



Acts

Study Pack 02

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Acts Chapter 1

This is lecture two. We're going to get into the first chapter of Acts. We had our introductory lesson. You got a little bit of a feel for it. I will tell you this. Every chapter of this great book is just one amazing event or truth after another. It really is exciting. It unfolds as you dig into it. I think you're going to hopefully enjoy it.

Acts Chapter 1

Let's read 1 through 5. We touched on a couple of these things in our intro. We'll work through that and then start to peel back the layers. First, look at Acts chapter 1 verse 1:

¹The former treatise have I made all Theophilus of all that Jesus began...

We talked about that before. He's not saying it's what Jesus did, but what Jesus began.

...both to do and to teach, ²Until the day in which he was taken up (until the ascension),

So he's referring back to the Gospel of Luke that he wrote. The author of the book of Acts is Luke.

...after that he through the Holy Ghost that had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

We're going to see in this lecture today that this is a very important statement there. The work is going to continue on. How is the work of Christ going to continue...through the Holy Ghost.

To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion (after he died on the cross) by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Make a mental note of that. It is important, that during those forty days between the resurrection and the time that he ascended he was speaking in teaching things pertaining to the kingdom of God. That's really important because this is what they know. This is what they've seen. This is what they understand from the prophets: that this kingdom of God is going to happen and that the eternal Kingdom with David on David's Throne, this eternal promise, this Covenant that he made. He was talking about those things.

Now look at verse four

⁴And, being assembled together with them, (Jesus is with them.) commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for _____, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. ⁵For truly John baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

This is a whole brand new truth. We just read it. We understand it because it's something that we are used to. We're taught in church. We're taught in our Bible Colleges. We understand that when you get saved, you are baptized by the Holy Spirit. We get that but he is teaching them, "stay in Jerusalem. This is about to happen. You're going to be baptized in the Holy Ghost. This is brand new to them. They've never understood this

concept. Do they understand what the Holy Spirit is... Yes. Did the Holy Spirit come upon men in the Old Testament... Yes. That's very, very different than what this is.

As you go through the book of Acts there are times when God does a certain thing, a certain way through the apostles because it's that transitional period. They are going from Temple worship and sacrifices. Now, after the cross, after the resurrection, we are in the church age. Things had to happen for the very first time. We have to be careful that we don't say, "Well, that's how it has going to happen every time."

Let's look at one of these areas: Baptism.

First of all there are two baptisms. In baptism there is the spiritual and the physical, the water and the other. In the spiritual and unseen since we talked about being filled with the Holy Spirit and we also talked about being baptized in the Holy Spirit. That is a little bit different. We are going to develop this as we go.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is what puts you into the church, the universal church. Most of the doctrines of the Catholic Church we do not agree with but catholic means universal. There is a universal church. There is also a local church.

Every town, every city, every country and every region has local churches, but there is one body of Christ, the bride of Christ. What makes that up? The Holy Spirit indwelling you, indwelling me, and indwelling the believers in Togo, in Thailand, in the Philippines, and every country all around the world bonds believers together in the universal church. _____ the body of Christ.

That is different than being filled by the Holy Spirit. It is really important understand that because as we go through this book, we're going to see the one happens, one time, the feeling happens, multiple times. That's that "yielding and that controlling". We'll develop that further as we go.

Verse 6

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

This is actually a valid question because that's what they understood to be next on the prophetic calendar. That's what they thought was going to happen. Remember what was Christ, in those 40 days after his resurrection, teaching them about? What was he talking about? He was talking about the kingdom of God, the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. It's only natural that they're going to be thinking this is going to happen.

What were they looking for? They were looking for the messiah? In the disciples' minds that was Jesus Christ. To them Christ was their savior from bondage to Rome. He was the one that was going to help them get reestablished, to have freedom, and to have peace and not persecution. That's how they packaged it. That's how they saw it.

What was all that Jesus was teaching in those forty days pertaining to the kingdom? We don't the specifics of what he said, but I have to believe that part of what he was explaining what that kingdom was all about. He's getting them prepared for the time he's going to leave. He's going to be gone.

This is a valid question based on their upbringing which was all Old Testament teachings. They knew of the Messiah, as far as they understood the coming of the Messiah, meant the setting up of the final Kingdom. That's what they understood it to be. You'll notice that Jesus did not rebuke them.

There's a way of thinking about this. The prophets in the Old Testament, as they were looking forward, saw two mountain peaks. These were the main events. They could see that Jesus, the Messiah, was coming clearly and talked about it all through the Old Testament prophecies. The next mountain peak they could see prophetically that they talked about in the Old Testament was the setting up of the Kingdom, the eternal kingdom, the Throne of David. They couldn't see the valley between those two peaks. They couldn't see the Church Age down in that valley from their vantage point. It wasn't revealed to them. It was a mystery.

