

***THE ACTS OF THE  
APOSTLES***

**OR**

***THE ACTS OF THE  
RISEN LORD***

**STUDIES 1 - 12**

***STUDENT  
MANUAL***

**Stephen Nemeth Lectures**

# ***GOING THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS***

## **STUDY 1**

**Scripture Portion: Acts 1:1-3**

### **Acts 1:1-3 -**

In many ways, **Acts** is the most exciting book in the New Testament for it is so full of movement and interest. These studies will be expository, devotional, practical and varied. This first study in the series is introductory to the whole.

*To begin with, notice the following -*

## **1. TITLE.**

The book is known as “The Acts of the Apostles“. This is correct, though in the main it only tells us of the “acts“ of two apostles:

**Peter**, whose ministry was to the Jews and whose great word was “repent“, and

**Paul**, whose ministry was to the Gentiles and whose great word was “believe“.

Strictly speaking, however, this book does not record the acts of men but of the Risen Lord, who, by the Holy Spirit, filled and used men as His instruments. This is the meaning of -

### **Acts 1:1 -**

Luke tells us that in his Gospel he recorded many of the things “that Jesus began both to do and teach.....”.

Read -

### **Luke 1:1-4 -**

For 33 years the Holy Spirit had indwelt, filled and worked through the human body of the Man Christ Jesus.

Then, this same Man returned to Heaven and the Holy Spirit came and filled His mystical body, the Church. Thus the Lord continued to do His mighty works from the throne.

It is more correct, therefore, to call this book “The Acts of the Risen Lord”, or “The

Acts of the Holy Spirit”.

Because of this, the **Book of Acts** is an unfinished book. It records the continuing work of the Risen Lord from Heaven.

## **2. WRITER.**

Luke wrote his Gospel, and also the **Book of Acts**.

Compare -

**Luke 1:1-4 -**

**Acts 1:1-3 -**

Both letters were written to Theophilus.

## **3. DATE AND PERIOD.**

It was written about AD 63 and covers approximately 33 years of history.

Our Lord lived upon this earth for 33 years, which, incidentally is the average life span of a man.

In **Acts** we have an example of what can be accomplished through one generation of believers.

## **4. KEY VERSE -**

**Acts 1:8 -**

**KEY WORD** - is “witness”.

In this one verse we have a bird’s eye view of the whole book.

We start by reading of the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, the ecclesiastical centre, and conclude with the preaching of the gospel in Rome, the centre of world power.

*Now consider some reasons why we should study this*

*wonderful Book of Acts.*

## **1#. It is the record of actual history.**

Be sure of this. It is authentic.

**2 Timothy 3:16 -**

It is the first book ever written of Church history. It is the history book of the Church of which we are members. It applies to this Church age and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit in which we are living. Compare -

**Matthew 16:18 -**

**Acts 2:41 -**

The “building” and the “adding” are still going on!

## **2. It is full of instruction for us as Christians.**

It is our text book.

**2 Timothy 2:15 -** *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

In it we learn how to worship, how to walk, how to witness, how to win souls, how to pray, how to conquer, how to suffer, how to rejoice in tribulation, how to live for the Lord, and how to die for the Lord.

This book tells us how the early Christians gave, how they worked together and how they acted in times of crisis. What an exciting record it is!

## **3. It contains a clear exposition of vital Christian doctrine.**

**Romans**, of course, is the text book of theology, but in **Acts** we hear the Christian gospel being preached and we see it working. We hear it in the sermons and speeches of Peter, Paul, Stephen, Philip, James and Ananias. We quickly learn what a Christian believes and how he is to present the gospel to others.

All the vital Christian doctrines are emphasized in the **Book of Acts**. “All the notes of the Christian gospel are sounded. They peal forth in rapturous harmony.”

It is significant to notice that the message, though preached by very many different people, is always the same.

#### **4. It contains many thumbnail biographies.**

Read through **Acts** and pick out the stories told, in brief compass, of individuals who God saved, blessed and used for the extension of His kingdom.

