

# Acts Chapter One

## Acts 1:1-5

**The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

- Refers to who this book is written to—Theophilus (first account is the Book of Luke). It is believed that he was an influential, wealthy man living in Antioch. His name means 'lover of God'.
- Luke covers the period preceding the ascension. The Book of Acts continues story of a Living Jesus—not just distant memories. This book is about the Jesus who can be known and loved.
- This section indicates that Jesus communicated/gave order "by the Holy Spirit"—so they could begin to recognize this way of being led. They are called apostles because now they will be 'sent ones'.
- This is a continuation of all that Jesus does/teaches—no longer from earth, but from glory.
- Three more times in Acts 1 there are clues about the work of the Holy Spirit:
  - 1:5 you shall be baptized
  - 1:8 you shall receive power when the H.S. has come upon you
  - 1:16 scripture had to be fulfilled which H.S. foretold by mouth of David
  - 1:20-21 H.S. must have given direction about the proper interpretation of these scriptures.

First four verses are one sentence.

Jesus presents Himself alive---this is not the norm following crucifixion. The entire book is built on this initial proving of the resurrection of Jesus.

Convincing (infallible) proofs

Appearing over 40 days (seen by over 500/I Cor 15:6). The number 40 is the time period for 'testing'.

Speaking

This is not the only resurrection miracle—OT, Lazarus, widows son

Speaking of the things 'concerning the Kingdom of God'.

Disciples still think in terms of natural/political kingdom/Israel

**Gathering together:** eating and lodging together

**Gave Direction:** Do not leave Jerusalem—wait for what the Father promised (which you heard of from Me)—Wait (Abraham didn't/Ishmael)

**You shall be baptized with the H.S. not many days from now.**

- Different than water baptism
- Jesus knew the fulfillment would come on Pentecost—but the disciples did not know to expect it as a fulfillment of this feast.

**Acts 1:6-8**

**So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 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 even to the remotest part of the earth."**

- Came together: 11 apostles +other followers. The number 12 represents fullness.
- Disciples thought that the main agenda was restoring the kingdom to Israel. They still inquire about an earthly kingdom where Israel will be central/rule over the rest of the world. The restoration of the Kingdom to Israel was part of the new covenant (Jer 23:1-8, Ezek 36:16-30, 37:21-28). They anticipated a political, territorial kingdom overseen by Messiah.
- Jesus responds—it is not for them to know times/epochs. (times:longer, epochs:shorter).

- What comes next is a period of time where God will call out of the nations—a people for Himself—called the Church.
- Holy Spirit will come upon you—same description used for the Incarnation-with Mary.
- Witnesses: Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, remotest parts of the earth. This is the outline for their future ministry. Ch 1-7: Jerusalem, Ch 8-12: Samaria and Judea, Ch 13-28 to the ends of the earth.
- Jesus was killed in Jerusalem, rejected in Judea, encountered mixture in Samaria, gentiles to the ends of the earth.
- I John 1:1-3—what it means to bear witness
- Great commission—Matthew 28:18-20

His Kingdom is coming—not taking people from the world—but transforming them within this world—bringing the sphere of earth under the rule of heaven.

Since His Kingdom has come, and He is now enthroned as King—witnesses will be sent as heralds to every corner of His realm—announcing His coming. When they ask about the Kingdom—He calls forth His Church (until now a mystery).

This conversation takes place 10 days prior to Pentecost.

### **Acts 1:9-11**

**And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also 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 just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."**

- A cloud received Him (took Him out of their sight)—take note that clouds in OT and book of Revelation indicate presence and movement of the Lord. The same cloud appeared on the Mt. of Transfiguration and as the Shekinah that filled Solomon's Temple.
- Two angels: indicate Jesus' destination—heaven. He will return in the same way you saw Him leave.
- Jesus is stepping into God's immediate presence—His dimension of reality.
- When He was born—wrapped in swaddling clothes. At His death—naked. At His departure—wrapped in clouds/glory.
- Zech 14:4—His return: personal, visible, glorious

- He will return in the same way He left (physically, visibly, from Mt. of Olives, in the presence of disciples, blessing the Church).
- Taken up from you—ascension
- Heaven and earth—two distinct parts of God's reality
- He will come again—promise of His return is made
- In Daniel 7: One 'like the Son of Man' is brought up—presented to The Ancient of Days—given Kingly power over the nations and beasts (forces for evil and chaos)
- It is through prayer that we access the heavenlies

### **Acts 1:12-14**

**Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered *the city*, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, 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*. These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the women*, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.**

- These 'all with one mind'—continually devoted to prayer—along with the women. One accord=a notable unity.
- Devoted (katamenontes:to remain fixed; to continue in a state) in prayer—desperate and earnest. Participation in prayer gives those gathered access to heaven—where Jesus is. This brings about conflict with those who serve the temple (the location where God's presence had been displayed until now).
- From the Ascension onward—the story of Jesus' followers takes place in both dimensions.
- Sabbath's day journey: less than one mile—2,000 cubits (Rabbi's calculation from Exodus 16:29)
- It is a specific upper room—probably location for the Last Supper.
- This is the only time Mary is mentioned in the Book of Acts.

