church history where this form of leadership selection took place.

b. Which of the two became the replacement for Judas?

Matthias became the replacement.