Read of Stephen - **Acts 6:5-7:60**.

Read of Dorcas - **Acts 9:36-42**.

Read of John Mark - **Acts 13:1-13**.

Read of Apollos - **Acts 18:24-28**.

For your own guidance, make a list of these biographies. Make your list alphabetically. When you have completed it, you will have a valuable aid to further study.

#### **5. It has a strong missionary emphasis.**

The **Book of Acts** is the authorized missionary manual of the Church. It deals with the why, the how and the where of missionary work. It speaks of the evangelization of cities. For example read **Acts 8:1-8**

It speaks also of individuals. For example read **Acts 8:26-39**.

It shows concisely how men are called and equipped for missionary service. This book inspires, makes, trains, instructs and equips missionaries. It is a missionary book from start to finish.

**Acts 13:1-5** -

#### **6. It describes many notable conversions.**

This will inspire you. Read of the conversions at Pentecost - **Acts 2:36-42.**

Of the conversion of the Queen's Treasurer - **Acts 8:26-39.**

Of the conversion of Cornelius - **Acts 10:1-48.**

Of the conversion of Lydia - **Acts 16:13-15.**

Of the conversion of the Jailer - **Acts 16:25-34 -**

Of the conversion of Crispus - **Acts. 18:8.**

These are but examples of what God can do! Yes, examples of what God can do and of what He is doing all over the world today through the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the gospel and in answer to the prayers of God's people.

## **7. It is of great spiritual value.**

To read the **Book of Acts** will send us to our knees. It will raise the temperature of our love for the Lord. It will fire us with new zeal and will stir us to be active in the Lord's service. Read of the men who turned the world upside down and you will be turned upside down also.

**Acts 17:6 -**

Read of what God can do with ordinary men and women when they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 4:31 -**

**Acts 4:33 -**

**Acts 17:6 -**

The late Dr. Campbell Morgan used to say that a study of this book will do two things for us.

**First** - it will fill us with hope. We shall realize what a wonderful Lord we have, what a might Person the Holy Spirit is and what a powerful gospel has been entrusted to us.

**Second** - it will fill us with shame. To read this book will humble us and send us to our knees causing us to cry out, "Lord, do it again".

So, read through **Acts** again and again. Study it prayerfully, eagerly, methodically and expectantly.

## ***NOTES***

# WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

## STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:4-5

### **Acts 1:4-5 -**

What do these verses tell us?

They record the final great command that the risen Lord gave to His first followers. He had commissioned them to preach the gospel.

### **Matthew 28:19 -**

Now, just before His ascension, He told them that “they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father”, which, He said, He had often spoken about.

In order that we may clearly understand what our Lord was referring to, and how the promise of the Father related not only to them but to us, we shall ask and answer three main questions.

## **1. WHAT WAS THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER?**

It was the promise of the advent of the Holy Spirit. Before Pentecost, in all earlier dispensations, He was working in the world and in the lives of God’s people. In the Old Testament, we have instances of His coming upon men to empower them for special service.

For example:

Bezaleel -

**Exodus 31:3 -**

Eldad and Medad -

**Numbers 11:26 -**



Gideon -

**Judges 6:34 -**

Samson -

**Judges 14:19 -**

Thus far, however, He had not come to abide with and in all God's people.

***The promise of the Father was the promise that the Holy Spirit would come to Pentecost to do a distinctive threefold work in the lives of all Christians.***

It was a promise that related to this period of time in which we are living, the Dispensation of the Spirit, the Church age.

***a#. It was given through the prophet Joel.***

***Joel 2:28-32 -***

***b. It was proclaimed by John the Baptist.***

**John 1:29-34 -**

***c. It was referred to many times by our Lord Himself.***

**John 7:37-39 -**

**John 14:16-17 -**

**John 15:26 -**

**John 16:6-7 -**

**John 16:13-14 -**

**Acts 1:8 -**

***d. It was anticipated by our Lord after the resurrection. This was an earnest of Pentecost.***

**John 20:22 -**

*e. It was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.*

**Acts 2:4 -**

The promise of the Father, then, was the promise that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit would come in a special way to do a threefold work in the lives of all God's children.

