

Twelve Lessons

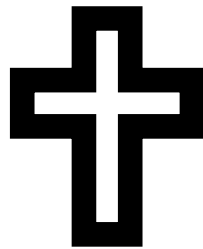
on

Acts I
(Chapters 1-9)

Compiled and Written

by

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THE LORD'S LAST INSTRUCTIONS – LESSON 1

Acts 1:1-23

Introduction: Here is a basic overview of the book of Acts:

1. Author: Luke, the beloved physician, a converted Gentile. He is easily identified by his references to the medical world, found some fifty times in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. (Medical references – study)
2. Outline: As the Lord gave John the Beloved the outline for the book of the Revelation (Rev. 1:19) so here he gives Luke the outline for the book of Acts (Acts 1:8).
 - a. Chapters 1-7 – the Lord working through the Church in Jerusalem.
 - b. Chapters 8-12 – the Lord working through the Church in Judea and Samaria.
 - c. Chapters 13-28 – the Lord working through the Church unto the uttermost parts of the earth.
 - d. Note: We see in this outline that the heathen without legal obligation are made fellow members in the church. This originates not from Paul and not from Peter, but from God.
3. There are three meaningful conversions:
 - a. The first is the eunuch (8:36-38), a descendant of Ham (Gen. 10:6-20).
 - b. The second is Saul (9:1-6), a descendant of Shem (Gen. 10:21-31).
 - c. The third is Cornelius (10:44-48) a descendant of Japheth (Gen. 10:2-5).
4. There is a significant comparison:
 - a. The Pentateuch of the Old Testament – Genesis through Deuteronomy begins with Adam and ends with Moses.
 - b. Acts could be said to complete the Pentateuch of the New Testament beginning with the Second Adam and ending with Paul. (Should we study Genesis with Matthew, Exodus with Mark, Leviticus with Luke, Numbers with John, and Deuteronomy with Acts?)
5. Title: The Acts of the Apostles
 - a. Really this is the Acts of the Lord Jesus Christ or the Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Church.
 - b. Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke to describe what the Lord did on the earth.
 - c. Luke writes Acts to present a perpetuation of what the Lord is doing from heaven of that which he began on earth. Acts is actually a continuation of the gospel through Luke.
 - d. As Jesus did His works in the power of the Spirit; His body, the Church, is to do mighty works in the power of the Spirit.
 - 1) John 20:21 – *“As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”*
 - 2) John 14:12 – *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”*
6. The Purpose: The Book of Acts is a bridge or ladder between the Gospels and the Epistles. It is a transitional book. Acts is a record of the transition from the Kingdom to the Church, from Judaism to Christianity.
 - a. Unless we respect the dispensational character of Acts, we shall not be able to rightly divide the word of truth.
 - b. We see the “Holy Ghost” upon the early disciples as a “sign” to the unbelieving Jew but then the “Holy Spirit” indwelling the early disciples as they go to the Gentiles. It is interesting to note that Dr. Billy Kanoy said he believed the King James translators made a distinction between “Holy Ghost” and “Holy Spirit” to show the difference in the dispensational work of the Holy Spirit because both words are translated from the same Greek word.

Lesson Goals:

1. Become familiar with the overall design and purpose of the Book of Acts.
2. To see the truths Jesus taught his disciples during the forty day period between His resurrection and ascension.
3. Be acquainted with the manner of life and events that took place in the early church between the ascension of Christ and Pentecost.

Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:

1. Pentateuch – a Greek term meaning “five-volumed” which refers to the first five books of the Old Testament. The Jews traditionally refer to this collection as “the Book of the Law,” or simply “the Law.”
2. Treatise – *logos* – a written composition on a particular subject, in which the principles of it are discussed or explained. A treatise is of an indefinite length; but it implies more form and method than an essay, and less fullness or copiousness than a system.
3. Passion – Grk. *to pathein*, “suffering” – words referring to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ by crucifixion.

I. THE SALUTATION

A. The Author – Acts 1:1 – *“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.”*

1. *“The former treatise”* – The Gospel according to Luke.
2. *“Theophilus”* – Both Luke’s Gospel and the Acts are addressed to Theophilus. The name means “lover of God.”
3. Luke 1:1 – He is called “most excellent” Theophilus – “Most excellent” was used only in addressing a Roman official, generally one set over a country. Theophilus was an officer of the Roman empire, perhaps a governor of a province.

B. The Arrangement – *“...of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.”*

1. God’s order for power is “doing” before “teaching”.
2. Jesus spent 30 years doing and 3 1/2 years teaching. What He did and said are inseparable. What He did is to be interpreted by what He said, and what He said is to be interpreted by what He did.

C. The Ascension – vs. 2 – *“Until the day in which he was taken up...”*

1. Four times in this chapter we see the statement “taken up”: vs. 2, 9, 11, and 22. Why?
2. This detail is important in that it reveals a physical Christ not the mythical Christ of the Gnostics.
 - a. There is a real man in Heaven at God’s right hand.
 - b. I Tim. 2:5 – *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”*
 - c. Heb. 4:15 – *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

II. THE SCHOOLWORK – vs. 2 – *“commandments”* – For forty days, the Lord taught His disciples some important lessons.

A. The Reality of His Resurrection – vs. 3 – *“To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days...”* The doctrine of the bodily resurrection of Jesus was predominant in the preaching and teaching of the Early Church.

