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| C:\Users\William\Documents\Graphics\Cross Black with Dark Red 2.jpg | Acts Volume 1: Ten Days |
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| 2/16/2019 | Acts Volume 1: Ten Days |
|  | This second letter from Luke to Theophilus provides an account of the early Christians and the first century church. It focuses on the Apostles Peter and Paul and their rolls in the developing religion of Christianity. In Volume 1 of this study, the focus will be on Acts chapters 1:1 to 2:4 which describe the activities of the disciples in the ten-day period between the ascension and the beginning of the church. |

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Acts Volume 1: Ten Days

Acts Volume 1: Ten Days

# Introduction:

The book commonly known as the Acts of the Apostles is the second in a set of two letters written by the same author to a person identified as Theophilus.[[1]](#footnote-1) Taken together they provide a history of the Christian movement from the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ through his ascension into heaven, then onto the extension of his new religion from Jerusalem to Samaria and then to the farthest reaches of the known world. Although they are written by the same man, they are different types of writings. His first letter, the Gospel of Luke, is similar to the other letters known as the Gospels especially Mark and Matthew. It is best characterized as a Greco-Roman Biography. As a biography, Luke deals primarily with the life and deeds of Jesus Christ. The Acts of the Apostles on the other hand is unlike any other book in the New Testament. It has been most generally classified as a historical work. It differs from Luke in that it does not concentrate on a single individual, but introduces several people throughout its pages.

Acts begins with a connecting statement that reminds Theophilus about the nature of these letters. Doing this he sets the stage for the second volume to continue to trace the Christian movement since the death of Jesus.

In the Gospel of Luke, the author makes the following statement in his introduction:

 **Luke 1:1-4 (KJV)**
1  Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2  Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3  It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4  That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

He points out several things that are important to the study of the Acts of the Apostles. Among these are:

1. There have been other efforts to write about the things which their community believes
2. The writer has a “perfect understanding of all things from the very first”
3. This is written so that Theophilus might know for certain those things he has been taught

Clearly these are just as important to the study of the Acts of the Apostles as they are to the Gospel of Luke. The author has a “perfect understanding” of these things from the very beginning to the time he was writing the letters. We can ask for no better historian than this to provide us a glimpse of the spread of Christianity in the first century.

The author of both of these letters has been identified as Luke, the physician and a compatriot of Paul. Luke has been accepted as the author since at least the second century. However, some scholars dispute this.

Acts has been dated from 63 AD at the time of Paul’s imprisonment in Rome to as late as 95 AD. Most scholars today consider the most likely date to be somewhere between 80-90 AD.

Author of Acts

The author is not named in either volume.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBurkett2002196-6) According to Church tradition dating from the 2nd century, he was the "Luke" named as a companion of the [apostle Paul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostle_Paul) in three of the letters attributed to Paul himself; this view is still sometimes advanced, but "a critical consensus emphasizes the countless contradictions between the account in Acts and the authentic Pauline letters."[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles#cite_note-FOOTNOTETheissenMerz199832-7) (An example can be seen by comparing Acts' accounts of Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-31, 22:6-21, and 26:9-23) with Paul's own statement that he remained unknown to Christians in Judea after that event (Galatians 1:17-24).)[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPerkins1998253-8) He admired Paul, but his theology was significantly different from Paul's on key points and he does not (in Acts) represent Paul's views accurately.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBoring2012590-9) He was educated, a man of means, probably urban, and someone who respected manual work, although not a worker himself; this is significant, because more high-brow writers of the time looked down on the artisans and small business-people who made up the early church of Paul and were presumably Luke's audience.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEGreen199735-10)

Wikipedia, Acts of the Apostles

The intended recipient of this letter, as well as the Gospel of Luke, is a person named Theophilus. He is identified in both the first chapter of Luke and Acts and is never mentioned again in the cannon. Since Luke calls him “most excellent Theophilus” in the Gospel it is assumed that he is a person in the upper class of society and maybe even a government official. Nothing else can be discerned about him.

In this second volume of the Study of Acts, we will begin in Antioch where the Holy Spirit separates out Paul and Barnabas for their first missionary trip and their journey that leads to the universal church of Christ.

## Method of study:

There are several ways to study this book. We are going to combine two of them into what I hope will be a unique study of the Acts of the Apostles, which we shall hereinafter call simply “Acts”. To understand this better, any history book will contain certain types of information. Among these are stories, speeches, tracking of the movements of the key characters, and supporting information including chronological data. Acts is not unlike this.

