

THE
ACTS
OF THE APOSTLES

NT 2725
Chapters 1-14

ACTS

AD 30	The Church Established at “Jerusalem”		The Church Enlarged to “Judea and Samaria”		The Church Expanded to “the Ends of the Earth”		AD 60
	The church is . . .		The gospel is . . .		The witness is . . .		
	born		spreading		extended		
	tested		multiplying		received and rejected		
	purified		changing lives		changing lives		
	strengthened		breaking traditions		unifying Jews and Gentiles		
	CHAPTERS 1–7		CHAPTERS 8–12		CHAPTERS 13–28		
Leaders	The apostle Peter				The apostle Paul		
Emphasis	Jewish evangelism		Transition		Gentile evangelism		
Time	AD 33 (1:1–2:47)		AD 36 (8:1)		AD 40 (9:32)		AD 46 (13:1) AD 57 (21:18)
Scope	City evangelism		National evangelism		Cross-cultural evangelism		
Theme	In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus’s followers carry the good news of Christ to the world.						
Key Verse	1:8						
Christ in Acts	Jesus is the glorified, enthroned Savior, who continues His ministry in the world by means of the Holy Spirit working through His disciples until He returns (1:7–9).						

Chapter 1

Verse 8- THEME VERSE OF THE BOOK- *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth."*

There is nothing the apostles or anyone can do concerning the Holy Spirit coming upon them but to receive it.

"You are never more saved than the first day you are saved."
(Lucado)

Chapter 1

Verse 9- *And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were watching, and a cloud took Him up, out of their sight.*

We can look back at Volume 1 (the Gospel of Luke 24:50-53) to see more detail about what is happening in this verse:

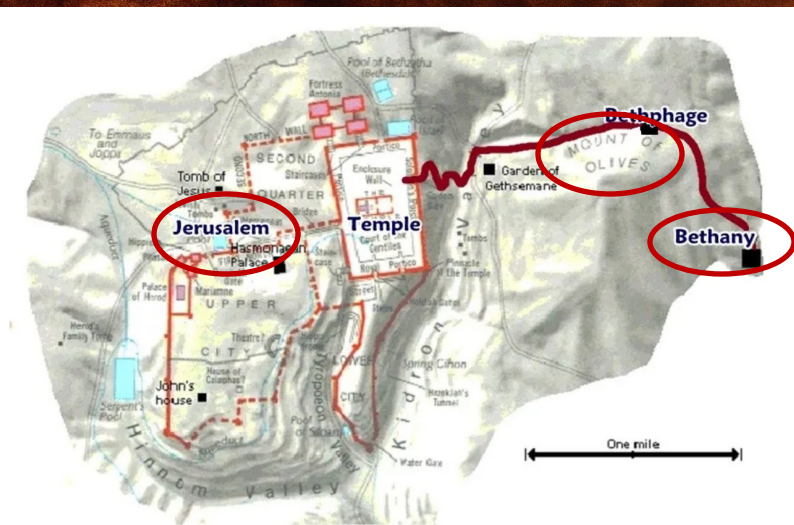
And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God.

Chapter 1

Verse 9- *And after He had said these things, He was lifted up (passive) while they were watching, and a cloud took Him up, out of their sight.*

Jesus was lifted up just as he was risen up from the grave. The

Bible records that Jesus took the apostles out of Jerusalem to Bethany before he ascended (Luke 24:50; John 11:18). The exact location was the Mt. of Olives (1:12).



Bethany Bethphage map

God is often represented by clouds in the Bible.

