

**Review (Acts 1:4-8)**

*4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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.”*

- Recall that Luke has been creating a sense of anticipation concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit and *the Promise of the Father*.
- Jesus again contrasts baptism in water with the baptism in the Spirit.
- Jesus’ answer to their question about the Kingdom is important. He doesn’t say that there **won’t** be a kingdom, but that the timeframe isn’t ours to know.
- Jesus refocuses them on their mission to the nations (*the Great Commission*).
- When the Spirit comes, they will receive power: *dunamis*. Peter will later say how God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and *dunamis*. The disciples will soon experience the same.

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## **The Ascension (Acts 1:9)**

*9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.*

- This is a pivotal moment, even if we tend to overlook it. Having overcome sin and death, Jesus now sits at the right hand of His Father in glory.
- Psalm 110 is the Old Testament passage most quoted in the New Testament: “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’” (Psalms 110:1).
- This passage was used to show that Messiah would victorious *first*, and *then* be taken up to the highest place of authority at the Father’s right hand.
- This passage also shows that the Messiah would be more than an ordinary man. Jesus asked the Pharisees: if David calls the Messiah Lord, then how is He the Son of David? (See Matthew 22:41ff.)

## **The Promise of His Coming (1:10-11)**

*10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”*

- This is the first appearance of angels in Acts. They are ministering spirits, sent out to minister for those who will be the heirs of salvation (see Hebrews 1:14).

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- We're not to seek to contact God's angels, and we don't give them orders. We also don't see angels teaching us in the New Testament.

Three truths we can glean from the angels' words:

1. First, Jesus will return.

God has determined that there will be an end to injustice, and that He will one day set up a kingdom of righteousness. There will be an end to Man's direct management of this world apart from God.

2. Second, it will be the same Jesus.

Jesus said, "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:ba-5).

- Muslims believe that their version of Jesus ("Isa") will return as the assistant of their Messiah, the *Mahdi*. Others see "Christ" not as a person but as a state of being or consciousness.
- No, the One who's coming back to rule and reign is the very same Jesus who died and rose again on the third day: "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

3. Third, Jesus will come in a way that's similar to the way He left.

Jesus is coming *physically*. This is not going to be merely a spiritual event.

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The same Jesus who *left* this world is coming back in great power and glory. He's coming physically, and *publicly*.

He's coming *in a similar way*.

- He's coming with clouds. "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints... (Jude 14b)" That word saints can mean holy people or holy angels.
- "[T]he Lord Jesus [will be] revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7b-8)
- John saw His descent: "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.... And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (19:11-15).
- Jesus is coming to Jerusalem but not necessarily descending there first. There is a whole series of battles in and around Israel.

### **The Apostles Prepare for the Coming of the Spirit (1:12-14)**

*12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they had entered, they went up into*

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*the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*

- A Sabbath day's journey was considered about 2000 cubits (about 3000 feet).
- We don't know whether this was where they had the Last Supper with Jesus.
- There are several groups of people mentioned here:
  - The 11 apostles who remained after the fall of Judas Iscariot.
  - The women.
  - Mary the mother of Jesus and Jesus' brothers.
- Jesus' brothers were James, Joses, Judah, and Simon. John tells us that not even His brothers believed (see: John 7:5).
- "Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind'" (Mark 3:20-21).
- Jesus had at least six siblings, and possibly more.

Eusebius (4<sup>th</sup> century) wrote: *"Meanwhile the holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour were dispersed throughout the world. Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor, Scythia to Andrew, and Asia to John, who, after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus. Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion. And at last,*

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*having come to Rome, he was crucified head-downwards; for he had requested that he might suffer in this way. What do we need to say concerning Paul, who preached the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and afterwards suffered martyrdom in Rome under Nero?”*

- According to tradition, all the original apostles were martyred for Christ except for John the Beloved, and it wasn't because they didn't try!

What did the disciples do in the upper room?

- They stayed in unity.
- They prayed in unity.
- They were united in supplication – strong and forceful praying!

### **Replacing Judas With Matthias (1:15-26)**

*15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 16 “Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; 17 for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.” 18 (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the*

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*middle and all his entrails gushed out. 19 And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)*

- There were about 120 present, but on a single occasion Jesus appeared to 500 people. Why did only ~25% of the disciples gather in the upper room?
- Luke gives us additional unsavory details concerning Judas's demise.
- Now Peter says that the Scriptures needed to be fulfilled concerning Judas – someone was going to have to replace him as an apostle.

*20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms: ‘Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it’ [quoting Psalms 69:25]; and, ‘Let another take his office’ [quoting Psalms 109:8]. 21 “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”*

*23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen 25 to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” 26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

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- Peter quotes two psalms, Psalm 69 and Psalm 109, which make those comments about someone losing his place and having another take his place. Led by the Spirit, Peter states that Judas will have to be replaced.
- Apparently, it was thought that to be an effective witness, you would need to have been exposed to the entire sweep of Jesus' teachings.
- Barsabbas could mean "son of the Sabbath," and the nickname Justus means that he was considered to be a very morally upright person.
- Obviously, both of them must have been quite outstanding people to have their names put forward. Church traditions tell us that these two men were among the 70 lesser apostles whom Jesus sent out on a mission, two by two.
- The reliance on the casting of lots has been questioned, and we never see it again in the Bible.
- The selection of the Apostle Matthias was not a mistake. Luke will later refer to the apostles—including Matthias— as "the twelve" (see: Acts 6:2).

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