They didn't understand: the gospel going to the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit's indwelling them. They didn't understand because it wasn't revealed to them. So, it's really easy for us to kind of look back and ask why they would you ask if this is the kingdom now? It was a valid question and what they couldn't see was the church age.

Let's go on verse 7.

⁷And he said unto them,

So here's his answer. They asked this valid question. He doesn't rebuke them, but he does say,

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the father has put in his own power.

His answer is two things:

1. It's revealing. What did he reveal? The kingdom is not now.

I don't know what their look was on their faces. I don't know what their reaction was but I do know this: because of the Resurrection, their faith is solid. Their faith is solid because the things that he was talking about that, they maybe didn't quite all understand before he died, all made sense after he resurrected. Do you see the pattern?

As you grow in Christ, you are going to have things in your life that God is working on. He asks you to step out on faith. The first time you do it will probably be rough. You may think, "I just don't know. I mean, is this really what God wants me to do? Is this really happening? Is he going to come through for me? I don't see how this can possibly work out."

That's the essence of the disciples' thinking before the cross and before the resurrection. After the resurrection, "We can trust every word he says. We have no clue how this is going to happen, but brother, it's going to happen!" So I don't know exactly what their facial reaction was, but I do know this: Their faith is made strong by the resurrection.

He says, "It's not for you to know the times or the seasons. The father has put that in his own power. Don't worry about it. Just do what God is asking you to do and it's all going to be great."

So it's both revealing but it's also

2. Instructive

He says, it's not yours to know now but then he says, verse 8

⁸But ye shall receive the power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

So he says, “The kingdom is not now, but I've got a job for you. You're going to have the power of the Holy Spirit. You're going to be witnesses unto me in all the world.

Verse nine

⁹And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

We should we looked earlier at the Mount of Olives where we know this took place. There are various views. There's is no bad view whether you're on the Mount of Olives looking over Jerusalem or your Jerusalem looking up to the Mount of Olives. Here is an older picture that shows it not quite developed an area. This is a picture of the actual moment when he ascended. We can only imagine what this moment was like. The fact is, that what they did know at this point was that their mission was clear. God was going to unfold it through the Holy Spirit. He was going to teach him all these things: How this church was going to be structured, how this mission was going to be carried out; but they knew their mission. The kingdom is not going to happen today and we are going to be his witnesses. They got that. They understood that. Remember, earlier, he tells them that the stay in Jerusalem and the Holy Spirit's is going to come.

Our mission today is no different. We have the word of God, all the truths that God taught these men; that they wrote down in the inspired word of God. We have them and we can use them. It is our job. If we were to have the Lord walk into this room and this assembly today and we were to ask him, “Is today the kingdom happening now?” I think his response would be, “Don't worry about it. Be getting ready for it because it could happen any day. Get out there and do the work of the Lord.” That's what he would tell us. It's the same mission.

But this moment on this day must have been something when: the one who you love so much, the one you saw crucified, the one you saw come back to life in the miraculous resurrection, is saying, “I have a job for you to do” and then he's gone. I can't imagine that moment is like.

Remember this mission that we're on is not done in our power. It wasn't done through their power then. It's not done to our power now. It's through the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep us in mind. These men did not have a full understanding of what their mission was. They had a general idea but didn't have a full understanding of how it would all play out, but I do know this: They paved the way for us. They paved the way for us. They went through all of that transitional phase that we're going to see in the book of Acts. They went through that transition. They got all the truths through the Holy Spirit. They handled all the practical truths of carrying out those doctrines through the churches and getting them establish and all these things. We get to open up our Bibles and read these truths and understand the application of these truths whereas they're the ones who went through it.

In front of their very eyes, the miracle of Jesus literally just launching from planet earth off of the Mount of Olives up into the clouds. Luke gives us really the only detailed account of this. Scholars have speculated about what exactly took place and all it is only speculation. But I'll give you a few because I think it's kind of interesting.

It seems as if it were a cloud literally lifting him off. They saw it happening. Some of also said it will that it was similar to the Shekinah Glory that filled the Tabernacle or the Temple, the cloud when Peter improperly elevated Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. We don't know for sure.

