

ACTS 1

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS*

UBS ⁴	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Promise of the Holy Spirit	Prologue	Introduction; the Risen Christ	Introduction	Prologue
1:1-5	1:1-3 The Holy Spirit Promised	1:1-5	1:1-5	1:1-5
The Ascension of Jesus	1:4-8	The Ascension	Jesus Is Taken Up to Heaven	The Ascension
1:6-11	Jesus Ascends to Heaven 1:9-11	1:6-11	1:6 1:7-9	1:6-8 1:9-11
The Choice of Judas' Successor	The Upper Room Prayer Meeting	The Gathering of the Twelve	Judas' Successor	The Group of Apostles
1:12-14	1:12-14 Matthias Chosen	1:12-14	1:12-14	1:12-14 Judas is Replaced
1:15-26	1:15-26	1:15-26	1:15-17 1:18-19 1:20 1:21-22 1:23-26	1:15-20 1:21-22 1:23-26

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading" p. vii)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT THE PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects. Compare your subject divisions with the five modern translations. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one main subject.

1. First paragraph

* Although they are not inspired, paragraph divisions are the key to understanding and following the original author's intent. Each modern translation has divided and summarized the paragraphs. Every paragraph has one central topic, truth, or thought. Each version encapsulates that topic in its own distinct way. As you read the text, ask yourself which translation fits your understanding of the subject and verse divisions.

In every chapter we must read the Bible first and try to identify its subjects (paragraphs), then compare our understanding with the modern versions. Only when we understand the original author's intent by following his logic and presentation can we truly understand the Bible. Only the original author is inspired—readers have no right to change or modify the message. Bible readers do have the responsibility of applying the inspired truth to their day and their lives.

Note that all technical terms and abbreviations are explained fully in Appendices One, Two, and Three.

2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ACTS 1:1-5

¹The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. ³To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. ⁴Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not in any days from now."

1:1 "The first account I composed" This is an AORIST MIDDLE INDICATIVE, literally, "I made." Luke is the obvious author of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts (compare Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-2). The term "volume" was used in Greek for a historical narrative. Technically (i.e. in Classical Greek) it implied one of at least three works. It is surely possible that the unusual ending of Acts might be explained by Luke's plan to write a third volume. Some even speculate that what we call the Pastoral Epistles (I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus) may have been penned by Luke.

▣ **"Theophilus"** This name is formed from (1) God (*Theos*) and (2) brotherly love (*philos*). It can be translated "God lover," "friend of God," or "loved by God."

The title "most excellent" in Luke 1:3 could be an honorific title for a Roman governmental official (cf. Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25), possibly used of the equestrian order of Roman society. He may have been the literary benefactor for the writing, copying, and distributing of Luke's two books. Church tradition names him as T. Flavius Clemens, cousin of Domitian.

▣ **"all that Jesus began to do"** This refers to the Gospel of Luke. It is surprising that Luke says "all" that Jesus did, because the Gospel of Luke (like all the Synoptic Gospels) is very selective in what it records about Jesus' life and teachings.

1:2 "until the day when He was taken up to heaven" There are a number of different Greek words used to describe Jesus' ascension back to heaven:

1. *analambanō*, to take up (Acts 1:2, 11, 22, cf. I Tim. 3:16), which is also used in the Septuagint of II Kgs. 2:9, 11 for Elijah's translation to heaven and also I Maccabees 2:58
2. *epairō*, to lift up, to raise up, to elevate (Acts 1:9)
3. *analēpsis* (Luke 9:51, form of #1)
4. *diistēmi*, to depart
5. *anabainō*, to ascend (John 6:62)

This event is not recorded in Matthew or Mark's Gospel. Mark's Gospel ends at 16:8, but one of the three later scribal additions describes the event in 16:19 (*analambanō*).

▣ **"He had by the Holy Spirit"** This is the first mention of "the Holy Spirit," who is so important in Acts. In the OT "the Spirit of God" (*ruach*) was a force which accomplished YHWH's purpose, but there is no hint that it was personal (OT monotheism). However, in the NT the full personality and personhood of the Spirit is documented.

1. He can be blasphemed (Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:29)
2. He teaches (Luke 12:12; John 14:26)
3. He bears witness (John 15:26)
4. He convicts, guides (John 16:7-15)
5. He is called "who" (*hos*, Eph. 1:14)
6. He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30)
7. He can be quenched (I Thess. 5:19)

Trinitarian texts also speak of three persons (see Special Topic: the Trinity at 2:32-33)

1. Matt. 28:19
2. II Cor. 13:14
3. I Pet. 1:2

The Spirit is linked to human activity.

1. Acts 15:28
2. Rom. 8:26

3. I Cor. 12:11
4. Eph. 4:30
5. I Thess. 5:15

At the very beginning of Acts the Spirit’s role is emphasized. Pentecost was not the beginning of the work of the Spirit, but a new chapter. Jesus always had the Spirit. His baptism was not the beginning of the work of the Spirit, but a new chapter. Luke prepares the church for a new chapter of effective ministry. Jesus is still the focus, the Spirit is still the effective means and the Father’s love, forgiveness, and restoration of all humans made in His image is the goal!

▣ **“given orders”** This refers to information not recorded in the Gospel of Luke, but in Matt. 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.

▣ **“orders”** This is an AORIST MIDDLE (deponent) PARTICIPLE. Some scholars see this as referring to 1:8 (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:45-47 or Luke 24:49). The church has a two-pronged function: (1) evangelism and Christlike maturity. Every believer must wait for God's power and equipping to achieve these. (2) others see it as referring to “wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit’s coming and empowering (cf. v. 4; Luke 24:49).

▣ **“the apostles”** See chart of Apostles’ names at 1:13.

▣ **“He had chosen”** “Chosen” (*eklegō*, AORIST MIDDLE INDICATIVE) is used in two senses. Usually in the OT it refers to service, not salvation, but usually in the NT it refers to spiritual salvation. Here it seems to refer to both ideas (cf. Luke 6:13).

1:3 “He also presented Himself alive” This probably refers to Jesus’ three appearances in the upper room to the entire group on successive Sunday nights, but also could refer to other appearances (cf. I Cor. 15:5-8). The resurrection of Jesus is crucial to the truthfulness of the gospel (cf. 2:24,32; 3:15,26; 4:10; 5:35; 10:40; 13:30,33,34,37; 17:31; and esp. I Cor. 15:12-19,20). The following is a chart of the post-resurrection appearances from Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity*, p. 185.

