

## 2. The Apostles Wait for the Holy Spirit, Jesus Ascends, and God Chooses Matthias: Acts 1

Lesson 1 reviewed the *many convincing proofs* that Christ was alive. The proofs established the certainty of Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, the central principle of the gospel. In Luke 1:3-4, Luke stated his purpose in the writing of his record of the gospel:

3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Those who read the gospel account may know the certainty of the things taught. Therefore, Luke begins *The Acts of the Apostles* by leading off with the assertion that Jesus himself had given “many convincing proofs that he was alive.” Acts begins with a recitation of these important events in *The Gospel According to Luke*.

Acts 1:1-3

*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. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men 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.*

In this first paragraph of Acts, Luke further states the purpose of the gospel. He had written about all that Jesus began to do and to teach. In this introduction to Acts, Luke summarizes the facts of the gospel. Jesus was taken up into heaven. His instructions were to the apostles and made certain by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, who had suffered death on the cross, appeared to men, proving that he was alive. Finally, Luke says that during the forty days after the resurrection, Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God.

The purpose of Acts is to chronicle the facts of the establishment and spread of the kingdom of God—literally what the apostles did and taught as a result of Jesus’ command in Luke 24:44-49:

44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

### ***Baptized with the Holy Spirit***

Acts 1:4-5

*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."*

This passage in Acts is parallel to Luke 24:49. Both speak of the promised gift from God. In Luke 24:49, the gift is a clothing of power from on high; in Luke 1:5, it is a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the clothing of power from on high. In both instances, the promise was given exclusively to the apostles. Modern teachings on the

baptism of the Holy Spirit are mostly without scriptural foundation and are unscriptural in content and intent. One will read nothing of these modern concepts and practices in *The Acts of the Apostles*. There will be no supernatural demonstrations of power in a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion in order to demonstrate salvation.

*Baptized*, as used here, takes its original meaning. W. E. Vines defines baptize as literally a dipping or an immersing, and metaphorically as an overwhelming:

Baptize: "to baptize," primarily a frequentative form of bapto, "to dip," was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another, etc. Plutarchus uses it of the drawing of wine by dipping the cup into the bowl (Alexis, 67) and Plato, metaphorically, of being overwhelmed with questions (Euthydemus, 277 D). (from Vines's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

In the sense here, baptizing is an overwhelming of the Holy Spirit; or as stated by the Lord in Luke 24:49, it is a clothing. In the Greek language, the word used here gives the same meaning literally and metaphorically as baptized. Strong defines it this way: NT:1746

enduo (en-doo'-o); from NT:1722 and NT:1416 (in the sense of sinking into a garment); to invest with clothing (literally or figuratively):

KJV - array, clothe (with), endue, have (put) on.

(Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

This endowment of the Holy Spirit was not only special to the apostles, but it was also special to the generation of those living at this time. Jesus had foretold the clothing with power from on high. He also foretold that it would be in the lifetime of his listeners, not in the lifetime of generations to follow. In Matt 16:28, he said, "28 I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." In Mark 9:1, he said, "9 And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

When the power from on high came, the apostles, and only the apostles were overwhelmed with it, and at the same time, the kingdom of God came. To these apostles, everything would be fulfilled, just as the Lord had said in Luke 24:44, "44 He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'"

Acts: 1:6-8

*6 So when they met together, they 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."*

In this account, the apostles are bewildered, thinking that the talk of the kingdom of God meant the restoration of the physical kingdom to Israel. The Lord chose this time to pinpoint the time of the coming of the power to them. It would be at the time when the Holy Spirit was to come on them. Now, we know that these events happened on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. The kingdom that will unfold is a spiritual kingdom—the Israel of God.

Paul wrote in Gal 6:15-16: "15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. 16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God." This Israel of God includes all men, according to Eph 3:6: "6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus." There will be no earthly restoration of the kingdom of the old covenant.

Verse 8 tells them to wait in Jerusalem to receive the power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them. Thus far the Lord has told them where the Kingdom would come—Jerusalem, how it would come—with power from on high, and to what extent it would come—they would be overwhelmed. The apostles will have no trouble recognizing this great and glorious day of the Lord of Acts 2:20.

In this section, Luke concludes with the Lord giving the order of the progress of the gospel. He said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." *The Acts of the Apostles* will trace this progression of the gospel and the growth of the kingdom of God

### ***The Ascension of Jesus***

Luke 1:9-11

*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."*

This passage gives the basic facts of the ascension and return of Jesus; that is, he will return the same way as they saw him leave. This a reiteration of Luke 24:50-53 but with more detail:

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

The manner of Jesus' return is the subject of two passages by Paul. Nowhere do they mention the return of Jesus to the earth, which, according to Peter, will have its very elements burned with fervent heat. First, in 1 Thess 4:15-17, Paul said that we would meet him in the air to forever be with the Lord:

15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. **And so we will be with the Lord forever.** [Emphasis added]

There is no room in this passage for a return of the Lord to an earthly kingdom. Neither is there room for such an earthly kingdom in Paul's writing to the Corinthians. In 1 Cor 15:20, 23-24, Paul gave the order of events from the resurrection of Christ to the end:

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep . . . 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he

comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

Again, there is no room in this passage for an earthly kingdom at some later time. The very same is true of Paul's teaching in 1 Cor 15:50-53:

50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Not only is there no room for an earthly kingdom in this sequence of events, but there is also no room for "flesh and blood" to inherit the kingdom of God. Paul's description exactly fits what Jesus said in Matt 24:27, 30-31:

27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Peter makes it clear that this earth and the elements therein will be destroyed (melt in heat) in 2 Peter 3:10-13

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

From the very beginning of Luke's chronicles of the events of Acts, the kingdom of God, which comes in chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost, with the overwhelming power of the Holy Spirit, is the spiritual kingdom of God.