Because Acts in a general history book, it can best be studied by:

1. Studying the chronology found there. This is done by closely studying the spread of Christianity. Acts 1:8, introduces this method by quoting Jesus when he commanded his disciples to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. A student of Acts can, therefore, study the spread of Christianity in three circles, namely;
	1. Jerusalem,
	2. Judea and Samaria, and finally
	3. Throughout the known world.
2. Studying the structure of Acts. Once again this can be divided into three sections.
	1. First is the transition from the Gospel (Acts 1:1-26),
	2. Second is the activities of Peter (Acts 2:1-12:25) and
	3. Finally the activities of Paul (Acts12:1-28:21)
3. Studying the themes found within Acts. Speakers will deliver different messages to different audiences. In Acts, the themes can be classified into three groups:
	1. Exhorting Christians, encouraging them to face the trials and tribulations that they will face.
	2. Converting new disciples, and
	3. Defending the doctrine. Usually to government officials in an effort to convince them that the basis of this new religion are factual.
4. Identifying the significant events such as; speeches, miracles, prayers, and persecutions recorded in Acts. The speeches in Acts occupy almost 25% of the book. There are around 19 speeches recorded in Acts. Of these 6 are attributed to Peter, 8 to Paul, 1 to Stephen, 1 to James, 1 to Ananias, and 1 to Priscilla and Aquila and 1 to Jesus. Luke records xx miracles, xx prayers and xx accounts of persecutions in his history of the early church.
5. Considering the skeptics. Studying accusations of error proposed by skeptics, and the answers to them.
6. And finally, studying Acts verse by verse, tracing the primary characters as they flow through this historic period as recorded by Luke.

We are going to combine each of these methods of study in this course. We will begin with an overview of each of these methods, then begin by identifying the structure and chronological period of that section, then look into the themes in those verses. From the themes we will move into an overview of the significant events and a brief investigation into accusations of skeptics before we enter the verse by verse study. This will be an exhaustive study that will likely take several weeks or even a few months to do correctly. However, it should be anything but boring as we get a glimpse into the development of the church of Christ in the first century.

# chronology of the acts of the apostles:

As stated earlier, the best estimate of the date of origin of Acts is between 80 and 90 AD. Chronologically, Acts covers the church from about 40 days after Passover in 30 AD to the imprisonment of Paul in Rome in 63 AD. In Acts 1:8, Jesus identified three periods of church development which we will use as broad chronological periods for this study. These are the development of the church in Jerusalem, the development of the church in Judea and Samaria, and the development of the world-wide church.

#### Development of the church in Jerusalem:

This is the earliest period of church history. The infant church was born on Pentecost in 30 AD, about ten days after Jesus ascended into Heaven or fifty days after His resurrection. This period is covered by Luke in Acts 1:1 through Acts 8:1. The principle characters are the apostles and the other 108 disciples including Mary the mother of Jesus. The key verse in this section is Acts 2:36 where the Jews cried out “What should we do?” once Peter and the other Apostles convinced them that they had had a part in the murder of Gods Son.

#### Development of the church in Judea and Samaria:

The second period of church development discussed by Luke in Acts begins with the church being exported from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria. This period of church development begins in Acts 8:1 and continues to Acts 12:24.

#### Development of the world wide church:

Once the church had been established in Judea and Samaria, Jesus wanted it taken to the farthest reaches of the world. Beginning in Acts 13:1, Luke expounds on the development of the world wide church. Paul was instrumental in achieving this goal.

In this volume, the chronological setting will exclusively be found within the “Development of the World Wide Church”.

### STRUCTURE OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:

Acts can be structurally divided into three sections. The transition from the Gospel of Luke, the activities of Peter and the activities of Paul. While there are other men and women discussed in the last two sections besides Peter and Paul, they are arguably the primary characters in those sections.

#### Acts 1:1-26. Transition from the Gospel of Luke:

In this section, Luke transitions from the gospel to the history of the church. This section contains only one chapter and provides a connection between the earlier work that he had sent ant this one.

#### Acts 2:1-Acts 12:25. Peter and the jewish church

In the second section, Luke concentrates on the activities of Peter and the church as it begins as Jewish organization. Because Jesus gave Peter the keys to His kingdom[[2]](#footnote-2) he opened the doors twice, once to the Jews in Acts chapter 2 and finally to the Gentiles by baptizing Cornelius and his family in Acts chapter 10. Peter’s role continued into the final section for a short period, then he disappears from Luke’s history book.