1. He Presented Himself – *“he shewed himself alive”*
2. He Proved Himself – *“by many infallible proofs”*

B. The Coming of His Kingdom – vs. 3 – *“...and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:”*

1. Kingdom of God is “visible”. It is clear that the disciples believed there would be a literal, visible Kingdom here on earth with Israel reigning. In verse 6, one point was left untouched, the time when He would restore the kingdom to Israel; that is the reason for the disciples question. The answer was according to His repeated teaching; the time was God’s secret (Matt. 24:36,42,44; 25:13; I Thess. 5:1).
2. Kingdom of Heaven is “invisible” among the “visible” (tares and wheat, etc.).

C. The Power of the Holy Spirit – vs. 4-8

1. John’s baptism with water was characterized by repentance (Luke 3:3), and he clearly did not think of it as having any saving power in itself, else he would not have refused it to so many (Luke 3:7). This water baptism was offered only to those who gave evidence that they had already repented (Luke 3:8). This baptism “with water” was “in water” as evidenced by the baptism of Jesus (immersion). The whole body of the convert was baptized.
2. The baptism with the Holy Ghost was characterized by repentance and faith in Christ. This Holy Spirit baptism was conditioned by evidence that they had trusted Christ as Saviour. This baptism “with the Holy Ghost” was “in the Holy Ghost” as the whole body of the church was baptized. I Cor. 12:13, *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”*
3. Vs. 8 – There is a vast difference between the “baptism” in the Holy Ghost in verse 5 and the “power” that is to come upon them. The first has to do with “position” and the second has to do with “power.” Positionally, every believer is in the body but practically not every believer is “empowered” with the Holy Ghost.
4. A Simple Outline explaining the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer
 - a. The Holy Spirit was received as an Endowment (gift) – Acts 2:38; 8:15-19; 19:2
 - b. The Holy Spirit came on believers as an Enduement (enablement) Acts 1:8; 10:44; 11:15; 19:6
 - c. The Holy Spirit was the Element they were baptized in (bonding) Acts 1:5; I Cor. 12:3
 - d. The Holy Spirit was poured out, as an Effusion (an exhalation of God) Acts 2:17; 18; 10:45
 - e. The Holy Spirit filled believers as an Empowerment (authorization, stamp of approval) Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 6:5; 7:55; 9:17; 13:9

D. The Assurance of His Coming Again – vs. 9-11

1. His Ascension was declared necessary in order that His followers might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33; John 16:7; 20:22).
2. His Ascension was necessary to show His disciples that this visible, tangible, risen Jesus withdrew that they might realize more fully His presence and power as the returning Lord.

III. THE STUDENTS

A. Their Dwelling – vs. 12-13

1. Mount of Olives – The Ascension had taken place from the Mount of Olives, which stands directly east of Jerusalem, about three thousand feet away. This was the distance permitted to a Jew to walk on the Sabbath day without breaking the Sabbath rest.
2. The Upper Room – The word *hyperooon*, here translated “upper room,” occurs only four times in the New Testament: Acts 9:37, “*She (Dorcas) was sick and died; whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber*” (see also Acts 9:39); 20:8, “*And there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together.*” The room so designated was an upper chamber used for devotion, or as a place where to lay the dead before burial, or occasionally for conversation, etc. Here it evidently means the place where they were assembled for devotion.

B. Their Devotion – vs. 14

1. The Perseverance – The word “continued” denotes “persevering and constant attention.”
 - a. “With one accord” – The word denotes the entire harmony of their views and feelings. There were no schisms, no divided interests, no discordant purposes.
 - b. The key phrase “with one accord” is found six times in Acts (1:14; 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; and note also 2:44).
2. The People – “His brethren” – Jesus’ half-brothers (Matt. 13:55), who did not believe in him before his death (John 7:5) but who were brought to faith by his resurrection. A resurrection appearance to James is recorded in 1 Cor. 15:7. The women may designate either the wives of the disciples or the women mentioned in Luke 8:2; 24:10.

C. Their Dependence – vs. 15-26

1. The Dilemma – vs. 15-22.
 - a. Judas’ rebellion and subsequent death had created an absence among the Apostles.
 - b. Peter goes to great lengths by quoting Psalm 41:9 to prove that God knew of the apostasy of Jude before it happened.
 - c. The qualifications for Judas’ successor were twofold: he must have been a companion of Jesus, and he must have been a witness of Jesus’ resurrection. This proves that there are no “Apostles” today, otherwise, they would need to have been Jesus companion while on earth and a witness of His resurrection.
2. The Decision – vs. 23-26
 - a. They Depended on Prayer – As they could not agree on the individual, they invoked the direction of God in their choice – an example which should be followed in every selection of an individual to exercise the duties of the sacred office of the ministry.
 - b. They Depended on Providence – Such a choice by the casting of lots had an OT precedent (Prov. 16:33), but it occurs nowhere else in the NT and is not normative for Christian practice.