## **Acts 1:15-20**

**At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said, "Brethren, 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. For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry." (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. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the book of Psalms,**

**'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE,  
AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT';  
and,**

**'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.'**

- This gathering probably did not include all the believers—Jesus had appeared to over 500—I Cor 15:6
- Judas does not ruin God's plan—he plays a part in fulfilling it
- The scripture had to be fulfilled (H.S. foretells beforehand)
- As they prayed—pondered the Psalms—they spoke of a time when they would be opposed by a traitor in their midst. (Lu 24:45—Jesus had opened the scriptures for their understanding).
- Applied these scriptures—homestead made desolate/Ps 69:25, let another take his office/Ps 109:8
- Hakeldama-field of blood—Judas blood spilled—perhaps rope broke. Another reason for name—purchased with 'blood money'.
- Though the disciples had experienced trauma and disappointment—they are still very cognizant of the Lord at work.

## **Acts 1:21-26**

**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." So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they drew lots**

**for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.**

- Some think that Peter was impulsive in adding to the 11—because Jesus would choose Paul later.
- Jesus had chosen 12. It takes 12 to model/symbolize God's plan for Israel. 12 is the number that denotes earthly government—so there needed to be 12 witnesses to Jerusalem after the Ascension (a second offer of the kingdom—Acts 3:19-20).
- It is significant that Paul is not called until Israel's failure is fully demonstrated—in the stoning of Stephen. ( Gal 1:1)
- Peter has this election before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- The one who would replace Judas had to be with them from John's baptism onward—witnessed to the resurrection. They pray—draw lots.
- Some say Matthias is wrong choice because he is never mentioned again—but neither is Matthew, Andrew or Thomas.
- Revelation 21:14—names of 12 apostles written on foundation stones of New Jerusalem—argument will be settled then.
- Key message given to the church—bear witness to the resurrection—it speaks of God's new creation.

**Why is the Resurrection the Pivotal Message:**

- Sermons in NT—beginning at Pentecost have resurrection as their theme.
- Jesus said repeatedly that He would rise from the dead. He is not a liar.
- OT prophecies must be fulfilled
- Jesus as the High Priest needed to present blood to turn the judgment seat to mercy seat—ever lives to make intercession for us.
- God is not a God of the dead but of the living (Matt 22:29-33)
- Resurrection as well as His death are critical to saving faith. All other religions have dead leaders.
- His death=payment for sin. His resurrection=gives new life
- Without resurrection/ascension—could not send the H.S.
- Showed Himself to 500—not a hallucination
- Broke the bonds of death by resurrection
- Returns immortality to mankind
- Because He lives—we can live also
- Death loses power/sting. Fear of death kept people captive all their lives. Death is defeated—Rom 6:9

- Edersheim: most established fact in history.
- Condition for salvation: Rom 10:9
- Resurrection declares Jesus to be Son of God
- Sets Jesus above creation—Matt 28:18, Eph 1:20-23
- Bring new life source—I Pet 1:3
- Assures future judgment—Acts 17:31

# Acts Chapter One—Workbook

## Key Words:

## Harmonize:

Were there any prophecies concerning Judas betraying Jesus?

## Dig:

- 1) What is the "first account" referred to in verse 1?
- 2) What clues about the Holy Spirit do you find in chapter 1?
- 3) What were the "convincing proofs" Jesus presented to His apostles (vs3)?
- 4) How is a Sabbath's day journey different from a regular journey?
- 5) List seven facts about Jesus from this chapter.
- 6) Read Acts 1:6. The disciples asked a similar question in Matthew 24:3. How does His response differ here?
- 7) Verse 11 describes the Return of Christ---check the cross references—what else can you find out about His return?
- 8) What reasons are given for the Father sending the Holy Spirit?
- 9) Describe the Ascension. Why is it important?
- 10) What were the requirements for choosing an apostle to replace Judas?

11)What do the disciples think will happen when they receive the Holy Spirit?

12)How did the disciple's understanding of the Kingdom differ from Jesus?

**Discuss:**

- 1) Acts 1 indicates Jesus communicated/gave orders by the Holy Spirit.  
What was the evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence to these disciples?  
What did this look like?
  
- 2) Did the disciples have any way to anticipate what it would be like to relate to the Holy Spirit?
  
- 3) What is the difference between being baptized with water and being baptized with the Holy Spirit?

**Point of Prayer:**

Pray a prayer of submission to the Father—a willingness to receive all that the Holy Spirit was sent for.

**Integrate:**

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

**Application:**

- 1) What is the role /responsibility of a witness?
  
- 2) How can you determine if you are walking in agreement/'one mind' as you pray with others?

- 3) Describe a time when it was hard to wait for something.
- 4) What have you been taught about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?
- 5) Did you experience any 'power' as a result of your baptism?
- 6) Have you ever been betrayed by someone? How did you recover?
- 7) Where/to whom has the Lord sent you to 'witness'?
- 8) Describe a time of powerful group prayer that you have participated in.
- 9) What is the hardest part for you in witnessing to unbelievers?