#### Acts 13:1-Acts 28:31. paul and the universal church

The final section in Luke’s description of the development of the early church is its transition from an exclusively Jewish religion to a true universal religion. While Peter had a role it this with his conversion of the first Gentile Christians, Cornelius and his household, it is Paul who is the primary architect of the universal church.

### principle themes of the acts of the apostles:

Acts contains an overriding theme and three additional themes. The primary theme of the book of the Acts of the Apostles is that God is behind this new religion and that he is directing its development and spread. From this idea, three principle themes are evident. These are, Christians exhorting other Christians, Christians converting people to Christianity, and Christians defending the factual basis of Christianity. For clarity, these are titled Exhortation, Evangelism, and Apologies.

#### Exhortation:

Encouraging the early Christians was one of the principle reasons Luke wrote these two volumes. In the Gospel of Luke, he clearly told Theophlius that he was writing so” That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”[[3]](#footnote-3) Luke wanted his intended audience, Theophlius, to be well grounded in the Christian doctrine so that he would be thoroughly convinced that what he had been taught was the truth.

Unlike some other Christians of this period, Luke did not think that Jesus would return in their lifetime.[[4]](#footnote-4) Luke makes it clear that Christians should not be concerned about the end of the world and the return of Jesus, but they should focus on introducing Christianity to the people of the world.[[5]](#footnote-5) His encouragement to the Christians to stop being concerned with the return of Jesus and to evangelize the world fits well with the exhortations throughout the book.

The speeches of exhortation presented by Luke begins with Jesus when he tells the disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Ghost falls on them and this will allow them to be a witness of him throughout the world.[[6]](#footnote-6) They continue with speeches by Peter, Paul and others.

Exhortation is just as important today is it was in the period that Luke wrote Acts. Today, Christians are faced with some of the same issues that they dealt with then. Christians are persecuted, both directly and indirectly by non-believers today. Members of other religious organizations kill believers of Jesus today, just as they did then. Satan works hard to cause doubts and questions that are designed to destroy our faith. Open hostility to Christians can be seen on college and university campuses here in America today. Because of this, it is easy for Christians to become depressed and speeches of encouragement and exhortation are essential to our religious health.

#### Evangelism:

Speeches of Christians to non-Christians are well represented in Acts. It should be noted that the speakers presented a message based on the needs and understanding of their listeners. Not every person needed to hear the same message, some had heard of Jesus and believed on him, others had not. Some understood the need for men to repent of their sins to be pleasing to God while others had no such understanding. A speaker seeking to convert a person who had not heard of Jesus would, of necessity, begin with Jesus as did Phillip when he rode with the Ethiopian official. Other speakers would only give the necessary instructions on how to become a Christian to people who already were convinced that Jesus was the son of God and that they needed to repent. This was the method used by Ananias when he met with Saul.

Evangelism is critical to the growth of the church today, just as it was in the first century. Very few people just happen to walk into the meeting of the church uninvited and un-encouraged. It is absolutely essential for Christians to work to convert their neighbors and families. The Gospels of Matthew and Mark both end with Jesus commanding his disciples to teach the world about him, making additional disciples.

#### Apologetics:

Speeches of Christians to non-Christians, usually government officials, that defend the facts of the Christian movement as recorded by Luke are speeches of apologetics. These speeches were intended to convince the listeners that Jesus lived, died, arose and ascended into heaven. While they also caused some, like Felix, to seriously consider becoming a Christian their principle purpose was to convince them that the Christian faith is based on historical facts and not mere rumors or superstition.

With Satan’s efforts, people today believe that life came from non-life, that the universe exploded into existence with no cause or design. Men claim that Jesus was a fictional character, or at most that He was only a very good man. They deny His virgin birth, His supernatural powers, His divine nature and especially His resurrection and ascension into Heaven. Defending these facts are just as important today as they were then, in fact Paul himself tells us that if Jesus did not rise from the dead we are the most miserable creatures that ever existed.[[7]](#footnote-7)

### SIGNIFICANT EVENTS:

Significant events will be presented in a table format identifying the type (i.e. speech, miracle, prayer, persecution, etc.), who was involved, what happened, the result and the particular verses involved.

### CONSIDERING THE SKEPTICS:

This section will also be presented in a table format. It will list the verses involved, the skeptics’’ view, and the Christians View[[8]](#footnote-8).

