



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Acts 1

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Acts 1.

Introduction: Acts picks up where the Gospels left off it records the early progress of the Gospel as Jesus' disciples took it from Jerusalem throughout Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the Mediterranean world. The story begins with Christ's ascension and the events of Pentecost, as Gentiles begin responding to the Gospel, the focus shifts to Paul and his missionary journeys. Acts forms a bridge between the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament it shows how the apostles carried on Christ's work, providing a historical background from Romans through to Revelation. The Acts of the Apostles is the second of two New Testament books written by Luke, like his Gospel, Acts was a letter to Luke's friend Theophilus, written sometime in A.D. 62–64.

Topics.

- Luke briefly gives an overall account of his first letter to Theophilus.
- Jesus ascends to heaven.
- You will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.
- With Judas thirty silver coins a field was purchased.
- A man falling headlong burst open and all his bowels gushed out.
- Matthias replaces Judas by casting lots.
- Why casting a lot was in God's will.

NOTE: for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

1

ACTS 1:1

Luke briefly gives and overall account of his First letter to Theophilus.

- **Acts 1:1:** In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵for John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." ¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

The words, "In the first book" (v1) refers to the book of Luke in which he wrote to his Christian friend Theophilus telling him about the miracles Jesus had done and the things he had taught (Luke 1:3). The words, "The

command Jesus gave them" refer to the following and final words of Jesus to his disciples (recorded at the end of Luke's first letter to Theophilus) just before Jesus ascension "Behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you, but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49) referring to the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5).

The Kingdom of God: after Jesus resurrection he was with his disciples for forty-days speaking about the kingdom of God (v3). Prior to Christ's death and resurrection no-one understood what Jesus meant when he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Luke 9:22) so it is certain he spent these forty-days explaining the following two aspects of the Kingdom of God:

1. Jesus would have taught the things concerning his return as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. Notice even though God has set a fixed time for Christ's return (v7) it is given to no-one to know the exact dates or time when this glorious event will be.
2. Jesus would have explained that salvation is now available to Jews and Gentiles through faith in his name and that righteousness is granted as a free gift to all who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him contrasted to striving to attain to it by self-effort and adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions etc.

Jesus told his disciples that the Gospel they are to proclaim is:

- The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Godly repentance in Christ's name is the entry into God's Kingdom.
- God's forgiveness through Christ is always available and always granted to those who repent (Luke 24:44).

2

The following shows that God's Kingdom has existed in various shapes: The Kingdom of God has existed throughout history in different shapes and different forms. In the Old Testament it existed under Moses and the Judges in one form and under David and Solomon in another. Prior to Christ's death and resurrection, the Jews focus was the promised literal and physical Kingdom of Israel to be restored on earth rather than the resurrection of Jesus and all those (Jews and Gentiles) who trust in his name being resurrected to eternal life. After Christ's resurrection the focus of the writers changed from the literal Kingdom to salvation in Jesus name and resurrection to everlasting life and eternal glory. Christ's resurrection ushered in a spiritual Kingdom that exists in the heart, mind and conscience of all who confess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of this age when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords he will separate out of this existing spiritual Kingdom, the foolish and wicked servants from the faithful and wise servants and with the faithful and the resurrected who died in Christ majestically establish God's literal Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth, then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father (Matt 13:36-43) thus the Kingdom will take on another form. Nevertheless, this is not the final shape of the Kingdom since at the end of this age God Himself will descend to earth and be ALL in ALL and eternity will begin in all its majestic royal eternal fullness and glory.

NOTE: it is the context that determines which Kingdom the writer is referring too. In the New Testament the Kingdom of God in Paul's mind is often the invisible spiritual Kingdom existing in the heart and mind of those who belong to Christ which is manifested in righteousness, peace and joy (Rom 14:17). For further information see the title:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgement.

Jesus ascends to heaven: verse nine says, "As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight," ponder for a moment the emotional wonder and amazement the disciples would have felt as they watched the one they had known for three years ascend to his heavenly Father. All who faithfully follow Christ will one-day experience that same overwhelming wonder and splendour when the Lord they have known and loved returns, but this time not as a Lamb to be slaughtered, but as the mighty and all-powerful King of kings and Lord of lords.

You will be baptised with the Holy Spirit: one hundred and twenty people including the eleven apostles and the woman who ministered to Jesus are waiting at Jerusalem in an upper room for the promise of the Father as Jesus had commanded them (v4-5) (Luke 24:49). The promise of the Father is the baptism in the Holy Spirit which will give those in the upper room power.

NOTICE: the purpose of this power is so that they will be Jesus witness in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (v8) how appropriate that the power they received from the Father was the ability to speak in foreign languages that all who spoke those languages understood what they were saying (Acts 2:1-10).

ACTS 1:13-20

With Judas thirty Silver Coins a field was Purchased.

- **Acts 1:13-20:** And when they had entered, 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. ¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. ¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers and said, ¹⁶"Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." ¹⁸Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood. ²⁰For it is written in the Book of Psalms, "May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it"; and "Let another take his office."

It seems the eleven apostles, Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot) and Judas (the son of James) were all living in a house which could accommodate one-hundred and twenty people in its upper room and to which Mary (the mother of Jesus) and his brothers and many other men and woman regularly gathered together to pray. It is certain that Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and Salome (the woman who after seeing the two angels at Jesus empty Tomb went and told the apostles at Jerusalem what they had seen (Luke 24:4-10) would have been amongst the one hundred and twenty gathered together with the eleven and no-doubt the two men from the Emmaus village who Jesus appeared to.

