

Acts: The Power of the Gospel

Acts Chapter 1



The Message of the Good News¹

The rejection of Jesus by the nation of Israel was not a random event, but a fulfillment of key Messianic prophecies found throughout the Old Testament. For example, Psalm 22:16 describes the Messiah's hands and feet being pierced, pointing to crucifixion, while Isaiah 53:5 foretells that he would be wounded for our transgressions and bear the punishment for humanity's sins. Daniel 9:26 predicts that the Messiah will be "cut off," and Zechariah 12:10 speaks of Israel mourning for the one they have pierced. These passages show

that Jesus' suffering and rejection were necessary steps in God's plan.

His sacrificial death was essential because only by paying the penalty for sin could the barrier between humanity and God be removed (see Isaiah 53:5 and Ephesians 2:8-9). After Jesus' death and resurrection, he promised that the Holy Spirit would come—a promise fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2, when the Spirit descended on believers, empowering them for a new relationship with God. This sequence—prophecy, rejection, sacrificial death, and the coming of the Spirit—reveals how the Old Testament's prophecies are realized in the New Testament.

Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman in John 4:23-24 that a time was coming when people would worship God in spirit and truth, marking a profound shift made possible only after his sacrifice. Thus, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the direct fulfillment of Jesus' promise, connecting ancient prophecies to their New Testament realization and showing how each event builds upon the last in the theological timeline.

John 4:21,23

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Before we could have a relationship with God, the problem of sin had to be addressed. Sin is what separates us from God, so it needed to be dealt with before fellowship could be restored. In the Law, a "*Kinsman Redeemer*" is someone who has the right to redeem or rescue a relative in need. Jesus became our *Kinsman Redeemer*²—God took on human form to pay the debt owed by spiritually bankrupt humanity. Once this debt of sin was paid, our relationship with God could be restored and we could enjoy fellowship with



¹ Good News or Gospel? Gospel comes from the Old English meaning *god spell*, the Greek is **εὐαγγέλιον** (*euangélion*)

² Law of Kinsman Redeemer Leviticus 25:25, "*If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold.*"

Him again. This is why salvation is called a **"Free Gift"**—it is offered by God without requiring us to earn it; we simply need to accept it with faith. Salvation is freely given, and all we must do is accept this gift that God graciously provides.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

This is the **Good News**, Salvation is offered to everyone, free of charge, because Jesus paid for the penalty of Sin on the cross. The Good News or Gospel is just that, its Amazing Good News to lost people, that Salvation is now available free of charge because of the work of Jesus Christ. This is the point of Acts, to deliver this Good News to the World, God has chosen to use the Church, the body of believing Jews and Greeks, who would take this message into the world. That is what the Great Commission is, we have been "Commissioned" or given authority to deliver this message into a fallen world, with demonic opposition.



Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."³

However, our ability to deliver this message is limited, with our own power we stand no chance, this is why Jesus commanded the "Church" to wait until they receive "Power" to deliver the message. This power was to come from the Holy Spirit, the Gospel would be delivered, but it would be empowered by the Holy Spirit, who would use our human bodies as a vehicle to deliver the message.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:1-5

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,
2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.
3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.
4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me;
5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Verse 1-2:

The Book of Acts is the second book after the *Gospel of Luke*, **The First book**, Luke wrote the Third of the four Gospels as a reporter would write an eyewitness account of events taking place at the scene. About 35% of the Gospel of Luke is borrowed from Mark (Peter being the origin of Mark), but it also contains information not in any of the other Gospels. Some material only found in Luke includes: The Parables: The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Narratives only in Luke: Birth of John the Baptist, Journey to Emmaus and the Infancy Narrative (the census, the manager and the shepherds).

Luke used eyewitness testimonies from the disciples and the Holy Spirit to write the Gospel of Luke, the Book of Acts is the Second part of his writings, to an individual known as Theophilus.