# sTUDY GUIDE: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## Chapter 1:

### CHRONILOGICAL PERIOD:

#### development of the world wide church:

Acts Chapter 13.

The principle dates involved are:

### STRUCTURAL SECTION:

#### transition from the activities of jesus to the development of the church

Acts Chapter 1 is the only chapter in the Transitional Section of Acts. Luke reminds the reader that he had previously wrote about the life of Jesus, specifically His deeds and teachings. Then without hesitation or any attempts to identify himself he begins his history of the church.

### THEMES:

#### exhortation and encouragement

The theme of this chapter is exhortation and encouragement.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**:**

 The speeches, one by Jesus and the other by Peter are both uplifting. Luke records the prayer as being offered by the Apostles and two miracles both performed by Jesus in this chapter. At this time, the church is suffering no persecutions. These significant events are described as:

|  |
| --- |
| SIGNIFICANT EVENTS |
| Activity | **Who** | **Scripture** | **Summary** | **Result** |
| Speeches | Jesus | Acts 1:4-8 | Promised the Apostles the baptism of the Holy Spirit. |  |
|  | Peter | Acts 1:15-22 | Encouraged the selection of a replacement for Judas | Two men presented for consideration, Matthias and Joseph Barsabbas. |
| Prayers | Apostles | Acts 1:24-25 | Asked for guidance in selecting a replacement for Judas | Matthias selected by lot. |
| Miracles | Jesus | Acts 1:9-11 | Ascension into Heaven | Returned to the right side of the Father |
|  | Jesus | Acts 1:26 | Selection of Matthias | Reconstituted the twelve apostles after the suicide of Judas |
| Persecutions |  |  |  |  |
| Major Events | Jesus | Acts 1:9-11 | Final departure of Jesus | Jesus ascending in the air and disappearing into a cloud |