John	Matthew	Luke	I Corinthians
<i>Jerusalem Appearances</i>			
Mary (Jn. 20:15)	Women (Mt. 28:9)	Simon (Lk. 24:34)	Cephas (I Cor. 15:5)
		two on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:15)	
		disciples (Lk. 24:36)	the Twelve (I Cor. 15:5)
ten disciples (Jn. 20:17)			
eleven disciples (Jn. 20:26)			
<i>Galilee Appearances</i>			
			500+ believers (I Cor. 15:6; possibly linked to Matt. 28:16-20)
			James (I Cor. 15:7)
seven disciples (Jn. 21:1)	the disciples (Mt. 28:16-20)		
<i>Jerusalem Appearances</i>			
		the Ascension (Lk. 24:50-51)	all the apostles (I Cor. 15:7)

- ▣
NASB, NRSV,
 NIV **“by many convincing proofs”**
NKJV **“by many infallible proofs”**

TEV “many times in ways that proved beyond doubt”
NJB “by many demonstrations”

The word *tekmērion* is used only here in the NT. There is a good discussion of the terms used in Greek literature in Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, p. 628, where it means “demonstrative evidence.” This term is also used in the Wisdom of Solomon 5:11; 19:3 and III Maccabees 3:24.

▣ **“after His suffering”** It was with great difficulty that Jewish believers accepted this aspect of the gospel (cf. I Cor. 1:23). The Messiah’s suffering is mentioned in the OT (cf. Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22; Isa. 53; and notice in Luke 24:45-47). This was a major theological affirmation of Apostolic preaching (*kerygma*; see Special Topic at 2:13).

Luke often uses the AORIST ACTIVE INFINITIVE of *paschō* (suffer) to refer to Jesus’ crucifixion (cf. Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:26,46; Acts 1:3; 3:18; 9:16; 17:3). Luke may have gotten this from Mark’s Gospel (cf. 8:31).

▣ **“appearing to them”** We have ten or eleven accounts of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances recorded for us in the NT. However, these are only representative samples and not the definitive list. Apparently Jesus came and went during the period, but did not stay with any one group.

▣ **“forty days”** This is an OT idiom for a long period of indefinite time, longer than a lunar cycle. Here it is related to the time between the annual Jewish feasts of Passover and Pentecost (which is fifty days). Luke is the only source of this information. Since the date of the ascension is not the major issue (not even noted by Christian writers until the fourth century A.D.), there must be another purpose for the number. It could relate to Moses on Mt. Sinai, Israel in the wilderness, Jesus’ temptation experience, or we just do not know, but it is obvious that the date itself is not the issue.

▣ **“speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God”** The Gnostics claimed that Jesus revealed secret information to their group during the time between Passover and Pentecost. This is certainly false. However, the account of the two on the road to Emmaus is a good example of Jesus’ post-resurrection teaching. I think Jesus, Himself, showed the church leaders from the Old Testament, the predictions and texts related to His life, death, resurrection and Second Coming. See Special Topic: The Kingdom of God below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the OT YHWH was thought of as the King of Israel (cf. I Sam. 8:7; Ps. 10:16; 24:7-9; 29:10; 44:4; 89:18; 95:3; Isa. 43:15; 44:4,6) and the Messiah as the ideal king (cf. Ps. 2:6). With the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem (6-4 B.C.), the kingdom of God broke into human history with power and redemption (new covenant, cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:17-36). John the Baptist proclaimed the nearness of the kingdom (cf. Matt. 3:2; Mark. 1:15). Jesus clearly taught that the kingdom was present in Himself and His teachings (cf. Matt. 4:17,23; 9:35; 10:7; 11:11-12; 12:28; 16:19; Mark 12:34; Luke 10:9,11; 11:20; 12:31-32; 16:16; 17:21). Yet the kingdom is also future (cf. Matt. 16:28; 24:14; 26:29; Mark 9:1; Luke 21:31; 22:16,18).

In the Synoptic parallels in Mark and Luke we find the phrase, “the kingdom of God.” This common topic of Jesus’ teachings involved the present reign of God in men’s hearts which one day will be consummated over all the earth. This is reflected in Jesus’ prayer in Matt. 6:10. Matthew, written to Jews, preferred the phrase that did not use the name of God (kingdom of heaven), while Mark and Luke, writing to Gentiles, used the common designation, employing the name of deity.

This tension is caused by the two comings of Christ. The OT focused only on one coming of God’s Messiah—a military, judgmental, glorious coming—but the NT shows that He came the first time as the Suffering Servant of Isa. 53 and the humble king of Zech. 9:9. The two Jewish ages, the age of wickedness and the new age of righteousness, overlap. Jesus currently reigns in the hearts of believers, but will one day reign over all creation. He will come as the OT predicted. Believers live in “the already” versus “the not yet” of the kingdom of God (cf. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart’s *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 131-134).

1:4
NASB “gathering them together”
NKJV “being assembled together with them”
NRSV “while staying with them”
TEV “when they came together”
TEV^a “while he was staying with them”
TEV^b, NIV “while he was eating with them”
NJB, KNOX “while at table with them”

Verses 4-5 use one appearance of Jesus as an example of His several appearances and proofs. The term *sunalizomenos* can be spelled differently. The spelling changes the meaning.

1. long a – assemble/gather
2. short a – eat with (literally “with salt”)
3. Au (diphthong) – stay with

It is uncertain which was intended, but Luke 24:41-43 (cf. John 21) describes Jesus eating with the apostolic group, which would have been evidence of His resurrected body (cf. v. 3).

▣ **“not to leave Jerusalem”** This is recorded in Luke 24:49. The first part of Acts is a review of the end of Luke’s Gospel, possibly a literary way of linking the two books.

▣ **“to wait for what the Father had promised”** In 2:16-21 Peter relates this to the eschatological prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. They waited ten days until Pentecost. Luke has specifically designated “the Father’s promise” as the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33). Jesus had previously spoken to them about the coming of the Spirit in John 14-16. However, it is possible that Luke understands the Father’s promise not as one thing only (i.e. the Holy Spirit), but also that the OT promised salvation will be brought to Israel in the person of the Messiah (cf. Acts 2:39; 13:23,32; 26:6).

