

*Friends, don't get me wrong. By no means do I count myself as an expert in all of this, but I've got my eyes on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.*

Philippians 3:13-14 THE MESSAGE BIBLE

---

First Love Ministries, Inc.

Prayer Study #229

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### Chapter 1

#### **Main Sources**

*The Book of Acts: Early Church History and the Ministry of the Holy Spirit*  
by Kevin Conner

*Sparkling Gems from the Greek* by Rick Renner

*The Church in the New Testament* by Kevin Conner

*The New Daily Study Bible: The Acts of the Apostles* by Kevin Conner

*Through the Bible* by J. Vernon McGee

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* by John F. Walwood  
and Roy B. Zuck

*The New Scofield Reference Bible: King James Version* edited by C.I.  
Scofield, DD

*All the Men of the Bible* by Herbert Lockyer

*The Open Bible: New King James Version*

#### **Author**

**Luke:** There are only three references in the Bible to Luke: Colossians 4:14, Philemon 2:4, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:11. From these scriptures we know for certain two things: Luke was a physician, and Luke was one of Paul's most trusted and loyal friends, even following him to Rome where Paul was imprisoned and then murdered by Nero's orders. We can assume that he was a Gentile because he is not listed in Colossians 4:11 with those of the circumcision but after Colossians 4:12 which begins a list of non-Jews.

Thus, Luke is the only Gentile author of the New Testament, and, in fact, he wrote most of the New Testament as far as length in words.

### **Luke's Sources**

Luke had to rely on other sources for most of the first fifteen chapters of Acts. Surely he must have listened to the stories of the churches in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Antioch, and surely he knew all the major players in these accounts since he was so close to Paul and must have spent hours and hours visiting Paul in prison. Interestingly, Luke writes much of Acts in the third person (they, he, she) but there are portions, especially in the last half of the book where he changes over to first person (I, we). Thus, Luke must have actually been present when things were happening and been an eye witness.

### **Main Theme**

1<sup>st</sup> Century Church and the Acts of the Holy Spirit

### **Date of Writing**

around A.D. 60

### **Scotfield Introduction**

*"The book of Acts, written by Luke, the author of the third Gospel, is a continuation of that narrative. Luke wrote more of the N.T. than any other individual. The 'beloved physician' and companion of Paul, he was the first historian of the early years of the Church.*

*The book has often been called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is referred to more than fifty times in this one book, particularly in relation with baptism with the Holy Spirit, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and being led by the Holy Spirit. The Acts begins with Luke's second account of the ascension of the Lord and terminates with Paul's residence in Rome as a prisoner, covering a period of more than 30 years.*

*This book is of highest importance because it is the only inspired account of the beginning and early work of the church....It is the primary textbook for the study of missionary principles, the defense of the faith, the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, and the methods and themes of Christian preaching."*

C. I. Scotfield

*"The Book of Acts is called 'The Acts of the Apostles,' but more truly could be called 'The Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Church.'" The secret to the*

*whole Book is the glorious Person, Work and Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Church which is revealed as the mystical and spiritual Body of Christ in the earth. There are about 50 references to the Person of the Holy Spirit in this 'sketch history' of the Early Church. All that is said and done by means of preaching and teaching the Word of the Lord, declaring the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in power, signs and wonders, and the phenomenal growth and development of the Church numerically, plus the Doctrine, Grace, and Gifts and Word—all is found in the operation of the HOLY SPIRIT. He is 'the key' to the Book of Acts. The Early Church recognized its helplessness, inability, frailty, and weakness without the Holy Spirit....Acts is the only unfinished Book of the Bible! Hence it has no 'Amen' to it. Its history is still being recorded in the Books of Heaven. It will only be finished when the Church has finished her earthly ministry and the 'End will be much better than the beginning' (Ecclesiastes 7:8)."*

Kevin Conner

The Book of Acts has been called by various theologians:

1. The Acts of the Apostles
2. Acts of Apostolic Men
3. The Acts of the Ascended and Glorified Lord
4. The Gospel of the Resurrection
5. The Acts of the Holy Spirit
6. The Gospel of the Holy Spirit

#### **Prologue to Acts**

1. The former account 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 he through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen.