### CONSIDERING THE SKEPTICS:

Skeptics have accused the Bible of errors for centuries. None of them have proven accurate. The following is a list of the more significant skeptical claims about this chapter and the Christian View:[[9]](#footnote-9)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Verses Involved | Skeptics View | Christians View |
| Acts 1:1-2 | Luke said that he told Theophilus “*all that Jesus began both to do and teach*” but John said that *“the world itself could not contain the books*” that would be needed to cover all that Jesus did and taught[[10]](#footnote-10)t. This is a clear conflict.[[11]](#footnote-11) | Like many words, “all” can have meanings based on context. For example if you asked a person how many stars they saw last night, they are likely to answer “All of them.” Did they actually meant that they saw all of the stars, or just all that were visible from where they were? In this situation, Luke is stating that he recorded all of what Jesus did and taught that he (Luke) knew about. |
| Acts 1:1-3 | If the resurrection[[12]](#footnote-12) actually occurred, why did Jesus only appear to people who were already believers?[[13]](#footnote-13) | Jesus actually did appear to non-believers. One in particular, Saul of Tarsus, was a fanatic anti-Christian when Jesus appeared to him. The other was James, His half-brother. The account of the appearance to Saul of Tarsus is given three times in the book of Acts 9:1-9; Acts 22:6-16 and Acts 26:12-18). The appearance to James, His half-brother is mentioned only once (1 Corinthians 15:7).  |
| Acts 1:4 | Where did Jesus tell his disciples to go after his resurrection? Luke says he told them to go to Jerusalem (Luke 24:39, Acts 1:4), but both Matthew (Matthew 28:10) and Mark (Mark 16:7) say they were told to go to Galilee. | These verses, while seeming to contradict one another, are actually speaking of different situations. In Matthew and Mark, Mary Magdalene and another Mary went back to the grave on Sunday morning after Jesus was crucified on Friday. When they got there they saw an angel who told them that Jesus was not there, that He had risen, the angel told them to look at the place where Jesus had been placed and then go tell his disciples to go to Galilee where they would see him. On the way back to the disciples, they met Jesus and He told them to go into Galilee where they would see him. This occurred on the day He was resurrected.The incident referred to in Acts 1:4 happened forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). Jesus told them to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father.There is no contradiction, the verses are speaking of two different incidents. |
| Acts 1:8 | Is the gospel intended for all humanity or only for a portion of us?In Acts 1:8 Luke implies it is for all humanity, but then he recants and says it was not to be preached in Asia (Acts 16:6). Matthew is just as confused, first saying it was only for Jews (Matthew 10:5-6, 15:24) then saying it is for all (Matthew 28:19), while both Mark and Paul say it is for everyone (Mark 16:15, Galatians 2:3)[[14]](#footnote-14) | The gospel is meant for all humanity. However, in the beginning it was presented to the Jews. After the murder of Stephen, disciples went into Samaria and preached it there. When God deemed the time right, he sent Peter a vision and Cornelius of Caesarea a message which resulted in the conversion of the first Gentiles. We know that the gospel was preached in Asia because John writes to the seven churches in Asia in the first three chapters of Revelations. For some reason, the Holy Spirit did not want Paul to go to Asia at the time Luke refers to in Acts 16:8. There is not a conflict. The gospel is for all, but it was presented in Gods timeline. |
| Acts 1:9-11 | Where did Jesus ascend into heaven from? Luke says He ascended into Heaven from Bethany (Luke 24:50-51) then he says it was from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12). Mark says He ascended from a room in Jerusalem where the Apostles were eating (Mark 16:14-19).[[15]](#footnote-15) | The Mount of Olives lies between Jerusalem and Bethany. Luke may have mentioned the nearest town in the Gospel, while the account in Acts describes the geographical location.The account of Mark, stating that He ascended from a room in Jerusalem probably is an account of an earlier ascension into heaven. This will be explained more in the next question. |
| Acts 1:9-11 | When did Jesus ascend into heaven? In Acts, Luke reports the ascension as being about 40 days after the resurrection (Acts1:2-3,9) then he waffles about this and says it was “many days” after the resurrection (Acts 13:31). However in the Gospel, he implies that Jesus ascended shortly after the resurrection and maybe even the same day (Luke 24:1-50).[[16]](#footnote-16) Mark seems to agree with Luke that Jesus ascended on the day of his resurrection (Mark 16:9-19). Then John claims it was at least eight days after the resurrection (John 20:26).[[17]](#footnote-17)  | Jesus was seen by his disciples for 40 days after the resurrection. This doesn’t mean, though, that He was present with them 100% of the time. There is no contradiction between these two accounts since Luke may be very likely speaking of two separate events. Jesus may have ascended into heaven after He meet with the eleven apostles in Luke 24, then returned to earth later to continue His tutelage of the disciples. This could have happened numerous times, we just do not know. This is the best explanation of the discrepancies in departure points between Mark and Luke’s accounts of the ascension. What we do know is that the ascension referred to in Acts 1:9 was His final trip until He returns at judgement. |
| Acts 1:11 | The Mount of Olives is only a few miles outside Jerusalem and is not a day’s walk as Luke states in Acts 1:11. Luke was ignorant of geography or the Gospel was written by someone who had no idea of the location of the Mount of Olives.[[18]](#footnote-18) | Luke doesn’t say that it was a day’s journey, he says it was a Sabbath Days journey. The Jews were restricted from walking far on the Sabbath Day by their laws. The distance that they could walk on that day was either 1,000 cubits (about 500 yards) or 2,000 cubits (about 1,000 yards)[[19]](#footnote-19). The longer distance made it possible to walk from the Mount of Olives to Bethany or some parts of Jerusalem on the Sabbath without breaking their religious laws.  |
| Acts 1:13 | The lists of Apostles provided by the Gospels and Acts do not agree. This is a clear contradiction, making the Bible a book with errors and not one given by God without errors.[[20]](#footnote-20) | Lists of the Apostles are found in Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:13-16 and Acts 1:13. First, the accounts given by Luke in Luke 6:13-16 and Acts 1:13 do agree except for the order given and the fact that Judas is omitted from the list in Acts since he was dead when that list was compiled. The list agree in three points:1. Peter is always list first and Judas Iscariot last.
2. Peter, Andrew, James and John are always the first four listed.
3. There are three groups of four names in each list, except for Acts 1:13 where Judas Iscariot is omitted due to his suicide.

