

Acts is the book that reveals the power of the church.

When a church begins to dwindle, lose its power, and turn dull and drab in its witness, it needs to get back into the spirit, expectation, knowledge and teaching, the principles of the exchanged life ---"Not I, but Christ

When the record of the gospels, there is nothing but a handful of Jews in the city of Jerusalem, the center of Jewish life, talking together about a kingdom for Israel.

When you open Romans, there is a man whose name is never mentioned in the gospels is writing to a group of Christians in Rome---of all places, the center of Gentile culture---and he is talking about pushing out to the very ends of the earth.

Something has happened in between.

Should be titled, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." or even perhaps, "The Continuing Acts of the Lord Jesus Christ."

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach...

Acts continues the story of what Jesus began both to do and to teach ...until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts is the account of the way the Holy Spirit, coming into the church, continued what Jesus began to do, that is, carried on the work which was initiated during the days of his incarnation.

Much of the weakness of the church is due to the fact that somehow over the years, through the traditions of men, a wrong concept has developed within the body of Christ. We have heard the first word, "Go!" but our Lord spoke another little two-letter word that we have almost completely forgotten---"Lo." "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:20)

Christians have met together and have recited the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to take the gospel out to the farthest corners of the earth, "God therefore and make disciples of all nations." (Matt. 28:19)

It is one of the favorite tricks of the devil, however, to hold up before Christian people the end that God has in view, and then suggest to them that they go about doing it their own way---trying to fulfill God's will in man's way.

The idea is that the church must somehow plan all the strategy, and figure out how best to reach out to the far corners of the earth so as to fulfill this expectation of God.

Acts is the complete testimony to his ability and adequacy to carry out the program he had in mind. "He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it." (1 Thessalonians. 5:24)

It was always God's intention not only to lay the program before us, but to fulfill it in his own strength.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit.

First of all, he is visible in directing the activities of the church. It is the Spirit of God who takes the initiative and launches new movements in carrying out the program of God.

Philip was in Samaria preaching the gospel, a great city-wide revival was in progress as a result of his preaching. The whole city was stirred. But the spirit of God said to him, "Rise and go down to a man in the desert." (Acts 8:36) Now, what kind of strategy is that, to leave a city-wide campaign where the Spirit of God is moving in power, where multitudes are coming to Christ, to go down into the desert to talk to one man?

Spirit-led witnessing is---the right man in the right place at the right time saying the right thing to the right person.

In chapter nine, the Holy Spirit calls a man on the Damascus road and sends another man to pray with him---Ananias, who was absolutely astounded by this commission.

"Lord," he said, "you don't know what you are asking." God said, "I know whom I have called. He's a chosen instrument of mine."

In chapter 13 the Holy Spirit is recorded as saying to the church at Antioch, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

Later on in the book, Paul says, "We tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit said no. And we started to preach the gospel in Asia, but were forbidden by the Holy Spirit." (Acts 16:6, 7)

All through this book you find that the strategy has all been worked out in advance by the Holy Spirit.

As Christians are available to him, he unfolds the strategy step by step.

Nobody can plan this kind of a program. We can only be willing to follow the overall directive activity of the Spirit of God at work in his church. That is the divine strategy.

You find the Holy Spirit in another aspect of his ministry doing what no man can do; communicating life to those who believe.

Wherever the gospel is preached, wherever the word of God is upheld, wherever the good news of the work of the Lord Jesus is preached to men, the Holy Spirit is there to communicate life.

Have you ever noticed who gives the altar call in the book of Acts?

It is almost invariably the ones being preached to.

On the day of Pentecost it was. As the Spirit of God preached through Peter to those thousands who had been brought in by that tremendous miracle of the tongues after the Holy Spirit descended upon them, Peter got only halfway through his message. He had only reached his second point. What happened? They were convicted in their hearts. They broke in on him and said, "Preacher, what must we do to be saved?" Now, who gave the altar call there? Well, they did.

When the Philippian jailer is impressed by the singing of Paul and Silas at midnight, and the earthquake comes and shakes down the prison walls, who gives the altar call? Why he does. He comes running and says to them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

It is the Holy Spirit communicating to them, imparting life to them when they believe.