Theophilus: The name means "Loved of God", *Theo*-God, *Philus*-Loved, opinions vary some view his

³ Great Commission: Mark 16:14-20, Luke 24:46-49

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John

Role	Description	Key Scripture
<i>The Regenerator</i>	Bringing spiritual birth and new life to the believer.	John 3:5-8
<i>The Living Water</i>	Providing internal satisfaction and spiritual "overflow."	John 7:37-39
<i>The Indwelling Presence</i>	Remaining with and in the believer forever.	John 14:16-17
<i>The Teacher</i>	Reminding the disciples of Jesus' words and explaining them.	John 14:26
<i>The Witness</i>	Testifying to the identity and truth of Jesus Christ.	John 15:26
<i>The Convictor</i>	Proving the world wrong regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment.	John 16:8-11
<i>The Guide</i>	Leading believers into "all truth" and revealing things to come.	John 16:13
<i>The Glorifier</i>	Redirecting all honor and attention toward Jesus.	John 16:14

name in a generic sense, meaning to all believers "loved of God". The original address in Luke says "Most excellent" implying it was a real person, a Roman official who had respect and honor. Josephus was a Jewish historian whose work was sponsored by wealthy patrons to write the *History of the Jews*. He is an example of how book patronage worked in the first century.

Luke 1:3-4

3 it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,
4 that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Before Jesus ascended or was **taken up**, he gave specific **commands** to the 11 apostles, to stay in Jerusalem until they are empowered with the Spirit of God (Luke 24:49), also they were to take the Good News of salvation to the nations, teaching "*repentance for the forgiveness of sins*" (Luke 24:47-49).

Verse 3:

The Resurrection was proof of Jesus' Messianic identity, evidence of the promise of Salvation, through his payment for our sins. For the next **forty days** after the resurrection Jesus appeared and to the disciples and others. (See also Matthew 28:9,16, Mark 16:10-14, Luke 24:1-53, John 20:1-21). Forty days was the same period of time Moses was on the mountain receiving the 10 commandments (Deuteronomy 9:9).

1 Corinthians 15:5-8

- 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
- 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.
- 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.
- 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Jesus affirmed that his suffering and rejection were in accordance with the promise of scripture. The Messiah was foretold he would suffer and die for the sins of humanity (Luke 24:44-46). This was in anticipation of the **Kingdom of God** promised when the Messiah would come, the expectation and understanding of the Kingdom is a major focus of both Old and New Testaments. It's the "End Game", where is this all headed? What is the purpose of Life? One day we will dwell with God, in His Kingdom through the work of Jesus the Messiah. (See also *Isaiah 11:1-10, Isaiah 62, Ezekiel 40-47, Zechariah 2, 14:16-21*)

Isaiah 2:2-3

- 2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it,
- 3 and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Verses 4-5

Unlike John who baptized with water, Jesus would baptize his followers with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to speak in tongues, prophesy, and perform miracles. This empowerment by the Holy Spirit signified a transformation that allowed believers to participate in spiritual gifts and works beyond natural abilities.

This was the reason; they were ordered **“to wait”**. Prior to this promise, Jesus taught the how the Spirit of God, the **Holy Spirit** would change the relationship between man and God. Our sins would be paid for, and the separation between man and God would be eliminated with the Blood of Christ. (Hebrews 9:14-15) Once our sins were paid for, the Holy Spirit could dwell in us and work through us in this fallen world. The Spirit of God would allow us to have fellowship with God, and the Spirit would communicate the will of God in our lives, allowing us to fulfill the Great Commission.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

John 15:26-27

26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, **he will bear witness about me.**

27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

John 16:13-15

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and **he will declare to you the things that are to come.**

14 **He will glorify me**, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

The Holy Spirit will bear witness about Jesus, he will guide and direct the believer into all truth, Jesus will be the focus of the Holy Spirit message. God became man, to die for our sins, the Good News is “Salvation” is Free and available to all. The Holy Spirit will empower us, the church to deliver this message to a fallen world. The Holy Spirit will transform and us from within, Jesus told the Samaritan Woman (John 4). The Spirit will produce “Living Water” (John 7:38).

The Ascension

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,

11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Verses. 6-7

The Kingdom of Israel

Ask yourself the question where are you going to be in 10 years? In 30 years? And in a thousand years or ten-thousand years? For most people 10 and 30 years seem practical, but a 1000-years? Its unimaginable for us to think in those terms. So in the same way, the disciples are wondering, what is the “End Game” how long until there is a conclusion to these matters. After all the Roman Empire occupied the land of Israel, promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? So they wanted to know, when was the physical, political **Kingdom of Israel**, under the Kingship of the Messiah, Jesus going to be installed.

After all, the Messianic Kingdom is a focus of the Hebrew scriptures, see above, (Isaiah 2, Isaiah 11:1-10, Daniel 7:13). They wanted to see where they were in the timeline of events, much like many of us.