In Luke 1:3 Luke calls Theophilus "*most excellent Theophilus,*" which really means "*Your Excellency, Theophilus,*" which indicates a person high up in the service of the Roman government. Barclay gives us three possibilities as to whom this man may have been:

- a. Since *theo* means "God" and *philein* means "to love," Theophilus may have been a made-up name that Luke used to write to someone who loved God but whose real name could not be used because it was dangerous to be a Christian and to be thus identified.

- b. Maybe Theophilus was a real person high up in the government whom Luke was writing to show that Christians were good people not out to overthrow the government and thus should not be persecuted.
- c. Some have speculated that Theophilus was Luke's master since in those days doctors were often slaves. It is thought that Theophilus was gravely ill and brought back to health by Luke's skill as a doctor. In gratitude Theophilus freed him. Luke was so moved by this act that he wanted to share with his former master the most precious thing that he had, i.e. the story of Jesus.

The former account was the Gospel of Luke. It dealt with Jesus' earthly ministry. Now Luke moves on to the ministry of the Comforter whom He promised He would send when He went away. The Comforter never speaks of Himself but only glorifies and brings honor and recognition to Jesus (John 16:14).

#### **Appearance of the Resurrected Christ**

- 3. to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.
- 4. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me:
- 5. "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."
- 6. Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
- 7. And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.
- 8. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

John concludes his Gospel with these words: *And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.* (John 21:25). I believe there are so many things Jesus did during this period following His resurrection and before His ascension that are not recorded. During the forty days He was on earth after the Resurrection, only ten times are recorded in scripture that He appeared to His disciples, and five of these were on the first day. They were to Mary Magdalene, to the women returning from the tomb with the angelic message, to Peter that



afternoon, to the Emmaus disciples near evening, to the disciples with Thomas being absent, on the next Sunday night to the disciples with Thomas being present, to the seven besides the Sea of Galilee, to the apostles and over 500 brethren, to James the Lord's half brother, and here in this first chapter of Acts.

The first message that Jesus speaks after His baptism by John was the Kingdom of God. The last message He speaks to His disciples is about the kingdom. The problem was that what Jesus meant by the kingdom was not what the Jews meant. The Jewish people thought that God was going to intervene in history, using them to conquer the world, and giving them special privileges and worldwide power. Jesus, on the other hand, meant a society upon earth where God's will would be done as perfectly as it is done in heaven. The fullness of the kingdom will not come until He comes, but we can walk in a measure of the kingdom now.

These are disciples who had received the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them in John 20:22: *And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."* This was on the evening of the first day of His Resurrection when Thomas was absent. We receive Christ by receiving the Holy Spirit, but there is a second blessing, and that is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The first involves the Holy Spirit coming upon a believer. The second involves the Holy Spirit filling the believer. This second experience is to give the believer power to be a witness. Verse 8 has come to be called the Great Commission and is similar to Matthew 28:19. We are to be witnesses in Jerusalem (our hometowns), in all Judea (our countries), in Samaria (places where it is difficult to be a witness), and in all the world. We witness our faith to others for several reasons (from the Open Bible):

- a. Because Jesus commanded us to. (Acts 1:8 and Rev. 22:17)
- b. Because of our love for Jesus. (John 14:15)
- c. Because all are lost. (Romans 3:10)
- d. Because our sharing is the Lord's chosen method to reach people for the Gospel. He could have chosen angels or other means. (Romans 10:14-17)
- e. Because God desires to save ALL people. (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:8 and 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:4)
- f. Because someone shared their faith with us, and we have an obligation in turn to share with others. (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:3)

### **Ascension of Christ**

9. Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
10. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,
11. who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Only Luke tells this story of the ascension of Christ. It so impressed him that he not only told it in his Gospel but also here in the book of Acts. In Luke 24:52, he records that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Obviously, they felt that Jesus had not left them but would be with them, through the Holy Spirit, forever. This passage also reconfirms the Second Coming of Christ, who, scripture tells us, will return coming on the clouds (Matthew 24:30) with angels (Matthew 25:31).