▣ **“Father”** The OT introduces the intimate familial metaphor of God as Father: (1) the nation of Israel is often described as YHWH’s “son” (cf. Hos. 11:1; Mal. 3:17); (2) even earlier in Deuteronomy the analogy of God as Father is used (1:31); (3) in Deut. 32:6 Israel is called “his children” and God called “your Father”; (4) this analogy is stated in Ps. 103:13 and developed in Ps. 68:5 (the father of orphans); and (5) it was common in the prophets (cf. Isa. 1:2; 63:8; Israel as son, God as Father, 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4,19; 31:9).

Jesus spoke Aramaic, which means that many of the places where “Father” appears as the Greek *Pater* may reflect the Aramaic *Abba* (cf. 14:36). This familial term “Daddy” or “papa” reflects Jesus’ intimacy with the Father; His revealing this to His followers also encourages our own intimacy with the Father. The term “Father” was used rarely in the OT (and not often in Rabbinical literature) for YHWH, but Jesus uses it often and pervasively. It is a major revelation of believers’ new relationship with God through Christ (cf. Matt. 6:9).

1:5 “John” All four Gospels (cf. Matt. 3:1-12; Mark 1:2-8; Luke 3:15-17; John 1:6-8,19-28) tell of the ministry of John the Baptist. “John” was the shortened form of the Hebrew name Johanan, which meant “YHWH is gracious” or “gift of YHWH.” His name was significant because, like all biblical names, it pointed toward God’s purpose for his life. John was the last of the Old Testament prophets. There had not been a prophet in Israel since Malachi, around 430 B.C. His very presence caused great spiritual excitement among the people of Israel.

▣ **“baptized with water”** Baptism was a common rite among Jews of the first and second century, but only in connection with proselytes. If someone from a Gentile background wanted to become a full child of Israel, he had to accomplish three tasks: (1) circumcision, if male; (2) self-baptism by immersion, in the presence of three witnesses; and (3) a sacrifice in the Temple if possible. In sectarian groups of first century Palestine, such as the Essenes, baptism was apparently a common, repeated experience. However, to mainline Judaism, ritual precedents can be cited for this ceremonial washing: (1) as a symbol of spiritual cleansing (cf. Isa. 1:16); and (2) as a regular ritual performed by the priests (cf. Exod. 19:10; Lev. 15).

▣ **“you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”** This is a FUTURE PASSIVE INDICATIVE. The PASSIVE VOICE may refer to Jesus because of Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16. The preposition *ev* can mean “in,” “with,” or “by” (instrument, cf. Matt. 3:11). This phrase can refer to two events: (1) becoming a Christian, (cf. I Cor. 12:13) or (2) in this context, the promised infusion of spiritual power for effective ministry. John the Baptist often spoke of Jesus’ ministry by this phrase (cf. Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16-17; John 1:33).

This is in contrast to John’s baptism. The Messiah will inaugurate the new age of the Spirit. His baptism will be with (or “in” or “by”) the Spirit. There has been much discussion among denominations as to what event in the Christian experience this refers. Some take it to refer to an empowering experience after salvation, a kind of second blessing. Personally I think it refers to becoming a Christian (cf. I Cor. 12:13). I do not deny later fillings and equippings, but I believe there is only one initial spiritual baptism into Christ in which believers identify with Jesus’ death and resurrection (cf. Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12). This initiating work of the Spirit is delineated in John 16:8-11. In my understanding the works of the Holy Spirit are:

1. convicting of sin
2. revealing the truth about Christ
3. leading to acceptance of the gospel
4. baptizing into Christ
5. convicting the believer of continuing sin
6. forming Christlikeness in the believer

▣ **“not many days from now”** This is a reference to the Jewish festival of Pentecost which occurred seven weeks after Passover. It recognized God’s ownership of the grain harvest. It came fifty days after Passover (cf. Lev. 23:15-31; Exod. 34:22; Deut. 16:10).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:6-11

“So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” ⁹And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. ¹¹They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

1:6 “they were asking Him” This IMPERFECT TENSE means either repeated action in past time or the initiation of an act. Apparently these disciples had asked this many times.

▣ **“Lord”** The Greek term “Lord” (*kurios*) can be used in a general sense or in a developed theological sense. It can mean “mister,” “sir,” “master,” “owner,” “husband” or “the full God-man” (cf. John 9:36, 38). The OT (Hebrew, *adon*) usage of this term came from the Jews’ reluctance to pronounce the covenant name for God, YHWH, which was the CAUSATIVE form of the Hebrew verb “to be” (cf. Exod. 3:14). They were afraid of breaking the Commandment which said, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” (cf. Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11). Therefore, they thought if they did not pronounce it, they could not take it in vain. So, they substituted the Hebrew word *adon*, which had a similar meaning to the Greek word *kurios* (Lord). The NT authors used this term to describe the full deity of Christ. The phrase “Jesus is Lord” was the public confession of faith and a baptismal formula of the early church (cf. Rom. 10:9-13; I Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11).

▣ **“is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom of Israel”** They still had a totally Jewish nationalistic perspective (cf. Ps. 14:7; Jer. 33:7; Hos. 6:11; Luke 19:11; 24:21). They possibly even were asking about their administrative positions.

This theological question still causes much controversy. I want to include here a part of my commentary on Revelation, which discusses this very issue.

“The OT prophets predict a restoration of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine centered in Jerusalem where all the nations of the earth gather to praise and serve a Davidic ruler, but the NT Apostles never focus on this agenda. Is not the OT inspired (cf. Matt. 5:17-19)? Have the NT authors omitted crucial end-time events?

There are several sources of information about the end of the world:

1. OT prophets
2. OT apocalyptic writers (cf. Ezek. 37-39; Dan. 7-12)
3. intertestamental, non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writers (like I Enoch)
4. Jesus Himself (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21)
5. the writings of Paul (cf. I Cor. 15; II Cor. 5; I Thess. 4; II Thess. 2)
6. the writings of John (the book of Revelation).

Do these all clearly teach an end-time agenda (events, chronology, persons)? If not, why? Are they not all inspired (except the Jewish intertestamental writings)?

