

Shall we turn in our Bibles to Acts, chapter one. As we read, *The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach*, The I is always accepted to be Luke, the author of the third gospel. Thus the former account or treatise would be a reference to the gospel according to Luke. Now from Paul's epistles we know that Luke was a physician. We know that he accompanied Paul for a period of time on Paul's missionary journeys. He was with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome and he was a careful historian. He also was a Gentile and thus the only Gentile to write a New Testament book. He wrote two of them. The Acts of the Apostles and of course the gospel according to Luke. Luke, it would seem, because he was not an eye witness to the events of the gospel, got his information through the typical reporter coming and questioning the eyewitnesses. He gives us interesting insights into Mary which would indicate that he actually interviewed Mary, concerning the visitation by the angel, letting her know that she was going to have a child. He gives us a lot of interesting insights because he was a careful recorder of the event.

He is writing to Theophilus who according to early tradition, was a very wealthy and influential Roman officer. He came from the city of Antioch. He turned his basilica over for the church use. Theophilus, it is thought, bought Luke's freedom. Luke according to some traditions was a slave. When Paul who had many physical infirmities, insisted on traveling, Theophilus bought his freedom in order that he might accompany Paul and take care of Paul's medical needs while he was going through the rigors of extensive travel in taking the Gospel on into Asia Minor and of course on over into Greece and to Rome. There are other stories that Theophilus was really not a person at all or that was not his name but that Luke gave him that pseudonym. The word means lover of God. Theos Phileo. So to hide his identity, he just called him the Lover of God. I don't know how accurate that is but I like it! I like to think that this is addressed to all lovers of God. Thus you can take it quite personally if you are a lover of God, this was written for your benefit and for your information.

²until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³to 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 The former account, the gospel of Luke, was the beginning of the life of Christ and His ministry until the time He was ascended into heaven. The last verse of Luke's gospel is the ascension of Jesus into heaven as He went with His disciples as far as the Mount of Olives where He ascended into heaven. In the tenth verse here we have the account of the ascension. So the first few verses of Acts are equivalent to the last verses of Luke. So he sort of gives you a little bridge between the last few verses of Luke and the first few verses of Acts.

In the gospel according to Luke, Jesus said to his disciples, "now tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Here he has Jesus commanding them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. Then the story of the ascension and then the Acts of the Apostles carries the story then on after the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

So the former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. The gospel of Luke is the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. The Acts of the Apostles is the continuation of the ministry of Jesus. But notice in verse 2, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, that the day that He ascended into heaven. Now after that, after what? After His ascension into heaven. He, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen. So the Acts of the Apostles is the continued work of Jesus through the Apostles who had been anointed by the Holy Spirit. So what Luke is saying is that the ministry of Jesus did not end with His ascension! Jesus continues to heal. Jesus continues to work. He continues to pour forth His grace and His mercy and His love, only now He is doing it by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles that He had chosen. So it is the continued work of Jesus that we have in the Book of Acts through the lives of the Apostles. In that sense the Book of Acts is an open ended book because the Lord continues to work unto the present day. Working through people who have been

filled and overflowing with the Holy Spirit, the Lord continues His work to the present day and thus the final chapter has not yet been written on the Book of Acts. The Lord still works.

Speaking of the Apostles, He said, ³*to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs.* If we are to put any credence to our jurisprudence system that facts can be determined by the witness or the testimony of eye witnesses, that if two or three people will bear witness that on a certain date they saw a certain event take place, if they make this testimony under oath concerning perjury, if there are sufficient witnesses to give their account, corroborate, then it is determined by the court that that is an actual fact. So that is the way facts are determined in our system of justice. It is the basis of our whole jurisprudence system. The ascertaining of facts by the witness of those who saw the event and their declaring the truthfulness of their witness under penalty of perjury. Jesus appeared after His resurrection, first to Mary Magdalene, then to the other women, then to Peter, then to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and that first Sunday night to the Apostles, the ten of them, Thomas not being present. The following Sunday night He appeared unto them again, Thomas was present. We have the account in the last chapter of the Gospel of John of His appearance to seven of the disciples there in Galilee. He appeared at another time to James, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul tells us that He appeared to more than five hundred people at one time. He was showing to them that He was alive and that He was not a phantom or a spirit. He said give me something to eat and He ate some fish and some honey with them to show them that He wasn't a ghost or a spirit. He said a spirit doesn't have flesh and a body as you see that I have. Touch Me. Feel Me. So they handled Him, they touched Him to realize that He wasn't just an apparition, just a spirit, but He had risen bodily from the dead. So He showed Himself alive after His death by many infallible proofs. The men who saw Him bore witness to the fact that they had seen the resurrected Lord. And for the most part, they gave their lives as martyrs because of their witness. So if He had not risen from the dead, surely when it came down to their very life, they would have confessed to a fraud to save their own skin. But to a man they suffered violent deaths, maintaining that their story was true, that Jesus is alive. They had seen Him!

