

## The Book of ACTS

### Lessons from Acts 1:12-26

1. The Return from Mount Olivet and Peter's Leadership of the 120. It appears to be Immediate as he connects the Old Testament with current events. [1:12-20]
2. The Requirements of an Apostle [1:21-22; cf. 1 Cor. 9:1; Galatians 1:1, 12-17]

*No Biblical evidence exists to indicate that these thirteen apostles were replaced when they died.*

3. The Replacement for Judas is Determined: Matthias [1:23-25]
4. The Revelation of God's Will [1:26] (Casting Lots)

### Chapter 2

1. Overview of First Evangelistic Message
  - a. Background [2:1-13]
  - b. Theme: Resurrection of Jesus Christ [2:14-36]
  - c. Response: 3000 Saved and Baptized [2:37-41]
  - d. Results: First Church Established [2:42-47]
2. Key Phrases of Peter's Evangelistic Message
  - a. Reference to Joel 2:28-32 [cf. Acts 2:16-21; Rev. 6:12-17]  
*Sun -> Darkness; Moon -> Blood = Great & Notable Day of the Lord*
  - b. Determinate counsel and foreknowledge [Acts 2:22-24; cf. Mark 14:21]
  - c. Comparison of David and Christ [Acts 2:25-36]

*David cannot be speaking of himself in Psalm 16 because he is dead and buried; therefore, David must be speaking of Christ and His resurrection from the dead.*

d. “Soul in hell” [Descent into Hell or Compartment Theory]

A fascinating theory, not a fundamental of the faith, believed by many and dismissed by other believers.

Neither side believes that Christ’s alleged Descent into Hell was punitive since Christ announced on the cross: “It is finished.”

Both sides believe that Christ suffered our eternity in Hell compacted into 3 hours on the cross, resulting in His cry: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.” [Matt. 27:45-46; Mark 15:33-34’ 2 Thess. 1:8-9]

A Theory, although not found in the writings of the early church fathers, was popularized in the late 4<sup>th</sup> Century in the Pseudepigraphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the *Book of Enoch*. [Dialogue of Hades and Satan; non-Biblical characters]

The original Apostles’ Creed [50 years after the Apostles] used the phrase “descended into the grave”, thereby affirming Christ’s physical death, to refute the Docetic teaching that Christ did not have a material body that could die [“material was bad”]. The original phrase was altered by Rufinus in 395 A.D. in order to read: “descended into hell”, in order to dovetail with the Gospel of Nicodemus. Rufinus boldly admitted his new phrase was not held by any Church Creed until he introduced it in his late 4<sup>th</sup> century writings. [*Rufinus: Historical Writings*, p. 550]

Even if the Theory is true it would appear out of scope in Peter’s Eyewitness Account of the Resurrection [2:32] and his simple Resurrection message to the Lost.

*“raised” – 16 times in Acts; “resurrection” (10); “corruption”; “flesh” “dead” “buried” “sepulchre”*

The Theory was popular among NT Messianic Jews since it explained why their OT ancestors were not in Hell.

The Theory appears to limit Christ’s sacrifice in time. Is it not just as theological to assume Christ could die in the patriarch’s future for their sins of the past as it is to assume Christ could die in the past for our (yet uncommitted) sins in the future? [Rev. 13:8]

*Revelation 13:8 – “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*

Moses and Elijah also appeared at the Transfiguration in their “glory” [Gr. *doxa*] and discussed the impending death [“decease”] of Christ in Jerusalem, “heavenly” knowledge only available from being in God’s presence.

*Luke 9:30-31 – “And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias; Who appeared in glory [doxa], and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. . . and when they (Peter, James, John) were awake, they saw his glory (doxa), and the two men that stood with him.”*

The Theory arises from the misunderstanding that God cannot be in the vicinity of sin so OT saints must wait to enter Heaven until after Christ’s death, yet God is omnipresent.

*Jeremiah 23:24 – “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.”*

*Revelation 12:9-10 – “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan . . . he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. . . Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”*

Christ said at death: “into thy hands I commend my Spirit.” (Luke 23:46) after telling the thief on the cross that “today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43). Paradise is heaven in other Scripture (2 Cor. 12:1-4; Rev. 2:7).

