FIVE-DAY THEOLOGY COURSE

ACTS

The Spirit of God in Mission

TAUGHT BY

Lec SK. KIERU

Chapter 2: Preparation for Pentecost

The background of Pentecost, Jesus' departure, the Upper Room experience, and the selection of Judas' replacement

Day 1: Understanding Acts and Preparing for Pentecost · Day 2: The Spirit-Empowered Church in Jerusalem and Beyond · Day 3: The Gentile Mission and Paul's Missionary Expansion · Day 4: Paul's Missionary Journeys, Jerusalem and Rome

Day 5: Final examination (2026-10-09)

Based on Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission by Denzil R. Miller. Africa's Hope, 2017.

CHAPTER 2 · UNIT 1 · DAY 1

Preparation for Pentecost

The background of Pentecost, Jesus' departure, the Upper Room experience, and the selection of Judas' replacement

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Source: Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission - Denzil R. Miller (Based on Chapter 2)

Chapter purpose. This chapter studies Acts 1, which serves as a programmatic introduction to the whole book. It sets the tone, states Luke's purpose in Acts 1:8, and shows how the disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Spirit.

Chapter 1 introduced Acts 1:8 as the interpretative key. Chapter 2 now works through Acts 1 itself and shows how that key verse writes the programme for the entire book, and how the disciples obeyed the command to wait.

Bible reading: Acts 1:1-26

Read the whole of Acts chapter 1 before the lesson. Parts of this chapter cannot be fully understood without a clear and current recollection of the biblical text.

Learning Objectives

• Explain the five functions the first eleven verses of Acts perform in Luke's narrative.

• Explain Jesus' final command to His church and how it fits with His command to go.

• Describe the meaning of being "baptized in" the Holy Spirit.

• Name the seven key outpourings of the Spirit in Acts.

• Show from Luke-Acts how prayer is associated with receiving the Holy Spirit.

Before This Lesson, Read Your Bible

Acts 1:1-26

Keep your Bible open to Acts 1 throughout this lesson.

The Big Idea

The mission of God can only be successfully accomplished in the power of the Spirit.

Acts 1:1-11: A Programmatic Introduction

The first eleven verses of Acts serve as a programmatic introduction to the entire work. They set the tone and "write the program" for all that will follow.

Five Functions of Acts 1:1-11

• They summarize and finalize the work of Jesus as presented in the Gospel of Luke (vv. 1-2).

• They serve as a narrative bridge between Luke's two volumes (compare Luke 24:44-53).

• They reveal Luke's authorial intent and introduce the key theme of the work (1:8).

• They provide a "table of contents" for the book (1:8).

• They introduce five overarching themes that will reappear throughout the book (vv. 1-11).

The Story: Acts 1:1-3

Luke begins his book by reminding his readers of his former work, the Gospel of Luke. He summarizes Jesus' ministry as a ministry of "doing" and "teaching." After His resurrection, Jesus remained with His disciples for forty days teaching them about the kingdom of God. Then as His concluding act of ministry, Jesus gave final instructions through the Holy Spirit to His apostles.

Commentary on Acts 1:1-3

1:1 Theophilus

• Luke addresses his book to Theophilus, the same man he calls "most excellent Theophilus" in Luke 1:3. In Acts the title "most excellent" is used of nobility and political leaders (Acts 24:3; 26:25).

• Theophilus, which means "lover of God," was probably a Greek believer, a man of considerable wealth and influence, and Luke's literary patron.

• Although Luke and Acts are addressed to a single person, they were written to a larger audience. More broadly, Acts has a message for all "lovers of God."

1:1 In my former book

• Luke's "former book" is his Gospel, which described what Jesus began to do and teach before His ascension.

• The implication is that this second volume is about what Jesus continued to do and teach after His ascension.

• In Luke, Jesus carried out His ministry through the direction and power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18-19; compare Acts 10:38). In Acts He continued His ministry through His church, which was also directed and empowered by the Spirit.

• The phrase "do and teach" summarizes Jesus' entire ministry. It was a ministry of powerful words and mighty works.

1:2 Instructions through the Holy Spirit

• Even after His death and resurrection, Jesus still carried out His ministry under the impulse of the Spirit.

• The Holy Spirit's active role in empowering and inspiring ministry is a key theme of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

• As the Superintendent of the Harvest, the Holy Spirit, having anointed and guided Jesus' ministry, will now anoint and guide the global mission of the church.

1:3 He showed himself... that he was alive

• At the very beginning of Acts, Luke refers to the death and resurrection of Jesus. These two pivotal events represent the core of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-6) and the paramount message of the church.

• Luke immediately informs his readers that the church's witness is to the gospel, and that the central message of the gospel is the death and resurrection of Christ. This is the message we must forcefully and faithfully proclaim to the nations.