Now He appeared to His disciples showing Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, *being seen by them during forty days.* So that would take us to within seven days of the Feast of Pentecost. The Feast of Pentecost takes place fifty days after the beginning of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, which takes place the day after the Passover. Jesus was crucified on the Passover. He was three days and three nights in the grave. Then after His resurrection, He was seen by His disciples over a period of forty days. So it is just about a week away from the Feast of Pentecost. I point that out now to bring it to your attention later.

And He was *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.* Through His ministry, He was talking to them about the Kingdom of God. The world is under the kingdom of darkness. Darkness reigns in the kingdom of men. The world is under Satan's power. The world system is Satan's system. Jesus came to redeem the world from the power and the hold of Satan. Satan, when Jesus came, took Him up to a high mountain and offered to give them to Him if Jesus would just but bow down and worship Satan. Jesus did not challenge the ability of Satan to do so, because He knew the world was under Satan's power.

Ephesians 2:2 pg. 1436 Paul the Apostle writing to the Ephesians, writing about their former life said that you were living according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. Or declaring that the world system is being governed and directed by Satan. And those who are following along with the world today unbeknown to them, their life is actually under the control of Satan. Their concepts, their ideas, their value systems are governed by Satan. It is very obvious that in the world today that is the case. As we hear the media and all we realize that they are not espousing at all a Christian based system of morality but they are advocating and espousing a morality that is far beneath and below what is the Christian belief as far as morality is concerned. So here Jesus is talking about the day that God's kingdom is going to come. God's will is going to be done here on earth as it is in heaven. He told the disciples that they should pray, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. What a glorious day that is going to be! When Jesus comes to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth and

righteousness will cover the earth as waters cover the sea. Where the Kingdom of God will be established and men will live together in love, in peace. There will be no war.

Isaiah 2:4 pg. 780 *He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nations shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.* As the prophet said they will beat their spears into pruning hooks and they will study war no more. The glorious day when God's kingdom shall come. So Jesus was talking to them about the coming kingdom of God.

⁴And 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;*" This promise of the Father to which Jesus is referring is found in Joel, chapter 2.

Joel 2:28-32 pg. 1045 Joel declares that in the last days *That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days* So the promise of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon everyone.

Now during the Old Testament period the Holy Spirit was only poured out on certain individuals. The Holy Spirit was upon Moses in giving him the capacity to lead the people.

Exodus 18:13-27 pg. 97 But when the burden became too heavy. You see, when people had a grievance against someone else they would come to Moses to get a judgment. As so from morning until evening Moses would be sitting there and there would be a long line of people waiting to get to Moses. They would say now my neighbor borrowed my shovel and he didn't turn it back, you know, I want you to give me a decree that he would have to return my shovel. Moses all day long was making these kind of decisions. Naturally, it was just wearing him out. So his father-in-law said, hey you are going to kill yourself, son. You can't do this. You need to get some help. So the Lord told Moses to take seventy elders from each of the tribes and bring them into the tabernacle. God would take the Spirit that he put on Moses and He put it upon these seventy men so that they would help Moses in making the decisions then and the judgments. They would hear the cases. They would make the judgments. If they weren't able to make the judgments, then they would bring it to Moses so that Moses would not wearied and worn out by daily listening to all of the problems of everybody wanted an audience with him. Remember there were over a million people that were led out of Egypt so you can imagine how difficult that was!

Numbers 11:16-17 pg. 190 So Moses gathered the seventy there in the tabernacle and the Holy Spirit descended upon them and they began to prophesy which was the sign in the Old Testament of the empowering by the Spirit.

