

Acts Chapter 1 Con't

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[0 : 00] You will take your text sheet for the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 1, and this is our last session for the month of February.

It's hard to imagine that next time we meet it will be March, but that will be alright. Spring is right around the corner. We are considering this book because it more than any other book in all of the Scripture is responsible for the great divisions that exist in the body of Christ.

And I think we will be able to see as we work our way through the book of Acts why it is and how some of these divisions have come about. And of course it all has to do with how one interprets a text of Scripture that is before us.

So as we engage the Acts of the Apostles, there will be plenty of opportunity for Q&A.; There will be, I'm confident, some really new things that you will come to appreciate.

And the beautiful thing about learning is the more you learn, the more you have to learn with. And nothing, in my estimation, is so satisfying and stimulating as intellectual, spiritual stimulation that comes about from examining the truth.

[1 : 27] So that's what we are about today. And I want to remind you, in the first chapter, the contrast that exists here, we read that John, in verse 5, John truly baptized with water, but, and here is a contrast, you, meaning the disciples here, or the apostles in particular, you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

Interesting, he didn't say what John went on to say in his addresses in the Gospels, because John's message was, when the Messiah comes, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. But nothing is said here about being baptized with fire. And the reason is simple, is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism by the Holy Spirit or in the Holy Spirit, will be a phenomenon experienced only by the believers of that day.

The baptism of fire, to which John referred, is the baptism reserved for unbelievers. This is a great contrast.

Believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit, unbelievers are baptized with fire. And that's what John is talking about. But here, Dr. Luke doesn't go into that and say that, because, frankly, it wasn't applicable for them.

[2 : 59] The baptism with the Holy Spirit, not many days hence, will be realized ten days hence from the time this is stated, and it will be on the day of Pentecost.

And that will undertake in chapter 2. The question, then, about the kingdom and when it is coming surfaces. We've already addressed that a little bit.

We'll not belabor the point. He tells them that their expectations for the arrival of the kingdom of heaven on earth is not theirs to know.

The Father is going to provide for that in due time. And he's offering another contrast here, because there are two different directions in which this thing could go.

One is, if the kingdom of heaven is going to come to earth, then that would have been realized, and there would be no need for what is following in verse 8.

[4 : 05] But, however, there is a contrast here. It is, the kingdom is not going to be established now. That's for the Father to bring about in his own good time.

However, but, as an alternative program, here is what's going to happen. Instead of the kingdom of heaven coming to earth now, as you expect, there is another thing in store.

And that is, you shall receive power. After that, and this word for power is *exousia*, from which we get the word authority.

You shall receive authority. After that, the Holy Spirit is come upon you. And you shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the

earth.

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

[5 : 15] This must have been utterly stunning, just spectacular. I get the impression that they are circled around the Lord Jesus, and he is talking to them, just as I am talking to you.

And after he offers this assurance that they are going to receive power, and how they are going to witness to him, he begins levitating vertically.

He is just rising right before their very eyes. And they are standing there looking, and all at once, he is elevating right before them.

And as they stand there, he is going up, up, up. They are there, wide-eyed, with their mouths open, as he is ascending literally. And then the next thing, a cloud envelops him, and he is gone.

And they stand there, gazing up into heaven, trying to get another glimpse. And as they are looking up, eyes wide open and mouths agape.

[6 : 21] Then we are told that two men stood by them in white apparel. These men are angelic beings.

They are often described as men because they have the appearance of men. Apparently, these angels were not discernible from ordinary men, but they were angels.

They were not simply men. And they also said, ye men of Galilee. And all of these guys were from Galilee. Remember, of the twelve apostles that Jesus chose originally, only one was not from Galilee.

And that was Judas. He was from Iscariot, which was further down south. All eleven of the apostles that remained were from Galilee.

And that's, of course, where Jesus was from in Nazareth. They're from all up north. They're northern boys. Ye men of Galilee. But they're not in Galilee now.

[7 : 24] Remember, they're in Jerusalem, outside Jerusalem. They're actually on the Mount of Olives. And the Mount of Olives is just across the Brook Kidron and the Valley Kidron from the temple area.

So here they are in the Mount of Olives, near the Garden of Gethsemane. And they are addressed by the angels. Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Frequently throughout the Gospels, Jesus speaks of having come down from heaven. Having been sent from heaven by the Father.

Here he is returning up. Which, of course, leads us to believe that heaven is up. But up from where? Because up from Australia is not up from the United States.

[8 : 30] It's a different up. We're talking about a globe. And if you are here, situated at the top of the ball, and you go up, you're going up this way.