- A pillar of cloud led the Israelites through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21).
- When the Israelites camped at Mt. Sinai, God covered the mountain in cloud and smoke to show the people the authority He was giving Moses (Exodus 19:9, 16-18).
- When Solomon brought the ark of the covenant into the new temple, God filled the whole building with a cloud of His glory so thick the priests had to flee (1 Kings 8:-11).
- When God showed Peter, James, and John the glory of Jesus during the transfiguration, He spoke to them from a cloud (Mark 9:7).
- When Jesus will return, for both the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) and the second coming (Revelation 1:7), He will come with clouds.
- The word *shekhinah* is not present in the Bible. It is first mentioned in rabbinic literature. The Semitic root from which *shekhinah* is derived, š-k-n, means “to settle, inhabit, or dwell.” In the verb form, it is often used to refer to the dwelling of a person or animal in a place, or to the dwelling of God.

Chapter 1

Verse 10- *And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, then behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them,*

The apostles were “gazing intently” (*atenizontes*- “to stretch.”) As Jesus went up, two men (angels) in white clothing stood beside them (In Mark 16:5, Mark adds that the angels’ white garments were “gleaming” *astraptousē*- “star-like” when at the tomb).

The apostles were looking for more information- When would Jesus inaugurate the kingdom of God? Where was he going? When would he return? What they needed was the power to do God’s will, not information.

Chapter 1

Verse 11- *and they said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”*

The women of Galilee were the first witnesses of the resurrection, explained by two angels. Now, the men of Galilee (literally, “Men, Galileans”) are emphasized as the witnesses of the ascension described by two angels (the same angels at the tomb?). The fact that they are Galileans is mentioned again at Pentecost (2:7).

The time between Jesus “has been taken up from you” and “will come in the same way” is the Church age.



God had instructed the Israelites to completely conquer and drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land, which included various Canaanite tribes and nations. However, the Israelites did not fully follow these instructions and allowed some Canaanite groups to remain in the land. As a result, these Canaanite groups became a source of influence and temptation for the Israelites, leading them away from worshiping God alone and toward adopting the religious practices and gods of the Canaanites.

As a result, over 1400 years later, there were Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, Romans, Greeks, Syrians, Phoenicians, and other ethnic groups



Judeans tended to look down on Galileans, viewing them as uneducated (Acts 4:13- *agrammatoi*- the “uneducated,” and the *idiōtai*- ordinary (*idios*- one’s own self). and of questionable ancestry (John 1:46; 7:52). Galileans also had a reputation of being rabble-rousers, as they often took part in protests and uprisings against the Roman occupiers. It is significant that Jesus grew up in Galilee (Matthew 2:19–23) and in Galilee recruited most of His disciples, started His ministry, and performed His first miracles (Matthew 4:17–23; John 2:11). Being Galilean, Jesus “was despised, and we held him in low esteem” (Isaiah 53:3).

Chapter 1

Verse 11- *and they said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”*

How long will the Church age last? Long enough for us to accomplish Jesus' Great Commission.

Matthew 28:19-20- *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Chapter 1

Verse 11- *and they said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”*

Many scholars believe Jesus will return with his saints to the exact spot of the Mt. of Olives where he ascended. This was prophesied by Zechariah (14:4):

On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west forming a very large valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north, and the other half toward the south.

Chapter 1

Verse 12- *Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.*

A Sabbath day's journey is defined as three-quarters of a mile (2000 cubits or 3000 feet). This is taken from Numbers 35:5:

You shall also measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, on the south side two thousand cubits, on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits, with the city in the center. This shall become theirs as pasture lands for the cities.

Chapter 1

Verse 12- *Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.*

These are the dimensions of the Levites' pastureland around cities. A person was allowed to walk this length on the Sabbath as commanded in Exodus 16:29:

See, the Lord has given you the Sabbath; for that reason. He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain, everyone, in his place; no one is to leave his place on the seventh day.”
(Faw).

Chapter 1

Verse 13- *When they had entered the city, they went up to the upstairs room where they were staying, that is, Peter, John, James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.*

This could be the same room (*hyperōon*- upper room) where the Last Supper took place the night of Jesus' crucifixion, although it is a different word (*katalyma*- guest room) than in Luke 22. All eleven disciples are mentioned, with the obvious exception of Judas, who killed himself (full of remorse but not repentance). This list is identical to Luke 6:14-16, but in a different order.

