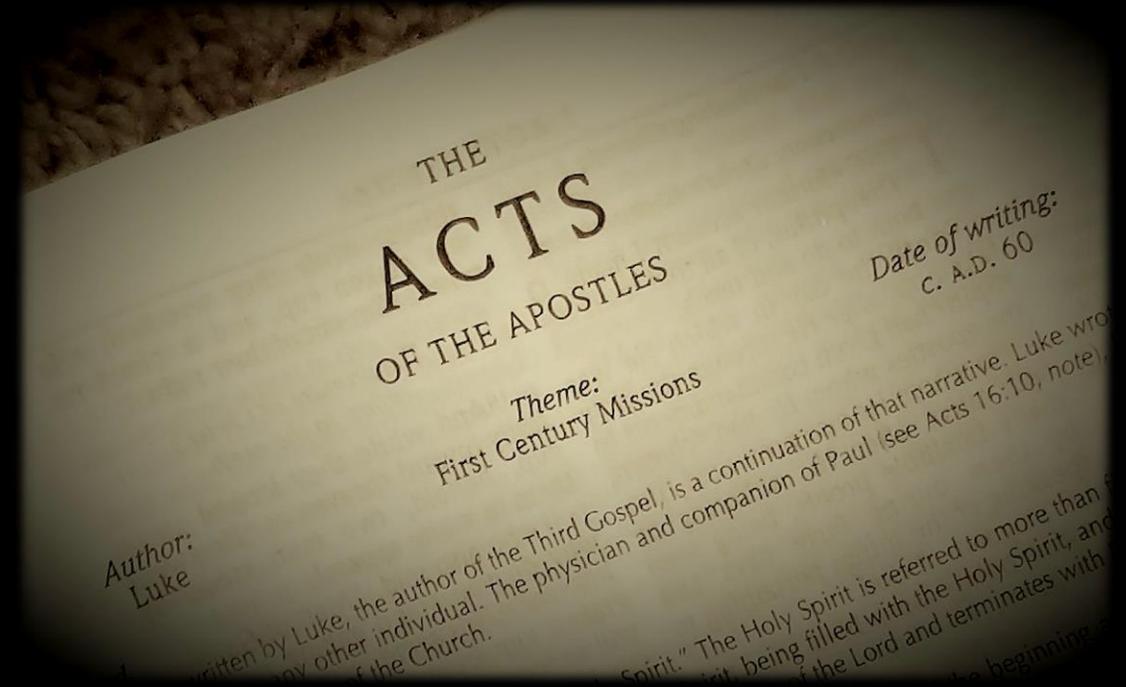


Verse by Verse

Acts 1



Previously in the **New Testament**

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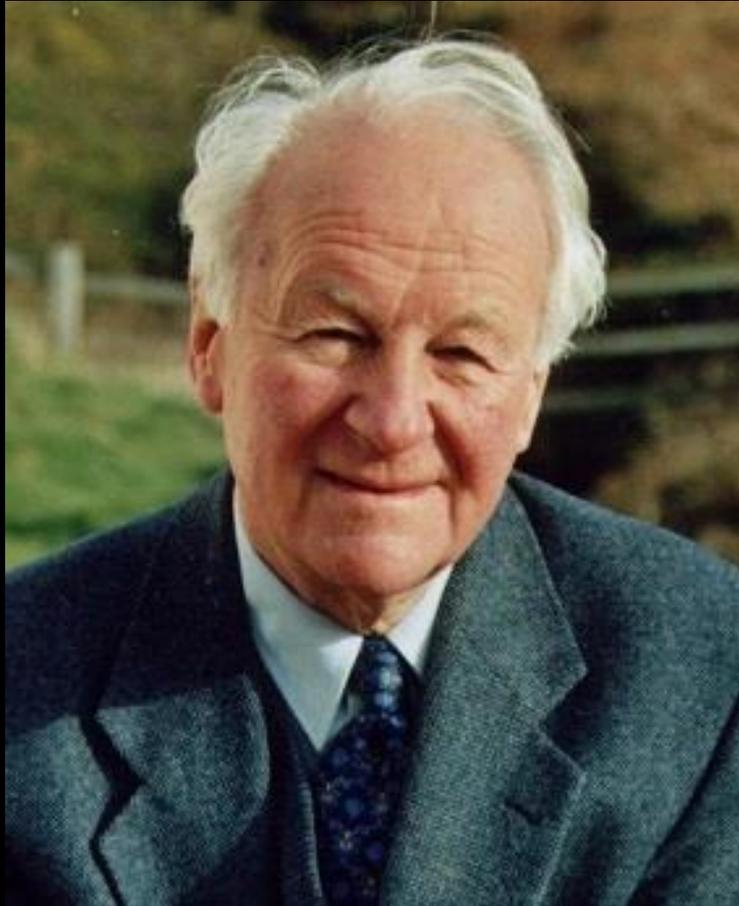
- So far we have gone through the four **Gospels**.
- Each one presented details from the life of Christ and various aspects of his ministry.
- **Matthew, Mark** and **Luke** were all closely related in their telling of that story.
- **John** was a little different and he included things that the other authors left out.