But if you're from Australia, and you're at the bottom of the globe, and you go up, you go that way. So which way is up? I think geographically, we need to always keep in mind that the focal point for all of humanity, for all of the world, for all of the universe, is Israel.

That's God's chosen real estate. So it is always up from Israel. That's the reference point.

It is up from Israel. And that's exactly what they appeared to have witnessed. He shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven.

And, fellas, I can only take that to mean literally, physically, the angel is saying, as you have seen him go, bodily and physically, right before your very eyes, that's the way he's going to return.

[9 : 44] And Matthew 24 says, and every eye shall see him. He will come in the clouds, and it will be a very visible, physical thing, just as physical as is his ascension.

Yes? Were the two white-robed men, say, men of Galilee, while you're standing there, who can be gone away to heaven someday just to see when he will return?

Has that been relayed by Jesus any place prior to this, or is this direct revelation from God? Is this something that other people would have heard Jesus say about what was going to happen?

About his return? Yeah, about him going and coming back. Oh, yeah. Okay. Yeah. Yeah, in John 14, he talks about, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and I will receive you to myself.

And then in Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse, he talks about his second coming. He is going to return again. And, yeah, so there are numerous places in the Gospels where Christ referred to it. [10:59] Here, all the angel is doing is reinforcing what Christ has already said and reminding them of that. But he shall come in like manner, as you have seen him go into heaven.

Then return they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey. Now, keep in mind one fact in the midst of all of this, and I've already made a point that the fact that these guys are from Galilee.

Well, they're now in Jerusalem. And Galilee, for instance, Nazareth, where Jesus was reared, where he grew up as a lad, is probably from Jerusalem.

Let's see, how far would it be? Probably 70 miles or close to it. So all the while here, they are in Jerusalem. They're a long ways from home.

They're just temporarily here in Jerusalem, but they are going to end up staying pretty much in Jerusalem for years.

[12:08] And they're in Jerusalem. They are going to proclaim the Gospels, going to start on Pentecost. And they are going to be subjected to persecution and imprisonment.

And even one of them, James, will be put to death. And this is all right there in Jerusalem. And as you move through the book of Acts, they never seem to get out of Jerusalem.

So the center of the bullseye is Jerusalem. And the next circle out is Judea. And the next circle out is Samaria.

The next circle out is the uttermost parts of the earth. But they are confined right there to Jerusalem. And it's very interesting as to why that is the case. And we will see that when we get there.

So they are on the mount called Olivet. And by the way, it is referred to as the place of Christ's return, both in Zechariah and in the Gospels.

[13:09] Which is from Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, where abode both Peter and James and John, we are on the next page now, of course.

And Andrew and Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, or Simon the Zealot.

Simon would have been considered the extremist of the group. He was more radical. He was, the Zealots were those who were in favor of taking on the Romans militarily with guerrilla warfare and trying to drive them from the country, etc.

He belonged to that particular party. And we are told in verse 14 that these all continued with one accord. And that's important.

One accord means that they had a cohesiveness about them. They weren't divided over these issues. They were all together. And they are engaging in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

[14:29] And in those days, Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said, and the names of those together were about 120, Men and brethren, the scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas.

Now, this is a prophetic utterance that David gave about Judas a thousand years earlier. And we won't take time to go back there, but it is in the Psalms.

And some of you have marginal notes that will indicate exactly where it is. I don't have that at my immediate disposal, but it is there. And Judas was guide to them that took Jesus.

For he, that is Judas, was numbered with us. He was one of the twelve and had obtained part of this ministry.

Now, this man, Judas, purchased a field with the reward of iniquity. Well, actually, he didn't purchase the field at all.

[15:50] What happened was, after Jesus was betrayed and led away to be crucified, Judas came to a stark realization of exactly what he had done.

And he was overcome with guilt and remorse. He took the thirty pieces of silver he had been given by the chief priests and the scribes, went into the temple and said, I want to return this money.

I don't want anything to do with it. And that's what his guilt did. We are told that he repented. And I believe that he did. So, the chief priests then look at this thirty pieces of silver.

And the logical thing to do with it would be to put it in the temple treasury. But they, being very ceremonially astute as they were, said, well, this is the price of blood.

This is blood money. We can't put that in the temple treasury. It would contaminate everything. So, we're not going to receive the money.

[17:01] That's your responsibility. And Judas took the money then, the thirty pieces of silver, threw it at the feet of the priest, turned around, walked out, committed suicide.

Meanwhile, the priests are there gathering up these coins and saying, what are we going to do with this? We can't put it in the temple. What are we going to do with this money? Somebody said, well, let's buy a field.

And they bought a field outside of town called, we would call it a potter's field. Potter's Cemetery. It's a pauper's cemetery.

