

ACTS

Union Grove Bible Institute

The Progression of the Gospel:

ACTS 2-7	ACTS 8	ACTS 9
Acts 2:10 Jews & Proselytes 2:14 Men of Judea 2:22 Men of Israel 2:36 House of Israel	Samaritan Acts 8:25 Ethiopian Proselyte 8:26-40	Saul Converted <u>GENTILES</u> Kings Israel
Men of Israel Acts 3:12	Hellenists Acts 6:1 Nicolas, a Proselyte 6:5	Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
Captain of Temple Priests Sadducees Acts 4:1; 5:24	Stephen Preaches to His People Martyred Acts 7	
Elders Children of Israel Acts 5:21		
Transitional Period – Judaism to Christianity		

I. The Witness in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7).

A. The expectation of the chosen (chaps. 1–2).

1. THE INTRODUCTION (1:1–5).

1:1–2. In the first two verses of this book Luke looked back to his Gospel. **Theophilus** may have been Luke's patron who financed the writing of Luke and Acts. At any rate he was a believer in Christ. These two books would confirm and instruct Theophilus, as well as the church of Christ, in the faith (cf. Luke 1:1–4).

The verb **began** indicates that Acts continues the account of the ministry and teaching Christ began on earth. He is still working and teaching through His people today.

The reference to the Lord's Ascension in Acts 1:2 looks back to Luke 24:51.

Two commandments were given by the Lord before He returned to heaven: (1) the apostolic band was to remain in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4; cf. Luke 24:49); (2) they were to go into the world as witnesses (Acts 1:8; cf. Luke 10:4; 24:47). These **instructions** may have seemed contradictory but they were to be obeyed sequentially.

1:3. The Lord's post-resurrection appearances attested the reality of the Resurrection. Christ **gave many convincing proofs** of this. The word "proofs" (*tekmēriais*) occurs only here in the New Testament and looks at demonstrable evidence in contrast with evidence provided by witnesses. In other words, the Resurrection was proven by touch, sight, and feel (cf. Luke 24:39–40; 1 John 1:1).

For **40 days** after His resurrection the Lord **appeared** to the apostles and discussed **the kingdom of God** with **them**. What is meant by this term? God has always ruled over the world and especially in Israel (Dan. 2:47; 4:3, 25–26, 32, 34–37; 5:21; 6:25–27; Pss. 5:2; 84:3; 89:6–18; 103; etc.). However, a time is coming, commonly called the Millennium, when God will burst into human history in a spectacular way to establish His rule on earth. This is what is meant by the term "kingdom of God" (cf. comments on Matt. 3:2; 13:10–16). Though this topic was the subject of much of the Lord's teaching and preaching before the Cross, He saw fit to discuss it further during His 40 days of post-resurrection ministry.

1:4. The promised **gift** from the **Father**, also anticipated in Luke 24:49, was quite obviously the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:5; John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7).

1:5. Indeed **John** had predicted a Spirit baptism by the Lord Jesus. The greatness of Christ was seen in the fact that John identified people with himself by **water** baptism; Christ Jesus would join His followers to Himself by **the Holy Spirit**. The word **baptized**, which normally means "dipped or immersed," here has the idea of "uniting with" (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1–2). The Lord made the same prediction of Spirit baptism that John made (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; cf. Acts 11:16).

2. THE INTERNMENT AT JERUSALEM (1:6–26).

a. *The Ascension (1:6–11).*

1:6. The disciples' question, **Lord are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?** is most illuminating.

The sentence is introduced by the connective **so** (*men oun*), which associates the thought of verse 6 with verse 5. In the disciples' minds the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the coming of the promised kingdom were closely associated. And well they should be, because the Old Testament frequently joined the two (cf. Isa. 32:15–20; 44:3–5; Ezek. 39:28–29; Joel 2:28–3:1; Zech. 12:8–10). When Christ told the disciples of the soon-coming Spirit baptism, they immediately concluded that the restoration of Israel's kingdom was near in time (cf. comments on "restore" in Acts 3:21).

1:7. Some conclude from the Lord's response that the apostles had a false concept of the kingdom. But this is wrong. Christ did not accuse them of this. If the followers of the Lord Jesus had an incorrect view, this would have been the time for Him to correct it. The fact is, Christ taught the coming of an earthly, literal kingdom (cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke 19:11–27; 22:28–30). Acts 1:3 states that the Lord instructed the disciples about the kingdom; He certainly gave them the right impression as to its character and future coming. What Jesus discussed here (v. 7) was the *time* of the coming of the kingdom. The Greek word for **times** (*chronous*) basically describes duration of times, and the word for **dates** (*kairous*) refers to both length of times and kinds of times (as in, e.g., "hard times"). The disciples were **not ... to know** either the times or the critical periods **the Father had set by His ... authority**. Later, further revelation would be made concerning these (cf. 1 Thes. 5:1).

1:8. This verse contrasts (*alla, but*) with verse 7. Instead of knowing the times or dates, the apostles were to be Christ's witnesses **to the ends of the earth**. This they were to do after they had been supernaturally empowered by **the Holy Spirit**.

The meaning of the clause **you will be My witnesses** is subject to question. Is this a command, or is it a simple statement of fact? Grammatically the words may be taken either way, but because of 10:42 (cf. 4:20) it is clearly an imperative in the future tense.

Probably "the ends of the earth" looks to Rome, the proud center of world civilization in the Apostolic Age, a significant distance from Jerusalem (more than 1,400 miles, as the crow flies).

1:9–11. These verses describe the Lord's Ascension but they also anticipate His return. He will come back in **a cloud**, bodily, in view of people (Rev. 1:7), and to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4)—**the same way** the apostles saw **Him go**.

The Ascension of Christ marked the conclusion of His ministry on earth in His bodily presence. It also exalted Him to the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33–36; 5:30–31; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 12:2). At the same time the Ascension meant that the continuing work of Christ on earth was now placed in the hands of His disciples (Acts 1:1–2, 8).

It was imperative that the Ascension occur so that the promised Comforter could come (cf. John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; Acts 2:33–36). The Holy Spirit would empower the disciples as they ministered the gospel and waited for the kingdom.

b. *The supplication in the Upper Room (1:12–14).*

1:12–14. A **Sabbath Day's walk** was about 3,000 feet or a bit more than half a mile (cf. Ex. 16:29; Num. 35:5). **The Mount of Olives** is this short distance east of Jerusalem.

The apostles were gathered **upstairs**. Large groups normally would meet in upper stories because the largest rooms were upstairs (cf. Acts 20:8–9). The lower stories had smaller rooms so that their walls would bear the weight of the upper stories.

The **prayer** (1:14) may be specific prayer for the promise referred to in verse 4. In the Greek "prayer" has the article. The disciples were following the instruction suggested by Jesus (Luke 11:13). However, since the day of Pentecost, it is not necessary for Christians to pray for the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:9). Evidently the Lord's resurrection led to the conversion of the **brothers** of Jesus (cf. John 7:5; Cor. 15:7). If so, this is the only recorded appearance Christ made to unsaved people after His resurrection.¹

¹ Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, /vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 353–356.