Acts Introduction

Acts Introduction

- One of the Gospel authors, **Luke**, continued his story beyond the resurrection of Christ.
- That is what we have here in **Acts**.
- We might consider it a **Part 2** or a **sequel** to the **Gospel of Luke**.

Acts Introduction



Jesus' ministry on earth, exercised personally and publicly, was followed by his ministry from heaven, exercised through his Holy Spirit by his apostles.¹

– John Stott (1921 – 2011)
Anglican author and pastor

Acts Introduction

- As we begin the book of **Acts**, we will see Jesus departing this earth and going to heaven.
- From there, we will see the ministry of the **early church** continue, empowered by the **Holy Spirit**.

Acts 1 Key Verse

Acts 1 Key Verse

- Acts 1:8 (ESV)

But 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.

Acts 1 Outline

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1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5
2. The Ascension 1:6-11
3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

- By looking back at the beginning of the **Gospel of Luke**, we can immediately see its connection to **Acts**.

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

- Luke 1:1-4 (ESV)

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also ...

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

- Luke 1:1-4 (ESV)

... having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

The disciples did not immediately enter into their own ministry, but needed to wait for the Spirit to come.

Formerly they had experienced the Spirit through the presence of Jesus. After Pentecost they would experience Jesus through the presence of the Spirit. ²

– John B. Polhill, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

- John 16:7 (ESV)

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

- The empowering of the Holy Spirit is essential to the life of the church and the value of our ministry.
- We need not wait like those first disciples, but merely need to ask for the Holy Spirit's presence and power.

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

- Jesus put it like this,
- Luke 11:13 (ESV)

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5

There is still more:

- We can resist his leading or sanctifying presence.
- We can rely on our own hard work or human wisdom without allowing God his rightful place.
- Knowing we have the Spirit within us and among us, we still need to submit to his will.

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- 1:6 The question of the disciples is reasonable, but kind of off the mark.
- They were, after all, expecting the Messiah to reign on the throne of David forever.

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- 2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16 (ESV)

¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever ...

¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- Exactly when would this happen – maybe right now?
- Jesus tells them that it is not for them to know.
- The Father has fixed the times and seasons.
- Though he tells us much about what to expect, he does not exactly tell us when to expect it.
- The disciples misunderstood what was about to happen in at least three ways.

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- Three misunderstandings by the disciples:

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- Three misunderstandings by the disciples:
 1. They were interested in the timing of the kingdom, but Jesus had different priorities right now.
 2. They had no real idea what it would mean for Christ to “build his church” (Matthew 16:18)
 3. Their mindset did not include mission/witness – which is going to be a primary focus in Acts.

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- Our key verse **Acts 1:8** provides a rough outline of the entire book. Their ministry will extend to:
 1. Jerusalem
 2. All Judea and Samaria
 3. And to the end of the earth.

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- Luke is the one author to record the ascension and he mentions it twice.
- **Luke 24:50-53** (ESV)

⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- Three benefits for the church to a visible ascension:

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

- Three benefits for the church to a visible ascension:
 1. It makes a clear break so that the disciples did not expect continued appearances of Christ.
 2. It helps us make sense of the concept of Christ's return.
 3. It helps us understand Christ's present ministry of priestly intercession at the right hand of the Father.