### **Anticipation of the Spirit**

12. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey,
13. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas, the son 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 brothers.

A Sabbath day's journey is 2000 cubics. Since one cubic equals 18 inches or ½ yard, a Sabbath day's journey would be 1000 yards or a little more than ½ mile. To get to the Mount of Olives, you must pass through the Kidron Valley. It separates the Mount of Olives from the Temple Mount. The upper room is on Mount Zion. It is in this building that many scripturally recorded things happened, as the washing of feet, the resurrection appearances of Jesus to His disciples, the election of Matthias, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Note that the disciples were unified in one accord and also in prayer.

### **Appointment of Matthias**

15. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said,

16. "Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus;
17. for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."
18. (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.
19. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is Field of Blood.)
20. "For it is written in the book of Psalms: '*Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it;*' and '*Let another take his office.*'"
21. "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,
22. beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."
23. And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.
24. And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen
25. To take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."
26. And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

These last verses of the first chapter have to do with the appointment of Matthias to take the place of Judas. Notice that there were over 500 brethren who witnessed Christ's ascension (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:6), but only 120 got to the Upper Room. 120 is a very significant number in scripture and has to do with "the end of all flesh and the Spirit supreme." (For example, according to Kevin Conner, "the Holy Spirit strove with men for 120 years before the flood came. At the end of the 120 years, Noah ceased to preach the word and the Spirit ceased to strive with men. All ungodly flesh was judged by the flood.") In this instance, the 120 represents the end of the law's supremacy, and the beginning of the Holy Spirit's supremacy.

Prayer means to petition God. Supplication means humble self abasement and earnest prayer in worship. Those who are in supplication kneel down, entreat, implore, and humbly call upon the Lord.

Jesus chose 12 Apostles to represent the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 10:1-4). Judas came from the same tribe as Jesus, the tribe of Judah. Judas was ordained (Mark 3:13-19) by Jesus Himself, but he fell over the love of

money (Matthew 26:6-9; John 12:1-6; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:10). Psalms 69 and 109 are known as the “Judas Psalms” and indicate that his name would be blotted out of the Book of Life. He sold the Lord for 30 pieces of silver which was, in that day, the equivalent of six months salary. Judas hung himself on a tree and lost his office or position.

It was an ancient custom to draw lots in this way. Proverbs 16:33 addresses this: *The lot is cast into the lap but the disposing thereof (the choice or decision) is of the Lord.* Apostles are never again chosen by lot in the New Testament once the Holy Spirit was poured out. From the Day of Pentecost onward, the Lord Jesus himself chooses and ordains and equips by the Spirit.

The function for an apostle is to be a witness to the resurrection. The qualification of an apostle is that the person must have been with Jesus. Every true Christian is one, however, who lives day by day with Jesus.

Matthias was chosen. Tradition says that Matthias, whose name means *Gift of God*, was one of the 70 sent out by the Lord in Luke 10. We have no record of him after his election. This should not be used as an argument that Matthias was not the Lord’s choice. We hear of very few of the apostles and their ministries in the book of Acts. In fact, Peter, James and John, and Paul are the main apostles mentioned. Tradition says that Matthias was stoned and then beheaded as a martyr for Christ in Ethiopia.

### **WILL YOU BE POURED OUT**

Will you be poured out like wine  
Upon the altar for me?  
Will you be broken like bread  
To feed the hungry for me?  
Will you be so one with me  
That I may do just as I please?  
Be My life, My light, My love,  
My word fulfilled.

Yes, I’ll be poured out like wine  
Upon the altar for You.  
Yes, I’ll be broken like bread  
To feed the hungry for You.  
Yes, I’ll be so one with You  
That You may do just as You please.  
I’ll be your life, Your light, Your love,  
Your word fulfilled.