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## MORE TO THE STORY

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### ACTS 1



The opening paragraph of Acts reveals that we're reading a sequel. Luke started the story with his gospel detailing "all that Jesus began to do and teach". Now, it continues. Indeed, one might say a proper title for this book would be "The Acts of Jesus II". The mysterious presence of Jesus is all over this book! In Acts, Jesus' ministry is not an increasingly distant memory but an increasingly powerful reality. Chapter 1 shows us that the ministry of Jesus did not stop with the gospels. It is an ongoing work initiated by Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension and carried on through his disciples by his Holy Spirit.

### THE COMMISSION (1:1-11)

1. Read Acts 1:1-3. What does Luke's opening address to his reader, Theophilus, tell us about his reason for writing? What pointers is it giving us for our reading of Acts?

2. In what ways did Jesus prepare and equip his apostles to continue his ministry and life on earth? How might this encourage us?

3. For what are the apostles impatient and how does Jesus address it? What are you impatient for?

#### "WITNESSES"

The primary task of the people of God is to bear witness to his great deeds. For the first disciples, they quite literally were charged to bear witness to the risen Christ, whom they had seen with their eyes (1 John 1:1-3).

4. Picture yourself as one of the apostles at the ascension (1:9-11). What do you see and hear? How would you feel and respond?

## A NEW TWELFTH DISCIPLE (1:12-26)

One way to summarize the message of Acts is that it is the story of the continuing work of Jesus through his witnesses, despite significant oppositions and barriers. Throughout Acts we will see that God oftentimes directly uses these oppositions to advance his gospel. This was true even from the first disciples of Jesus. Judas, one of twelve Jesus originally called to follow him, betrayed him. Yet, the work of Jesus was not thwarted, as he often uses sinful opposition to advance his kingdom.

5. Why do you think prayer was the major activity the apostles were engaged in after they returned to Jerusalem (1:12-14)? How does Luke describe their praying together? How can we grow as a church in the matter of prayer?
6. Consider the circumstances surrounding the prayer gathering of Jesus' followers: Jesus' commission, ascension, and promise to return. How does their response of prayer serve as a model for us?
7. How do we see Jesus using opposition to advance his purposes in the appointment of Matthias (Acts 1:15-26)? Can you think of an instance in your own life where opposition served a greater purpose the Lord had for you?

### SUMMARY

The stage is now set for the day of Pentecost. As we leave Luke's first chapter, the apostles have their commission, they've seen Jesus' ascension, and they await the fulfillment of his promise to send the Holy Spirit with power!