2. The Ascension 1:1-6-11

Hebrews 7:25-26 (ESV)

²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. ²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

- 1:12-14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer.
- This may be the most important thing we can learn from the example of these first Christians.

3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

- 1:15-20 How do we handle it when Christians abandon their faith?
- We may have seen this happen with prominent pastors or church leaders.
- We may have felt betrayed by Christian family members or friends.
- God allows such things for his own purposes so we must be determined not to be shaken from our faith.

3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

- 1:21-26 The early church clearly thought that the number of apostles must be twelve.
- We can compare this to the twelve sons of Jacob as the patriarchs of Israel.
- Christ chose twelve and this number seemed best.

3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

- The significance of the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles will be remembered forever.
- In the book of Revelation, we see this description of the New Jerusalem.

3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

- Revelation 21:12, 14 (ESV)

¹² It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—

¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

- Both **Joseph** and **Matthias** were followers of Christ from the beginning.
- The use of lots can best be explained as an Old Testament practice that is no longer helpful.
- We actually never see it again in the New Testament after this.

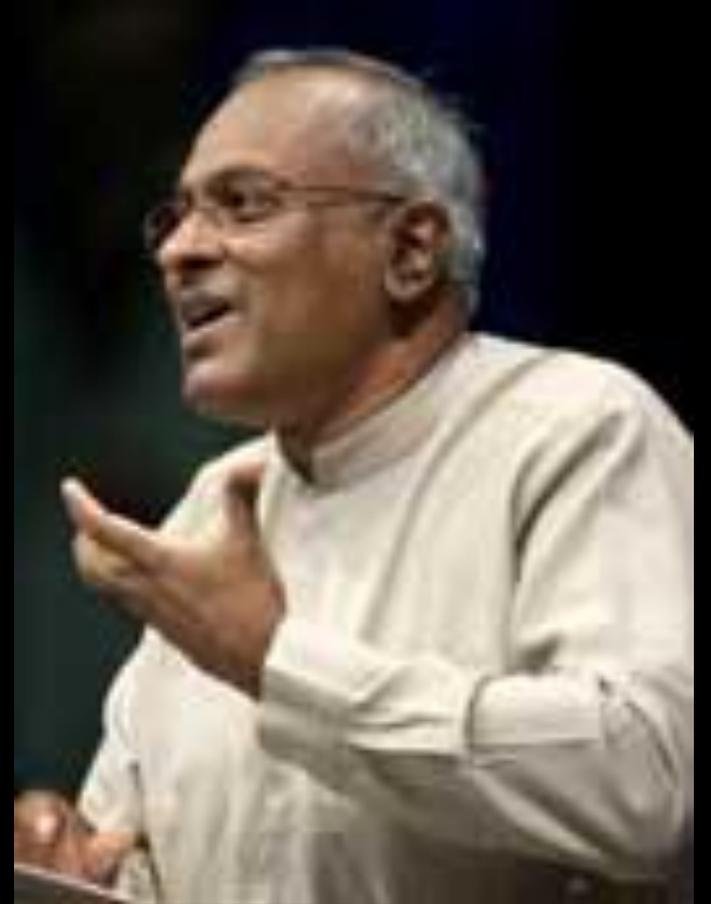
3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

- **Side Note:** I have heard pastors say that this choice of **Matthias** was a mistake.
- The usual point being made has to do with the importance of **Paul**.
- Ajith Fernando would disagree and his is by far the majority view among Bible teachers.

3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

Like most of the other apostles, the new apostle Matthias does not appear again in Acts. Later tradition presents him as a missionary to the Ethiopians ... There is, however, “no exegetical support in any New Testament text” ...