1 Samuel 10:6 pg. 342 It was the gift of prophecy. When the Spirit of God came upon Saul, he began to prophesy and the people realized that the Spirit was upon him. They had a proverb, "*Is Saul also among the prophets?*"

Numbers 11:26-30 pg. 190 Now there were two men Eldad and Medad who were out in the camp. They weren't in the tabernacle with Moses. They began to prophesy in the camp. Someone came running in and said, Moses there are a couple of guys, Eldad and Medad, and they are out in the camp prophesying, they didn't come into the tent here. Joshua said, Oh my lord, Moses, do you want me to go and stop them? Moses said, Oh no! I wish that all of Israel did prophecy and God's Spirit was upon them all. How easy it would be for me if they were all filled with the Spirit. We could get rid of a lot of this hassling and haggling and all if everybody was just walking in the Spirit. So Moses could see how ideal it would be if God's Spirit was upon everybody, if they were all walking in the Spirit.

Now as we see in Ephesians 4:30-32 & 5:1-2 pg. 1439, Paul tells us to walk in love. If we are walking in the Spirit then that is one of the characteristics of walking in the Spirit. We are walking in love.

So the promise was there will come a day when God's Spirit will come upon all flesh. Jesus had been telling them about this promise in Joel. Now He is saying not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father which is going to be fulfilled in a few days.

Luke 24:49 pg. 1265 Now as I said in Luke's gospel, he records it as Jesus saying, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high. They were to wait for this promise of the Holy Spirit being poured out on all. Now that was a one time experience of waiting for the Holy Spirit or tarrying for the Holy Spirit, God was not establishing a pattern for the receiving of the Holy Spirit, though some Pentecostal churches have taken that up. They have what they call, "tarrying meetings", where people gather and they pray and they tarry or wait for the Holy Spirit. But that is not really Biblical or Scriptural. Once the Holy Spirit was given on the Day of Pentecost, there was never again a command to wait for the Holy Spirit or to tarry for the Holy Spirit. Once the Spirit was given as a gift to the church, He was then imparted through the laying on of hands or by the believing of faith, the Holy Spirit was received because the Holy Spirit is given to the church. We don't have to tarry or wait. He is God's gift to the church. As a gift of God, we receive by faith. You see, if you wanted to be tarrying, to be Scriptural, you would have to go to Jerusalem. But tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high. Now that wouldn't be a bad thing, but it wouldn't be necessary because the Holy Spirit has already been given as a gift to the church.

He said, ⁵*for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*" Jesus is separating the experience of baptism in water from the baptism in the Holy Spirit. John baptized with water. Now with John's baptism, John was the one that was baptizing. Water was the element in which they were baptized. The issue was repentance. It was the baptism of the repentance from sin. It was the recognition that the old life is dead. We bury it. We are living now a new life in the Spirit. It was the repentance of sin and thus it was the issue of the baptism.

In the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is the baptizer. The Holy Spirit is the element in which a person is baptized. And of course, the issue is love. The fruit of the Spirit is love. It will be that which is manifested when a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:11 pg. 1126 You remember when John was baptizing and many came, He said I indeed baptize with water unto repentance but there is one coming after me who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. So Jesus is the baptizer. The Holy Spirit is the element. I sort of like the figure, even as you are baptized in water, you are sort of immersed in it and you come up, just dripping all over. So Jesus just sort of dunks you in the Holy Spirit and you come up, flowing all over with the Spirit.

Jesus spoke about it in John 7:37-38 pg. 1280 He, on the last day of the feast, *cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* But this, John said, He spoke concerning the Spirit which was not yet given. So, that overflowing of the Spirit.

So there is a difference between being filled with the Spirit and being baptized with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is an experience that begins when you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. The Holy Spirit comes into your life and you are to be filled with the Spirit. As the Spirit is in your life, He will help you. The word comforter is *parakletos*. It is one who comes along or who is called alongside to help. He will help you to live the Christian life. It is the Holy Spirit working in you that conforms you into the image of Jesus. He is the one who gives you the power to be like Christ and to do the works of Christ. That's the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the outflowing of the Holy Spirit from your life. There is a difference between being filled and overflowing. The overflow is the baptismal of the Holy Spirit. That is the outflow of the Spirit rather than the infilling of the Spirit that comes and it brings a transformation within. But then as the Spirit flows forth out of your life, the *dunamis*, the power, the dynamic that goes forth from you in touching the world around you. So that is what Jesus is talking about with His disciples. Wait, it is going to happen in a few day. God is going to keep His promise. You are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit!

⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus had been talking about the Kingdom of God. They thought that the kingdom was going to be set up immediately. In fact, they thought that Jesus was going to set up the kingdom. They were shocked when He was crucified because they had been anticipating that He would set up the kingdom. Now their desire for the kingdom was not the purist because they were thinking selfishly of positions that they would have in the kingdom. They were arguing among themselves as who would be the greatest when the Lord set up the kingdom. This was an argument that was going on between the disciples. It is sort of good to know that they are sort of lousy like we are. That God uses people even though their motivations may not always be right, God will work and do His work of transformation. But He doesn't choose perfect people to do His work. He chooses imperfect people and He works in them to perfect them and to use them in the accomplishing of His purposes. So they were arguing among themselves, disputing who would be the greatest. They were vying for this position of greatness. John and James got their mother into the act. She came and said, Jesus I have a favor to ask of You. What is it? Well, when you establish Your kingdom, can my one boy, John be on one side of you and James on the other? Because they were interested in the power as He set up the kingdom. So they thought that He would set it up immediately. So when He talks about, in a few days you are going to receive the power. They said, Lord is that when it is going to happen, you know? Just a few days, is that all we have to wait?

⁷And He said to them, *"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."* It's something that God has determined, the time of the establishing of the kingdom. It isn't given to us to know. We don't know when the Kingdom of God is going to be established. But I do believe that the Lord intended that we always live in the constant expectancy of the Kingdom to be established at any time. So to look forward to the Kingdom. That is the thing that sustains us. You look at this rotten world and it's easy to get depressed and to just to get despair and hopelessness. I mean this is horrible, the things that are happening in the world in which we live. And there doesn't seem to be any solution or any answer. As Jesus predicted of the last days, there would be distress of nations with perplexity. In the Greek it means problems where there is no way out. That seems to be the case today. All of these social problems and there doesn't seem to be an answer. The whole problem of welfare. It's breaking the country. But there doesn't seem to be a solution. The problems of drugs and the extensive drug abuse. There doesn't seem to be any solution. The problems of the economy. There doesn't seem to be any solution. The problems of raising taxes. There doesn't seem to be any solution. The problems of gang warfare. There doesn't seem to be any solution. We look at these things and it's easy to become despairing. But we know that things are not to go on this way forever. That the Lord is going to come. He is going to establish a Kingdom of righteousness and joy and peace. We look forward to the Kingdom of God. So it is proper that we be anxious and look forward to the Kingdom of God. That's only right and proper. It's going to be so glorious when God sets up His kingdom. But just when it's going to happen we don't know. So Jesus said, occupy or stay busy till I come. You don't know when it's going to happen so just keep busy! Know that it can happen at any time. So if Jesus said that this is something that only the Father knows it is only blasphemous for man to speculate when it is going to be.

But Jesus getting right back to the real subject, that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, said, ⁸*But you shall receive power* (Their question was are You going to set up Your kingdom now? Jesus said that is not for you to know when that is going to happen, but--the word, but, is a disassociative conjunction that ties together two thoughts that are sort of contrasting and so He is tying together the thought with the disassociative conjunction, you don't know, it's not given to you to know, but, getting back to the issue, you are going to receive power) *when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me,* (The power to be a witness for Jesus Christ. That is the power to live in such a way that your life becomes a reflection of Jesus. That's what a witness is. It is interesting that in Antioch the people began to call them Christians because they were like Jesus. Thus the term, Christians, was not one they took upon themselves but it was a term that was given to them by the press and the media at the time because they were like Christ. It was sort of a derisive term just

like they used to call us Jesus freaks, but because we were crazy about Jesus! We are in love with Him. So they gave us the term Jesus freaks. Thus the term, Christians was given to them in Antioch because they were seeking to live like Christ. Now that is God's purpose and desire for us that our lives be a reflection of Jesus Christ. He is our example, Peter said, that we should follow in His steps, but we can't do that in our ability or power. I cannot forgive. I cannot love. I cannot be kind and considerate as Jesus was without the power of the Holy Spirit. I can't do it in myself. But through the power of the Holy Spirit, He transforms me. He not only transforms me, but He conforms me into the image of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:18 pg. 1415 Paul said, *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

