

## Acts 1-2:13 Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

Although the author of Acts is never spelled out, from the earliest days it's been attributed to **Luke**.

The grammar & vocabulary are the same as the gospel that bears his name & the author of Acts refers to the earlier story of Jesus he'd already written. Acts was Part 2 of the "Jesus story" – showing how the followers of Jesus went on to carry on His mission.

Acts is an important part of the NT for just that reason, it provides a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles.

Without Acts, we'd have no context for understanding how the first believers went about living out what they'd learn from Christ.

- Acts tells us of the conversion of Paul, whose letters make clear how Christ fulfilled the Law and ushered in salvation by grace through faith.
- Acts tells us how the Early Church, which was entirely Jewish, understood how to embrace the inclusion of Gentiles.

These are important parts of the development of Christianity we'd be lost without.

As we'll see later, Luke was a traveling companion of Paul's on one of his missionary journeys

In Col 4:14, Paul calls him the "beloved physician," a fact born out by his repeated use of medical terms.

In the Roman world of that time, doctors weren't usually from the ranks of the social elite or privileged.

They were specially-trained servants, owned by a rich master.

Their role was to attend to the medical needs of the master's family & household.

An especially skilled doctor would be **loaned out** to the wealthy friends of the master.

The way Luke's name is spelled suggests he was a slave.

From hints found in the NT, it appears Luke's master was a certain **Theophilus**.

In Luke 1:3, Luke calls him "**most excellent** Theophilus" - a title reserved for Roman officials.

Based on this & some clues of the Early Church fathers, it's believed Luke was Theophilus' physician-slave.

When Theophilus became a Christian during one of Paul's mission campaigns, Luke was loaned to him as an attendant.

We know Paul contracted a physical ailment on one of his trips. Luke was sent to be his personal physician.

But he was given another mission as well.

As a Roman official, Theophilus knew the importance of rooting a religious movement in history.

Rome was quite respectful of ancient religions but showed no toleration for new movements.

So Luke was to research the roots of Christianity & provide an apologia if the

Faith ever came in to full conflict with the Empire.  
 It's interesting that both The Gospel of Luke & the Book of Acts are presented in the form of formal apologies.  
 Several of the Early Church Fathers, known as the *Apologists*- Used Luke & Acts as part of their Defense of the Faith before Roman officials, even some of the Emperors.

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We'll see how Luke's writing does seem to support this idea that Acts was meant to be a formal defense of the Faith before Roman officials.

- He shows how time & again, officials found in favor of the disciples. This is an important part of his apologia since legal precedent was a central part of Roman law, as it is in today's American legal system.
- He shows how it was *jealous & hostile Jewish & pagan elements* who were behind most of the trouble that swirled around the early church.
- He shows how the Faith makes Christians *better*, not worse citizens of the Empire.

**Outline of Acts**

- I. THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM      CHS. 1-7
- II. PERSECUTION & PEACE              CHS. 8-12
- III. LAUNCHING OUT                      CHS. 13-28

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- I. THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM                      CHS. 1-7
    - A. *The First 40 Days*                      Ch. 1
      - 1. The Ascension                      vs. 1-11

**<sup>1</sup>The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,**

The Gospel of Luke was not the sum total of all Jesus did, it was only the beginning.

His work continued on through the Apostles in the Book of Acts.

The Book is called, "The Acts of the Apostles" But really, it ought to be "The Acts of Jesus through the Apostles."

**<sup>2</sup>until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,**

While the resurrected Jesus spoke to the apostles personally, His words were received by them as never before because they were now indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

**<sup>3</sup>to 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.**

Following the resurrection, Jesus appeared often & in a manner that cleared away any doubt He was real & alive.

There's a popular notion that the collective desire of the Apostles caused them

to have a mass & shared hallucination of the Risen Christ.  
But this idea isn't modern – Luke knew the tendency of the skeptics of his time to attribute the resurrection to the earnest wishes of Jesus' disappointed followers.

So he makes it clear they weren't hallucinating.

Jesus' really rose, & *proved it* by removing all doubt.

During the little more than month He appeared to the apostles, He taught them about what was to come and what they were to do.