1:3 Spoke about the kingdom of God

• The kingdom of God is the overarching context for the book of Acts.

• Luke shows this by using a narrative strategy known as inclusio: framing his story inside key parallel statements about the kingdom of God (1:3; 28:23, 31).

• Once he does this, it is no longer necessary to mention the kingdom each time it applies. The kingdom of God is assumed to be the context of everything within the frame.

• Luke uses the phrase kingdom of God thirty-two times in his Gospel. For Luke, to proclaim the kingdom is equivalent to preaching the gospel (Acts 8:12; 28:23, 31).

The Story: The Spirit Is Promised (Acts 1:4-8)

During His last meeting with His disciples, Jesus gave them final instructions. They were to wait in Jerusalem for the promised outpouring of the Spirit. In a few days they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. As a result, they would receive supernatural power, enabling them to take the gospel to Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

When the disciples asked Jesus about Israel's future participation in the kingdom of God, He instead pointed them to the task at hand: Spirit-empowered witness to the nations.

Commentary on Acts 1:4-8

1:4 "Stay!" and "Go!"

• Jesus issues a final command before returning to the Father: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised." This parallels Luke 24:49: "Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

• During the past forty days Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples to "Go!" With each restatement of the Great Commission is a command to go (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21-22; Acts 1:8).

• But now, in His final words, He commands them, "Stay!" The lesson is this: before they could effectively obey the first command, they would have to explicitly obey the second.

• Jesus left His church with a humanly impossible task, the evangelization of all nations before He comes again. It was a job beyond their capability and ours. They would therefore need supernatural help.

• We too, if we are going to effectively reach the lost with the gospel, must carefully obey both commands.

1:4 The gift my Father promised

• The phrase translated "the gift my Father promised" (Greek ten epangelian tou patros) is literally "the promise of the Father."

• Jesus is likely referring to the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-29, since that was the passage Peter quoted at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18).

• He could also have been referring to His earlier promise that the "Father in heaven [will] give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

• Joel generalized the promise: it is for "all people." Jesus specified: although the promise is potentially for all people, it is specifically for those children of the Father who earnestly ask for it (Luke 11:9-13).

1:5 Baptized in the Holy Spirit

• This phrase could be better translated "baptized in (Greek en) the Holy Spirit."

• Just as John baptized in water, Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit. This statement references John the Baptist in Luke 3:16.

• In this metaphor Jesus is the baptizer and the Holy Spirit is the element into which one is baptized.

• Paul uses the same metaphor for a different baptism, baptism into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). In Paul's metaphor the Spirit is the baptizer and the body of Christ is the element.

1:6 Restore the kingdom to Israel

• The disciples were correct in connecting Jesus' teaching concerning the Holy Spirit with the kingdom of God; however, their timing and focus were wrong.

• Jesus' immediate concern was that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit so they might receive power to participate in advancing God's kingdom on the earth.

1:8 You will receive power, and you will be my witnesses

• Acts 1:8 serves as the hermeneutical key to the book of Acts, and can be divided into two parts.

• The first half reveals Luke's empowerment-witness motif: "you will receive power," and as a result, "you will be my witnesses." This is the key to Luke's primary intent in writing Acts, and is repeated many times throughout the book.

• The second half ("in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth") functions as a programmatic outline for Acts. It writes a program or "table of contents" for the entire book.

• The second part also reveals Luke's secondary purpose: to trace the church's geographical progress from Jerusalem to Rome, and to show how the church moved from being a localized Jewish sect into a universal body of believers, encompassing both Jews and Gentiles.

• To the ends of the earth. The ultimate scope of God's mission is "the ends of the earth" (Greek eschatou tes ges). Every person from every nation and language and from every age in history is the object of His loving concern and grace. Every person must therefore hear the good news of Christ. It is for this great purpose that the Spirit empowers Christ's disciples.

Table 2.1: The Seven Key Outpourings

The empowerment-witness pattern of Acts 1:8 is most dramatically demonstrated in seven key outpourings. Each of these outpourings resulted in powerful missional witness. Note that the author places the Antiochian "outpouring" in quotation marks.

· Outpouring · Scripture · Period in Acts

• #: 1. Outpouring: Pentecost, the first Jerusalem outpouring. Scripture: Acts 2:1-4. Period in Acts: The Jewish mission

• #: 2. Outpouring: The second Jerusalem outpouring. Scripture: Acts 4:31. Period in Acts: The Jewish mission

• #: 3. Outpouring: The Samaritan outpouring. Scripture: Acts 8:14-17. Period in Acts: The transitional period

• #: 4. Outpouring: The Damascene outpouring. Scripture: Acts 9:15-18. Period in Acts: The transitional period

• #: 5. Outpouring: The Caesarean outpouring. Scripture: Acts 10:44-48. Period in

Acts: The transitional period

• #: 6. Outpouring: The Antiochian "outpouring". Scripture: Acts 13:1-3. Period in Acts: The Gentile mission

• #: 7. Outpouring: The Ephesian outpouring. Scripture: Acts 19:1-7. Period in Acts: The Gentile mission

Life Application

The command of Jesus to wait for the promise of the Father was not only for those first disciples in Jerusalem. It is also for all believers of every age until Jesus comes again (compare Luke 11:9-13).