And you will be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

As we look at the Book of Acts, it is the story of the witness of the church, first of all in Jerusalem until they had filled the city with the doctrine of Jesus. And then as the result of persecution on into Judea as they went everywhere preaching the word. Then continuing as Philip went into Samaria and preached Christ unto them and ultimately as Paul took the Gospel of Jesus Christ into Asia Minor, into Greece, and over into Europe, to Rome. Matthew took it over to India, as the gospel spread throughout the world. Now I believe that the Lord had a pattern here. You start out where you are. You move into the surrounding territories and then you expand further and ultimately the witness goes into all the world.

As the Lord began to work here in Calvary Chapel, it was first establishing the work in Costa Mesa. Then the Spirit of God began to add and it began to affect the area around here, as God was blessing and prospering the church. And then others who were here began to go out to Judea. Jeff Johnson to Downey, Raul Rees to West Covina, Greg Laurie to Riverside, we began to see the gospel expand. Mike MacIntosh down to San Diego, Chuck Smith, Jr. out to Yucca Valley, Palm Springs and then later on down to Dana Point. We began to reach our Judea. Then as God continued to bless we began to spread a little further into Samaria as Wayne Taylor went to Seattle, Washington, Jon Courson to Oregon, Lewis Neely to Sacramento, Skip Heitzig to Albuquerque, Joe Fosch to Philadelphia, Bil Gallatin to New York and Tom Stipe to Denver, we began to spread out into Samaria. And then we began to send out missionaries all over the world until today there are Calvary Chapel missionaries all over the world that are there being supported and representing Calvary Chapel in the ministry that God began here. Now the interesting thing is that Mike went to San Diego. That's our Judea but it became Mike's Jerusalem! So Mike began to fill San Diego and then he began to spread out into his Judea. He has started over twenty-one churches in San Diego County. Then he began to spread out into his Samaria. Then he started mission works in Mexico and the Caribbean and began to spread the ministry into the world.

Skip Heitzig went to Albuquerque and that became his Jerusalem. It was our Samaria. Skip began to reach Albuquerque. He has the largest church in Albuquerque, over nine thousand on Sunday morning services there in Albuquerque. He then began start churches in Clovis and Santa Fe as he began to reach his Judea and then began to reach over into Arizona, his Samaria. Then he started a mission in India. He has over three hundred mission fellowships in India, reaching the whole world. So every place it goes that becomes the Jerusalem. It spreads from there in the Judeas and into the Samarias and into the uttermost parts.

Our young people went over, Mike Harris went over to Subatiza, Yugoslavia. That was Mike's Jerusalem. He then began to start other fellowships in Baja, Hungary and in other communities in Yugoslavia as they reached their Judea and into their Samaria. It is interesting that we have a couple of young fellows from the church in Subatiza who are now missionaries here in the United States as they are reaching the uttermost parts of the world! They are the youth leaders of the Redlands Calvary Chapel. They are bringing the most turned on young people to camp and are doing a fabulous job in the youth ministry there in Redlands. So every place it goes, it just spread sort of like a cancer from there into the surrounding areas. It goes out from there and ultimately into the world. So that's God plan of exponential type of explosive growth of the church. This pattern is followed where ever it lands, that becomes the Jerusalem, then it begins from there to reach the Judeas, the Samarias and the utter most parts. That has happened in each of the Calvary Chapels around the

country. That became the center for a new explosion of the gospel reaching the territories around them and out and out and out! Glorious, the way in which God is working!