Luke wanted his readers to understand that what followed was the *outworking* of what Jesus had taught them.

**4**And 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; <sup>5</sup>for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” <sup>6</sup>Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup>And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

We already covered this in our first sermon on Acts where we went into a lot of depth on vs. 4-11.

**<sup>9</sup>Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup>And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, <sup>11</sup>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.”**

If you weren't here when we looked at this, you'll want to pick up the Message titled. “*Meanwhile.*”

## **2. In Jerusalem vs. 12-14**

**<sup>12</sup>Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.**

A Sabbath's day journey is about 3,000 ft. so a little more than half a mile.

Jesus ascended from the Mt. of Olives which is located just East of Jerusalem, overlooking the Temple Mount.

It's interesting that the angels said He would return in the same manner He left, meaning descending from the clouds.

What's interesting is that Zech 14:4 says when He comes again in glory, He will touch down on the Mt. of Olives.

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**<sup>13</sup>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*.**

11 – the only one missing is of course, Judas Iscariot, who'd hung himself in remorse for betraying Christ.

It's not known if this is the same room where they'd shared the Last Supper a little a month & a half before but some assume so.

This upper room seems to have become the *unofficial headquarters* of the early church.

**<sup>14</sup>These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.**

By "the women" Luke refers to the little group that had gone to the tomb on Resurrection Sunday. [Luke 24:10]

Jesus' mother & brothers also joined the group now.

The brothers had become believers following the resurrection.

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There's no one we'd rather see come to faith than our own family.

It's hard when loved ones resist the Lord & live in unbelief; spouses, parents, children, siblings.

And we can really get down on ourselves for their lack of faith, feeling if we'd just be a better witness, more bold, more loving, more holy, whatever – then they'd come to faith.

That may be true, but it isn't necessarily true as proven by this – Jesus' own brothers didn't believe in Him until after the resurrection!

Could Jesus have been more loving? More Holy? More kind? More *anything*?

It wasn't Jesus' fault His brothers didn't believe – it was their choice to reject the truth about Him.

What turned them was the resurrection.

So, as you consider unsaved loved ones – what will see them won to faith? The resurrected Christ!

All you need to do is let Him live in & through you as you live before them.

### **3. Replacing Judas vs. 15-26**

**<sup>15</sup>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, <sup>16</sup>“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; <sup>17</sup>for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.”<sup>18</sup>(Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. <sup>19</sup>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.)**

Vs. 18-19 are *Luke's comments* on what happened to Judas.

The gospels tell us when Judas realized his betrayal would lead to the *execution* of Jesus, he was filled with remorse.

He tried to give the bribe money back to the priests but they refused, saying it was “blood money.”

What hypocrites, they wouldn’t take the money for killing but were willing to do the deed itself!

Judas, threw the 30 pieces of silver into the temple & went out & hanged himself.

The priests couldn’t put the money back into the treasury since it was morally tainted, so they used it to buy a field in which to bury the poor. Because the field was bought with blood money, it was called the *field of blood*

Matthew 27:5 says Judas *hanged* himself. But Luke here says Judas fell & burst open.

Is this one of the many supposed contradictions in the Bible?

Who’s right? They both are!

Judas could not have burst open from a simple fall; he must have fallen from a significant height.

He hanged himself from one of the many cliffs around Jerusalem.

But the rope broke & he fell onto some jagged rocks below.

**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.’

**21**“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **22**beginning 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.”

Peter quotes 2 Psalms [69:25 & 109:8 cf. Revelation 21:14]

As good students of Scripture, Peter & the other disciples knew that their number needed to be 12, corresponding to the 12 tribes of Israel which Jesus said in Luke 22, they would judge.

They moved to fill the spot left open by Judas’ departure.

There are a couple important things to take note of here.

1) Peter emerges as the early leader of the Apostles.

Being the eldest, it was expected he’d take the lead in a time of need.

The question is; was this a true need?

Later events will bear out that the apostles jumped the gun.

**Jesus** had selected the original apostles, and He’d find a replacement for Judas.

He didn’t need Peter’s help.