A man falling head long burst open and all his bowels gushed out: some sceptics of the Bible use the fact that Matthew states that "Judas throwing the pieces of silver into the temple went and hanged himself (Matt 27:5), but in these verses Peter says "His bowels gushed out", but this is a perfect example of approaching the Scriptures with a particular mindset and reading far more into what people are saying than is actually there since this apparent contradiction (to them at least) can be easily explained as the following will show. The words:

- This man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out (v18).

Obviously, this does not refer to Judas because he threw the thirty pieces of silver back into the Temple before the Chief Priests and the elders. It was not lawful for them to put the thirty silver coins into the treasury because it was blood money so they bought the potter's field with the money Judas threw into the treasury (Matt 27:3-10) (note; these are the only verses that mention this event in the NT) thus it was the man who purchased the field whose bowels gushed out and not Judas, this is most likely because the religious leaders thought they could profit by purchasing property with the blood money that betrayed Jesus the Son of God.

The Scripture had to be fulfilled: in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit often speaks beforehand by the mouth of the prophets (especially by David a king and prophet) in the Psalms concerning Christ, future events or men in God's service (Acts 1v16). Often the New Testament Scriptures will give us a verse that link us back to the Old Testament Scriptures which will give us:

- Further insights into the Lord's anguish and his heart.
- Further insights into events that though they may have happened during the generations of the Old Testament prophets they are yet to appear once more in history on a much grander scale to bring about the perfect fulfilment of the prophets' prophetic words.

Added to these the New Testament will often cite a verse from the Old Testament to direct the reader to the entire chapter because it will give greater insight into the event that is in focus or the person being spoken of. Even though the prophet maybe speaking of himself and his own circumstances often the Holy Spirit will have embodied within the prophetic words being spoken by the prophet:

- Principles and attitudes that apply to everyone in God's Kingdom.
- Future events.
- Things echoing Christ and events concerning his life.

Peter by citing the words, "May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it" and "Let another take his office." (Acts 1:20) directs our minds to the Psalm sixty-nine in which David in prayer said:

- God pour out your indignation upon my enemies and let your burning anger overtake them *may their camp be a desolation*; let no one dwell in their tents because they *persecute him* whom you have struck down, and they recount the pain of those you have wounded" (Psalm 69:24-26)

David in this prayer is praying about his own troubles and heartfelt distress, but within the language is an echo of Christ's suffering, grief and anguish, and to Psalm one-hundred and nine in which David wrote:

- May his days be few; may another take his office! (Psalm 109:8)

David in this Psalm is expressing his anguish in prayer before God, but being a prophet contained within the language of his prayer is an echo of the anguish of Christ.

Matthias is Chosen to replace Judas Iscariot as the Twelfth Apostle.

- **Acts 1:21-26:** So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection."²³And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called

Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Matthias replaces Judas by casting lots: the man to replace Judas had to have accompanied Peter and the other ten Apostles from the time that Jesus was baptised by John up until the day when he ascended to heaven and he had to have witnessed Christ's resurrection. Two men fitted this criteria Joseph called Barsabbas (also called Justus) and Matthias. No-doubt all the people in the upper room prayed asking which of the two men the Lord had chosen. What happens after that is amazing, remember these people in the upper room would be classed as the most spiritual people on the planet at this time in history, yet instead of saying, "God sent an angel and told them to choose Matthias" they cast lots which would be the same as us flipping a coin today. The lot fell on Matthias, so he was numbered as one of the twelve apostles.

Why casting a lot was in Gods will: the word lot from Strong's Concordance literally means to be rough (as stone) properly a pebble, (i.e. a small stone being used for casting lots), figuratively it carries the idea of a portion or destiny as if determined or chosen by lot. In some circumstances the easy way to decide a thing or stop a quarrel is to flip a coin, i.e. when my building partner and I decided to go our own way we had to divide the tools, we were good mates and did not want to upset each another so we prayed that God's will would be done and then grouped the tools together in pairs of equal value, then wrote our names on opposite sides of a block of wood and then tossed it in the air. We agreed that whoever's name came up would have the first choice then we would alternate choosing from then on, it worked really well and stopped any tension that could have developed. In casting lots God's will was done because we both agreed to accept the outcome whatever way the block fell and both accepted the outcome of it as God's will. Proverbs states; "The lot puts an end to quarrels and decides between powerful contenders (Proverbs 18:18).

Likewise, those in the upper room agreed that there were two men who could equally replace Judas so either way the lot fell would have been OK. This was not a situation in which they had one man who would be perfect for the position and another who would not, no-one with any wisdom would leave that king of decision to what would appear to be chance especially since if the lot fell the wrong way the outcome would certainly not be God's will. Casting lots is only in God's will when whatever way the lot falls is a good outcome, i.e. if Paul and Peter were deciding to share the Good News of the Gospel on a particular Sunday at the same house meeting they could pray and flip a coin to see which one of them was to lead the meeting in that home and by faith whatever way the lot fell it could be accepted as God's will since no matter whether the coin falls in favour of Peter or Paul the outcome is a good result for those attending the meeting and for God's Kingdom.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