⁹*Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.* I believe it was the Shekinah cloud. The cloud that let the children of Israel in the wilderness. The cloud that descended in the holy of holies of the tabernacle and of the temple, that it just enshrouded Christ and He was received 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."* This Jesus is coming again! Now He was on the Mount of Olives when He was taken up into heaven. When He comes back, He will come back and set His foot in that day on the Mount of Olives. And even as He was taken up visibly out of their sight, He will be coming again, visibly. Don't let anybody tell you that He has a secret coming. He went into secret chambers. He is now governing the world from the secret headquarters. Not the case! When He comes every eye shall see Him. They also that pierced Him shall mourn and they shall look on Him who they have pierced. It won't be some kind of a secret cloak and dagger type of thing. He's coming. All of the world will know and be aware when He returns in power and great glory to establish God's kingdom upon the earth! So the promise of the coming again of Jesus Christ! The promise that we still look forward to. We hope and anticipate that it will happen very soon!

¹²*Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.* (or about two thirds of a mile) 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.* The eleven, of course Judas Iscariot is absent because he has committed suicide. Let me give you just a little thumb nail sketch of the disciples who were called Apostles.

Peter, given the name Simon, but he was renamed by Jesus, Petros, which means a little stone. He was brought to the Lord by his brother, Andrew. He was chosen by Jesus to be one in the inner circle. He saw the miracle of the raising Jairus' daughter. He saw the transfiguration of Jesus. He was one who was drawn closer in the garden of Gethsemane to be nearer to Jesus as He prayed. He was an eager, excitable man. He was the one who drew the sword in the garden to defend Jesus. He was vacillating until he was baptized with the power of the Holy Spirit. He became a spokesman and a leader in the early church. According to tradition, He was crucified in Rome upside down because when they came to crucify him, he said he was not worthy to be crucified as his Lord and requested to be crucified upside down.

Andrew was the brother of Peter. He gained his reputation as the one who was always bringing others to Jesus! He brought Peter to Jesus. When the five thousand were there on the hillside, he was the one that brought the little boy with the five loaves and two fish to Jesus. When the Grecians came to see Christ, he was the one who came to Jesus and informed Him that the Greeks were there and wanted to see Him. According to tradition, he brought the gospel to Asia Minor, to Greece, and to Scythia, or Russia. When he arrived in Odessa, he was crucified on a cross where the two ends were transfixed into the ground; hence, you get the term, Saint Andrew's cross.

James was the brother of John, a son of Zebedee. He was called by Jesus, the son of Thunder. He was part of the inner circle with Peter and John. His mother asked Jesus if he could sit by the side of Jesus when He came into His kingdom. He was ready to call down fire from heaven on those who did not receive Jesus. (Son of Thunder!) When Herod Agrippa was appointed governor of Judea, he wanted to gain the support of the Jews so he began to persecute the church. He had James beheaded. He cast Peter into prison. It is told that the executioner of James was so impressed by his bravery and his courage, that he determined to accept Christ. He

fell at the feet of James, accepted the Lord, so that James would not be executed alone. So according to the story both the executioner and James were beheaded together.

John was known as the beloved. He was the brother of James and the author of course of one of the Gospels and three of the Epistles, plus the Book of The Revelation. He always was thought to be close to Jesus. He leaned on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. He asked to be close to Jesus in the kingdom. His mother's name was Salome. It is thought that she was a sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus, which would mean that John and James were actually cousins to Jesus. He had a home in Jerusalem and he took Mary, the mother of Jesus into his home after the crucifixion. He lived in Jerusalem until its destruction at which time he moved to Ephesus. Among his pupils were Polycarp and Ampathius and Ignacious, early church leaders, who became the bishops of the churches in Syrna, Heriopolis, and Antioch. According to tradition, he was brought to Rome by Domacian, that horrible Roman emperor, and was placed in a cauldron of boiling oil. But he survived by a miracle and was banished to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Upon the death of Domacian, he was released from the exile by Nerva and he returned to Ephesus, where he died a natural death, the only one of the Apostles to die a natural death!

Philip, we are told that Jesus found Philip, and called Philip to follow Him. Philip, in turn found Nathaniel and said, come, we have found the one that Moses and the prophets wrote about, Jesus of Nazareth. Nathaniel questioned, can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said, come and see. Jesus asked Philip where they could buy enough bread to feed the five thousand. It was to Philip that the Greeks came saying, sir, we would see Jesus. It was Philip who said Lord if You will just show us the Father it will suffice us. According to tradition, he took the gospel to Upper Asia, was active in establishing the church at Heriopolis. At Pergia he was scourged, cast into prison and then crucified in 54 AD

Bartholomew was also known as Nathaniel, the one that Philip brought to Jesus. He was brought to Christ by Philip. He was from Cana. There are those who believe that is why Jesus happened to be in Cana of Galilee for the wedding, not that of Nathaniel but one of Nathaniel's friends. According to tradition he took the gospel to many countries and translated the gospel of Matthew into the language of India. It was there that he spent his life until he was cruelly beaten and crucified.