So even though Peter was able to call up some scripture to validate what they were doing, that didn’t mean it was *in fact* directed by God.

Notice that *no where* do we read this was *directed by the Holy Spirit*.

2) At the time they moved to replace Judas, the church had grown to 120.

This would be too many to crowd into the upper room.

So what we read about here doesn’t mean all 120 were there when the apostles did this.

This took place between the ascension & the Day of Pentecost – in that

10 day period between the 2 events.

As they waited & prayed, Peter made this suggestion to the other 10 apostles.

They set the criteria that Judas' replacement would need to be someone who'd been with them from the very beginning, when Jesus had called them right after His baptism, up till the ascension a few days before.

This of course meant there *were candidates* – guys who'd not been official disciples for the last 3 years but *had followed* Jesus nonetheless.

**23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen 25 to 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.**

2 guys fulfilled the criteria the Apostles established; Justus & Matthias.

When lots were chosen, Matthias was the winner.

Was Matthias really God's choice as the replacement for Judas?

This is the only time he's mentioned in the Scripture.

And when they cast lots, it was an either or sitch; it had to be either Matthias or Justus.

Lots don't allow for a "neither" selection.

Remember, this action was taken BEFORE Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon them in power & filled them with what they needed to complete their mission.

This drawing of lots was poorly conceived as later events revealed.

Who was the one who emerged as God's choice for Judas' replacement? Paul.

In 1 Cor. 15:8 he refers to himself as the apostles who was *born out of due time*.

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The enduring lesson from Matthias & Paul is that just because we can rally scriptural support for our actions doesn't mean they are in fact inspired by God.

I don't know how many times I've had pot-smokers quote me Genesis 1:30:

**To [you] . . . I've given every green herb . . .**

Peter & the disciples learned a lesson we all have to learn.

Following Pentecost & the filling with the Spirit, they no doubt looked back on what they did here and said, "Wow, that was out of line! It seemed right at the time but it wasn't directed by the Spirit at all."

We need to slow down & draw our direction from the Lord, not just go running off to do what seems right and we seem to have scriptural justification for."

Obedience to God is always right.

There are some things we don't need to seek direction on because the right course is already clear.

Be honest. Tell the truth, Don't cheat. Don't steal. Be faithful. Etc..

But when it comes to new direction, making decisions that involve the

direction of our lives, we need to stay in step with the Holy Spirit and follow His leading.

## **B. Pentecost**

## **Ch. 2**

### **1. The Spirit comes vs. 1-4**

**<sup>1</sup>When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

The backdrop of this most significant event in the history of the Church was the Jewish festival known as *Pentecost* which takes place 50 days after Passover. Pentecost means 50.

Pentecost was 1 of 3 annual festivals Jews were to celebrate by coming *to Jerusalem*.

It was also called *the Feast of Weeks* because it celebrated the *7 weeks of the grain harvest*.

It began with the barley harvest & lasted thru the wheat harvest.

They celebrated by bringing offerings of grain, the first of their harvest, to the temple.

Really, what they were celebrating was the goodness of God manifested by the *early & later rains* that made the harvest possible.

This is why God *used Pentecost* as the setting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, who He'd said would empower them to be witnesses of Him starting there in Jerusalem & going to the very end of the world.

The *first outpouring* of the Spirit *began* the harvest.

The *latter rain* of the Spirit will bring in the final harvest.

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On the day of Pentecost, as the disciples were altogether doing what they'd been doing for the last 10 days – praying, waiting – suddenly there was the sound of a strong wind, but without the evidence of things blowing around.

Since in Greek & Hebrew the words for wind & Spirit are the same word, hearing the sound of wind would move the disciples to think of the Spirit & the promise Jesus had given.

Then, in fulfillment of the Jesus' promise in Mark 16:17. they began to speak in other languages.

### **2. The crowd's reaction vs. 5-13**

**<sup>5</sup>And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.**

They were there to celebrate Pentecost.

**<sup>6</sup>And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.**

The confusion arose from the fact that the speakers were clearly not natives to their



region; they were Galileans.