We, like those early believers, must seek the face of God until the Holy Spirit comes upon us. Only then will we be adequately equipped to be His witnesses at home and "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Story: Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11)

Having promised His disciples power, Jesus ascended into heaven. As He disappeared from their sight, two men (angels) appeared before them. The angels challenged them, "Why are you standing here staring into the sky? This same Jesus will come again in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Commentary on Acts 1:9-11

1:9 He was taken up

• Jesus' ascension receives only brief mention in the Gospels (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51). Here Luke adds more detail.

• Jesus was "taken up before their very eyes," that is, He ascended visibly and bodily into heaven.

• In Acts this story sets the stage for the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (2:33). It is one of the "many convincing proofs" that Jesus was alive (1:3).

1:11 Why do you stand looking?

• These words of the angels come as a challenge to the staring disciples.

• While there is an appropriate time to stand and gaze on the Lord's glory (2

Corinthians 3:18), such activity can never serve as a substitute for obedience to His clear commands.

• The disciples had been commanded to return to Jerusalem and wait to receive power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5), and they needed to obey quickly.

• Throughout Acts, angels intervened in the mission of God. They often urged the disciples to "go" and bear witness to Christ (5:19-20; 8:26).

1:11 This same Jesus will come back

• This statement introduces the eschatological context of the book of Acts.

• Since "this same Jesus... will come back," there is an urgency about the disciples' mission.

• The entire book of Acts, as well as the entire New Testament, has an eschatological, or last-days, context: "He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything" (Acts 3:21).

• Luke spoke often on eschatology and the second coming of Christ (Luke 12:35-40; 13:34-35; 21:25-36; 22:16; Acts 1:10-11; 2:17; 3:19-21).

Further Insight: Five Key Themes Introduced in Acts 1

The first eleven verses function in Acts much as a legal or academic abstract. They outline the major elements of what is to follow. Five key themes are introduced which occur again and again throughout Acts.

• The kingdom of God. Luke mentions it twice in these verses: in verse 3 Jesus "spoke about the kingdom of God"; in verse 6 the disciples inquired about the restoration of "the kingdom to Israel."

• The global mission of the church. Jesus told His disciples that "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (v. 8). Acts is principally the story of the church fulfilling its God-ordained mission of taking the gospel to the nations.

• The necessity of Spirit empowering. In verses 4-5 Jesus commanded them to wait for the gift the Father promised, and in verse 8 promised them power. The mission of God can only be successfully accomplished in the power of the Spirit.

• The Holy Spirit guiding the work of missions. Verse 2 says Jesus gave orders to

the disciples through the Holy Spirit. Throughout Acts one reads of the Spirit inspiring, guiding, and directing the work of missions. Luke presents Him as the Superintendent of the Harvest.

• The urgency of the missionary task. In verse 11 the angels chided the disciples: "Men of Galilee,... why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus... will come back." In Acts the work of missions is carried out in anticipation of Christ's soon return.

The Story: In the Upper Room (Acts 1:12-26)

In obedience to Jesus' command, the disciples returned to Jerusalem. There they entered an upper room where they resided, prayed, and conducted business.

In their group were the eleven apostles: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. Also with them were Mary the mother of Jesus, Jesus' brothers, and a group of women. The total number of believers was about 120. "They all joined together constantly in prayer" (1:14).

One day Peter stood and proposed to the group that Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Jesus and then committed suicide, be replaced. His replacement must be a man who had been with the disciples during Jesus' entire ministry. The group then nominated two men, Joseph called Barsabbas and Matthias. After prayer, they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias, who was added to the eleven apostles.

Commentary on Acts 1:12-26

1:13 Upstairs to the room where they were staying

• About 120 disciples gathered with the apostles in the upper room (v. 15).

• Their time was divided between this venue and the temple courts. In the upper room they gathered for prayer and business. They also "stayed continually at the temple, praising God" (Luke 24:53).

1:14 Constantly in prayer

Luke consistently associates the reception of the Holy Spirit with earnest prayer.

• The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus "as He was praying" (Luke 3:21).

• Before the Day of Pentecost the disciples were "continually at the temple praising God" (Luke 24:53) and "constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14).