The Spirit revealed truths to the OT writers in terms and categories they could understand. However, through progressive revelation the Spirit has expanded these OT eschatological concepts to a universal scope (cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13). Here are some relevant examples:

1. The city of Jerusalem is used as a metaphor for the people of God (Zion) and is projected into the NT as a term expressing God’s acceptance of all repentant, believing humans (the new Jerusalem of Revelation 20-22). The theological expansion of a literal, physical city into the people of God is foreshadowed in God’s promise to redeem fallen mankind in Gen. 3:15 before there even were any Jews or a Jewish capital city. Even Abraham’s call (cf. Gen. 12:3) involved the Gentiles.
2. In the OT the enemies are the surrounding nations of the Ancient Near East, but in the NT they have been expanded to all unbelieving, anti-God, Satanically-inspired people. The battle has moved from a geographical, regional conflict to a cosmic conflict.
3. The promise of a land which is so integral in the OT (the Patriarchal promises) has now become the whole earth. New Jerusalem comes to a recreated earth, not the Near East only or exclusively (cf. Rev. 20-22).

4. Some other examples of OT prophetic concepts being expanded are (1) the seed of Abraham is now the spiritually circumcised (cf. Rom. 2:28-29); (2) the covenant people now include Gentiles (cf. Hos. 1:9; 2:23; Rom. 9:24-26; also Lev. 26:12; Exod. 29:45; II Cor. 6:16-18 and Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2; Titus 2:14); (3) the temple is now the local church (cf. I Cor. 3:16) or the individual believer (cf. I Cor. 6:19); and (4) even Israel and its characteristic descriptive phrases now refer to the whole people of God (cf. Gal. 6:16; I Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev. 1:6).

The prophetic model has been fulfilled, expanded, and is now more inclusive. Jesus and the Apostolic writers do not present the end-time in the same way as the OT prophets (cf. Martin Wyngaarden, *The Future of The Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment*). Modern interpreters who try to make the OT model literal or normative twist the Revelation into a very Jewish book and force meaning into atomized, ambiguous phrases of Jesus and Paul! The NT writers do not negate the OT prophets, but show their ultimate universal implication.

1:7

NASB "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority"

NKJV "It is not for you to know times or seasons"

NRSV "It is not for you to know the times or periods"

TEV "the times and occasions"

NJB "It is not for you to know times or dates"

The term "times" (*chronos*) means "eras" or "ages" (i.e. the passing of time), while the term "epochs" (*kairos*) means a "time of specific events or seasons" (cf. Titus 1:2-3). Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, says they are synonyms simply denoting duration of time (cf. I Thess. 5:1). It is obvious that believers are not to try to set specific dates; even Jesus did not know the time of His return (cf. Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32). Believers can know the general season, but they are to remain ready and **active** for the actual event at all times (cf. Matt. 24:32-33). The twin emphases of the NT about the Second Coming are to stay **active** and **be ready**. The rest is up to God!

1:8 "but you will receive power" Notice that the coming of the Holy Spirit is linked to power and witness. Acts is about "witness" (i.e. *martus*). This theme dominates the book (cf. 1:8,22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39,41; 13:31; 22:15,20; 26:16). The church has been given her assignment—witness to the gospel of Christ! The Apostles were witnesses of Jesus' life and teaching, now they were witnesses about His life and teaching. Effective witness only occurs by means of the Spirit's power.

▣ **"Jerusalem. . .Judea. . .Samaria. . .the remotest part of the earth"** This is a geographical outline of Acts: Jerusalem, chapters 1-7; Judea and Samaria, chapters 8-12; ends of the earth (i.e. Rome), chapters 13-28. This outline may denote the author's literary structure and purpose. Christianity is not a sect of Judaism, but a worldwide movement of the one true God fulfilling His OT promises to restore rebellious mankind to fellowship with Himself (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5; Isa. 2:2-4; 56:7; Luke 19:46).

The first Jewish leaders, knowing the Septuagint and the many prophetic promises of YHWH restoring Jerusalem, raising Jerusalem, bringing the world to Jerusalem, expected these to be literally fulfilled. They stayed in Jerusalem (cf. 8:1). But the gospel revolutionized and extended the OT concepts. The world-wide mandate (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8) told believers to go into all the world, not wait for the world to come to them. Jerusalem of the NT is a metaphor for heaven (cf. Rev. 21:2), not a city in Palestine.

1:9 "He was lifted up" This event is known as the Ascension. The resurrected Jesus is returned to His place of pre-existing glory (cf. Luke 24:50-51; John 6:22; 20:17; Eph. 4:10; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:14; and I Pet. 3:22). The unexpressed agent of the PASSIVE VOICE is the Father.

▣ **"a cloud"** Clouds were a significant eschatological marker. Clouds were used in three distinct ways in the OT: (1) to show God's physical presence, the Shekinah cloud of Glory (cf. Exod. 13:21; 16:10; Num. 11:25); (2) to cover His Holiness so that man would not see God and die (cf. Exod. 33:20; Ps. 18:9; Isa. 6:5); and (3) to transport Deity (cf. Ps. 104:3; Isa. 19:1). In Daniel 7:13 clouds were used of the transportation of a Divine Messiah. This prophecy in Daniel is alluded to over 30 times in the NT. This same connection of the Messiah with the clouds of heaven can be seen in Matt. 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Acts 1:9,11 and I Thess. 4:17.

1:10 "they were gazing intently" This is a PERIPHRASTIC IMPERFECT. They were continuing to strain hard to see Jesus as long as possible. Even after He had been lost from sight, they kept on looking.

This term is characteristic in Luke's writings (cf. Luke 4:20; 22:56; Acts 1:10; 3:4,12; 6:15; 7:55; 10:4; 11:6; 13:9; 14:9; 23:1, only found outside of Luke and Acts twice in II Cor. 3). It implies "to look at intently," "to gaze upon," or "to fix one's eyes upon."

▣ **“into the sky”** The ancients believed heaven was up, but in our day, up is relative. In Luke 24:31, Jesus vanished. This might be a better model for our culture. Heaven is not up and out there, but possibly another dimension of time and space. Heaven is not a direction, but a person!

▣ **“two men in white clothing”** The NT often identifies angels by their bright white clothing, (cf. Luke 24:4; John 20:12). Angels appeared at His birth, His temptation, in Gethsemane, at the tomb, and here at His ascension.

1:11 “Men of Galilee” Several times in Acts Luke records the Galilean origins of the disciples (cf. 2:7; 13:31). All of the Twelve, except Judas Iscariot, were from Galilee. This area was looked down on by residents of Judea because it had a large Gentile population and it was not as “kosher” (i.e. strict) in its performance of the Oral Traditions (Talmud).