Not only does the Holy Spirit communicate life, as he did in the home of Cornelius (while the message was going on the Holy Spirit fell upon the people gathered there), but he is also at work preserving the purity of the church.

Today there are groups of people whose sole occupation seems to be to defend the faith; to preserve, if they can, the purity of the church.

Their perfectly proper intention is to try to preserve the purity of the church by driving out those who may disagree

But the Holy Spirit himself is in charge of this task.

As the church fulfills its commission to be available, to be willing instruments of the activity and life of the Holy Spirit, he is at work to preserve the purity of the church.

For example, there is an amazing incident that occurs early in the book. Ananias and Sapphira's hypocrisy was revealed when they tried to attach to themselves a holiness which they did not actually possess. (Acts 5:1-11) They tried to appear more committed or dedicated than they really were. They tried to gain a reputation for sanctity among the Christians by appearance only. The judgment of the Holy Spirit came immediately in the form of their physical death.

Today whether spiritual or physical, the result of the Holy Spirit's presence is exactly the same. Let somebody begin to use his religious standing, his Christian opportunities in order to advance his own sanctity in the eyes of people---to pretend to a holiness he does not possess---and what happens? The Spirit of God cuts him off from the manifestation of the life of Christ.

Finally, the major emphasis of this book and the amazing thing about these Christians---the quality that made them a constant wonder to those who heard them preach---is that the Spirit of God is always at work imparting boldness to Christians.

Did you notice how bold these Christians were?

Boldness is the evidence of the Spirit's presence.

At one moment you see Peter and John hiding behind locked doors, afraid to go out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the enmity of the Jews against the Lord Jesus.

Now, after the Spirit of God comes upon them, they are out in the streets and temple courts boldly proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ. When they are locked up in prison, the angel releases them and they go right back into the temple courts to pray and preach again.

Once again they are arrested, and the church makes prayer for them, asking God that they might go out again and preach the gospel in the very same place. In other words, they are saying, "Lord, do it again. We got into trouble the last time, but Lord, do it again." Their boldness was simply irresistible. Even those who were bitter enemies of the gospel could not resist the boldness with which they proclaimed the truth.

That is God's program.

he Holy Spirit doing the whole thing---energizing, guiding, directing, programming, empowering and communicating life. He does it all.

It is not up to us to do anything except be available, to be his instruments, to go where he wills, to open our mouths, to be ready to take advantage of whatever situation he places us in. It is the job of the Spirit, which he never fails to fulfill, to carry out that ministry.

That is what the church has lacked, is it not?
That is what you see so much here in the book of Acts.

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:1-26 [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.

[12] Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

[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.

[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.

POWER TO GO ON - Acts 1:1-5

"My Dear Theophilus, I have already given you an account of all the things that Jesus began to do and to teach, 2] right up to the day when he was taken up to heaven, after he had, through the Holy Spirit, given his instructions to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3] In the days that followed his sufferings he also showed himself living to them by many proofs, for he was seen by them on various occasions throughout a period of forty days; and he spoke to them about the kingdom of God. 4] While he was staying with them he told them not to go away from Jerusalem but to wait for the Father's promise, 'which,' he said, 5] 'I told you about; for I told you that John baptized with water but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit before many days have passed.'"

[1] The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

1] The writer is Luke. He wrote the Gospel according to Luke and the Book of Acts.

"Former Treatise" refers to the Gospel of Luke.

In Acts 1:1, Luke does not include the words "most excellent" before "Theophilus" but addresses him as My dear Theophilus.

Some scholars presume that Theophilus was a believer or had become one by reading Luke's Gospel

*Luke 1:1-3 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,***

Luke had an agenda with this Gospel.

“Most excellent Theophilus” is a title generally used of a Roman official. He probably was a governor of a province.

Theophilus may be an intimate / nick name and not his formal name.

“Theophilus”- name means “lover of God”

Speculation: Luke is Volume 1 (the Gospel) and Acts is Volume 2 written to Theophilus, who prepared the accounts necessary for Paul’s appeal to Rome.