• Saul spent three days in prayer before Ananias laid hands on him to receive the Spirit (9:9, 11).

• Cornelius "prayed to God regularly" (10:2), and Peter also prayed in preparation for the outpouring at Caesarea (v. 9).

• At Antioch the Spirit moved as the church worshiped, prayed, and fasted (13:1-2).

• The Holy Spirit came upon the Samaritans, Saul, and the Ephesian disciples when they were being prayed for (8:17; 9:17-18; 19:6).

• Anyone who desires to be filled with the Holy Spirit should thus commit himself or herself to earnest and expectant prayer to God.

1:14 Along with the women

• Women were among those who were filled with the Spirit at Pentecost.

• Throughout his two-volume work, Luke often focuses on the significance of women in fulfilling the mission of God (Luke 8:1-3; 23:49, 55; 24:1-12, 22; Acts 5:14; 8:12; 16:13-15; 17:4).

• He makes it clear that women can be filled with the Spirit and effectively used by God in gospel ministry (Acts 1:14; 2:17-18; 18:18-19, 26; 21:9).

1:22 One of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection

• In the upper room Peter makes it clear that "it is necessary" to choose a replacement for Judas.

• One reason was to return the number of disciples to the original twelve.

• But the key reason for the choice seems to be witness to the gospel, for Peter said that the one chosen "must become a witness... of his resurrection."

Important Terms

Baptized in the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the baptizer and the Holy Spirit is what the believer is immersed in. It brings power for witness.

The promise of the Father. The gift Jesus told the disciples to wait for, that is, the

outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Inclusio. A writing technique where an author frames a story between two matching statements, so the idea in those statements covers everything in between.

Episode. One specific story inside a bigger series of stories.

Superintendent of the Harvest. Luke's picture of the Holy Spirit as the one who directs and oversees the work of missions.

Eschatological. To do with the last days and the return of Christ.

Key People

• Jesus: Gives final instructions through the Holy Spirit, promises power, then ascends bodily into heaven.

• The eleven apostles: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

• Mary the mother of Jesus, and the women: Present in the upper room. Women were among those filled with the Spirit at Pentecost.

• Peter: Proposes that a replacement be chosen for Judas, whose key qualification is witness to the resurrection.

• Matthias: Chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot, and added to the eleven apostles.

• Joseph called Barsabbas: The other man nominated to replace Judas.

Key Places

• Jerusalem: Where the disciples were commanded to stay and wait for the gift the Father promised.

• The Upper Room: Where about 120 believers resided, prayed, and conducted business.

• The temple courts: The disciples "stayed continually at the temple, praising God" (Luke 24:53).

Key Event

Jesus commands the disciples, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised," and then ascends into heaven.

Jesus had repeatedly said "Go!" Now He says "Stay!" Before they could effectively obey the first command, they had to explicitly obey the second.

Key Verse

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about."

Acts 1:4

Remember This

• Jesus said "Go", but first He said "Stay". Obey the second command in order to obey the first.

• The mission of God can only be successfully accomplished in the power of the Spirit.

• Luke consistently associates the reception of the Holy Spirit with earnest prayer.

Textbook Review and Application

• 1. To whom is the book of Acts addressed? Was it meant only for him? How might it be relevant to you?

• 2. What was Jesus' final command to His church before returning to heaven? How can this command be reconciled with His repeated command to "go"? How does this command apply to the church today?

• 3. Describe the meaning of "baptized" in the Holy Spirit.

• 4. Cite several texts in Luke-Acts that associate prayer with receiving the Holy Spirit. How do these texts apply to the church today?

Quick Review

1. How many believers gathered in the upper room?

Answer: About 120.

2. Who was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, and how?

Answer: Matthias, chosen by lot after prayer.

3. What was the key qualification for Judas' replacement?

Answer: He had to become a witness of the resurrection of Jesus.

4. In the metaphor of Spirit baptism, who is the baptizer and what is the element?

Answer: Jesus is the baptizer and the Holy Spirit is the element into which one is baptized.

5. How many key outpourings of the Spirit does the author identify in Acts?

Answer: Seven.

Chapter Summary

Before the church could go, it had to wait. Spirit empowering is the necessary preparation for mission.

• Acts 1:1-11 is a programmatic introduction that writes the plan for the whole book and introduces five key themes.

• Jesus commanded the disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they were "clothed with power from on high".

• Luke identifies seven key outpourings of the Spirit in Acts, each resulting in powerful missional witness.

Commit yourself to earnest, expectant prayer for the Holy Spirit, because the reception of the Spirit is consistently associated with prayer in Luke-Acts.

ONE-SENTENCE MEMORY

Acts 1 gives the programme for the whole book: wait for the Spirit, receive power, and be witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.