These three ministries of the Holy Spirit would only come into operation at and after Pentecost and throughout the whole of this dispensation.

## **2. What were (*and are*) these ministries?**

*a. He would come to BAPTIZE them all.*

John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize His people with the Holy Ghost.

**John 1:33 -**

Jesus told His people that they would be "baptized with the Holy Ghost".

**Acts 1:5 -**

The doctrinal explanation of this baptism of the Spirit is to be found in -

**1 Corinthians 12:12-13 -**

At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came and filled the 120, they were up until then isolated units, but He united them into the body of Christ. Pentecost marked the formation of the Church, the body of Christ.

All our "fathers" were baptized into Moses and in the sea once.

**1 Corinthians 10:1-4 -**

That was never repeated. Likewise, the baptism of the Spirit was historical and collective and not to be repeated. By the baptism of the Spirit, every Christian has been placed into the body of Christ.

*b. He would come to INDWELL them all.*

**John 14:16-17 -**

*Notice these words of the Saviour which pointed forward clearly to their fulfillment.*

**Acts. 2:4 -**

*The Holy Spirit, Who had been with them, would thereafter be in them - “for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”. The distinctive mark of a Christian is that he in indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is true of every Christian from the moment of believing on Christ.*

*The following references confirm this.*

**John 7:39 -**

**Romans 5:5 -**

**Romans 8:8-9 -**

**1 Corinthians 6:19 -**

**1 Thessalonians 4:8 -**

**c.     *He would come to EMPOWER, them all.***

In other words -

**Luke 24:49 -**  
and

**Acts 1:8 -**

were fulfilled in the experience of these first disciples.

**Acts 2:41 -**

We only have to read through the **Book of Acts** to see how wonderfully these early Christians were empowered when the Holy Spirit clothed them.

### **3.    WHY DID THEY HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE PROMISE?**

They had to wait for God’s time, in accordance with -

**Leveticus 23:15-17 -**

Doubtless the waiting time was a time of heart searching and of earnest prayer.

**Luke 11:13 -**

In God's calendar, Pentecost had to come fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. They had to wait - they did wait - the Holy Ghost came in fulfillment of our Lord's promise.

#### **4. DO WE HAVE TO WAIT?**

- a. WE DO NOT have to wait for the Holy Spirit to baptize us into the body of Christ.*

*What is spoken of in -*

***1 Corinthians 12:13 -***

has already taken place.

We enter into the good of this at the moment of conversion. Every believer is already baptized into the body of Christ. There is, therefore, no command in scripture to seek the baptism of the Spirit.

- b. WE DO or MAY have to wait for the Holy Spirit, Who indwells us, to fill and possess us.*

*Read again -*

***1 Corinthians 6:19 -***

*He waits to fill us.*

***Ephesians 5:18 -***

*He can only fill and possess us if we do not grieve Him.*

***Ephesians 4:30 -***

*or quench Him -*

***1 Thessalonians 5:19 - Quench not the Spirit.***

- c. **WE DO** have to wait for the Holy Spirit to empower us for special service.

*We do not wait for Him but on Him, in order that He may endue us with power and thus make our service for Him effective.*

**1 Corinthians 2:4 -**

*Let us rejoice that the promise of the Father has been fulfilled and that the Holy Ghost has been given without measure.*

**John 3:34 -**

*As believers, we have been baptized into His body, the Church, and are members one of another. Let us give Him the right of way in our lives and be utterly dependent upon Him for Him to fill us with Himself and use us for His glory.*

*Take us, Lord, oh, take us truly,  
Mind and soul, and heart and will!  
Empty us and cleanse us throughly,  
Then with all Thy fulness fill.*

**NOTES**  
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# THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY MANDATE

## STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:8

**Acts 1:8** -*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

This key verse is where we learn from the lips of our Lord Himself, His own plan for world evangelization, or what is to be “the whole work of the whole Church for the whole age”.