▣ **“Jesus. . .will come”** Some theologians try to make a distinction between Jesus and the Christ. These angels affirm that it is the Jesus who they knew who would return. The glorified, ascended Christ is still the Jesus of Nazareth. He remains the God/man.

Jesus will come again as He left, on the clouds of heaven (cf. Matt. 10:23; 16:27; 24:3,27,37,39; 26:64; Mark 8:38-39; 13:26; Luke 21:27; John 21:22; I Cor. 15:23; I Thess. 1:10; 4:16; II Thess. 1:7, 10; 2:1,8; James 5:7-8; II Pet. 1:16; 3:4,12; I John 2:28; Rev. 1:7). The Second Coming of Jesus is a recurrent and major theme of the NT. One reason the gospel took so long to be put into written form was the early church’s expectation of the very-soon return of Christ. His surprising delay, the dying of the Apostles, and the rise of heresies all finally prompted the church to record the life and teachings of Jesus in written form.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:12-14

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

1:12 “returned” Luke 24:52 adds “with great joy.”

▣ **“mount called Olivet”** This seems to contradict Luke 24:50 (i.e. Bethany); however, compare Luke 19:29 and 21:37 with Mark 11:11-12 and 14:3. The Mount of Olives was a 2.5 mile ridge about 300-400 feet above Jerusalem that ran from Bethany opposite the Kidron Valley, across from the Temple. It is mentioned in OT eschatological prophecy (cf. Zech. 14:4). Jesus had met the disciples there many times to pray and possibly camp out.

▣ **“a Sabbath day’s journey away”** The distance a Jew could travel on the Sabbath was set by the rabbis (cf. Exod. 16:29; Num. 35:5). It was a distance of about 2,000 cubits (or steps), which the rabbis set as the maximum one could walk on the Sabbath and not break the Mosaic law.

1:13 “the upper room” This was probably the same site as the Last Supper (cf. Luke 22:12; Mark 14:14-15). Tradition says it was the upper level (2nd or 3rd floor) of the home of John Mark (cf. Acts 12:12), who wrote the memories of Peter into the Gospel of Mark. It must have been a large room to accommodate 120 persons.

▣ **“they”** This is one of four lists of the Apostles (cf. Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; and Luke 6:14-16). The lists are not identical. The names and order change. However, they are always the same persons named in four groups of three. Peter is always first and Judas is always last. These three groups of four may have been for the purpose of allowing these men to return home periodically to check on and provide for their families.

CHART OF APOSTLES’ NAMES

	Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:12-18
First Group	Simon (Peter) Andrew (Peter’s brother) James (son of Zebedee) John (James’ brother)	Simon (Peter) James (son of Zebedee) John (James’ brother) Andrew	Simon (Peter) Andrew (Peter’s brother) James John	Peter John James Andrew

Second Group	Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
	Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
	Matthew (tax gatherer)	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
Third Group	James (son of Alphaeus)	James (son of Alphaeus)	James (son of Alphaeus)	James (son of Alphaeus)
	Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon (the zealot)	Simon (the zealot)
	Simon (the Cananean)	Simon (the Cananean)	Judas (son of James)	Judas (son of James)
	Judas (Iscaiot)	Judas (Iscaiot)	Judas (Iscaiot)	

▣ **“Peter”** Most Jews of Galilee had both a Jewish name (e.g. Simon or Simeon, meaning “hearing”) and a Greek name (which is never given). Jesus nicknames him “rock.” In Greek it is *petros* and in Aramaic it is *cephas* (cf. John 1:42; Matt. 16:16).

▣ **“Andrew”** The Greek term means “manly.” From John 1:29-42 we learn that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist and that he introduced his brother Peter to Jesus.

▣ **“Philip”** The Greek term means “fond of horses.” His call is elaborated in John 1:43-51.

▣ **“Thomas”** The Hebrew term means “twin” or Didymus (cf. John 11:16; 20:24; 21:2).

▣ **“Bartholomew”** The term means “Son of Ptolemy.” He may be the Nathanael of the Gospel of John (cf. John 1:45-49; 21:20).

▣ **“Matthew”** The Hebrew term means “gift of YHWH.” This is referring to Levi (cf. 2:13-17).

▣ **“James”** This is the Hebrew name “Jacob.” There are two men named James in the list of the Twelve. One is the brother of John (cf. v. 17) and part of the inner circle (i.e. Peter, James, and John). This one is known as James the less.

▣ **“Simon the Zealot”** The Greek text of Mark has “Cananean” (also Matt. 10:4). Mark, whose Gospel was written to Romans, may not have wanted to use the politically “hot-button” word “zealot,” which referred to a Jewish anti-Roman guerrilla movement. Luke does call him by this term (cf. Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13). The term Cananean may have several derivatives:

1. of the area of Galilee known as Cana
2. from the OT use of Canaanite as merchant
3. from a general designation as a native of Canaan.

If Luke’s designation is right, then “zealot” is from the Aramaic term for “enthusiast” (cf. Luke 6:15; Acts 1:17). Jesus’ chosen twelve disciples were from several different and competing groups. Simon was a member of a nationalistic group which advocated the violent overthrow of Roman authority. Normally this Simon and Levi (i.e. Matthew the tax collector) would not have been in the same room with each other.

▣ **“Thaddaeus”** He was also called “Lebbeus” (cf. Matt. 10:3) or “Judas” (cf. Luke 6:16; John 14:22; Acts 1:13). Both Thaddaeus and Lebbeus mean “beloved child.”

▣ **“Judas Iscaiot”** There are two Simons, two Jameses, and two Judases. “Iscaiot” has two possible derivations: (1) man of Kerioth in Judah (cf. Josh. 15:23) or (2) “dagger man” or assassin, which would mean he also was a zealot, like Simon.

1:14 “these all with one mind” This term is a compound of “this same” (*homo*) and “emotion of the mind” (*thumos*). It was not a prerequisite as much as it was the atmosphere of anticipation. This attitude is mentioned again and again in Acts (i.e. of believers, cf. 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; and of others in 7:57; 8:6; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29).

▣

NASB “continually devoting”

KJV “continued”

NRSV “constantly devoting”

TEV “gathered frequently”

NJB “joined constantly”

This term (*pros* and *kaptereō*) means to be intent or persistent or intently engaged. Luke uses it often (cf. 1:14; 2:42,46; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7). It is a PERIPHRASTIC IMPERFECT.

