



# Acts 1-12

## The Church Alive

Sample Lesson #1

and

Leader's Guide Answers

*Read—Acts 1; other references as given.*

Acts is the sequel to the third gospel; both were written by Luke (beloved physician and missionary) under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16). The gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were originally addressed to a man named Theophilus whose name means “a lover of God.”

For the past 2,000 years the book of Acts has inspired lovers of God. Empowered by the Spirit of God, the early church overcame government intrusion and persecution, hypocrisy, internal conflict, and the crippling cancer of religious traditionalism—perennial enemies of the church throughout the ages.

In this first study you’ll learn about the difference between the kingdom of God and the church age. You will also learn four important principles that will teach you how to discern God’s will for your life.

Now ask God to help you understand the truths you’ll be learning and conform you into the image of His Son.

1. During the forty-day period between Christ’s resurrection and ascension, He appeared to His followers many times (Acts 1:3). The Lord attested to the reality of His resurrection by many convincing proofs (Gk. *tekmerion*—“an infallible or indubitable proof,” a powerful word used only once in the New Testament—abbreviated NT hereafter). Jesus spoke specifically to His disciples concerning the kingdom of God. The term “kingdom of God” refers to the future time when Christ will rule personally on earth during the millennial reign (Revelation 20:4).
  - a. What question did the disciples keep asking Jesus concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 1:6)?
  - b. What did Jesus say to His disciples concerning the kingdom of God (Acts. 1:7–8)?
2. Jesus said, **You shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth** (Acts 1:8). Historically, the Christian church has understood Christ’s words (often referred to as the Great Commission) as His command to take the message of salvation to all nations. Some interpreters, however, believe Christ’s statement is a simple statement of fact (the Greek language allows for both interpretations).
  - a. How do we know that the disciples understood His statement to be a command to be obeyed rather than a simple statement of fact (Acts 4:17–20; 10:38–42)?
  - b. If you are a Christian, take a moment to reflect upon your understanding of Christ’s Great Commission (Acts 1:8). *Do you think* it is a divine command to be obeyed or a simple statement of fact?
  - c. If you believe it is a command to be obeyed, what specific things are you doing to fulfill God’s command to reach the world for Christ?
3. The “Great Commission” must have seemed like “mission impossible” to the eleven remaining apostles, who had denied Christ just days earlier (Matthew 26:56; John 18:25–27). What did Jesus say would happen to them so they could fulfill His command (Acts 1:5, 8)?
4. Jesus redirected his disciples’ thinking from the future kingdom of God to their present responsibility of being His witnesses. After that, He was lifted up from the Mount of Olives out of their sight (Acts 1:9, 11). Jehovah’s Witnesses and other religious groups claim that Christ has already come back in spiritual form. What does the Bible teach about the final return of Jesus Christ to this earth (Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:1–4; Revelation 1:7; 19:11–19)?

5. The disciples returned a Sabbath day's journey (3/5ths of a mile) from the Mount of Olives to the Upper Room where they had previously held the Last Supper with Christ. In the Upper Room they devoted themselves to prayer (Acts 1:14). The specific phrase **with one mind** (Acts 1:14) is an important term that occurs two other times in Acts and in Paul's letter to the Philippians, sometimes translated differently.
  - a. What does it mean (Acts 2:46; 15:25; Philippians 1:27; 2:1–5)?
  - b. If a Christian friend had a problem being of one mind with other believers, what specific counsel would you give him or her?
  
6. According to Acts 1:18, Judas fell headlong and died, but Matthew 27:5 says Judas hanged himself. How *do you think* this apparent inconsistency between these two accounts can be reconciled? In other words, how could both accounts be true?
  
7. Acts 1:15–26 focuses on the apostles' efforts to find a replacement for Judas. At first glance, this passage does not seem to fit well into the overall development of the book of Acts, especially when Judas' replacement, Matthias, is never mentioned again. This passage, however, reveals several essential principles on how to determine God's will for our lives—something every believer needs to understand to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.
  - a. Peter addressed the group of about 120 people in the Upper Room (Acts 1:15). His words reveal the first principle (other than prayer) that God's people must employ if they expect to determine His will for their lives. What is this first principle (Acts 1:16–20a)?
  - b. Peter's quotation of Psalm 109:8, **Let another take His office**, reveals the second principle that is necessary for determining God's will for their lives. What is it?
  - c. Christians can become confused when there appear to be two legitimate choices—both of which could be God's will for their lives (two homes to purchase, two colleges to attend, etc.). What is the third principle believers should use to determine God's will (Acts 1:24)?
  