How is the gospel to be spread today? Who are the people to do it? How are they to do it? What are their resources for doing it? These and other questions find their answer in our study verse.

## 1#. THE PEOPLE CHOSEN BY THE LORD.

It is important and encouraging to notice that God does not choose angels or supermen, but ordinary men and women to be His witness. “Ye.....you.....ye.....” - mark these pronouns in -

**Acts 1:8** -

How often we come face to face with the principle enunciated in -

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29** -

Most of His witnesses are ordinary folk like ourselves. This brings us to the important point - God expects every Christian to be a witness.

Dr. Pierson said, “Witnessing is a necessity of a truly saved soul. A light that does not shine, a spring that does not flow, a seed that does not grow is not more an anomaly than a life in Christ that does not witness for Christ.”

Every Christian is to be a witness. This means that God has, or should have, witnesses everywhere - in homes, in shops, in offices, in hospitals, in factories. Everywhere, wherever there is a Christian, there should be a witness.

It is clear then that the people whom God chooses to be His witnesses are all those whom He saves by His grace. Read through the **Book of Acts** and make a note of those whom God saved and then used as His witnesses.

You are a Christian. Are you a witnessing Christian?

## **2. THE PLAN ADOPTED BY THE LORD.**

What is the function of the witness? To witness means to give a testimony based on personal knowledge. A witness must tell, not what he thinks or supposes, but what he knows from personal experience. He must give first-hand, up-to-date evidence. Compare -

**John 3:11 -**

**John 9:25 -**

**Acts 22:15 -**

God's plan, therefore, is that every one of us who loves Him and who belongs to Him should tell what we have seen and heard, and what we know of Him and of His grace. Notice that our testimony is to centre upon the Person of Christ Himself.

*"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me...."*. We are not to witness to a denomination, a system or a creed, but to the Person of our Lord Himself.

Notice also that witnessing is not to be only a matter of telling. Primarily it is to be a matter of living. We certainly should use our lips in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. But first, our lives must witness for Christ.

Notice that **Acts 1:8** says,

What we are is more important than what we say. If our lives are witnessing for Him then our saying will be effective and powerful.

What a glorious plan this is that the Lord has adopted for the evangelization of the world! Every one of His children is to go forth into his ordinary sphere of life and live and speak for the Lord there.

## **3. THE PLACE INDICATED BY THE LORD.**

Where are God's witnesses to go? We have already noticed that God wants them everywhere.

In -

**Acts 1:8 -**

a definite geographical setting is indicated - *“in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”*.

Compare with -

**Matthew 28:19 -**

This inevitably means that some witnesses must leave their homes and go to other places and other lands in order that they may obey the Lord's commission, being His witnesses to peoples who have never heard of Him.

**Acts 1:8** is our authority for sending out “foreign” missionaries. This commission is obligatory on all Christians in every age.

- a. In the light of Acts 1:8, as His witnesses, every one of us should be willing to go anywhere for the Lord.*

Whatever our age and circumstances, we should be willing to be the Lord's witnesses in the place of His choice.

- b. In the light of Acts 1:8, young people under the age of 30 should be especially exercised as to whether or not the Lord would have them be His witnesses where the need is greatest.*

*Undoubtedly the need is greatest in many other lands where there are still millions of people who have never heard of Christ. Whereas, here in the homeland, we have churches everywhere!*

*Every young Christian who has health and strength should be willing to go wherever the Lord would have him go and to live and to labour for Him there as His witness.*

- c. In the light of Acts 1:8, all who would be His witnesses must begin in Jerusalem.*

That is, we must begin at home. We must live consistently for the Lord in the home, in the office, in the hospital or wherever we are just now. We must be His witnesses there. Going to Africa will certainly not make us witnesses!