In fact, the term Jesus used for himself more than any other term is “Son of Man”, which is a Messianic term linking the Messiah and the Kingdom of God.



possession.

Therefore, in the meantime, between the today and the future restoration, the disciples and the church in general were to present the Good News to the world. Jesus was not rejecting their theology of a future **Kingdom of Israel**, he was just saying the timing was under the **Father's authority**.

This is a rejection of those who opposed the Biblical doctrine that in the last days, God would reestablish the nation of Israel in the physical land of Israel, just like the prophets foretold. The only question is the timing of the event.

Ezekiel 38:8

8 After many days you will be mustered. In the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them.

This future kingdom of Israel is for all believers, who trust in Christ, since the Church or Ekklesia is grafted into the covenant promises of Israel (Jeremiah 31:31). These are the promises of the New Covenant, that would come upon the nations of Israel and Judah, according to scripture.

Verse. 8

Empowering the Great Commission

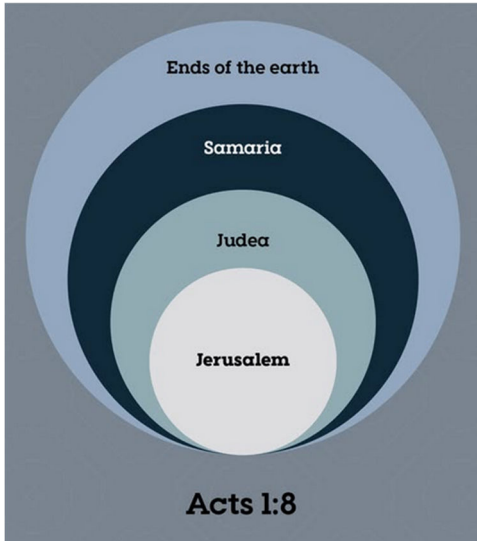
What is my purpose in life? If you like many, you might hear yourself asking that question? Is it to be great parent, who guides their children into prosperity? Is it to become famous that the whole world know your glory? Well, those purposes certainly are the goals for many, but as a believer in Jesus Christ, our main goal is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 7:13-14

13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

14 And **to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom**, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Like many of us, the disciples were thinking 10, 20 or even 30-years in the future, they did not yet completely understand the scope of their mission, also like us today. Their mission was to spread the Gospel, not to take physical possession of territory, but spiritual



Remember, the Gospel is the only way to Heaven, there are no second roads or do overs, Jesus died for our sins, and we as believers have been commissioned to present the Gospel to the World. One of the main purposes of the Holy Spirit is to equip the believer to do just that.

Jesus says, “**You will receive power**” the Greek word used here is *Dunamis*, the same word that was used to describe Dynamite. The Holy Spirit is God’s Power for the believer, it will transform us spiritual weakling into supermen and superwoman in the spiritual realms. It will allow us to exceed any human abilities we have, because its God’s power, not earthly. History is filled with stories of how the Holy Spirit transformed scared, weak people into Spiritual conquerors. Peter for example, was afraid of a servant girl (Matthew 26:71), but after the Holy Spirit comes upon him, he is fearless and was laughing at death, preaching Jesus at Pentecost, with 3000-souls committing to Jesus (Acts 2:41).