▣ **“with the women”** There was a group of women who traveled with and provided for Jesus and the Apostles (cf. Matt. 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:2; 23:49; and John 19:25).

SPECIAL TOPIC: WOMEN WHO TRAVELED WITH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

Matt. 27:55-56	Mark 15:40-41	Luke 8:2; 23:49	John 19:75
Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Mary, Jesus’ mother
Mary, mother of James and Joseph	Mary, mother of James the Less, Joses	Joanna, wife of Chuza (Herod’s steward)	His mother’s sister Mary, wife of Clopas
Mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John)	Salome	Susanna and others	Mary Magdalene

Following are the notes on these women from my commentary on Mark 15:40-41:

“There were also some women looking on from a distance” The apostolic group was ministered to both financially and physically by several women (i.e. cooking, washing, etc., cf. v. 41; Matt. 27:55; Luke 8:3).

“Mary Magdalene” Magdala was a small city on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, three miles north of Tiberias. Mary followed Jesus from Galilee after He had delivered her from several demons (cf. Luke 8:2). She has been unfairly labeled as a prostitute but there is no NT evidence of this.

“Mary, the mother of James the Less and Joses” In Matt. 27:56 she is called “the mother of James and Joseph.” In Matt. 28:1 she is called “the other Mary.” The real question is, to whom was she married? In John 19:25 possibly she was married to Clopas, yet her son James, was said to be the “son of Alphaeus” (cf. Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15).

“Salome” This was the mother of James and John, who were part of the inner circle of Jesus’ disciples, and the wife of Zebedee (cf. Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40; 16:1-2).

Following are my the notes on these women from my commentary on John 19:25:

“standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene” There is much discussion about whether there are four names here or three names. It is probable that there are four names because there would not be two sisters named Mary. Mary’s sister, Salome, is named in Mark 15:40 and Matt. 27:56. If this is true, then it would mean James, John, and Jesus were cousins. A second-century tradition (*Hegesippus*) says that Clopas was Joseph’s brother. Mary of Magdala was the one out of whom Jesus cast seven devils, and the first one to whom He chose to appear after His resurrection (cf. 20:1-2; 11-18; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1-10).

▣ **“His brothers”** We know the names of several of Jesus’ half-brothers: Jude, James (see Special Topic at 12:17), and Simon (cf. Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3 and Luke 2:7). They were once unbelievers (cf. John 7:5), but now part of the inner group of disciples. For an interesting brief discussion of the history of the “perpetual virginity” of Mary, see F. F. Bruce, *New International Commentary, Acts*, p. 44, footnote 47.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:15-26

¹⁵At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said, ¹⁶“Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of

David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷"For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry." ¹⁸(Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. ¹⁹And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰"For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; AND, 'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.' ²¹"Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—²²beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection." ²³So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen ²⁵to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." ²⁶And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

1:15 “at this time” This is literally “in these days” (*en tais hēmerais*) This phrase is used often in the opening chapters (i.e. 1-15) of Acts (cf. 1:15; 2:18; 5:37; 6:1; 7:41; 9:37; 11:27; 13:41). Luke is using other eyewitness sources. He also uses “from day to day” (*kath hēmeran*) as a common, ambiguous time indicator in the early chapters of Acts (cf. 2:46,47; 3:2; 16:5; 17:11,31; 19:9). After chapter 15 Luke is personally acquainted with many of the events he is recording. He still uses “day” often, but not as often in these ambiguous, idiomatic phrases.

▣ **“Peter stood up”** Peter is obviously the spokesman for the Apostles (cf. Matt. 16). He preached the first sermon of the church after the coming of the Spirit (cf. Acts 2) and the second sermon in Acts 3. Jesus appears to him first in the post-resurrection appearances (cf. John 21 and I Cor. 15:5). His Hebrew name is “Simeon” (cf. Acts 15:14; II Pet. 1:1). This name is spelled “Simon” in Greek. The term “Peter” is a Greek term (*petros*) for a “detached rock.” It is “Cephas” or “stone” in Aramaic (cf. Matt. 16:18).

▣ **“a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons”** This phrase is a parenthesis in the UBS⁴ Greek text (but not vv. 18-19). This group must have included the eleven Apostles, the women who accompanied Jesus, and other disciples from Jesus’ preaching and healing ministry. This number may be symbolic, linked to rabbinical speculation on the ratio of leaders/followers (i.e. 1 to 10, cf. *Sanhedrin* 1.6).

1:16 “the Scripture” All references to “Scripture” in the NT (except II Pet. 3:15-16) refer to the OT (ex. Matt. 5:17-20; II Tim 3:15-17). This passage also asserts the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (cf. II Pet. 1:21) through David. It also implies the canonization of “the Writings” section of the Hebrew Bible.

▣ **“had to be”** This is *dei*, which means necessity. It is an IMPERFECT ACTIVE INDICATIVE and refers to the first quote in v. 20.

The term is characteristic of Luke’s sense of the life of Jesus and the early church being an extension of OT Scriptures (cf. Luke 18:31-34; 22:37; 24:44). Luke uses this term often (cf. Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 11:42; 12:12; 13:14,16,33; 15:32; 17:25; 18:1; 19:5; 21:9; 22:7,37; 24:7,26,44; Acts 1:16,21; 3:21; 4:12; 5:29; 9:6,16; 14:27; 15:5; 16:30; 17:3; 19:21,36; 20:35; 23:11; 24:19; 25:10,24; 26:9; 27:21,24,26). The term means “it is binding,” “it is necessary,” “it is inevitable.” The gospel and its growth is not a chance occurrence, but the predetermined plan of God and fulfillment of OT Scripture (LXX usage).

▣ **“fulfilled”** When one reads these OT quotes (v. 20), Judas’ betrayal was not the intent of the writer of the Psalms. The Apostles interpreted the OT in light of their experience with Jesus. This is called typological interpretation. Jesus Himself may have set the pattern of this approach as He walked and talked with the two on the road to Emmaus (cf. Luke 24:13-35, especially vv. 25-27). The early Christian interpreters saw parallels between the events of the OT and Jesus’ life and teachings. They saw Jesus as the prophetic fulfillment of all the OT. Believers today must be careful of this approach! Those inspired NT authors were under a level of inspiration and personally familiar with the life and teachings of Jesus. We affirm the truth and authority of their witness but cannot reproduce their method.