**<sup>7</sup>Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? <sup>8</sup>And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? <sup>9</sup>Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup>Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” <sup>12</sup>So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” <sup>13</sup>Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”**

The reaction of the crowd that gathered was mixed.

Some were stunned and realized something incredible, *supernatural* was taking place.

Others saw the extreme joy & ecstatic worship of some who were filled with the Spirit & chalked it up to *drunkenness*.

What they heard were the disciples speaking in languages the speakers did *NOT* understand but what the hearers as residents of far-flung places *did*.

They heard the disciples declaring the wonderful works of God – praise/worship.

They weren't preaching. They weren't prophesying in the sense of speaking messages to man.

Paul makes it clear in 1 Cor. 14 that tongues are from man to God while prophecy is from God to man.

Tongues is prayer & praise, from a man/woman to God.

So any interpretation of a tongue would have to also be prayer or praise.

There's a popular teaching among Pentecostal & Charismatic circles that says there are 2 kinds of tongues.

- 1) The first is the one Paul refers to in 1 Cor. 14 which is a private prayer language. That's from man to God.
- 2) The second is the one found here and for public use and that it's prophetic, from God to man.

First of all, the NT never makes a distinction – there's only one kind – the 1 Cor. 14 kind.

Even the tongues given here were of that kind, as evidenced by the fact that it wasn't the tongues that resulted in the crowd turning to Christ.

It was Peter's sermon that follows that resulted in 3,000 getting saved – and he spoke in his native tongue.

If the tongues given on Pentecost were preaching, then they would have won the crowd to faith.

Peter would have never needed to preach.

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In 1 Cor. 13, Paul refers to tongues as being the language of men and/or angels.

There were many of disciples gathered on the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit came.

Over *15 different dialects* are mentioned here.



So how many total languages were being spoken we don't know – but there were a bunch!

Jon Courson tells about a time years ago when he was teaching up at the Bible school when it was at Twin Peaks.

They were holding a special meeting at the Hilton at Lake Arrowhead where about a hundred gathered for worship & study.

As they waited on the Lord He began to move through prophecy and other manifestations of the Spirit.

At one end of the room was a bar which the Hilton required be rented along with the rest of the room.

The bartender had nothing to do so he just sat there bored out his mind.

As the group was waiting on the Lord, one guy stood up & gave an utterance in tongues, then sat down.

The leader asked for the interpretation, but no one gave one.

He said that according to 1 Cor. 14, unless there was an interpretation, there ought not be any more speaking out in tongues.

A short time later when the meeting concluded, the bartender came over & with tears streaming down his face asked to see the man who had spoken in tongues. The bartender was Iranian and the tongues had been in *perfect Farsi*.

The barkeep said the praise rendered to God was so eloquent & moving he *had to meet the man* who possessed such a close relationship with God. It didn't take much to lead that bartender to faith in Christ.

While most of the crowd responded to the outpouring of the Spirit with a positive interest, some mocked and said they were drunk.

When the Holy Spirit comes upon a person & they give themselves over to freely worship God, it can appear a bit extravagant to those who think maintaining a cool exterior is the most important thing in life.

Some people are mockers by nature. It doesn't matter what they disdain, it's just their way to scoff & belittle.

Some specialize in mocking God & all evidences of faith.

They fancy themselves the guardians of reason & intelligence & consider any shred of religious faith as worthy of the most brutal excoriation.

Richard Dawkins is such a man as his recent book *The God Delusion* makes clear.

Whatever posture the worship of the Spirit-filled disciples took that first Pentecost, it elicited the scorn of the skeptics, *as heartfelt and sincere worship always will*.

Remember Michal - David's wife, how she mocked him when he danced before the Lord.

It's interesting to me that in Eph 5 Paul says, "Do not be drunk with wine, which is morally wasteful, but be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Paul contrasts alcoholic spirits with the Holy Spirit.

Drunkenness from alcohol is nothing but hell's counterfeit for the real joy that comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And if people can spend billions of dollars every year on getting smashed,

and bragging about it – why can't we gather with other believers &  
drink deeply of Christ and adore Him passionately?

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We'll stop there tonight and pick it up at v. 14 next week.