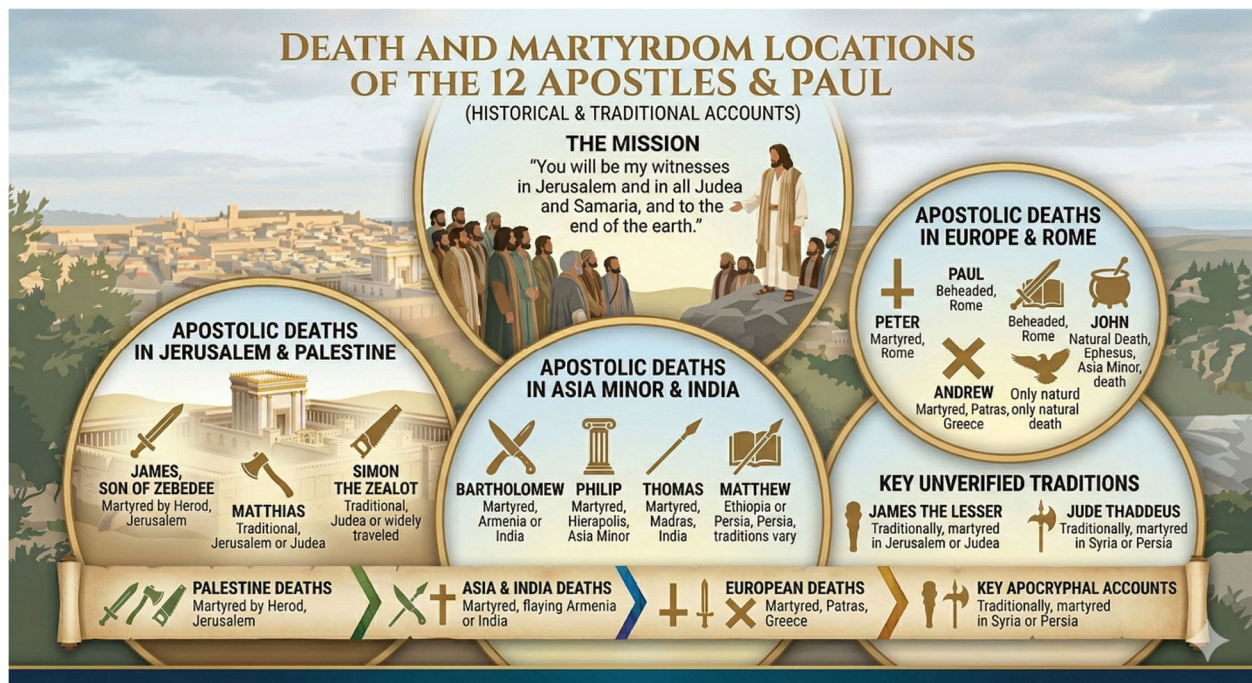
The purpose to wait for the Spirit, was the Spirit would empower the believer to be “**My Witnesses**”, meaning we are being empowered to testify about Jesus to a hostile world. We have the authority, position and commission from Jesus. His death on the cross, restored what Adam lost, now the commander is giving us the mission and power with the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for Witness is *Martus*, where we get the word *Martyr*. Jesus is calling us to be his martyr, because the Good News means putting yourself second, it means proclaiming salvation to a hostile world.

Where do we have authority?

We have the power of God dwelling in us, where does this power apply? Since God owns the world, He has authority over everything and everywhere? As believer in Jesus Christ, you have the commission from Jesus. Remember, the Holy Spirit gives us power to be witnesses of Jesus, so while disciples were told to stay in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, once they received it, we see it played out in the rest of the Book of Acts, as the Gospel expands from upper room at Pentecost Acts 2:1, to Roman Empire before Ceaser, where Paul is awaiting trail for the Gospel. The authority that Peter and Paul have, is the same authority you and I have, because it flows from the Holy Spirit, the purpose being Witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The question is how seriously do you take the position you have? Just like early disciples they were gathered in Jerusalem, but once they had the Holy Spirit they were empowered to spread the Gospel to the outreaches of the Roman Empire and beyond. We each have our **Jerusalem**, that is where we are, where we are comfortable, but if we expand that territory, to **Judea** it’s a little less known as less comfortable, then **Samaria** is a hostile land, it includes people who might view you as an enemy and hate your presence. Then, the **end of world** is the far reaches where there is comfort in safety but trust in the Holy Spirit.

Territory	Your Territory	Examples
Jerusalem	Where you are comfortable	Home, Work, Friends, Family, Neighborhood
Judea	Less comfortable, not familiar	City, Downtown, Store, Market, Gym
Samaria	Where the world is hostile to you	Another religion, race/ethnic political leaning, orientation
End of the earth	Unlimited,	Holy Spirit led, China, Russia, Africa, South America, Etc



Verses 9-11

Jesus Ascends

While Jesus is meeting the apostles on the Mount of Olives, in Jerusalem, he is telling them to wait until they receive the “Power” of the Holy Spirit. He is the Lord of Hosts, commanding his generals with their marching orders. This was at the end of the 40-days, Jesus had appeared to them after he was resurrected from the grave. After Jesus had given them the command in verse 8, Jesus ascended on “a cloud... out of their sight”.