Matthew was also known as Levi. He was a tax collector when Jesus called him. He prepared a great feast for Jesus. He invited all of his tax collector friends. He wrote the Gospel according to Matthew. He is called the son of Alphaeus, which could possibly relate him to James the less, who was also known as the son of Alphaeus. It is thought that he wrote the Gospel of Matthew first in Hebrew, then translated it into Greek. He took the gospel to Parthia and Ethiopia where he was slain with a halberd in the city of Dhobi around 60 AD.

Thomas called the Twin, probably would be classified as a melancholy. He was able to see the dark side of everything. When Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus was dead but they were going to go and wake him from his sleep, Thomas said let's go that we might die with him also. When Jesus told the disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them and where He was going they knew and they way they knew, Thomas said, Lord we don't know where You are going, so how can we know the way? When reports came that Jesus had risen from the dead, Thomas said, I won't believe that until I can see for myself. He was with the disciples in Galilee when Peter said I'm going fishing. He was one of those that said I'm going with you. He carried the Gospel to Syria, to Parthia, to Persia and on over to India. In southern India today they have the church of St. Thomas. It is one of the largest gospel works today in India. They've actually traced the origin of the church to Thomas.

There was James the son of Alphaeus which of course is to be separate from James the brother of John. As we have already noted, Levi or Matthew was also known as the son of Alphaeus. So it is possible that James and Matthew were brothers. He is known as James the less which does not mean less in degree, but he was smaller. The word indicates that he probably was a small man. His mother, Mary, was one of the women who was standing by the cross at the time that Jesus was crucified. She was also one of the women that came early to the tomb. Tradition has it that he took the Gospel to Egypt. It would seem that he is not the same James that took an early place of leadership in the church and wrote the epistle of James.

Then there was Simon the Zealot or Simon Zelotes. He belonged evidently to that radical group of nationalists known as the Zealots. It is interesting to see what opposites Jesus brought together. Matthew, a tax collector, was considered a collaborator by the Jews and thus a traitor to the Jews. Here is one of the Zealots who vowed to kill every Roman that they got a chance to kill. So we know very little about him, but tradition has it that he took the Gospel to Africa and later to Britain where he was crucified.

Then there was Judas who was defined as not Iscariot. He was also known as Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus. So you read of Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus and that is this other Judas. He is called here by Luke the brother of James. But we don't know which James. Possibly James the less which would make him also then the son of Alphaeus and a brother of Matthew. So it could be that you had brothers, Peter and Andrew, brothers James and John and brothers Matthew, James and Judas. Whether he is the author of the book of Jude is not known for certain. It is thought that the author of the Book of Jude was (he said he was the brother of James) and so would make him a half brother to Jesus. It was Judas who asked Jesus why he would manifest Himself to the disciples and why didn't He manifest Himself to the world? He was crucified in Odessa in 72 AD.

Then of course there was Judas Iscariot, the one that Jesus knew from the beginning would betray Him. He was allowed to carry the purse and thus had the responsibility to pay the bills, but he was thieving out of the purse. He was the one who objected to the costly ointment being poured out on Jesus' feet. He plotted with the Chief Priest to betray Christ for thirty pieces of silver. He led the soldiers to arrest Jesus in the garden, betrayed him or identified Him with a kiss. He brought the money back to the priests, threw it on the temple floor, went out and hung himself, the rope broke, he fell to the ground and his body burst open. So you have sort of a thumbnail sketch of those men that Jesus called to be Apostles. So here we have eleven of them, Judas had already committed suicide.

