

Acts Part 1 Study Guide

Lesson 1: Waiting for the Holy Spirit – Acts 1

Objectives of this study (Acts 1-14)

1. Be able to state the main theme of each of the first fourteen chapters of Acts.
2. Understand the role of the apostles in the beginning days of the kingdom and explain the gradual broadening of the sphere of influence to others.
3. Examine and understand the role of the Holy Spirit: the baptism with the Spirit, the miracles worked through the Spirit's power and the transmission of spiritual gifts.
4. Be aware of the gradual inclusion of the Gentiles in the kingdom and the problems this created.
5. Appreciate the high degree of fellowship and camaraderie among early Christians.

Overview of Acts 1

1. Luke begins his "Volume Two" of the life and work of Christ by summarizing the period between His resurrection and ascension. Jesus displayed Himself in unmistakable form to the apostles, men who knew Him intimately and could be certain of His identity.
2. Jesus accompanies the apostles to the Mount of Olives. His comments are filled with anticipation, urging them to wait in Jerusalem for developments that were imminent. Jesus repeats His commission to send them out as witnesses, and He then ascends into heaven.
3. As the apostles continue their gaze in amazement, uncertainty and who knows what other emotions sweeping over their souls, two angels gently bring them back to reality with the promise of Jesus' eventual return. The apostles return to the other disciples and engage in prayer and reflection.
4. In the interim, Peter takes the lead in determining a replacement for Judas, who has committed suicide.

1. Acts 1:1-3 – A Forty-Day Tutorial

- A. Jesus "*presented Himself alive*" (1:3) after His crucifixion, even as He promised would happen before the fact.
- B. This presentation was not merely fleeting or fragmentary but varied manifestations, "*many infallible proofs,*" that were designed to instill confidence that Jesus truly had been raised.
- C. Jesus did in this period what He had done previously: He taught the disciples "*things pertaining to the kingdom of God*" which was shortly to come into existence.

2. Acts 1:4-8 – “Not Many Days From Now”

A. Jesus says several things before His ascension that suggest something imminent is to happen. Can you list them?

1. 1:4 _____.

2. 1:4 _____.

3. 1:5 _____.

B. Jesus indicates that something superior to John’s baptism was to unfold, and crucial to these events was the Holy Spirit. How is the coming influence of the Spirit upon them described?

1. 1:5 _____.

2. 1:8 _____.

C. While the apostles had wanted power to rule with Jesus at His right hand, Jesus tells them they will be empowered for something other than warfare. They will be His *witnesses*, not His *warriors* (in a carnal sense).

3. Acts 1:9-14 – The “Upper Room”

A. An exclamation point is put upon the words of Jesus as He rises into the heavens in full view of His “witnesses.” Whatever the apostles were expecting Jesus to do now that He was raised, whatever misconceptions of the kingdom may have been lingering, Jesus dispels by departing the earth for heaven.

B. To further instruct and convict them, two angels appear. In gentle rebuke, they tell the apostles that it is fruitless to stare into the sky in anticipation of some grand further development. He will return in like manner as He departed – *after* going to prepare a place for them (cf. John 14:2-3).

C. As Jesus commanded, the apostles return to Jerusalem and to the “entourage” that had lately been with Jesus – the women, Mary and Jesus’ brothers. The events that will transpire and their relation to the “upper room” have been greatly distorted and misapplied by those who wish to expand the Holy Spirit’s influence. As we study pay close attention to what is said about the “upper room.”

4. Acts 1:15-26 – Judas Is Replaced

A. Peter takes the lead in initiating proceedings to replace Judas. Whether this is a result of instructions given by the Lord (cf. 1:3), or whether Peter acted by some other direction, it does appear that the selection is legitimate and endorsed by God.

B. Note that there is a definite conception of the “office” of apostleship:

1. “*He was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry*” – 1:17.

2. *“Let another take his office”* - 1:20 (quoting Ps 109:8).
3. Specific criteria are proposed that certainly rule out anyone presently living as an apostle – 1:21-22. (Only two out of 120 were deemed qualified.)
4. The replacement was *“to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell”* - 1:25.

C. The selection of Matthias makes ready the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Questions:

1. What do you make of the apostles' question in Acts 1:6?
2. Can you tie Acts 1:8 to the format of the book of Acts?
3. What passage(s) can you cite indicating that the coming of the Holy Spirit was *“the Promise of the Father”*?
4. What instruction or command was given to the apostles that would enable them to manipulate or influence the coming of the Holy Spirit?
5. Is there any evidence that would reasonably lead one to the conclusion that the promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit applied to anyone other than the apostles?
6. When did two angels in shining garments help other of Jesus' disciples understand the significance of what they saw?
7. From where did Jesus ascend to heaven?

- 8a. What did the apostles do with the others in the “upper room”?
- 8b. What do you think about the intensity of these activities given the events that have transpired?
9. What bearing would Acts 6:2 have on the legitimacy of Matthias’ appointment?
10. What observations can you make about inspiration of the Scriptures from Acts 1:16?