The image of cloud ascension and descension is very important to understanding God’s plan for the physical “Second Advent” or Second Coming. Messianic prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14⁴, portrays the “Son of man” coming to the throne of the Ancient of Days (God the Father) with the clouds of Heaven. The Son of Man is then given an everlasting throne over the nations and people of the world. This is clearly understood to be Messianic its nature. Judaism also accepts this description as the Messiah, who will rule the earth.

Then as the apostles were watching Jesus physically ascend on the clouds, **two men.... in white robes**, these are angels who are witnessing to the apostles, there were always supposed to be two witnesses to an event (Deut 19:15), testifying about the *First Advent* and the relation to the *Second Advent*. They asked the **men of Galilee**, because remember this was the base of Jesus ministry, Peter, James, and John were all Galileans. And it was in Galilee the Jesus gave them the “Great Commission” on a mountain maybe Mount Tabor they were told to bring the Gospel to the nations. Now they were gathered on the Mount of Olives, right outside the walls of Jerusalem.

⁴ **Daniel 7:13-14**, Jewish Understanding, Rashi **Rashi**: The famous medieval commentator identified the “son of man” as **King Messiah**, who will come to lead Israel and receive the kingdom....**The Talmud (Sanhedrin 98a)**: This text presents a famous paradox regarding how the Messiah will arrive. It suggests that if Israel is worthy, he comes “with the clouds of heaven” (per Daniel 7:13); if they are not, he comes “lowly and riding on a donkey” (per Zechariah 9:9).... **The Midrash**: Various homiletic teachings view this figure as the ultimate redeemer who humbles himself before God (the Ancient of Days) to intercede for the nation.

The angels give us an important piece of information regarding the Second Advent. They tell us “**This Jesus who was taken from you into heaven**”, meaning he is physically ascending, as you are watching him go into the clouds. “**Will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven**”

From this we can see God’s plans being mapped out and the parallel between the First Coming and Second Coming.

Zechariah 14:3-4

3 Then **the LORD will** go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.

4 On that day **his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives** that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.

Zechariah was written 520 BC, yet he tells of a day, when the “**Feet**” of the “**LORD**” will stand on the “**Mount of Olives**”. When Jesus returns he will stand on the same mountain, just as the angels witnessed to the men of Galilee.

Event	First Coming	Second Coming
Location	Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12)	Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4)
Ascends	On the clouds (Acts 1:9)	Descends on the clouds (Matthew 24:30)
Angels	With the angels (Acts	With the angels (Matt 24:31)
Form	In Human Form	Son of Man (Matt 25:31)
Realm	Physically	Physically “every eye will see him” Zech 12:10, Rev 1:7

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.

14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,

16 “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

17 For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”

18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.

19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “‘May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’; and “‘Let another take his office.’

21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”

23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias.

24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen

25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Verses 12-26

Matthias or Paul?

The **Mount of Olives** is just across the Kidron Valley from the Temple Mount, less than ¼ mile, with a half mile or 800-yards being the equivalent of a Sabbath's day journey, the distance you can travel in a Sabbath day. Returning to the **Upper Room**, this is the same room where Jesus had his Passover Dinner with the disciples before his death and resurrection (Mark 14:15, Matthew 26:18, Luke 22:12). This will be the same room, when the Holy Spirit comes upon the group while they are celebrating the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:1).

There were about **120**, who were part of this group of followers waiting for the promises of Jesus to be fulfilled. Eleven of the 12, including Jesus' mother and brothers, the brothers at first doubted Jesus (Matthew 12:46, John 7:5), but now believed. Everyone was one united body, both male and females together in fellowship, praying in anticipation of the promises of the Holy Spirit.

Now its at this time Peter felt it was time to replace Judas position of Apostle with someone who was with them from the beginning, they chose two to cast lots for **Matthias** and Joseph called **Barsabbas**. Peter quotes from Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8 regarding the replacement of Judas. The lot fell on Matthias and he was numbered with the 11, making him the 12th in the eyes of Peter and the other eleven.

Psalms 69:25

25 May their camp be a desolation; let no one dwell in their tents.

Psalms 109:8

8 May his days be few; may another take his office!

There is a difference of opinion, some think Peter did not wait for the Holy Spirit and rushed into a selection. Since later God chooses Paul to be an Apostle, so that would make 13 apostles if Matthias is to be included.

Gal 1:1,11-12,15-17

Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but **through Jesus Christ** and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.



15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace,
16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;
17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.