▣ **“Judas”** It was Judas’ apostasy, not his death, which caused this election of a substitute Apostle. In v. 20b, Judas’ actions were seen as a fulfillment of prophecy. The NT does not record another Apostolic election after the death of James (cf. Acts 12:2). There is much mystery and tragedy in the life of Judas. He was possibly the only Apostle who was not a Galilean. He was made the treasurer of the apostolic group (cf. John 12:6). He was accused of stealing their money throughout the period of Jesus’ time with them. He is said to be a prophetic fulfillment and an object of Satanic attack. His motives are never stated, but his remorse resulted in his taking his own life after returning the bribe.

There is so much speculation about Judas and his motives. He is mentioned and vilified often in John’s Gospel (6:71; 12:4; 13:2,26,39; 18:2,3,5). The modern play “Jesus Christ Superstar” depicts him as a faithful, but disillusioned, follower who tried

to force Jesus in to fulfilling the role of Jewish Messiah—this is, to overthrow the Romans, punish the wicked and set up Jerusalem as the capital of the world. However, John depicts his motives as greedy and malicious.

The main problem is the theological issue of God’s sovereignty and human free will. Did God or Jesus manipulate Judas? Is Judas responsible for his acts if Satan controlled him or God predicted and caused him to betray Jesus? The Bible does not address these questions directly. God is in control of history; He knows future events, but mankind is responsible for choices and actions. God is fair, not manipulative.

There is a new book that tries to defend Judas—*Judas Betrayer or Friend of Jesus?* by William Klassen, Fortress Press, 1996. I do not agree with this book, but it is very interesting and thought provoking.

▣ **“who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus”** Here is a quote from my commentary on Matthew 26:47-50.

“There has been much discussion about the motivation of Judas. It must be said that this remains uncertain. His kiss of Jesus in v. 49 either (1) was a sign to the soldiers that this was the man to arrest (cf. v. 48); or (2) lends support to the modern theory that He was trying to force Jesus’ hand to act, (cf. 27:4). Other Gospel passages state that he was a robber and an unbeliever from the beginning (cf. John 12:6).

From Luke 22:52 we know the make-up of this crowd. There were Roman soldiers involved because they were the only ones who could legally carry swords. Also, the Temple police were involved because they usually carried clubs. Representatives from the Sanhedrin were also present at the arrest (cf. vv. 47, 51).”

1:17 Judas was chosen by Jesus, heard Jesus speak, saw Jesus’ miracles, was sent on mission by and for Jesus, was present in the upper room and participated in these events and, yet, betrayed Jesus!

1:18

NASB, KJV,

NRSV, NJB,

NIV

“falling headlong, he burst open”

TEV

“where he fell to his death and burst open”

It is possible that “falling headlong” was a medical term for “swelling up” (cf. Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, pp. 535-536), which is found in some English translations (e.g. Phillips, Moffatt and Goodspeed). For a good discussion of the different versions of Judas’ death (Matt. 27:5 vs. Acts 1:18) see *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp/ 511-512.

▣ **“this man acquired a field”** Verses 18-19 are parenthetical (cf. NASB, KJV, NRSV, NJB, NIV). The author provided this information for the reader’s understanding. From Matt. 27:6-8 we learn the priests bought this piece of land in fulfillment of OT prophecy (cf. Matt. 27:9). It was Judas’ money, which the priests considered unclean, and used it to buy a field for burying unclaimed bodies. Verses 18-19 tell us it was the very field in which Judas died. This information about Judas’ death is not repeated elsewhere.

1:19

NASB, NRSV

“Hakeldama, that is Field of Blood”

KJV

“Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood”

TEV

“Akeldama, which means Field of Blood”

NJB

“Bloody acre. . .Hakel-dama”

This is a Greek translation of an Aramaic word. It is always difficult to uniformly transpose from one language to another. Despite the Greek spelling variations, the Aramaic means “field of blood.” This could mean (1) a field bought with blood money (cf. Matt. 27:7a); (2) a field where blood was shed (cf. Acts 1:18); or (3) a field where murderers or foreigners were buried (cf. Matt. 27:7b).

1:20 These are two quotes from the Psalms. The first is Ps. 69:25. Originally it was plural. It functions as a curse formula related to Judas. The second quote is from Ps. 109:8 (LXX). It provides the prophetic precedent for the replacement of Judas discussed in vv. 21-26.

▣

NASB, KJV,

NJB

“office”

NRSV

“positions of overseer”

TEV

“place of service”

In the Septuagint the term *episkopē* carries the connotation of a charge or service of an officer (cf. Num. 4:16; Ps. 109:8). It came to denote an office in the Roman Catholic clerical system, but in Greek it simply was the Greek city-state term for leader (cf. NIV), as elder (*presbuteros*) was the Jewish term for leader (ex. Gen. 50:7; Exod. 3:16,18; Num. 11:16,24,25,39; Deut.

21:2,3,4,6,19,20 and others). Therefore with the possible exception of James, “overseer” and “elder” after the death of the Apostles refer to the pastor (cf. Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5,7; Phil. 1:1).

1:21 “it is necessary” This is the word *dei* (cf. v. 16). Apparently Peter felt that the Twelve Apostles somehow represented the twelve tribes or some other symbolism that must not be lost.

1:21-22 These are the qualifications for Apostleship. Notice that it shows the presence of other believers besides the Twelve who followed Jesus throughout His earthly ministry. These criteria were later used by some to reject Paul’s Apostleship.

Luke apparently includes these two verses to show the priority of Apostolic witness, not the election of Matthias, about whom we hear no more. The church and NT Scripture will be built on Jesus’ life and teachings, but it is mediated through eyewitness, authoritative witness, selected theological witness, the NT. This is the theological issue, not the symbolism of “twelve”!