It's where people are buried who have no means of providing for their own burial or caring for the expenses that were attendant to that.

So, that's exactly what they did. And the money that Judas received for the betrayal of Jesus was ultimately used to purchase a potter's field. This man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity.

[18:08] Falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem. In so much as that field is called in their proper tongue, a keldama, that is, the field of blood.

For it is written in the book of Psalms, let his habitation be desolate, speaking of Judas, and let no man dwell therein, and his bishopric, or his office, let another take.

That is, Judas' position as an apostle is going to be filled by someone else. And this, too, is all in the Psalms. Now, there's what appears to be some contradictory information about the death of Judas. We are told that he went out and hanged himself. Here in this description, it says that it indicates that he died from a fall. And the fall was such that it pierced and opened his body, and remains of his body upon impact spewed out.

So, which is it? In fact, this is one of several accounts that leads some people to say, ah, you see, there's contradictions in the Bible. In the Gospels, it says he hung himself, and here it says that he died from a fall.

[19:31] And what's the answer? Some have posed a possibility, and this is just a possibility. I'm not saying this is the way it was, but it would suffice. That he was at the edge of a precipice, and there was a tree growing there close to the precipice with an overhanging limb.

He put a rope around the limb, and he stepped off the edge of the pinnacle, which was tantamount to kicking a stool out from under you.

He stepped off the edge and hung himself. And the theory is, and it's just a theory nobody can say, that the limb from which he was suspended broke under the weight of his body.

And hanging with the noose around his neck, he fell to the ground below upon jagged rocks or whatever, and the impact opened the body and the remains spewed out.

That's just one possible explanation, and it may not even be close to the truth. But I am satisfied that there is an explanation that satisfies both of these accounts, and we need not interpret it as a contradiction, as some insist that it is.

[20:46] And there are other possibilities as well. So, at any rate, now they are faced with the necessity of replacing an apostle.

One of the reasons they are concerned about that is because they had already been promised back in Matthew 19, that when the kingdom is established, you who have followed me in the regeneration shall sit upon the twelve thrones of Israel, judging the twelve tribes.

But now there's only an eleven apostle. So, what are they going to do? Some feel that, and some scholars are divided about this, some feel that the eleven were presumptuous, and they had no business trying to choose a replacement.

And if they had just waited, if they had waited, God would have raised up the twelfth apostle, whom he wanted to replace Judas.

And that would have been Paul. But the apostles here got rambunctious, and they ran ahead of God's plan and program, and they took it upon themselves to replace Judas with another.

[21:59] But I have real problems with that. First of all, the text doesn't say that. And you must remember that our Lord, when he called these men, gave them authority.

On the day of Pentecost, they are going to be endued with additional authority. But he already gave them authority to cast out demons, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to do things that he was doing.

So, they were not acting out of some misguided notion. They were simply fulfilling the responsibility that they had been given.

And they saw the necessity for replacing Judas, and they set about to do that. And not only that, but throughout this portion of the book of Acts, the apostles are referred to as being in prayer, as being men of faith, and as being filled with the Holy Spirit.

So, it is inconceivable to me to charge them with acting rashly and running ahead of God. I think they were doing exactly what they were supposed to be doing. And we will see later on that the Apostle Paul would not have been qualified to be one of the original twelve.

[23 : 20] And the reason he wasn't is because the qualifications for the original twelve are given. And here, it has to do with one who had been with them from the baptism of John, verse 22.

Judas' replacement needs to be one who has accompanied with us at the time, all the time, that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. That means he had to have been someone who was privy to what was happening for the past three years.

The time of the earthly ministry of Christ. And Judas, of course, was, and there were several others who were. There were several disciples, probably hundreds of disciples who were well familiar with Jesus, who had been with him, spent time with him, heard his teachings, saw his miracles, etc.

Hundreds besides the twelve. They were called disciples. And out of all of the disciples, Jesus chose twelve. So, there would still be a huge pool of potential replacements that were with Jesus from the time of the baptism of John up until the time he was taken up from them.

and Paul, the apostle, was not one of them. We do not have any evidence that Paul ever saw Jesus in the flesh.

[24 : 54] He may have, but there's no record of it. He never says he did. We know that he saw the risen Christ after his ascension and he spoke to him from heaven.

So, bear in mind, if you will, guys, and this is a really important distinction, that the ministry to which Paul is being called is not to duplicate that to which the twelve have been called because the twelve were exclusively commanded to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Paul, Paul's very title is going to be the apostle to the Gentiles. That's another way of saying the apostle to the non-Jews.

That would not fit because the twelve had a peculiar ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were the ones who got the kingdom message because they were the ones to whom the kingdom was promised.