8. The Bible says, **The lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles** (Acts 1:26). The apostles responded to the Lord's decision to have Matthias become the twelfth apostle with the assurance that God had answered their prayer. Sometimes God's people are plagued with doubts after they have made a decision because they aren't sure they made the right decision. What is the fourth principle Christians need to incorporate when we seek to walk in God's will (Acts 1:26)?

## 1: “You Shall Be Witnesses ...”

1. a. “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”  
b. He told them to focus their attention on being His witnesses rather than wondering if the kingdom of God was going to be established here on earth. He also told them that they would not be able to tell the time or the season which the Father had determined for the official establishment of the kingdom of God.
2. a. 1. Peter and John said that they could not stop speaking about what they had seen or heard (Acts 4:20).  
2. Peter told Cornelius and his household that God had ordered them to preach to the people (Acts 10:42).  
b. Answers will vary, but it is a command to be obeyed.  
c. Answers will vary but could include the following:
  1. The believer should develop his social, family and work-related contacts so that he can witness to them.
  2. The believer should be trained in evangelism so he can become an effective witness for Christ.
  3. He should determine to make witnessing as a way of life a top priority.
3. They would soon be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would give them power to be Christ’s witnesses to the remotest parts of the earth.
4. 1. Christ will come back bodily (**in like manner**; Acts 1:11).  
2. Christ will come back to the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4, note: this refers to His arrival with His church).  
3. Christ will come with the clouds, and every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7).  
4. Christ will return as a conquering hero to establish His kingdom and rule as the Lord of lords and the King of kings (Revelation 19:11–19).
5. a. The phrase “with one accord” means that a group of believers are united in spirit as a result of each believer humbly submitting himself, his thinking and his will to the person and plan of Christ as revealed through His Word. “Oneness of mind” means much more than unanimity, a congenial attitude, or mere capitulation to the consensus opinion of a group. It means that each individual must be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and desires to glorify God rather than seeking to promote his own personal spiritual agenda.  
b. 1. He should examine his spiritual life in light of the biblical teaching on this subject.  
2. He should sincerely confess his sin of having an independent spirit and accept God’s forgiveness.  
3. He should pray that God would help him manifest a Christlike attitude that promotes unity among other believers.
6. Perhaps Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27:5) and the rope or a tree limb broke (Acts 1:18). Judas fell headlong to his death and his body was ruptured in the fall. This last problem could have happened after his death when the body was beginning to decompose. A field, later known as Akeldama or Field of Blood, was purchased with the money that the priests had originally given Judas to betray Christ (Acts 1:18). Other possibilities could apply.
7. a. Peter and the rest of the apostles evaluated their present situation by Scripture. The principle can be stated as follows: Evaluate your present situation in light of God’s Word, and make sure you are where God wants you. If you find that you are not within God’s present will, make the necessary changes before attempting to discern God’s will for the future.  
b. Peter and the rest of the apostles determined God’s will for their lives by taking their counsel from the revealed Word of God. The principle can be stated as follows: Seek to determine God’s will for the future by examining the Scriptures to learn from God’s Word (His commands, promises, and principles) about the particular situation. Some Christians make important decisions based upon nonbiblical influences such as impressions, feelings, circumstances (fleece-casting), poor counsel, etc., rather than seeking the wisdom of God as revealed through His Word.  
c. The apostles prayed and surrendered their wills to God. The principle can be stated as follows: When you are faced with choices that appear equal, and nothing in Scripture precludes you from choosing either one, pray and totally surrender your will to God. The apostles’ prayer was an act of humility that enabled them to be freed from personal desire that might have caused a lack of peace subsequent to their decision.
8. The apostles did not second-guess God’s will for their lives. The principle can be stated as follows: When you have followed the first three steps and have made the decision you believe God has led you to make, trust that God led you. Christians can experience assurance and peace regarding their decision if they approach the decision-making process according to the will of God and trust God to answer their prayers (Proverbs 3:5–6).