The other supposed discrepancies are eliminated when you consider:1. Bartholomew and Nathaniel are likely the same person.
2. James the Son of Alphaeus is not James the Brother of Jesus. He is a different James.
3. Judas the Son of James and Thaddaeus are likely the same person.[[21]](#footnote-21)
 |
| Acts 1:15 | How many disciples did Jesus have when he ascended into heaven?Luke says there were about 120 (Acts 1:15) while Paul claims there were over 500 (1Corinthians 15:6)[[22]](#footnote-22) | In Acts, Luke is speaking of the disciples who were in Jerusalem after the ascension. Luke does not say that this was all the disciples, only that this was the number of disciples who were assembled there at that time. Paul, on the other hand was speaking of the total number of disciples that saw Jesus after his ascension. Paul did not say that there were only 500 disciples, but that 500 saw Jesus. |
| Acts 1:16-20 | The death of Judas narrated by Luke in Acts 1:16-20 is considerably different from that provided by Matthew 27:3-10 in the following points:[[23]](#footnote-23)1. Matthew says Judas was remorseful, but Acts doesn’t mention this.
2. Matthew says the Chief Priest bought the field, Acts says Judas bought it.
3. Matthew says Judas killed himself, Acts indicates his death was accidental.
4. Matthew names the field “Blood Field” since it was purchased with “blood money”. Acts attributes the name to the fact that that was where Judas bleed to death.[[24]](#footnote-24)
 | Two narrators of the same event often state differences in their rendering of the facts surrounding the event. This is easily seen today by reading the account of a major news story provided by two competing media outlets. The conflicting statements can be resolved by considering:1. Luke was not concerned about a complete retelling of the death of Judas, only that he died and left eleven Apostles instead of twelve. Because of this Luke had no reason to mention the attitude of Judas in his account.
2. Judas could have used the funds from the betrayal to purchase a field, then having second thoughts sold it and turned that money over to the Chief Priest who took it and purchased the same field.
3. Luke doesn’t say that Judas’ death was accidental, only that he fell and burst open. Since Matthew says he hung himself it is entirely likely that the rope broke and his body fell and burst open.
4. The name could have its origin in both of these. The name given by the Priests could be the official name and the reason for the name being that they used “blood money”. The common people could very well call it “blood field” because of the blood of Judas being there before the Priest started burying people in it.
 |

### VERSE STUDY:

Acts 1:1-11 (KJV)
1  The former treatise have 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 that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3  To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4  And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. 5  For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6  When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7  And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8  But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9  And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10  And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11  Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Two Men

Luke points out that there were two men, separate from the Apostles, who were at the ascension. Luke spoke about two men in similar situations in his Gospel. In Luke 9:30-32 and again in Luke 24:4 he told about these men. In Luke 9:30 they are identified as Moses and Elijah.

Moses, of course, represented the old law while Elijah was a prophet that foretold the coming of the savior. Taken together, they provide a summary of Gods plan for mankind. The old law as a teacher, the promise of a savior and the completion of Gods plan in Jesus and His victory over death.

##### Discussion Acts 1:1-11

During His life on earth Jesus did not allow his disciples to tell the world who he was. In fact after Peter made his statement that Jesus was the “Christ, the Son of the Living God” Jesus told them not to tell anyone this.[[25]](#footnote-25) Jesus did the same thing with those that He healed.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Verse 1 is also important in understanding the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.[[27]](#footnote-27) In this verse, Jesus clearly identifies the people to whom he is talking as the “Apostles, whom he had chosen”. Then in verse 4 He told them “not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father”[[28]](#footnote-28) which he then, verse 5, clearly states that they will be “baptized with the Holy Ghost” within a few days.

Once again[[29]](#footnote-29) they ask Jesus when He will return, and He tells them this is not something that they should be concerned about. It is in the Fathers hands alone.[[30]](#footnote-30)

12  Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey[[31]](#footnote-31). 13  And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* 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 brethren.

##### Discussion Acts 1:12-14

Luke describes the Apostles trip back to Jerusalem from Mt. Olive. He states that it was a “Sabbath’s day’s journey” back to the upper room in Jerusalem where they were all together. Here Luke states identifies the Apostles and says that they met with “the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren”. The Apostles located an “upper room” to observe the Passover feast[[32]](#footnote-32) on the instructions of Jesus. This may be, and is likely to be, the same upper room where Jesus appeared after His resurrection.[[33]](#footnote-33) It also may be a room in the house owned by John Mark’s mother.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The translations differ somewhat in the description of Judas. The some state “Judas, the son of James” while other say “Judas the brother of James”. It should be noted that the description of Judas as a son or brother is not in the original language. This is added by the translators. Among those using “brother” are the King James Version, Darby, The Mace New Testament, Wesley New Testament, Weymouth New Testament. The Young’s Literal Translation states “Judas, of James”. All others that I have access to use “son of” here, including; Contemporary English Version, English Standard Version, Holman Christian Standard Bible, International Children’s Bible, New American Standard Version (1977), New Century Version, New International Version, New King James Version, and the New Revised Standard Version.