Undercurrents throughout Acts = the continual uprisings that occur.

Makes the point over and over that Paul was not the instigator of these riots.

Romans are not portrayed as “the bad guys,” but rather as the good guys.

Note that this book is about Jesus Christ, not the Holy Spirit and not the church.

The Holy Spirit and the young church is very prominent

The Book of Acts continues yet today. We are writing the next volume in this story which has not yet ended.

The Gospel of Luke was the story of what Jesus began to do and to teach.

In Acts, the life of Jesus goes on in and through his Church.

The Church that carries on the life of Christ.

[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:

“Taken up” - occurs four times in this chapter alone, refers to the ascension.

analambanō: Thayer Definition:

1) to take up, raise

2) to take up (a thing in order to carry or use it)

[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:

He prepared his early followers for this transition during his 40-Day Ministry between the resurrection and his ascension.

Some of these meetings are recorded, some are not.

This is the only place that mentions the period of time between the resurrection and the ascension.

This passage tells us how the Church was empowered to do that by the work of the Holy Spirit.

We often call the Holy Spirit "the Comforter."

It comes from the Latin "fortis," which means "brave";

the Comforter is the one who fills men with courage and with strength.

It is difficult to draw a line between the work of the Spirit and the work of the Risen Christ;

The coming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus,

"Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matt.28:20).

[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.

To wait in Jerusalem, they were to wait. For what?

God’s promise which the Lord had delivered to them...

Luke 12:49-50 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled? [50] But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! KJV

Luke 12:49-50 "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! [50] But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! NIV

Jesus was constrained as a man; for example, he could only be in one place at a time.

In Acts, Jesus is free of that restraint through the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:7-11 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. [8] And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: [9] Of sin, because they believe not on me; [10] Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; [11] Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Jesus continues to talk of His "going away." Jesus needed to go away to allow the Holy Spirit to come.

The Holy Spirit is seen from the beginning (Gen 1:2).

Genesis 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

All through the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is very busy,

He doesn't just appear in Acts, He is busy from the beginning.

However, Jesus does note that the Holy Spirit is sent in a very special and unique way to the Church.

[5] For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

"Not many days hence" – It was 10 days to be exact.

Who is going to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit?

Just the 11 Apostles ?? There were 120 in the upper room on Pentecost!

Acts 1:15 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.)

The baptism is of the entire Body of Christ on Pentecost.

The apostles were told to wait on the coming of the Spirit.

We would gain more power and courage and peace if we learned to wait.

In life we need to learn to be still.

Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Baptized with – to be immersed in

Not have you been baptized with the Holy Ghost but are you baptized with the Holy Ghost

THE KINGDOM AND ITS WITNESSES - Acts 1:6-8

"So when they had met together they asked him, `Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom of Israel at this time?' But he said to them, `It is not yours to know the times and the seasons which the Father has appointed by his own authority. But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power; and you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and in Samaria and to the farthest bounds of the earth.'"

[6] When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Are you going to set it up and leave us in charge when you leave us?

Jesus: Don't worry about the times (what would they have done if they knew it would be 2000+ years). But, when you receive power, be my witnesses across the earth.

Jesus had always taught and thought about the Kingdom of God.

He meant one thing, they understood another

"Restore at this time"

Many promises in the Old Testament of the Kingdom, so this was a natural question for them to ask.

They did not know His plans,

Nor were they equipped for what is coming.

The core of Jesus message was the kingdom of God.

Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

But he meant one thing by the kingdom

Those who listened to him meant another.

The Jews were always conscious of being God's chosen people.

They took that to mean that they were destined for special privileges and for world-wide dominion.

Palestine was a little country not more than 120 miles long by 40 miles wide. It had its days of independence but it had become subject in turn to the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans.

The Jews began to look forward to a day when God would break directly into human history and establish that world sovereignty of which they dreamed.

They conceived of the kingdom in political terms.

How did Jesus conceive of it? Look at the Lord's Prayer.

In it there are two petitions side by side.