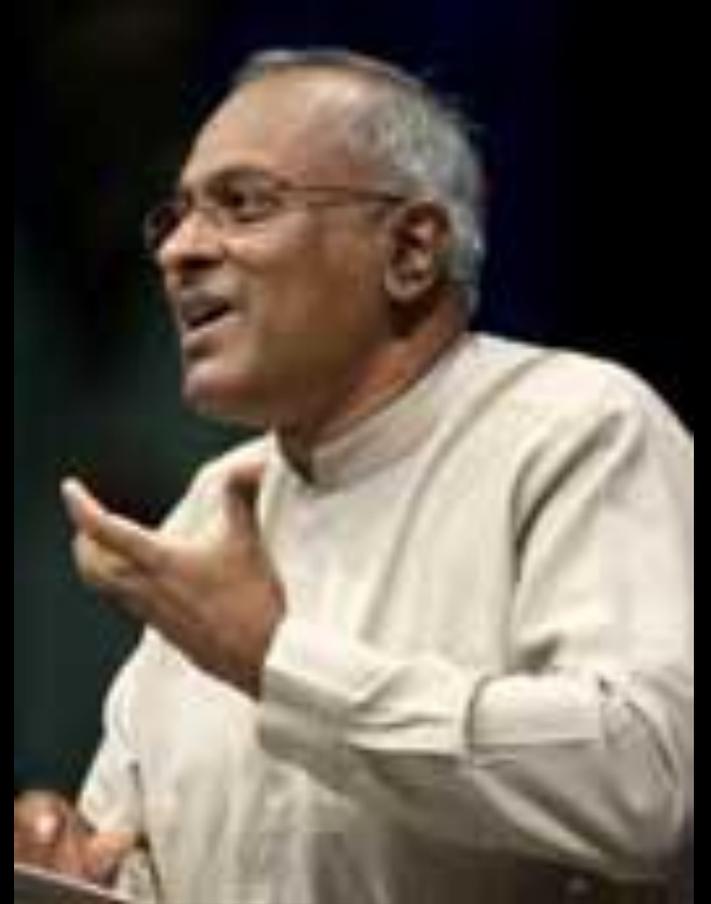
– Ajith Fernando,
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka



3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

... for the idea that the choice of Matthias to replace Judas was a mistake, and that “Paul ... was God’s man for the filling of the gap.” Matthias’s not being mentioned again in Acts is shared with eight other apostles! ³

– Ajith Fernando,
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka



3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

- In the end, our point here is that we are not going to criticize the choice of Matthias.
- At the same time, this is no criticism of Paul, whose ministry is extensively recorded in the book of Acts.

What to Expect in Acts

What to Expect in Acts

- We will see the church:
 1. As a close knit community.
 2. Engaged in selfless service.
 3. Committed to the truth of the Scriptures.
 4. Committed to the relevance of the gospel message for all people regardless of race or religion.
 5. Devoted to its mission regardless of the cost.

What We Just Read in Acts 1

1. The Promise of the Spirit 1:1-5
2. The Ascension 1:6-11
3. Choosing Matthias 1:12-26

Acts 1 Key Verse

Acts 1 Key Verse

- Acts 1:8 (ESV)

But 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.

Acts 1 Key Points

Acts 1 Key Points

1. Christ left the church with a worldwide mission.
2. We need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to carry it out until Christ returns.
3. The timing of that return is not especially important; we need to be ready at all times.
4. If we expect God to work, an important ministry of the church is to engage in corporate prayer.

Acts 1 Key Points

5. The ministry of the original twelve apostles is unique; we have no apostles of that type today.
6. We may see church members – even some with prominent ministries like Judas – abandon Christ.
7. When that happens, the ministry and mission of the church must still continue.

Acts 1 A Prayer

Acts 1 A Prayer

- Heavenly Father,
- We believe that Jesus died, arose from the dead and has now ascended into heaven. From there, we await his return.
- Help us not to be overly concerned with the exact timing of that event, but to be ready for Jesus at all times.
- We ask you to also fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Acts 1 A Prayer

- We desperately need his presence and power in our lives if we are to fulfill the mission that Christ has placed before us.
- Let us not be discouraged by trials or difficulties or the unfaithfulness of others. Keep us united in heart and mind, persistent in prayer and persevering in witness.
- In Christ,
- Amen

John 21 References

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3. Fernando, A. (1998). *The NIV Application Commentary*, (p. 76, 78). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.