We know this, as I mentioned in the introduction, this is the very moment that believers in Christ are no longer walking by sight. They're walking my faith. It's the only walk in Christ that we know. These men, these people knew both. They walked by sight with Jesus on earth for those years of ministry and then from this very moment it is now all by faith. It must have been a glorious moment both on earth and in heaven when Jesus went back to his rightful place seated on the right hand of God, the Father. What was that moment like in heaven? We don't know. Maybe we'll get an account of that when we get to Heaven someday.

I do know this. We are to use Christ as an example of how we live. There are a few key points of what that example is all about. We are to be Christ like. Christ-like, to really boil it down, He was the son of God, but he was also fully man. Sinless, yet fully man. In that role, what did he do with regards to the father? He said, "Your will, not mine." That's how we live. So at this moment he had done exactly the father's will. Remember, even in the Garden of Gethsemane before he goes to the cross, he's literally sweating drops of blood. What does he say? "If there's a way, Father, that this cup pass from me." And then how does he finish that prayer? "Not my will, but yours." I want you to picture this moment, in this exact place. Not when that picture was taken but in this exact place, and in this exact time, That moment of reality hits when he returns to the father and he has done exactly what the father asked of him to do. That is our example.

Do we do that every day? I don't, I'm guessing all of you don't do that every day, either, but that's our goal. Our mission is to say, "What is your will?" These men at that moment got that picture. They got those marching orders. They got this mission because they watched Jesus say, "Not my will," to his father, "but thine." So, then they say, "Not our will, Lord, but yours even though you're not here physically on earth we're going to follow you."

Look at verse ten.

¹⁰And in while they looked steadfastly toward heaven

That's why I put this picture with the clouds. I'm just picturing them staring up into heaven. Looking at each other and saying, "What just happened?" They look at each other and they look towards heaven.

as he went up, behold, two men stood by them and white apparel; ¹¹Which also said, Ye, men of Galilee. Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus (this glorified Jesus), which was taken up from you into heaven.

The one that you're you are gazing into the clouds at now is gone...

...shall come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven.

He's coming back. He's coming back to the very same place on the Mount of Olives. The instructions are clear. It's time to get to work. What was the key instruction at this point? Wait until the Holy Spirit comes. Stay in Jerusalem and wait until the Holy Spirit comes.

All would happen, between now (the ascension) and the predicted time (his return to the Mount of Olives) that these men in white apparel said he's coming back. Those are the bookends. He ascends into heaven and he's coming back to the same place. So if those are the two bookends of this timeline, all of what is going to

happen in-between, even though they don't understand it all, is about to be revealed and in a glorious, glorious way. This is the book of Acts.

Verse twelve—what do they do? They return to Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives is just down one simple valley and you're into Jerusalem.

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount of Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey.

It says in Luke 24 that during this time, “And they were continually in the temple, praising God.” Remember the center of all Jewish worship at this time was the Temple in Jerusalem. There were synagogues with the temple was THE place. Where are they going to go? They are going to go to the. You have to kind of picture this mindset.

¹³And they were come in, they went up into an upper room...

Now, I have got a picture here that shows an upper room type room. We don't know what it looked like. We don't know exactly where it was located. When you go to Israel they put some kind of a church or some kind of memorial over certain places everyone likes to claim certain things happened. Some are more probable, some are very clearly the actual place: Golgotha, the place of the skull, the garden tomb though maybe you can't say it's 1000% provable, all of the facts line up.

But I wanted you to have an idea of what an upper room would look like. It was just a place in a house where they could assemble. It was usually in someone's home that was maybe a little bit more wealthy and could afford a bigger house with an upper room, if you will, where they would gather. This is, of course, a very ornate and large one. But the fact is I wanted you to get the feel for these people who just watched Christ leave planet earth. He said wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes and they're gathering together. They're in this room

...where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Phillip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. ¹⁴These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and _____, and with his brethren.

What are they doing while they're waiting for the Holy Spirit to come? They're in prayer and supplication. I love that it says, “with the women”. I love that because they are believers just like the men. God used women in great ways. All of the mistreating of women, especially in that era yet in the Holy Scripture, it says, at this key time, all the men and the women were together praying and in supplication. It mentions the mother of Jesus with his brothers. This is a neat way for God to establish what he thought even though. Does God have different positions for men and women within the church? Yes, and we see that in the New Testament, but not as a matter of more respect or less respect; more value or less value, not at all throughout the Bible.

This time frame (during which they were waiting for the Holy Spirit) is found in the book of Acts. It only applies to this specific time period. It is really important understand this because never ever in church history from this point on, or in the Christian life or within the local church are we waiting for the Holy Spirit. This goes back to that lens I was telling you about. When we're looking at the book of Acts we have to remember this is a transitional book. We're going from what never was to what now we know and understand has been for 2000 years. This is something that is unique to this time frame when saved people are waiting for the Holy Spirit to indwell them.

