

Acts 1

Introduction:

<u>Author</u>	Luke the beloved physician and a disciple of Paul <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a Greek convert- writes in classical Greek- access to eyewitnesses to all of the events recorded
<u>Date</u>	before Nero in Rome (64AD)
<u>Audience</u>	Theophilus, Roman educated middle class, non-believer
<u>Purpose</u>	Evangelistic, to convince that the gospel extends to all nations

All that Jesus began to do and teach – This was what was written in volume one (the Gospel of Luke). This book is a continuation of what Jesus is doing and teaching now through the Holy Spirit as manifested in his Church. This has implications for us today. God is still moving and teaching. Christ is still walking the earth but now he is doing it in the form of His Body, the church.

Convincing proofs of the bodily resurrection of Christ in Luke. This is evident from the study of Luke.

Luke is introducing the coming of the Holy Spirit as the primary instruction to the disciples in Jesus' post resurrection appearances. They continue to believe that the Kingdom will come in a political form. "Is it now Lord, that you will restore the Kingdom to Israel???" It is not for you to know the times or dates for the coming of the eschatological Kingdom but there is a job you are to do until it comes and that is the focus of this book and the Church.

Acts 1:8

This is a very significant verse in this book. It is the outline of the internal structure of the book.

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| 1. Coming of the Spirit upon the disciples in Jerusalem | Chap 2 |
| 2. Their witness to the Resurrection of Christ in Jerusalem | Chap 2-7 |
| 3. The Gospel extends to Judea and Samaria | Chap 8 |
| 4. The Gospel extends to the uttermost parts of the world | Chap 9-28 |

There is an expansion both Geographically and Culturally in the book of Acts and this is important to both its structure and its theme.

The disciples are to be witnesses to the gospel. This word in Greek is the word from which we derive the English word Martyr. The suffering associated with the job of witnessing will become very important in Acts and through out the history of the church.

You will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes on you. You will be empowered to carry out this task through the divine power of God. The Spirit is given for the purpose of extending the Gospel message to all Nations. It is not given for our own edification, although that is a wonderful by product. If you want to experience the power of God, you must be involved in the purpose for which the Spirit was given.

Luke then focuses on the Ascension as precursor to the Return of Christ to establish his earthly Kingdom. I believe that he is bracketing this Age or time period for us. He is saying that this expansion of the Gospel to all Nations, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the witnessing function of the disciples of Christ will continue until Christ returns in the same way he left. Therefore until you see the Kingdom come and the new age begin – carry out this command from Christ.

For the Jews their understanding of time was based on “This Age” and “The Age to Come”. What divided these two ages was the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom. The disciples are asking if the Age to come is here now. The angels indicate that Christ will return again so they are still in “This Age” with a task to perform until “The Age to Come” arrives with the return of Christ.

Waiting for the Coming of the Spirit (Acts 1:12-26)

First they are obedient to the command of the Lord. They return to the city just as Jesus had said and they go into an upper room, away from the interruption of the daily life of the city.

Those who are present are the 11 disciples (They are named so that they are established as the recognized leadership of the church. This also creates continuity with the facts of the Gospel of Luke.). The women of Galilee are present. These are the same women that followed Christ and ministered to his needs. They are featured in the Gospel of Luke as faithful participants in his ministry from the early time (Luke 8) until the very end (23:53). This continues the theme of the importance of women and the removal of gender as an obstacle to participation in the Kingdom. Jesus’ mother and brothers are there as the representatives of his family. This sets the stage for the later leadership of his family in the early church in Jerusalem.

They are joined together constantly in prayer. This was not a command of Christ for this waiting time but they are following Christ’s example especially in his own baptism in the Gospel of Luke where it is mentioned that Jesus is praying when the Spirit descends upon him in the form of a dove (Luke 3:21). If revival is to come and the Holy Spirit is to move in the hearts of people, then fervent and unified prayer must be involved.

The next essential element to precede a revival is the integrity of leadership. The demise of Judas is discussed in its prophetic context and the need for a replacement to be chosen (Ps. 109:8). They see that it is necessary that there be 12 apostles as the foundation of the church. This proves that the choosing of 12 was not a coincidence and the disciples understood it to have a connection with the twelve tribes of Israel and the establishment of a New Israel (Luke’s Gospel also emphasizes this point (Luke 22:28)). They saw themselves as more than just a continuation of the prophets of the OT – but a reestablishment of the Kingdom.

The requirement for this office is that this person be a disciple of Christ from the beginning of his Galilean ministry – beginning with the baptism until he ascended into heaven. This confirms that the Apostles were all eyewitnesses of Jesus ministry including his teachings, miracles, and redemptive acts. The reason for this is so that this person can be a witness of the resurrection of Christ to the world.

Two men are proposed and Mathias is chosen after prayer. Again they pray and they ask that Christ chose this apostle just as they had been chosen directly by Him.