Chapter 1

Verse 14- *All these were continually devoting themselves with one mind to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*

These disciples were once focused on position and power, but now after experiencing Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection, they are focused on sacrifice and service. The women, who were minimized in secular life, are now praying with one mind (*homothymadon*) = *homo-* same + *thymadon* = passion) with these 120 believers. There is nothing that unites believers like earnest prayer!

Chapter 1

Verse 14- *All these were continually devoting themselves with one mind to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*

With the eleven disciples were “the women” (probably the wives of the apostles and the women at the cross, tomb, and resurrection), Jesus’ family- his mother, Mary, and his half-brothers- James, Joses, Judas, and Simon (Mark 6:3). At first, his half-brothers did not believe Jesus was the Messiah (John 7:5), but they obviously did after his resurrection. James became the pastor of the Jerusalem church, and Judas (Jude) wrote the book of Jude.

Chapter 1

Verse 15- *At this time Peter stood up among the brothers and sisters (a group of about 120 people was there together), and said,*

Between Jesus' resurrection and ascension, more than 500 people saw him at one time with his resurrected body (1 Corinthians 15:6). Now, 120 believers unite themselves in prayer and are concerned with replacing Judas, the one false apostle. A Jewish community needed ten males before a synagogue could be formed. Their community council had 120 members, one council member representing every ten males. (NOTE: The Israeli General Assembly (*Knesset* – “Assembly”) has 120 members.

Chapter 1

Verse 16- *“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.*

Now, 120 believers unite themselves in prayer and are concerned with replacing Judas, the one false apostle. Judas’ betrayal was not a surprise to Jesus as he had warned them that one of them would betray him (John 13:21-26). Peter quotes David from Old Testament:

- Psalm 69:25- *May their camp be desolated; May there be none living in their tents.*
- Psalm 109:8- *May his days be few; May another take his office.*

Chapter 1

Verse 16- *“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.*

David wrote of those he thought of as his friends who betrayed him. Peter uses this prophetic statement by David to explain the betrayal of Judas. Even though Peter also betrayed Jesus, he repented. Judas was full of remorse (he returned the money and hanged himself) but never repented.

Chapter 1

Verse 17- *For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry.”*

Peter emphasized that Judas was counted among the twelve disciples, but he was never genuinely a follower of Jesus.

In Volume 1, Luke recorded Jesus' conversation with the disciples at the Last Supper when he told them:

“You are the ones who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Luke 22:28-30)

Chapter 1

Verse 17- *For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry.”*

How could this be if there were now only eleven disciples? Even though Judas took part and was an active follower, Jesus knew he wasn't saved. John wrote:

“For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who (3rd person singular) it was who would betray Him.” (John 6:64).

Judas made the worst possible decision! Incredibly, Jesus said it would've been better if he had never been born. (Mark 14:21)

Chapter 1

Verse 18- *(Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.*

The believers didn't need additional details about Judas, but it was helpful for Theophilus and us to know this information.

The end result of Judas' betrayal was a fee of thirty pieces of silver paid by the chief priests and elders. Before hanging himself, Judas returned the money to them, but since it was tainted, they used it to buy a field to bury strangers. Judas hanged himself (Matthew), but the rope or branch broke, and his body fell down headfirst, and his internal organs "gushed out." (Luke)

Chapter 1

Verse 19- *And it became known to all the residents of Jerusalem; as a result that field was called Hakeldama in their own language, that is, Field of Blood.)*

Traditionally, this field is thought to be the Valley of Hinnom (Ge-Henna), south of the old city of Jerusalem. In Aramaic, it was called *Hakeldama* (*Haqel* – field + *D'ma* – of blood). In the Old Testament, it was a place of child sacrifice to Baal and Molech, pagan gods (2 Kings 23:10) by evil Israelite kings. Later, it became a garbage and sewage dump. Jesus refers to it eleven of the twelve times it is used in the New Testament, and it became synonymous with hell.