The women most likely included; Joana, the wife of Herod’s steward[[35]](#footnote-35), Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus[[36]](#footnote-36), Mary Magdalene[[37]](#footnote-37), Mary the mother of James the Less[[38]](#footnote-38), Salome[[39]](#footnote-39), and Susana[[40]](#footnote-40). Luke mentions Mary the mother of Jesus by name, this is the last reference of her in the Bible.

The brothers of Jesus most likely include James and Jude who are actually His half-brothers. Neither one believed in Jesus before his death[[41]](#footnote-41) but both became ardent supporters after his resurrection. Both wrote letters that are included in the New Testament and that carry their names.

 15  And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) 16  Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 17  For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 18  Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19  And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 20  For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. 21  Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22  Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. 23  And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24  And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25  That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26  And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

##### Discussion Acts 1:15-26

Luke states that there were about 120 disciples in Jerusalem at this time. However, Paul states that over 500 brethren at once[[42]](#footnote-42). This must mean one of three things:

1. The remaining disciples, over 380, were somewhere else and not in Jerusalem at this time. This presents some difficulties though in that the Pentecost was one of the major feast that all Jewish males were required to attend in Jerusalem. That is the reason that Jews from other nations were there.
2. Those disciples had abandoned the faith. This is unlikely since they had seen the risen Jesus. Why would they abandon the faith after seeing his resurrected body?
3. The 380 plus disciples were women and children. That would explain why they were not in Jerusalem for the Pentecost and would not indicate an abandonment of the faith after seeing the risen Lord.

This section of Acts chapter 1 contains the first speech given by the Apostle Peter after Jesus ascended into heaven. In it, Peter reminds the disciples that Judas Iscariot fulfilled scripture and that for that scripture to be completed another needed to be selected to take his place. The first prayer[[43]](#footnote-43) recorded after the ascension is also included here. This prayer was for direction in selecting the replacement for Judas Iscariot. This section ends with the selection of Matthias, stating that he was numbered with the eleven apostles becoming the thirteen apostle. This action brings the number of apostles back to twelve as was the original total. We do not hear anything about Matthias[[44]](#footnote-44) again in the scriptures.

## Chapter 2:

### CHRONILOGICAL PERIOD:

#### The development of the church in jerusalem:

Acts Chapter 2 continues the period of the development of the church in Jerusalem. This is the birthplace of the church of Christ. This chapter begins on Pentecost in the year 30 AD, placing it on May 27 or 28, 30 AD on our calendar. Since May 28, 30 AD was on a Sunday, I prefer that date. Luke gives us no indication of the period of time covered by this chapter, only that is involved a number of days.

The principle dates involved are:

Chapter 2 opens the section on the establishment of the church in Jerusalem. The Apostles are all involved in Luke’s story here, however it is Peter that Luke concentrates on for most of the chapter.

### STRUCTURAL SETTING:

#### Peter and the Jewish church:

Chapter 2 opens the second section in the structure of Acts. This section deals with the Jewish church and the principal character is the Apostle Peter[[45]](#footnote-45). It traces the birth of the church in Jerusalem as being open only to the Jews to the beginning of the Gentile church and the Apostle Paul’s activities who becomes the principal character in the remaining parts of Luke’s narrative.

### THEMES:

#### Evangelism and exhortation

This chapter deals both with exhortation and evangelism. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is certainly a story of encouragement, there can be no doubt that the Apostles on whom the Holy Ghost descended and those who witnessed the results of that baptism by the Holy Ghost were strongly encouraged. How could they not be, Jesus had told them it was going to happen just before he went back to heaven and now it had happened. The power of the Holy Ghost must have been felt by those on whom he descended, there could not have been anyone of them who did not remember their Lord and who were not ready to conquer the world for Him!

Then the remarkable, and impossible, happened. They begin speaking in languages that they had not learned! They were boldly proclaiming Jesus, the crucified savior, to a crowd of Jews who spoke at least sixteen languages but everyone heard in their native tongue. And the church was born in May, 30 AD.