And it is the twelve who were going to sit upon the twelve thrones during the kingdom. Paul is raised up of God to be an apostle of a different stripe.

[26 : 08] It is true he is going to go to the Jew but he is also going to go to the Gentiles. And the beautiful thing about this is and this is really significant guys Paul was a Jew.

His mother was a Jew. His father was a Jew. They were both of the tribe of Benjamin. He was as Jewish as you could get. But Paul was a Roman.

He was a Roman citizen which was very rare for Jews to enjoy. Most Jews were not Roman citizens.

Paul was. We don't know exactly how well he was born a Roman citizen. Apparently his parents were and we'll see that surface later in the book of Acts.

But this is really, really important. And here I want you to keep in mind that Paul's big thing his really big thing is Jew and Gentile together in one body making of the two one new man middle wall of partition broken down.

[27 : 21] So who is it that God raises up to be the apostle to the Gentiles? someone who could bridge both. Someone who was Jewish with a Jewish background understands the Jewish law the customs and everything else and yet someone who had the traveling papers the authority and the credentials of a Roman citizen.

What a prize and God selected him very strategically because it's going to provide all kinds of openings both ways and he is going to utilize them.

So that is really important and here in verse 23 then they appointed two I guess you would say these were nominated two men were nominated as possible replacements for Judas one who was called Joseph called Barsabbas not to be confused of course with Barabbas Joseph called Barsabbas who was surnamed Justice and Matthias and they the twelve the eleven prayed and said thou Lord which knowest the hearts of all men show whether of these two thou hast chosen

that he the one of your choice may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell that he Judas might go to his own place and they gave forth their lots that is they drew lots or cast lots for them and the lot fell upon

Matthias and he was numbered with the eleven apostles and there's no indication that he shouldn't have been there is no caveat here saying that they ran ahead of the Lord or that they took it upon themselves to do something that they should not have done so I think that this was very proper and all in order and fellas I want to emphasize something here and I'm going to be emphasizing this throughout following studies because this is a key all of these principles with whom we have to do here in Acts 1 they are all Jews every one of them is as Jewish as he can be and I am convinced that one of the greatest mistakes that is made in the interpretation of scripture by Christians the body of Christ is we insist on

Christianizing that which is Jewish and if you do that it will I guarantee you lead you to all kinds of wrong conclusions don't try to Christianize the Bible don't even try to Christianize the New Testament let what is Jewish be Jewish Christianity is going to come in strong and loud later on but you've got to remember that Christianity is born out of Judaism the cradle of Christianity is Judaism and that is so critical to understanding but so many Christians want to they want to they want to Christian baptize that which is Jewish and make it into something that it isn't and it leads to a lot of confusion and we will see that as we move through questions or comments Roger I'd have to look that up

[31 : 13] I can't tell you my my thinking is and don't don't hold me to this but I think it's maybe maybe a mile maybe a mile and a half something like that I a Sabbath day's journey a Sabbath day's journey consisted of the length that a Jew was permitted to travel on the Sabbath day without violating the Sabbath and if he went beyond that it was considered labor so he was allowed a certain amount of travel distance on the Sabbath and I don't recall exactly what that is I can research that and look it up Mike and then Richard there's mention of what happened to the other apostles but is there mention of what happened to Matthias no in fact some use that as an evidence that

Matthias was not God's choice because they say as you read on through the New Testament you never hear a thing from Matthias proving that he was not God's man that doesn't prove anything because as you move on through the New Testament you don't hear anything more about Bartholomew either or James the less you don't hear anything about others of the apostles except for Peter and James who is going to be martyred so there is very little said about them and the idea that Matthias is never mentioned again does not at all negate the idea that he should have been chosen Joe no we don't we don't and I'm not suggesting that that ought to be the methodology by which we decide things today either but that was a common way of doing it then Richard did you have a comment yeah I guess first of of just to comment on that they could pray to God show them which man should be chosen are so I'm not sure that that wasn't God's man but my question is I always had the understanding that you took the money and put it back and threw it at the feet of people that give it to it but yet chapter 1 verse 18 says that he bought a field with that money well I think I think I think the way the expression reads there it is a little confusing I certainly agree with that I think what the meaning is is that the money that was Judas's was used to purchase a field and I think it was these priests who purchased the field it's just that it was Judas's actual money that did it so they bought it by proxy yeah yeah

Roger well we don't know probably some of them were wives and probably some of them were women like Mary Magdalene and others who were women who were active in the ministry of our Lord probably we don't know this for sure but probably most of the wives of the apostles were home in Galilee especially if they had families and children you know they stayed by the stuff they were probably there because Peter mentions that we left everything you know they left their boats they left their business they left everything to follow Christ you you