

## Acts of the Apostles - Acts 1

The author of this book is Luke. He was not an apostle. Unlike many of the apostles of Jesus, his occupation was a doctor or physician. (Colossians 4:14) He was a devoted companion of Paul (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24 and 2 Timothy 4:11). Based on his name and his Greek writing style and cultural perspectives, Luke was a gentile and not a Jew.

### *Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven*

*1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.*

The book of Acts is written to Theophilus and us. There are numerous thoughts of who this man was but none are conclusive. The name means "Friend of God" which is a Greek name but this man is believed to be a first-century Roman official who was given this name when he was saved.

Together the books of Luke and Acts make up more than 30 percent of the New Testament. The book of Acts is believed to be a sequel to the first book. The book of Luke ends with the ascension of Jesus. (Luke 24:50-53) It appears that Luke is writing this book as a historical account of the birth of the Church. Based on what we read in Luke 24 and these first few verses, Luke was not an eyewitness to these events so it was a secondhand account of these events. He used the pronouns, they and them.

*1:3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

Luke starts off confirming that Jesus truly died and was alive. He gives examples and stated that Jesus appeared over 40 days and said that Jesus even ate with them. He confirmed the prophecy of John the Baptist had come true? (Luke 3:16) John baptized with water and Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

*1:6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

*7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

This question asked by Jesus' disciples tells us that they had not learned very much throughout their time with Jesus. They still thought Jesus was going to set up an earthly kingdom. Jesus did not give them an absolute answer. He told them that it was for them to know the time or date when that would happen. He answered them with a key verse of Christian Evangelism / sharing Jesus. We have heard sermons on the last words of Christ such as, "I thirst", "Father forgive them" and "It is finished". Acts 1:8 or "to the ends of the earth" are really the last words of Christ.

*1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

Next, Jesus was taken up on a cloud. This was the last or final appearance of the Lord after His resurrection. The ascension took place in the vicinity of Bethany. (Luke 24:45-53) Two angels appeared to those watching the ascension. They tell the "Men of Galilee," they said, "*why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.*"

### ***Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas***

*1:12 Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. 13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.*

When they got back to the upper room in Jerusalem, they prayed constantly. This list of disciples was not the same as one listed in Luke 6:14-16. The list in Luke included Judas Iscariot but now Judas was dead. Remember he is documenting for historical purposes. So having the list of disciples present would be historically accurate.

*1:15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) 16 and said, "Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. 17 He was one of our number and shared in our ministry." 18 (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. 19 Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 "For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms: "'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, "'May another take his place of leadership.' 21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, 22 beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."*

There were 120 believers present at this gathering. This is not believed to be all of the believers at this time. Peter stood up as the leader. Peter would have been nervous. He was a fisherman and would not have been accustomed to speaking in front of people. Peter starts with talking about Judas and what the Scriptures through King David had to say about Judas and his demise. He quoted Psalm 69:25 to tell what would become of the Field of Blood, the land that Judas purchased with the 30 pieces of silver. He quoted Psalm 109:8 to tell what their next step was. Originally Jesus chose 12 disciples. Judas hung himself after giving Jesus over to the Sanhedrin. Now they needed to select a replacement.

*1:23 So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.*

Since they had two candidates to take Judas place, they prayed and then cast lots to determine which man would take Judas place.

The following verses tell us about casting lots or about why they were used.

Proverbs 18:18	King Solomon – ends a dispute
Joshua 18:10	Joshua distributes the land when the Hebrew nation took Israel
I Samuel 14:38-45	Should King Saul attack an army that included his son Jonathan.
Leviticus 16:6-10	The choice of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement
Jonah 1:7	Jonah – to decide who was at fault for the storm.

Matthias was chosen as the new 12<sup>th</sup> disciple.