



## Acts chapter one

1. Important people can help us advance the Kingdom (1; “Theophilus” – See Luk 1:3 “*most excellent* Theophilus” = Title reserved for those with high social status, power or influence [Act 23:26, 24:3, 26:26]. Given that Luke’s audience was much larger than just Theophilus, strongly implies the mention of his name was for the purpose of adding extra validity - and therefore readership, to his writings – possibly to those in the Jewish community. Luke was a Gentile and therefore would have carried no respect in the Jewish community. Such an assumption infers that Theo was an important and highly respected Jew.).
2. Jesus did not go back to heaven until equipping His Church w/: 1) authority: He passed the mantle of Holy Spirit authority [anointing] to His “chosen” leaders (2, “after He had *by the Holy Spirit* given orders [or “charge” – Mar 13:34] to the apostles”, Joh 20:21-23). 2) assurance: He proved He was alive after His death (3, “many convincing proofs” = Evidence that removes doubt – e.g., Joh 20:17 [Mary Magdalene hugged Him], 20, 24-29 [Apostles saw/touched His wounds], 21:12-15 [Peter and other apostles ate breakfast w/Him]; “over a period of forty days” = Most likely the time when more than 500 people also witnessed Jesus alive after His death -1Co 15:6). 3) ability: He provided His disciples w/instructions for receiving the promised indwelling Holy Spirit for empowerment (4-8).
3. There is an ascending and descending gift of the Holy Spirit: 1) ascending = anointing (2; Joh 20:21-23 = Jesus gives the HS just before He *ascends* back to heaven), 2) descending = indwelling (4-5, 8; Eph 4:7-11; “measure” = indwelling - or *indwelling and anointing*; “When He ascended...He gave [aorist = tense stressing association more than indicating time]” = Christ’s HS anointing is associated w/His ascension; “descended” = On Pentecost to give the indwelling Spirit; v11 = The anointed offices today [“evangelist” = NT priest who plants churches/missionary, “pastor-teacher” = NT priest; See Isa 66:21]).
4. Being faithful as Jesus’ “witnesses” in the midst of persecution/trials is: 1) necessary to being empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit (4-8 w/Luk 3:16-17 w/Mar 9:43-50 “salted by fire” = Tested by fire [or fiery trials] (Lev 2:13 “with all your offerings you shall offer salt”)<sup>1</sup>. Jesus went through the same process – Luk 3:21-22, 4:1-14. In this light consider also Paul’s words in Act 20:22-24 w/14:22; *we are born [again] w/power that can only be released thru the trials that come thru witnessing*). 2) the reason most Christians never experience empowerment from the indwelling Spirit -- because they avoid witnessing for Jesus and the persecution/trials it often brings! Point NOT to miss: empowering is for the purpose of witnessing in the midst of persecution/trials which means if you avoid witnessing in these situations, you avoid being empowered (12-26 = The apostles are praying [w/ the expectation of] empowerment [12-14] bc they are planning to witness [15-26] to the same hostile Jews who killed Jesus<sup>2</sup>; See similar in [4:29-30]).
5. Jesus’ return will feel a lot like a science fiction movie, an alien invasion and episode from “Law And Order” (9-11 w/1Th 4:15-17 [Mat 24:29-31] and 2Th 1:7-8 [Psa 149; Joh 5:28-29; Mat 13:40-43]; In the end, everyone will have their day in God’s court and some of us w/c called to testify against others– Rev 20:11-15; Heb 13:17; 1Co 6:2-3).
6. The geographical place of Jesus’ ascent will also be the geographical place of His return (11-12 w/Zec 14:1-14, 9).

---

<sup>1</sup> “The reference to ritual sacrifice (Lev 2:13) would be fairly evident to the first readers of Mark. The argument has a coherence deeper than catchwords: Since undisciplined disciples risk the fire of gehenna at the last judgment, the hardships the disciple will undergo now are disciplines like the fire of a sacrificial offering that purifies, or like salt which stings but is preservative in its effect. Jesus on his way to Jerusalem is the supreme example of the sacrificial offerings ‘salted with fire.’ His sacrificial death is not to shield disciples from costly obedience, but rather show them the way: ‘For every one (meaning every disciple) will be salted with fire.’ Disciples whose lives are not characterized by rigorous self-discipline [and bold witness] are like flavorless salt. They have lost the sharpness which sets them apart from their environment and constitutes their usefulness.” – Lamar Williamson Jr. (*Mark*)

<sup>2</sup> Since both were required holidays and the cost of travel was steep, the Jews who travelled to Jerusalem to observe Passover, would often stay until Pentecost. As such, the Jews who witnessed Jesus’ death are still in town.