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE NUMBER TWELVE

Twelve has always been a symbolic number of organization

1. outside the Bible
 - a. twelve signs of the Zodiac
 - b. twelve months of the year
2. in the OT
 - a. the sons of Jacob (the Jewish tribes)
 - b. reflected in
 - (1) twelve pillars of the altar in Exod. 24:4
 - (2) twelve jewels on the high priest’s breastplate (which stand for the tribes) in Exod. 28:21
 - (3) twelve loaves of bread in the holy place of the tabernacle in Lev. 24:5
 - (4) twelve spies sent into Canaan in Num. 13 (one from each tribe)
 - (5) twelve rods (tribal standards) at Korah’s rebellion in Num. 17:2
 - (6) twelve stones of Joshua in Josh. 4:3,9,20
 - (7) twelve administrative districts in Solomon’s administration in I Kgs. 4:7
 - (8) twelve stones of Elijah’s altar to YHWH in I Kgs. 18:31
3. in the NT
 - a. twelve apostles chosen
 - b. twelve baskets of bread (one for each Apostle) in Matt. 14:20
 - c. twelve thrones on which NT disciples sit (referring to the 12 tribes of Israel) in Matt. 19:28
 - d. twelve legions of angels to rescue Jesus in Matt. 26:53
 - e. the symbolism of Revelation
 - (1) 24 elders on 24 thrones in 4:4
 - (2) 144,000 (12x12) in 7:4; 14:1,3
 - (3) twelve stars on the woman’s crown in 12:1
 - (4) twelve gates, twelve angels reflecting the twelve tribes in 21:12
 - (5) twelve foundation stones of the new Jerusalem and on them the names of the twelve Apostles in 21:14
 - (6) twelve thousand stadia in 21:16 (size of new city, New Jerusalem)
 - (7) wall is 144 cubits in 21:7
 - (8) twelve gates of pearl in 21:21
 - (9) trees in new Jerusalem with twelve kinds of fruit (one each month) in 22:2

1:23 “they set two” There is a Greek manuscript variant which shows the theological issue in this phrase:

1. *estēsan* (“they set”) in MSS \aleph , A, B, C, D¹, E
2. *estesēn* (“he set”) in MS D* and Augustine

If number one, this is an example of the whole group of disciples voting on the possible replacement of Judas (a form of congregational polity (cf. 15:22), but if number 2, then this is evidence for the supremacy of Peter (cf. 15:7-11,14). As far as Greek manuscript evidence, the wording of number one is certain (UBS⁴ gives it an “A” rating).

▣ **“Joseph. . . Matthias”** We know nothing about these men from the NT. We must remember that the gospels and Acts are not western histories, but selected theological writings to introduce Jesus and show how His message impacted the world.

1:24

NASB “who knows the hearts of all men”

NKJV “who knows the hearts of all”

NRSV “you know everyone’s heart”

TEV “you know the thoughts of everyone”

NJB “you can read everyone’s heart”

This is a compound word, “hearts and known” (cf. 15:8). This reflects an OT truth (cf. I Sam. 2:7; 16:7; I Kgs. 8:39; I Chr. 28:9; II Chr. 6:30; Ps. 7:9; 44:21; Pro. 15:11; 21:2; Jer. 11:20; 17:9-10; 20:12; Luke 16:15; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Rom. 8:27). God knows us completely and still loves us (cf. Rom. 8:27).

The disciples affirm that YHWH knows their motives as well as the motives and lives of the two candidates. They want God’s will in this choice (AORIST MIDDLE). Jesus chose the Twelve, but He is now with the Father.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE HEART

The Greek term *kardia* is used in the Septuagint and NT to reflect the Hebrew term *lēb*. It is used in several ways (cf. Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 403-404).

1. the center of physical life, a metaphor for the person (cf. Acts 14:17; II Corinthians 3:2-3; James 5:5)
2. the center of spiritual (moral) life
 - a. God knows the heart (cf. Luke 16:15; Rom. 8:27; I Cor. 14:25; I Thess. 2:4; Rev. 2:23)
 - b. used of mankind’s spiritual life (cf. Matt. 15:18-19; 18:35; Rom. 6:17; I Tim. 1:5; II Tim. 2:22; I Pet. 1:22)
3. the center of the thought life (i.e. intellect, cf. Matt. 13:15; 24:48; Acts 7:23; 16:14; 28:27; Rom. 1:21; 10:6; 16:18; II Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:18; 4:18; James 1:26; II Pet. 1:19; Rev. 18:7; heart is synonymous with mind in II Cor. 3:14-15 and Phil. 4:7)
4. the center of the volition (i.e. will, cf. Acts 5:4; 11:23; I Cor. 4:5; 7:37; II Cor. 9:7)
5. the center of the emotions (cf. Matt. 5:28; Acts 2:26,37; 7:54; 21:13; Rom. 1:24; II Cor. 2:4; 7:3; Eph. 6:22; Phil. 1:7)
6. unique place of the Spirit’s activity (cf. Rom. 5:5; II Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6 [i.e. Christ in our hearts, Eph. 3:17])
7. The heart is a metaphorical way of referring to the entire person (cf. Matt. 22:37, quoting Deut. 6:5). The thoughts, motives, and actions attributed to the heart fully reveal the type of individual. The OT has some striking usages of the terms
 - a. Gen. 6:6; 8:21, “God was grieved to His heart” (also notice Hosea 11:8-9)
 - b. Deut. 4:29; 6:5, “with all your heart and all your soul”
 - c. Deut. 10:16, “uncircumcised heart” and Rom. 2:29
 - d. Ezek. 18:31-32, “a new heart”
 - e. Ezek. 36:26, “a new heart” vs. “a heart of stone”

1:25 “to his own place” This is an euphemism for “damnation.” Satan used him for his purposes (cf. Luke 22:3; John 13:2; 27), but Judas is responsible for his choices and actions (cf. Gal. 6:7).

1:26 “they drew lots for them” This has an OT background related to the High Priest’s use of the Urim and Thummim in Lev. 16:8, or to individuals using some similar type of method (cf. Prov. 16:33; 18:18). The Roman soldiers also cast lots for Jesus’ clothes (cf. Luke 23:34). However, this is the last time this method of knowing God’s will is mentioned in the NT. If one tends toward proof-tenting, this method could become normative for how to make spiritual decisions, which would be very unfortunate (e.g. opening the Bible and putting one’s finger on a verse to determine the will of God). Believers are to live by faith, not by mechanical means of determining God’s will (e.g. sheep fleece, cf. Jdgs. 6:17,36-40).

▣ **“Matthias”** Eusebius says he was involved in the mission of the seventy (cf. Luke 10). Later traditions assert that he was martyred in Ethiopia.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why did Jesus stay with the disciples for 40 days?
2. What is the “baptism of the Spirit?”
3. Why is verse 7 so important?
4. Why is the ascension important?
5. Why did Peter feel a need to fill Judas' place?
6. How can Paul be an apostle when he did not fulfill the qualifications? (1:21-22)