We have the advantage, of course, that they didn't have. We know how the next several years unfold. We can open up the book of Acts. We can look through it all. They didn't have that. Our advantage is that we have all the scriptures. They're literally going to live through the next several years of the New Testament being written.

While they're waiting for the Holy Spirit, Peter, God bless him, decides it's time to replace Judas. Remember, what did we read in the earlier verses about the apostles? Who chooses the apostles? Jesus Christ, nobody else chooses the apostles. Don't be too hard on Peter. I think if we were there and we were in this upper room and were all sitting together and Peter says, "You know what? We know for a fact from what Christ taught, and the Old Testament prophecies that there should be twelve of us. There will be 12 in the Kingdom later on. He knew this this needed to happen. I'm pretty sure if any of us were in the room we would have said, "You know, what? That's a great idea. We're waiting for the Holy Spirit. We're doing what we were told. Let's get this business settled." So don't criticize into much.

Look at his reasoning found where we start in verse fifteen.

¹⁵And those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together. Inside with an inference is a number the names together about an hundred and twenty,)

That's why I put a picture of a room that was pretty big. It was pretty big 120 people, you know sitting around. Peter says

¹⁶Men and Brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning _____
_____.

Peter is referring back to a prophetic song that David wrote saying that Judas has to be replaced.

¹⁷For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry, ¹⁸Now this man, Judas purchased a field, (We all know the story.) with the reward of iniquity, (the thirty pieces of silver,) and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all of his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹And it was known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; in as much as that field is called in their proper tongue, _____, _____

This is really interesting. I've got a picture of that area once known as "the field of blood". This is interesting that Peter is talking about this. Luke, when he recorded it, gives us the account of what took place in the room and then adds that the place is known to everyone who lives in Jerusalem, or isn't in the area, what this field is. Even the historical writings of Josephus and others talk about this. It's a well-known fact.

In Matthew 27 we see that Judas is basically committing suicide and we wonder if there are more facts to support this record. Luke does that right here. He puts in those facts. As I said earlier, It's like he is saying, "Hey, I'm going to give you so much detail. You can attack it from every direction you want. This is fact. That field was known and it's still known as "the Field of blood." We also know it was once called The Potter's field where the clay for the pottery would have been dug to use in the potter's wheel.

Let's go on it with Peter's discourse here.

²⁰For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick (office of the bishop) let another take

Peter is referring back to this psalm and saying this individual's office needs a replacement.

²¹Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.

Peter is saying, "Here's who we're going to choose from to replace Judas." He gives these qualifications: one is these men have a companied us, they've been with us and Jesus all the time he went in and out among us. From what point in time...

...²²Beginning from the baptism of John, (when John baptized Jesus) unto that same day that he was taken up from us (to the Ascension),

He's giving this timeline of when these people that we are going to choose from should be taken so that we don't just, willy-nilly take a vote. He says further,

...must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

These Apostles had all of these qualifications. They had seen the resurrected Christ. They were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Lord. Why is that so important? Because everything centers around the resurrection of Jesus Christ: all the teachings, all the writings, everything of the New Testament, everything of this church that is about to take off. It is all based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The writers, the author's, the foundation of this church had to be eye-witnesses of the Resurrection.

There are a lot of different ways you could go with that as to why that would be so important for them. Personally, one reason that hits me is:, If you are to become a martyr for Jesus Christ, I think just in a personal way, it's going to help me if it's not just something I heard about from somebody else. I saw the resurrected Lord and, I'm willing to die for the Lord. And I hope that we would do that even if we didn't see him and many, many Christians have and still do today. But in this case, the foundation is transitional, I just think in a personal way. It was very helpful them.

No doubt Peter knew the Old Testament, knew the Hebrew Scriptures. He refers back to Psalm 69 as a as a Messianic prophecy leading him to believe that Judas' demise was foretold and now he needs to be replaced. In fact it was a good idea. It was actually something that God knew needed to happen. It's just that God needs to be the one to do it. There is some debate on this as to whether or not Mathias or even whether or not Paul was the true replacement. I believe there's no doubt that he was the replacement and we're going to see that in just a second.

I want you to remember just a little bit of a personality or so the character if you will of Peter. What was one of the things that he struggled with before the cross or leading up to the Cross? It was the idea of seeing things spiritually, instead of earthly, eternal focus instead of earthly focus. I know part of what he was thinking (probably) was the 12 Thrones with 12 Apostles in the Kingdom. The kingdom is coming. We were told it's not now, but we know it's coming. It could be any day. (That's how they lived: could be any day, any minute, any moment.) He's thinking, "We got to get this done. We're waiting for the Holy Spirit anyway so let's get this done."