7. The standard by which to measure any church is its divinely inspired prototype: the church started by Jesus, the church of the apostles, the Jerusalem church which was *small and filled with a lot of personal family members (versus large and filled with a lot of strangers)*<sup>3</sup> (13-15; As it re: to being small: “one hundred and twenty persons” = Very small in comparison to the crowds that once followed Jesus [e.g., Luk 9:12-14]; As it re: to being filled w/family members: “Judas” = Jesus’ [half] brother, apostle and author of Jude, “Mary the mother of Jesus, ...with His brothers.” = This list would include James – the future senior pastor of the church, as well as Joses and Simon. His sisters were [ml] also in attendance [Mar 6:3]; According to Scripture and tradition [e.g., Clement of Alexandria], most of the “eleven” were married and had at least one child [e.g., Mat 8:14; 1Co 9:5; e.g., Peter’s daughter was named Petronilla]. More than likely then, 30-40 [or 25-33%] of the 120 persons were family members. As it re: to remaining small: though experiencing times of great expansion (Act 2:41, 4:4, 5:14), they were short lived. Persecution forced most of the church’s new members to seek shelter in churches outside of Jerusalem (e.g., Act 8:4). As a result, the Jerusalem church remained one of the smallest for the majority of her first century existence (hence Act 11:28-30; Rom 15:25-26; 1Co 16:2-3).<sup>4</sup>

8. The apostles believed that insurrection – condemning or coming against the authority of those anointed to sacred office in the church was blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, the unforgiveable sin and apostasy (16-20 w/Mat 26:14 w/Joh 12:1-8; “Let his homestead be made desolate and let no one dwell in it” [See the full context of Psa 69:22-28] = Let them become apostate; For blasphemy against the HS as insurrection against the anointed in the covenant community, see Mat 12:32 w/Num 15:30-31, 16:1-3; also Psa 105:15).

9. The qualifications for being in the anointed sacred office of apostle make clear that anyone claiming that office today is a false teacher (21-22 w/25 “apostleship”).

10. The congregation is the one deciding who gets anointed/ordained (15-16 w/23 [“they” = the congregation] – 26 [“added” = voted in by the congregation]; See also Act 6:1-6 [“the whole congregation...chose”; That they were choosing for the purpose of anointing/ordaining – i.e., that these were elders/pastors is confirmed by the fact these individuals had the authority/ability to baptize – e.g., Act 8:38]; OT ref. to congregational choosing for anointing – 1Ch 29:20-22).

11. Casting lots (sortition or selection by lottery) is a divine way to preserve equity in situations where there is no explicit counsel from God [His Word] (23-26 = Lots were cast to determine the duties of the priests. Joseph and Mattias were [ml] elders in their church [Luk 1:9 and 1Ch 24:1-5, 31, 25:8, 26:13-16] e.g., also [clothing] Mat 27:31; [land] Num 26:55; Jos 18:6; [sacrifices] Lev 16:8; in re: to it being divinely attended [revealing God’s will] – Pro 16:33 [e.g., Urim and Thummin – Exo 28:30]).

---

<sup>3</sup> There are several good reasons for referring to the Jerusalem church as prototypical: 1) it is the specific church Jesus is referring to when making His “church promises” to Peter (Mat 16:17-19), 2) it is the church to which all the other first century churches looked for instruction/ruling on orthodoxy and orthopraxy (e.g., Gal 2:1-2; Act 15:1-29; 1Co 11:16 = The unity of practice among the “churches of God” on this issue was no doubt due to the fact that it came from their mother, the church at Jerusalem).

<sup>4</sup> According to ancient church historian Eusebius, the Jerusalem church relocated to the city of Pella just before the city’s fall to the Romans in 70 A.D. It did so however without its two leaders, James (the brother of Jesus) and Peter who stayed behind and perished during the siege. At this point, most of the apostles were also dead and the church’s former members permanently dispersed to other locations. Though the city itself would continue to play a significant role in the world’s politics and religion, her church remained small and struggled to exist.