Matt 6:10 "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

It is characteristic of Hebrew style, as any verse of the Psalms will show, to say things in two parallel forms,

the second of which repeats or amplifies the first.

The second is a definition of the first.

The kingdom Jesus meant was a society upon earth where God's will would be done as perfectly as it is in heaven.

[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.

"Not for you to know"

Mat 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Mark 13:32 "No man" nor the angels, neither the Son!

There was something that the Father knows that the Son doesn't, at least not at that particular time.

Note that Jesus did NOT cancel the Kingdom of Israel.

The issue here is the timing, not the event.

There are promises to Israel that are yet to be fulfilled, Jesus will yet to sit on David's Throne.

The promises of God to Israel are not forfeited; they are still going to be fulfilled.

The Kingdom message was first aimed at Israel exclusively.

Matthew 10:5-6 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: [6] But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Jesus sends the disciples out on a field trip, specifically sent to Israel, and not to the Gentiles.

This is in contrast to the mission which they are about to get, which was to go into Jerusalem and Judea first, then into Samaria, then to the uttermost part of the world.

John 1:11 states that Israel did not receive it

Joh 1:10-12 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Because they rejected Him, Israel is set aside for awhile

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

That opened the door to the Gentiles

The Book of Acts contains the different things that occur to fulfill the promise of God to all flesh, not just Israel.

Acts is a transition from the Kingdom to the Church

Revelation 2-3 is the transition back from the Church to Israel and the Kingdom again.

[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.

Twice already Luke has talked about waiting for the coming of the Spirit.

Do not to think that the Spirit came into existence now for the first time.

It is quite possible for a power always to exist but for men to experience or take it at some given moment. Eg Atomic power, electricity, etc.

God is eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but there came a specific time when men finally experienced His full power

“Shall receive power after..” - Didn't they already have power?

They went around Judea casting out demons, healing the sick...

Jerusalem and Judea -Acts 1 through 7

Samaria -Acts 8 through 12

Uttermost parts - Acts 13 - 28 and continuing!

“Be my witness”

Note that He doesn't say “witness,”

He says to “BE my witness.”

Be His evidence, His credentials, His arguments..., be His representative!

A witness is a man who says I know this is true.

In a court of law a man cannot give in evidence a carried story; it must be his own personal experience.

A witness does not say, "I think so"; he says "I know."

The real witness is not of words but of deeds. The witness of the true Christians life will be irresistible.

The Greek word for witness and the word for martyr is the same (martus).

A witness has to be loyal no matter the cost.

THE GLORY OF DEPARTURE AND THE GLORY OF RETURN - Acts 1:9-11

"When he had said these things, while they were watching, he was taken up and a cloud received him and he passed from their sight. While they were gazing into heaven, as he went upon his way, behold, two men in white garments stood beside them; and they said to them, 'Men of Galilee, why are you standing looking up into heaven? This Jesus who has been taken up into heaven from you will come again in the same way as you have seen him go to heaven.'"

The Ascension

[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;

Apparently on the Mount of Olives (we know this from other passages).

While He was speaking to them, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

This is important as this is how He is coming back!

Zech. 14:4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

"Two men in white apparel"- angels or Moses and Elijah?

They are seen in Rev 11, perhaps also in Gen 18?

Two is the number of witness

[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.

Only Luke tells the story of the Ascension and he has already related it in his gospel (Lk.24:50-53).

there had to be a final moment when Jesus went back to the glory which was his.

The forty days of the resurrection appearances had passed. There would have been something quite wrong if the resurrection appearances had just simply petered out.

Jesus was taken up in their sight – to prove He was leaving. This was more than His appearing and disappearing they had experienced over the past 40 days.

Rev 19:11-16

Nowadays most Christians do not regard heaven as a location; a place. We regard it as a state of blessedness when we will be forever with God.

Jesus did not return to some blissful euphoria but to a place. He left here, and being taken up went there. He returned to his glory,

When Luke tells of this in his gospel he says,

"They returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Lk.24:52).

In spite of the Ascension, or maybe because of it, the disciples were quite sure that Jesus was not gone from them but that he was with them forever.