The people who heard the gospel in their own languages that day were:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Parthians | Medes | Elamites  | People from Mesopotamia |
| Residents of Judea | Residents of Cappadocia | Residents of Pontus | Residents of Asia |
| People from Phrygia | People from Pamphylia | People from Egypt | People from Libya around Cyrene |
| Romans | Jews | Crete’s | Arabians |

###  **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**:

Peter uses the keys to the Kingdom that Jesus had given him (Matthew 16:19) to open the kingdom to new converts. His impassioned speech was at once powerful and full of love. It was particularly effective in convincing the Jews in Jerusalem that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. The facts surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection were still fresh in their minds. These significant events are described as:

|  |
| --- |
| SIGNIFICANT EVENTS |
| Activity | **Who** | **Scripture** | **Summary** | **Result** |
| Speeches | Peter | Acts 2:14-39 | Jesus Christ who YOU crucified is the risen Lord. | About three thousand new Christians. |
| Prayers |  |  |  |  |
| Miracles | Jesus and Holy Spirit | Acts 2:1-4 | Baptism of the Holy Spirit | Apostles spoke in foreign languages and began to preach a risen savior. |

### CONSIDERING THE SKEPTICS:

Skeptics have accused the Bible of errors for centuries. None of them have proven accurate. The following is a list of the more significant skeptical claims about this chapter and the Christian View:[[46]](#footnote-46)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  Verses Involved | Skeptics View | Christians View |
| Acts 2:1-13 | Did the Holy Spirit fall on the Apostles twice? Luke tells his readers that it came like tongues of fire and with the sound of a great wind. John, on the other hand says Jesus breathed on ten of the Apostles (John 20:22).[[47]](#footnote-47) | This is two different events. In John, Jesus gave the Holy Spirit by breathing on the ten apostles gathered there, it was a very private affair. The Holy Spirit baptism in Acts, on the other hand included all twelve apostles and its effects were public and miraculous. |

### VERSE STUDY

Acts 2:1-4 (KJV)
1  And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2  And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3  And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.4  And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues[[48]](#footnote-48)[[49]](#footnote-49), as the Spirit gave them utterance.

##### Discussion Acts 2:1-4

Luke moves to the day of Pentecost, in May 27 or 28, 30 AD and the baptism of the Apostles with the Holy Ghost. It is important to note that only the twelve Apostles, the eleven that Jesus had personally chosen and Matthias the one chosen by Jesus through the lots thrown by the others, were involved in this baptism of the Holy Ghost. The other 108 disciples had no part in this.

1. Luke 1:3; Acts !:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Matthew 16:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Luke 1:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “The New Testament, A historical introduction to the early Christian writings” by Bart D. Eharman, page 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Acts 1:6-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Acts 1:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Most, although not all, of the information in this section will be taken from the “*Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible”* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Most of these are taken from the “*Holman’s Apologetics Commentary on the Bible”* [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. John 21:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Taken from “*The Skeptics Annotated Bible*” [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Appendix 2, “The Resurrection; Truth or Fiction” [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Taken from the “*Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible”*. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Taken from “*The Skeptic’s Annotated Bible*” [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Taken from the “*Holman’s Apologetics Commentary on the Bible”* [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Taken from “*The Skeptic’s Annotated Bible*” [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The various distances depends on which Jewish Sabbath Day tradition is being used. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Taken from “*The Holman’s Apologetics Commentary on the Bible”* [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid, NOTE: This explanation cannot be proven true, but neither can it be proven false. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Taken from “*The Skeptic’s Annotated Bible*” [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Taken from “*The Holman’s Apologetics Commentary on the Bible”* [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Matthew 16:13-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Matthew 8:4, Luke 8:56 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See Appendix 3 for a discussion of the baptism of the Holy Ghost [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See Appendix 4 for a list of the speeches recorded by Luke in Acts. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Matthew records that the Apostles had asked Jesus a similar question. Matthew 24:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Matthew 24:36 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. 2,000 cubits, or less than 0.5 miles [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Luke 22:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. John 20:19,26 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Acts 12:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Luke 8:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. John 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Mark 16:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Mark 15:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Luke 8:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. John 7:3-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. 1 Corinthians 15:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See Appendix 5 for a list of prayers recorded by Luke in Acts. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See Appendix 10 for history on Matthias. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. For more on the life of the Apostle Peter, refer to the Biography of the Apostle Peter, Appendix 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Most of these are taken from the “*Holman’s Apologetics Commentary on the Bible”* [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Judas Iscariot was dead at this time, Thomas was absent and they had not yet selected his replacement. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See Appendix 11 for a thorough discussion of the topic of “other tongues”. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. See Appendix 6 for a list of the miracles of described by Luke in Acts. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)