Chapter 1

Verse 20- *“For it is written in the book of Psalms: ‘May his residence be made desolate, And may there be none living in it’; and, ‘May another take his office.’*

Peter quotes Psalm 69:25 as a prophecy of Judas’ thirty pieces of silver used to buy land for a cemetery (Matthew 27:3-10), a desolate place with no one living in it.

He also remembers Psalm 109, a call for judgment against his accuser who lied about him. His “office” (*episkopēn*) is the word “overseer.” Someone else would fulfill the spiritual office he could not fulfill.

Chapter 1

Verse 21- *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—*

Judas' replacement needed to be someone who had witnessed all of Jesus' ministry if he was to be a "witness." (Acts 1:8)

If Jesus' prophecy concerning the twelve apostles sitting on thrones judging Israel was to be fulfilled, a replacement was needed.

And Jesus said to them, 'Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. 19:28)

Chapter 1

Verse 22- *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.”*

Peter gives us the Biblical definition of an apostle. It was someone who was a "witness" (*martyra*- masculine singular) of Jesus' complete ministry, beginning at his baptism (Matt. 3:17) until his resurrection (Acts 1:3). Not independently, but someone who was known by the other eleven.

This time frame is the only span covered by all four Gospels. Matthew and Luke begin at Jesus' birth, but Mark and John begin at his baptism.

Chapter 1

Verse 23- *So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.*

Of the 120 in the upper room, many were disqualified from replacing Judas. Jesus' brothers only believed in him after the resurrection. Others like Stephen and Philip may have been present, but their role was as deacon (Acts 6:1-7) and evangelist (Acts 8:4-40).

Two men out of the 120 were qualified- Joseph, also called Barsabbas (Aramaic- "son of Sabbas or Sabbath"). It could be that Judas Barsabbas (15:22) was his brother. He also had a Latin name, Justus. A second candidate was Matthias.

Chapter 1

Verse 23- *So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.*

A second candidate was Matthias (“gift of Yahweh”). Church tradition supposes that he later became a missionary to Ethiopia.

Chapter 1

Verse 24- *And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all people, show which one of these two You have chosen*

The pattern we see here is so important for us today. They began the meeting with prayer, and now faced with an important decision, they stopped and prayed again, asking for God’s help. Luke reminds us that Jesus set the pattern when he prayed before choosing the original twelve apostles (Luke 6:12):

Now it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer with God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

Chapter 1

Verse 24- *And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all people, show which one of these two You have chosen*

The fact that they prayed shows us that apart from God’s leadership, we are capable of making wrong choices. Since Jesus chose the original twelve, his followers asked him to choose Judas’ replacement.

Jesus was a “knower-of-hearts” (*kardio*- hearts + *gnōsta*- knower). Since he created us, he knows us perfectly, much better than we know ourselves or other people.

Chapter 1

Verse 25- *to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.*”

This verse hinges on the words “to occupy” (*labein*) and “turned aside” (*parebē*). Both come from the root word *lambano*- “to seize something fully or to become identified with it.”

Judas never fully embraced the ministry of following Jesus. He never fully committed himself to it. As a result, he “turned aside from” (*paralambano*) this ministry of serving and following Jesus, and he chose to serve Satan. Now hell is “his own place,” which could be translated as “a place of his own choosing.”

Chapter 1

Verse 26- *And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.*

Casting lots is mentioned seventy times in the Old Testament and seven times in the New Testament

- The division of the land under Joshua (Joshua chapters 14-21),
- To determine His will for a given situation (Joshua 18:6-10; 1 Chronicles 24:5,31).
- To determine offices and functions in the temple were also determined by lot (1 Chronicles 24:5, 31; 25:8-9; 26:13-14).
- Casting lots for Jesus' garments (Matthew 27:35).
- Urim means "light," and Thummim symbolizes God's perfection.

Next week...

**Session 3 & 4:
The Day of Pentecost
Peter's First Sermon**