The essential teaching of Christianity is that God has a plan for man and the world.

History is not a haphazard conglomeration of chance events which are going nowhere.

There is some divine far off plan and event to which the whole of creation is moving and that when that consummation comes Jesus Christ will be Judge and Lord of all.

The Second Coming is not a matter for speculation and for illegitimate curiosity; it is a summons to make ourselves ready for that day when it comes.

Jesus will come in the same way He left! As the risen Lord, Messiah, Saviour

No more babes in manglers...

Note: Don't automatically assume He will return to the Mount of Olives. He will climb and set foot on it but scripture indicates when he returns to Jerusalem to ride through the Golden (Eastern) Gate, he will come from Bosrah – climbing over the Mount of Olives – the same way he presented himself the first time on the long ago Palm Sunday.

Isa 63:1-6 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was none* with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

5 And I looked, and *there was none* to help; and I wondered that *there was none* to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. 6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Two men appear standing next to them

Angels – maybe

Moses and Elijah – probably

Stop gawking into the sky – go and do what He said
And they did – exactly what He instructed them

THE FATE OF THE TRAITOR - Acts 1:12-20

"Then they made their way back to Jerusalem from the hill which is called the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, about half a mile away. When they came in, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; 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 were there. All of them with one united heart persevered in prayer, together with certain women and with Mary, Jesus' mother and with his brothers, And in these days Peter stood up amongst the brethren and said--the number of people who were together was about one hundred and twenty `Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold through the mouth of David about Judas who was guide to those who arrested Jesus, because he was one of our number and had received his allotted part in our service. (This man bought a piece of ground with the proceeds of his wicked deed; and he fell headlong and burst asunder and his bowels gushed out. This became a well-known fact to all those who lived in Jerusalem so that the piece of ground was called in their language "Akeldama," which means the place of blood.) For it stands written in the book of Psalms, "Let the place where he lodged be desolate and let no one stay in it." And, "Let another receive his office.""

[12] Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

The Sabbath day's journey was limited to 2,000 cubits

A cubit was eighteen inches; so 2,000 cubits was about 3,000 feet - just over half a mile.

Scholars are divided as to where Chapter 2 happens, some feel that because of verse 13, it happened in the Upper Room. Other scholars believe that while they abode here, they had their meetings in the Temple.

One reason for the Temple stance is that it would have to be a place where you could baptize 3000 people, that would be a bit tough in the Upper Room.

[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. [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,)

The 11 disciples are listed here.

Bartholomew and Nathaniel are two names for the same guy.

Philip is the "press agent,": every time you see him mentioned he is introducing someone to Jesus Christ.

Thomas who was the skeptic is present now.

"With his brethren"

Jesus had half-brothers and half-sisters

Matthew 13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

During Jesus' lifetime they had been among his opponents

Mark 3:31 There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

They came to bring Jesus out to take Him home

John 7:5 notes that they did not believe in Him

John 7:5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

After His resurrection two of them become very prominent, James and Jude each wrote a letter bearing their names which was included in our New Testament

John 16:23

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Mary (Jesus' mother) is praying with them to the Father,

They were NOT praying to Mary! They were asking her to intercede for them with 'her' son...

This is the last time we read of her by name in the New Testament

[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.

Judas' Replacement

Matthias selected by prayer and casting lots – rolling dice

Committing the decision to God 0 not men's vote...

Was choosing Mathias a mistake? Maybe not.

Twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Paul was chosen by God also but as the Apostle to the Gentiles – not Israel.

Act 2:14 says Peter and the eleven – 12 including Matthias

Act 6:1-2 The 12 called the disciples together to chose deacons

Matthew 19:27-28 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? [28] And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Zech. 11:12-13 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. [13] And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

Note the betrayal for thirty pieces of silver and that the money would end up in the hands of the Potter.

It is called the field of blood because it was bought with blood money,

That is where Judas hung himself and his blood was spilled.

Jesus said of Judas, "Better for him had he not been born."

Peter quotes from Ps 69:25; Ps 109:8 (from the Septuagint version).

