INTRODUCTION: The book of Acts is a book of ACTION for every chapter is loaded with holy activity. This first chapter takes up the story of the life of Christ exactly where the Gospel of Luke ended. (Luke 24:50-53) The Lord Jesus had risen from the dead and showed Himself alive many times to His disciples for a period of forty days. (Acts 1:3) It was now time for the Lord to ascend back into Heaven. This great event would take place just outside the city of Jerusalem upon the Mount of Olives. (Luke 24:50; Acts 1:12) In this chapter, Luke records the story of THE ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

I. THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT v 1-8

A. Luke addresses the book of Acts to a Roman official named Theophilus v 1-3
THEOPHILUS (v 1) - "a lover of God"
Theophilus must have been a Roman official of high rank for Luke calls him "most excellent Theophilus," a title reserved for those of high political position. (Luke 1:31) Chief captain Claudius Lysias referred to Governor Felix by the same title calling him "most excellent Governor Felix." (Acts 23:26) According to historical accounts, Theophilus was a great lord who ruled over all the men of political power in the city of Antioch, Syria. He was probably saved under Luke or Paul’s ministry and wanted to know more about the Christian faith. God uses Luke to write only two books in the Bible, the Gospel of Luke, and Acts, both of which are addressed to Theophilus. (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1)
PASSEION (v 3) - "suffering; Christ’s death on the cross"

B. The Lord Jesus promises to send the baptism "with the Holy Ghost" v 5-5
The baptism "with the Holy Ghost" is a baptism of power. (v 8) The disciples were already saved and on their way to Heaven, but they were fearful and timid preferring to secretly huddle in "an upper room" (v 13) than to go forth boldly preaching Christ to a lost world. The Lord had called them to be witnesses instead of lawyers or judges. (v 8) A "witness" simply tells what he has seen and heard. It would take the power of the Holy Spirit to make them bold witnesses who would not fear what men would do to them. (Micah 3:8; Luke 4:14; Acts 4:5; 6:8) The Lord Jesus commissions His local church for the fifth time to carry the Gospel. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:47-48; John 20:21-23) Notice the four places they are commanded to go with the Gospel:
1) "in Jerusalem" (v 8) - Jerusalem is their CITY
2) “in all Judea” (v 8) - Judea is their COMMUNITY
3) “in Samaria” (v 8) - Samaria is their COUNTRY
4) “the uttermost part of the earth” (v 8) - the earth is all CONTINENTS

NOTE: Notice that Jesus promised the “baptism with the Holy Ghost” not the baptism “of” the Holy Ghost for that would mean that the Holy Ghost was the One doing the baptizing. Jesus said that John the Baptist baptized with water. (v 5) The “water” did not do the baptizing but was simply the element with which John baptized. The Holy Ghost never baptized anybody. Instead, it is the Lord Jesus that does the baptizing and the Element with which He baptizes is the Holy Ghost. Baptism “with the Holy Ghost” does not place a person in a “mystical body of Christ” as some universal, invisible church people teach. Instead, the “baptism with the Holy Ghost” was a baptism of power for Christians. It was done once and for all on the day of Pentecost as God poured out His Spirit upon all flesh. (Joel 2:28) Today there is only “one baptism.” (Ephesians 4:5) That one baptism is “water baptism” which is to be done after salvation as a prerequisite to becoming a member of a local, visible body of Christ called a local “church.” (Acts 2:41; I Corinthians 12:13, 27; Ephesians 1:22-23)

II THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD v 9-11

A. The Lord Jesus was “taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight” v 9
The Lord Jesus ascended back to Heaven in a resurrected super-human body and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. Today, the Christian has a Mediator in Heaven, a great High Priest, an Advocate with God the Father, and a Saviour Who is “touched with the feelings of our infirmities.” (Hebrews 4:14-16)

B. The Lord Jesus will one day descend from Heaven in the same way He ascended to Heaven v 10-11
This “same Jesus” (v 11) will come again in the clouds at the rapture to receive the saved of all the ages unto Himself. (I Thessalonians 4:16-17; John 14:3)
Seven years after the rapture, this “same Jesus” will come again with clouds down to the earth to rule and reign for one thousand years. (Revelations 1:7; 14:14)

III THE WAITING OF THE DISCIPLES v 12-26

A. The disciples return to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives to await the baptism with the Holy Ghost v 12-14
Many that had been saved during Jesus’ public ministry gathered at the city of Jerusalem along with the eleven remaining disciples. Notice that Jesus’ “brethren” had now also trusted the Lord as their Saviour. (John 7:5; I Corinthians 9:5; Galatians 1:19)
B. Matthias is elected to take the place of Judas Iscariot as the twelfth disciple  

v 15-26  

MATTHIAS (v 23) - "gift of Jehovah"  

ACELDAMA (v 19) - "the field of blood"  

Aceldama was a jagged, rocky field at the base of the Valley of Hinnom located just outside the southern wall of the city of Jerusalem. It was on the cliff which hangs over Aceldama that Judas Iscariot hanged himself. The rope snapped and his dead body fell upon the jagged rocks below. The Jewish rulers took the blood money which Judas had cast down at the Temple and bought this "field of blood" to "bury strangers in." (Matthew 27:3-7) Buying this field of blood fulfilled the scriptures. (Zechariah 11:12-15; Jeremiah 18:1-4) While Peter was waiting at Jerusalem for the "baptism with the Holy Ghost," he came across the scriptures concerning the replacement of Judas Iscariot who "by transgression fell." (v 25) Matthias was elected by the church to be the twelfth disciple. (Psalm 69:25; 109:8) This is the democratic system that Bible-believing churches ever since have used in electing officers. (Acts 6:3-6; Proverbs 16:33) Some think that Paul should have been the twelfth disciple and that Peter and the others acted out of God’s will. This is not the case at all for the Holy Spirit mentions twelve disciples, which included Matthias, thus showing that God approved of their actions. (Acts 2:14; 6:2)  

TEACHERS’ TIP: ENTHUSIASM IS CONTAGIOUS - HAS ANYONE CAUGHT IT FROM YOU LATELY?  

NEXT MEMORY VERSE: Acts 2:41
TEST YOURSELF

Fill in the blanks:


2. Acts contains the first ________ years of church history.

3. ____________ is the human author of the book of Acts. He also wrote the Gospel of ________________.

4. The key verse of the book of Acts is ________________.

5. The key word, witness, in the book of Acts occurs ________________ times.

6. The book of Acts tells us about the ministries of ____________ and ____________.


8. When Jesus ascended, He was received in a ________________.

9. The Feast of ________________ was 10 days away when Jesus ascended. Jesus had been with them for ________ days after His resurrection.

10. There were now only ____________ disciples, so a new disciple had to be elected to take the place of ________________.

11. ________________ was the newly elected disciple.

BONUS: Why were there only eleven disciples at this time before the new disciple was elected?

Lesson 1 con't