### ***The Adding of Matthias to the Eleven***

Acts 1:12-14

*12 Then they 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.*

The focus of this section of Acts 1 is on the apostles and the replacement of Judas with Matthias. This group appears to be a narrow group of the eleven apostles, certain women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. The eleven returning shows that the promises of the overwhelming of the Holy Spirit and the promised power from on high were to the apostles and the apostles alone. The passage will turn to the manner of selecting a successor

to Judas—a matter ignored or perverted by many churches today—the Roman and Orthodox Catholic churches, the Anglican and Episcopal churches, and the Mormon church, to name most but not all. The passage makes it impossible to have apostles beyond the lives of the original apostles, leaving those who practice apostolic succession to their own reasoning to justify it. As the practice of apostolic succession falls, so the practice that church tradition is binding on Christians in past and future generations falls.

Acts 1:15-17

*15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) 16 and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus – 17 he was one of our number and shared in this ministry."*

Before a group of 120 believers, Peter began to rehearse that the prophecy of scripture called for Judas' replacement. It is interesting that Peter says that the Holy Spirit spoke. A few verses later, it was David who actually spoke the words of the Holy Spirit, in keeping with Peter's later teaching in 2 Peter 1:20-21,

20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:18-20

*18 (With the reward he got 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.' "

After the parenthetical description of Judas death, Peter quotes the prophecies. The prophecies conclude with the statement, "May another take his place of leadership." The authority for the replacement of and the method of replacement is binding teaching of the Holy Spirit and consistent with all the scriptures dealing with the apostles.

Acts 1:21-26

*21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out 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."*

*23 So they proposed 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.*

The qualifications were clear: ". . . one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out 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." This qualification rules out the choosing of anyone to be an apostle in the ages following the lives of eyewitnesses to Christ from the beginning to the resurrection of Christ.

The purpose of this selection was also limited by scripture to one to take Judas' place. The manner of the selection process is made more certain by Peter's prayer, "Show us which of these two **you have chosen** 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." The apostolic ministry was only that of Judas, and God chose the replacement.

The only other instance of adding an apostle was that of the apostle Paul, who wrote of his selection as an apostle in 1 Cor 15:8-11

8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

These choices—adding Matthias and choosing Paul—exclude any other cases of selecting apostles. Even the apostle, James, whom Herod put to death in Acts 12:1-3, was not replaced.

As with Matthias, Paul was chosen by God. Luke recorded Ananias saying in Acts 22:14-16:

14 "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers **has chosen you** to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'"

*Apostolic succession*, as practiced by denominations, is not a doctrine of scripture. The words, *apostolic Succession*, do not appear in the scriptures. Those who practice the doctrine make no pretense. They did not trust the scriptures, and so they invented a human scheme in order to rely on men. This scheme of *apostolic succession* permitted another scheme—tradition as equally binding as scriptures on the church. One of their own writers claims the purpose for the doctrine:

The first Christians had no doubts about how to determine which was the true Church and which doctrines the true teachings of Christ. The test was simple: Just trace the apostolic succession of the claimants. Apostolic succession is the line of bishops stretching back to the apostles. All over the world, *all Catholic bishops are part of a lineage that goes back to the time of the apostles*, something that is impossible in Protestant denominations (most of which do not even claim to have bishops). Catholic Answers, "The Divinity of Christ" (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2001)

This same article shows their blatant disregard of the scriptures:

Thus the early Church historian J. N. D. Kelly, a Protestant, writes, "[W]here in practice was [the] apostolic testimony or tradition to be found? . . . The most obvious answer was that the apostles had committed it orally to the Church, where it had been handed down from generation to generation. . . . Unlike the alleged secret tradition of the Gnostics, it was entirely public and open, having been entrusted by the apostles to their successors, and by these in turn to those who followed them, and was visible in the Church for all who cared to look for it" (*Early Christian Doctrines*, 37). (ibid).

Their claim is that these are "Spirit-endowed men who have been vouchsafed 'an infallible charism of truth'" (*Early Christian Doctrines*, 43)

These foundation doctrines—apostolic Succession, tradition, equal to scripture, and infallibility of bishops—have allowed the great perversion of scripture that is the great apostasy, which in turn, has created all the denominations. The words of the apostle Paul in Acts 20:28-31 have been fulfilled:

28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard!

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) holds a view of apostolic succession. To them, apostolic succession came back to the church when Joseph Smith, Jr., led its restoration in the nineteenth century. LDS maintains that Joseph Smith, whom they maintain was visited by God, the father and his Son, had the power of particular and general revelation.

While the New Testament embraces the power of particular and general revelation for the apostles and prophets, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is unique for believing general revelation is active today - and held by the apostles of their Church. [These notes on LDS rely on the websites, *Wikipedia* and *Executable Manuscripts*.]

Apostolic succession and latter day infallibility doctrines deny the clear teaching of the all-sufficiency of the scriptures. Paul taught in 2 Tim 3:16-17: "16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

## **Conclusion**

Lesson 2, covering Acts 1, ends with the selection Matthias to take the place of Judas among the eleven. Lesson three will cover Acts 2 where power will come from on high and the kingdom of will come with power, just as the Lord Jesus said it would.