¹⁴*These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.* 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. Two things I want you to notice. Number one, the confidence in the Scriptures, because it was written, it has to come to pass. They had great confidence in the Word of God. The Scriptures must need be fulfilled. If God said it, it's got to happen! That great confidence in the Word of God. Secondly, the recognition that it was inspired by the Holy Spirit, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spoke. So they believed in the inspiration of the Scriptures and the inerrancy of the Scriptures. These are two basic fundamental beliefs that we need to have! Number one, that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God. David spoke by the Holy Spirit, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and if it is in the Word of God it is inerrant. It will happen! The Scripture must be fulfilled which was spoken by the Holy Spirit through David. So those important, basic, foundational beliefs that we must have concerning the Word of God.*

¹⁷*for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."* (He was a part of us.) ¹⁸*(Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; (in the Old Testament there was a prophecy that said, name the price by which I was priced to them. So he said they measured out the thirty pieces of silver. I said a fine price to pay. Cast it into the temple and they would use it to buy a potter's field. So Judas fulfilled that. He brought the money back. He said I have betrayed innocent blood. They said that's your problem. He threw the money down on the temple and said it's your problem. Then he went out and hung himself. They did have a problem. They said we can't put it back into the treasury, it's blood money. What shall we do? So they decided to buy a potter's field to bury the poor people. Thus the prophecy of the Old Testament was fulfilled in the betrayal of Christ for thirty pieces of silver. The money later thrown down in the temple and then used to buy a potter's field. The prophecy was completely fulfilled. So this man purchased a field with a reward of his iniquity. That is the thirty pieces of silver that he got for his dastardly deed of betraying Christ.) and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. (An untimely end for a man who had done*

such a dastardly deed.) 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.' (Now it is interesting that Peter had a good working knowledge of the Scripture. Here are two obscure Psalms. By the Holy Spirit, Peter is interpreting these Psalms to refer to Judas Iscariot. We would not see that they were prophetic of Judas Iscariot except as it was interpreted by the Holy Spirit through Peter to be referring to Judas Iscariot. When you read these Psalms in context, you just don't pick it up. But Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit and his great knowledge of the Scriptures, saw that these were actually prophetic concerning Judas. 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, ²²beginning 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."* So in choosing a man to become an Apostle, to take the place of Judas Iscariot. The requirement was he had to be with us from the beginning. That is, the baptism of Jesus by John, traveled with us the whole while, and who could bear witness of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That was the requirement for apostleship by them. So they choose two. Now there were many disciples. Of those Jesus choose twelve that he called the Apostles. But there were many who were disciples of Jesus. So of those had been with them all the way along, they choose two.

²³*And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen ²⁵to 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.* Now is my opinion that casting lots is not really an excellent way of determining the will of the Lord. It is sort of drawing straws. I think that they made a mistake that we often make, that is giving God limited options. Lord, you want me to do this or that? Well maybe he had something entirely different that you haven't even thought of. But we limit God by the options that we offer him. It would appear that the Lord had another choice for an Apostle, that was Paul who came along later. Of course as we get into the Book of Acts, we are going to find an awful lot about Paul and his ministry. But what do you know about Matthias? This is the first and last time you ever heard of the guy. Evidently he didn't do anything of note.

Interestingly enough, and we jumped over it, as they listed the disciples it makes mention that Mary, the mother of Jesus was also there. But also very interesting, that is the last mention that you have of Mary, nothing more in the Epistles, nothing more in the Book of Acts. She didn't have an important place in the church. They didn't have to go to Mary and say, pray for me. Or ask your Son to intercede for me. She didn't have any position at all of importance. She was there with the group that was waiting for the Holy Spirit but not in any position of authority, power, or not at all considered a co-redemptionist of Jesus. But it is just the end of the story of Mary. That is the last mention of her in the Bible. It also happens to be the first and last mention of Matthias. So we don't know anything else about him except that he was selected by this dubious method of casting lots to determine who would take the place of Judas Iscariot.

So that gives sort of an introduction into the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit that will begin in Chapter 2 as we find the gift of God being given to the church as an abiding possession until the church is taken out of the world and the powers of the antichrist take over. We'll go on in to the Book of Acts, a chapter at a time and study the exciting work of Jesus Christ through the lives of the Apostles.

Father, we give thanks to You for the Holy Spirit, for the power of the Holy Spirit, that is available for us today. Lord, we pray that we might be filled and that, we pray, we might be baptized and thus overflow with Your Holy Spirit. That Your love and Your power might be manifested through our lives. Lord, make us Your

instrument through which You can accomplish Your work. Through which You can reveal Yourself to the world around us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

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