I think his focus was still a little bit on that earthly kingdom. I just think that that postponed kingdom, that delay of the Kingdom, hadn't sunk in fully. I cannot blame him at all. We don't see anywhere in scripture where they were condemned or rebuked for doing this. He set the requirements which were accurate requirements. They were with either with the Lord in this case and they were an eye witness of the resurrected Lord.

Pick it up in verse twenty-three of chapter one.

²³And they appointed two, _____, and Matthias. (And look at this,) they prayed,...

They sought the Lord. They were sincere.

...and said, Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show wheather of these two thou has chosen.

So they narrow it down and then verse 25

²⁵That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might not that he might go to his own place. ²⁶And they gave forth their Lots,...

They are casting lots to make this decision.

...and the lot fell upon _____.

I want to show you a couple pictures. I'm not claiming that these are the lots that they cast. I want you to see from that time period what some of the things looked like. These are some shards or pieces of pottery with a number on them. You can imagine putting them in bowl, mixing them up, and picking one out. This was one way. Another way, even in the time of Christ, they would have what we would call dice with different numbers on the different sides. and you would roll the dice. I don't think they played Monopoly in those days but it gives you an idea. This huge decision came down to casting lots over two godly qualified men.

Here's the lesson we can learn from this: When you're praying to God and you're only giving God two choices because you determined that these are the only two choices that are available to God, you're in trouble. That does not mean that you don't pray to God seeking his wisdom with the options that you understand. These guys in this moment gave God two options and asked him to pick which one.

We do the same thing in our lives. We narrow it all the way down and we and ask God to choose between only two things, and sometimes only one thing. Wow, we tend to limit God, don't we? We tell God what the options are and that's the mistake they made here.

Listen! I'm not judging them. I'm not going to condemn them. I probably would have done the exact same thing. It's what they knew. They were sincere in what they were doing, but it doesn't mean it was the right thing. Remember in our introduction I said there are acts and decisions recorded in this book that were not the right thing to do. That they were recorded doesn't mean this is how we should make our decisions. They were not condemned for it but we'll see but that was not the case. It wasn't their place. We saw in verse two that Christ chooses his apostles.

Here's why I believe it was not their place to choose a replacement for Judas:

1. They were told to wait for the Holy Spirit. Jesus did not say to go to Jerusalem and take care of a few matters while you wait for the Holy Spirit.
2. (The biggest reason) They did not have the Holy Spirit yet. That's a really big deal. When you make decisions outside of the Holy Spirit you're going to get yourself into trouble. It's never good. I think that's why he told him to wait.
3. The other thing is God had chosen the first 12, why wouldn't he be the one to choose the replacement? If Christ chose the first twelve wouldn't it make sense that he would take care of that replacement issue.

4. We find out later on that God had another person in mind and that was Paul, the Apostle. Do I say that simply because you wrote so many books in the New Testament? No, though it is very clear that God was using him in a great way. Look at Galatians 1:1. To me this is as simple as $1+1=2$. What does Paul say about himself?

First one, to me. This is two plus two. Very, very simple. Galatians 1, 1. What does Paul say of himself?

¹Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Paul is claiming apostleship and it was not done by casting lots. It was not done by man in any way. It was done by Jesus Christ and God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. It's interesting, a couple of things.

It's interesting that you never ever hear anything about Mathias again. His name is never mentioned. It's never brought up. If he really were an apostle you would think you would here something about him. Two other things that were true of Paul: the mystery of the church was made known unto Paul. The Holy Spirit through Paul revealed the church, the church age and all that. Paul was also the apostle to the gentiles. He always went first to the Jews. Every time he went to the synagogue. He went to look for the Jewish people first, but then he would go to the Gentiles. One other point to make is that we never see the apostles or any other church leaders anywhere else in the New Testament casting lots to make a decision.

So I think it's pretty clear. This was not the way to go. Again, I'm not trying to major on this as if it were some big catastrophic disaster or decision. They were sincere. I believe they were a hundred percent sincere, but it wasn't the right decision. And I think that's clear. They prayed their hearts were pure. Aren't you glad for grace? I know that I am.

It's so easy for us to look back at what they did and think they should have done this sooner or done that. It's just way, way different when you're in the moment.

So we come to the place where Christ's work on earth is done in a physical way. Here's a beautiful picture in Jerusalem: The sunrise over the Mount of Olives. He's gone physically, but the work of Christ is about to explode through the Holy Spirit and through these men.

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