

Jesus' Ascension; A Replacement Chosen for Judas Iscariot

Acts 1

Outline

- 1-5 | Luke's introduction; Jesus' instructions to stay in Jerusalem
- 6-8 | Jesus commissions the disciples
- 9-11 | Jesus ascends into heaven
- 12-14 | Disciples gather in the Upper Room
- 15-26 | Judas' replacement chosen: Matthias
qualification: with the disciples from Jesus' baptism by John until the resurrection

Reflections

The book of Acts is a continuation of the account by Luke, which was begun in his gospel, and contains the beginning and expansion of the church, mostly following the missionary journeys of Paul, until Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. In Acts 1:7-8, we find Jesus commissioning the disciples to be His "witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." After which He ascended into heaven.

The apostles determined that a replacement should be chosen to fill Judas Iscariot's spot. They had to meet this qualification: that they have been with the disciples from Jesus' baptism until the resurrection. Two men were put forward, Joseph-Barsabbas-Justus and Matthias. They chose lots "and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the twelve." (Acts 1:26)

The commission given by Jesus here is slightly different than in Matthew and Mark but it also gives us a loose outline for the book and also for the growth of the church in the First Century.

Matthew 28:18-20 NASB And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Mark 16:15-16 NASB And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

Acts 1:8 NASB but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

The book then follows this basic outline.

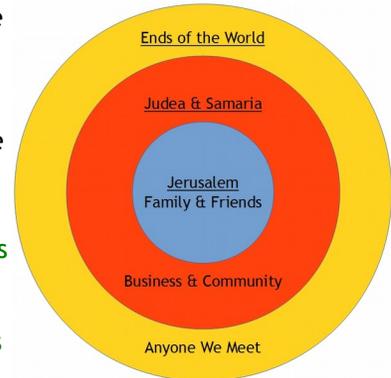
1. Witnesses in Jerusalem – 1:1-7:60
2. Witnesses in Judea and Samaria – 8:1-9:43
3. Witnesses to the remotest part of the earth – 10:1-28:31

The first two sections focus mainly on the activities of the twelve apostles, in particular Peter and John. The rest of the book focuses mainly the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles, being introduced through Peter's meeting with Cornelius.

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This same outline can be used as a way of defining a ministry to people in our own lives. Jerusalem could be seen as our family and closest friends; Judea and Samaria could be our next closest circle of friends whom we have acquaintances with, co-workers or people from our communities; and the remotest parts of the earth could be anyone else we might encounter in our daily life. Just as the first disciples were called to be witnesses for Jesus, so too we must do the same.

Lord God, Your Son gave instructions to His disciples to be His witnesses through out the world and to baptize and to teach people to be one of His disciples. Help us to continue their word and proclaim the gospel message wherever we might go. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.



Key Words: New Testament, Gospels, Acts, Jesus, Ascension, Apostles, Matthias, Commission, Witnesses, Theophilus

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