Peter argues from the Scriptures that Judas' place (his office) is to be filled as there is to be twelve and not eleven.

Psalm 69:25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

Psalm 109:8 Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

Cf: Psalm 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

Cf: Psalm 55:12-15 For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: [13] But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. [14] We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. [15] Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.

Many of David's experiences and writings turn out to be prophetic of the Lord Jesus...

We are told that the number of the disciples present was about 120.

It is very unlikely that any of them had ever been outside the narrow confines of Palestine in his life.

Since there were about 4,000,000 Jews in Palestine, this means that fewer than 1 in 30,000 were 'Christians'.

These 120 simple folk were told to go out and evangelize the whole world.

We may well be the only Christians in our shop, our factory, our office, in our circle. That should not be a problem that stops us...

That would be 1 Christian in Chesterfield, Macomb Township and New Baltimore combined.

In Matthew's account (Matt.27:5) we are left in no doubt that Judas committed suicide.

Mat 27:5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN APOSTLE - Acts 1:21-26

"So then, of the men who were with us during all the time our Lord went in and out amongst us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which he was taken up from us--of these we must choose one to be a witness of the resurrection along with us." So they selected two, Joseph, who was called Barsabbas, whose surname was Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, 'O Lord, who knowest the hearts of all, do thou show us which of these two thou hast chosen to take his place in this service and in the apostleship from which Judas fell away and went to his own place.' So they made them draw lots and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was elected to be along with the eleven apostles."

[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.

Peter assumes that it must be someone who had been there for the whole tour of duty.

[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.

It may seem strange to us that the method was that of casting lots. But amongst the Jews it was the natural thing to do

Proverbs 16:33 ordains the use of the lot in the Old Testament.

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

Often when they had something to decide they would cast lots.

1 Chron 24:5

David divided the priest by lots

Num 26:55; Joshua 15, 16:1-10; 17

They cast lots for the land when Joshua conquered the land and had to divide the land, they did it by casting lots.

1 Sam 14:41-42

Jonathon's disobedience to Saul's commands was discovered by lot

Joshua 7:16-18

Achan's sin was discovered by lot

All the offices and duties in the Temple were settled that way.

The names of the candidates were written on stones¹.

The stones were put into a vessel and the vessel was shaken until one stone fell out;

Whoever's name was on stone was elected to office.

Here it is likely that the two names were written on stones, and placed in an urn with several blank stones which were 'cast' (possibly drawn out) until one with a name fell out...

Acts 1:26 speaks of "the eleven," and not "the twelve."

Most scholars believe that this choosing of a 12th apostle was a gigantic mistake

Most scholars view Paul as the twelfth apostle and not Matthias.

Note however:

1] Of the 14 epistles in our New Testament that Paul wrote, 9 of them begin with the defense of his apostleship.

Galatians 1:1, and also Romans, both of the Corinthian letters, Ephesians, all start off by Paul having to establish his apostleship.

2] Paul was clearly appointed apostle of the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Rom 11:13; 15:16).

The 12 were to Israel and were to rule Israel. [Mat_19:28](#); [Luk_22:30](#);

3] Some hold the choice of Matthias was wrong because he was never accepted as an apostle.

He is not named again,

But - neither are more than half the other apostles named again after Acts 1

There is no hint anywhere in Acts, or elsewhere, that the selection of Matthias was not recognized.

4] In Act_6:2, "the twelve" are mentioned

Matthias must have been one of "the twelve," since Paul was not yet converted.

The function of an apostle was to be a witness to the resurrection.

The real mark of a Christian is not that he knows about Jesus but that he knows Jesus.

The basic mistake in Christianity is to regard Jesus as someone who lived and died and whose life we study and whose story we read.

Jesus is not a figure in a book, he is a living presence;

The Christian is a man whose whole life is a witness to that fact because he knows and has personally met the Risen Lord.

The qualifications of an apostle was that he had companied with Jesus.

The real Christian is the man who lives day by day with Jesus.

Jesus is here; he is alive;

The real Christian is the one who lives all his life with Christ.