### 3. Alleged Proof Texts of Various Denominations

#### Acts 2:4 - Charismatic Subsequence

**Frederick Dale Bruner:** “Pentecostals believe that the Spirit has baptized every believer into Christ (conversion), but that Christ has not baptized every believer into the Spirit (Pentecost). The most important characteristics of the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit . . . are: (1) that the event is usually ‘distinct from and subsequent to’ the new birth; (2) that it is evidenced initially by the sign of speaking in other tongues; (3) that it must be ‘earnestly’ sought.”

#### Charismatic Characteristics [3 Keys] – Acts 2:4

ACTS	Subsequence	Sign [Tongues]	Sought
2	Yes [120] No [3000]	Yes	No
8	Yes	No	No
10	No	Yes	No
19	No	Yes	No

**John Stott:** The 3,000 do not seem to have experienced the same miraculous phenomena (the rushing mighty wind, the tongues of fire, or the speech in foreign languages). At least nothing is said about these things. . . Nevertheless, there was this difference between them: the 120 were regenerate already, and received the baptism of the Spirit only after waiting upon God for ten days. The 3,000 on the other hand were unbelievers, and received the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Spirit simultaneously – and it happened immediately as they repented and believed, without any need to wait.

The distinction between the two companies, the 120 and the 3,000, is of great importance, because the norm for today must surely be the second group, the 3,000, and not (as is often supposed), the first. The fact that the experience of the 120 was in two distinct stages was due simply to historical circumstances. They could not have received the Pentecostal gift before Pentecost. But those historical circumstances have long since ceased to exist. We live after the event of Pentecost, like the 3,000. With us, therefore, as with them, the forgiveness of sins and the ‘gift’ or ‘baptism’ of the Spirit are received together.”

**Joseph Dillow:** “We must not make the tragic mistake of teaching the experience of the apostles, but rather we must experience the teaching of the apostles. The experience of the apostles is found in the transitional book of Acts, while the teaching of the apostles is set forth clearly in the epistles, which are our guide for our Christian experience today.”

#### Acts 2:38 - Baptismal Regeneration

- (1) Although Jesus came to seek and to save the lost [Luke 19:10], He did not baptize anyone. [John 4:1-2 – “Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.”]
- (2) Paul minimized baptism to the point of being thankful he had NOT baptized certain believers and forgetting those he had.

*1 Cor. 1:13-16* – “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.”

- (3) Paul makes a clear distinction between baptism and the gospel [1 Cor. 1:17]

*1 Cor. 1:17* – “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

## Doctrine of the Church [Acts 2:41-47]

### Fundamental Tenets of the Church:

Necessary or Negotiable? Repeated or Repealed? Pattern or Principle? Scripture?

- a. Reception of the Word
- b. Baptism
- c. Apostles' Doctrine
- d. Fellowship
- e. Breaking of Bread
- f. Prayer
- g. Wonders and Signs
- h. All things Common distributed as needed
- i. Daily in the Temple
- j. House to House
- k. Rejoicing and Praising God
- l. Favor with all people
- m. Converts Added

“And now, as wicked things advance more fruitfully, and abandoned manners creep on day by day, those abominable shrines of an impious assembly are maturing themselves throughout the whole world. Assuredly this confederacy ought to be rooted out and execrated. They know one another by secret marks and insignia, and they love one another almost before they know one another. Everywhere also there is mingled among them a certain religion of lust, and they call one another promiscuously *brothers* and *sisters*, that even a not unusual debauchery may by the intervention of that sacred name become incestuous.

He who explains their ceremonies by reference to a man punished by extreme suffering for his wickedness, and to the deadly wood of the cross, that they may worship what they deserve. For why do they endeavor with such pains to conceal and to cloak whatever they worship, since honorable things always rejoice in publicity, while crimes are kept secret? Why have they no altars, no temples, no acknowledged images? Why do they never speak openly, never congregate freely, unless for the reason that what they adore and conceal is either worthy of punishment, or something to be ashamed of?

Moreover, whence or who is he, or where is the one God, solitary, desolate, whom no free people, no kingdoms, and not even Roman superstition, have known? The lonely and miserable nationality of the Jews worshipped one God, and one peculiar to itself; but they worshipped him openly. But the Christians, moreover, what wonders, what monstrosities do they feign!—that he who is their God, whom they can neither show nor behold, inquires diligently into the character of all, the acts of all, and, in fine, into their words and secret thoughts; that he runs about everywhere, and is everywhere present.”

[Minucius Felix in *Octavius*, c. 165 A.D. – later converted to Christianity according to Tertullian and Jerome]