God's great heart of love yearns over the whole wide world. His method for



evangelizing it is to send forth living witness.

Study very carefully -

**Romans 10:13-15 -**

Who is sufficient for these things?

#### **4. THE POWER SUPPLIED BY THE LORD.**

*“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses.....”*. No one can be an effective witness without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Compare -

**Luke 4:18 -**

**Luke 24:49 -**

**Acts 2:4 -**

How was it that Peter and Paul were such vital witnesses? How does anyone, anywhere, witness effectively for the Lord?

Compare -

**Zechariah 4:6 -**

**Acts 1:8 -**

The empowering of the Holy Spirit is given to us to enable us to obey the Lord's command to witness effectively for Him.

#### **5. THE PERIOD GIVEN BY THE LORD.**

How long have we left in which to evangelize the world? Until the Lord Jesus comes again.

Compare -

**Acts 1:8 -**

**Acts 1:9-11 -**

**John 9:4 -**

All the signs of the times proclaim the fact that His coming is surely very near. If you and I would be His effective, living witnesses, we must be on the job at once. The matter is urgent. The time is short. The need is great. Millions are lost.

The Lord Jesus says to each one of us -

**Acts 1:8 -**

All our service must be filled with a real sense of urgency. We must hurry to preach the gospel.

**Acts 8:29-30 -**

We must be importunate in our praying.

**Acts 12:5 -**

Go, labour on while it is day,  
The world's dark night is hastening on;  
Speed, speed thy work, cast sloth away,  
It is not thus that souls are won.

Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice;  
For toil comes rest, for exile home  
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,  
The midnight cry, Behold, I come.

***NOTES***

# **“THIS SAME JESUS”, ASCENDING AND DESCENDING!**

## **STUDY 4**

**Scripture Portion: Acts 1:9-11**

### **Acts 1:9-11 -**

It is important for us always to remember that the Christian faith rests upon certain great historical facts. In this respect, Christianity is different from other religions which are concerned with moral systems, philosophies and religious observances. The gospel is God's good news of what He has done in history in the Person of His Son and for the salvation of men.

What are the great acts of God upon which the Christian faith rests and which are declared in the gospel? They concern the Person and the work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Five great facts concerning Him are brought before us in the opening verses of Acts.*

### **(1) His incarnation inferred in -**

**Acts 1:1 -**

### **(2) His crucifixion -**

**Acts 1:3 -**

### **(3) His resurrection -**

**Acts 1:3 -**

### **(4) His ascension -**

**Acts 1:9 -**

and the next great historical event -

### **(5) His second advent -**

**Acts 1:10-11 -**

In this study we are to consider and compare the fact and purpose of His ascension and the promise and purpose of His advent. We are to link together His going up and His coming down, for both are brought before us in this section of scripture.

Notice that four times we are told that Jesus was “taken up” -

**Acts 1:2 -**

**Acts. 1:9 -**

**Acts 1:11 -**

**Acts 1:22 -**

We are also told that the Lord is coming down again, for, while in -

**Acts 1:9-10 -**

we have the record of Jesus ascending, in -

**Acts 1:10-11 -**

we have the promise of Jesus descending.

***Three truths are emphasized here about His ascension and His second advent.***

**(1) He ascended personally.**

He will come again personally. Notice the words in **Acts 1:11** - “*this same Jesus*”. It is the same Lord Jesus Who was born in Bethlehem, Who lived 33 years upon this earth, Who was filled with compassion for all who were in trouble, Who died for our sins, rose for our justification and ascended, Who will come again!

**(2) He ascended bodily.**

He will come again bodily. His was a bodily resurrection and a bodily ascension. He came from the grave a resurrected Man, with “a glorious body”.

Compare -

**Acts 1:3-4 -**

**Philippians 3:20 -**

After forty days, He ascended in the same body. His return will be a bodily return.

**(3) He ascended visibly.**

He will come again visibly. It was “while they beheld” that He was taken up -

**Acts 1:9 -**

They saw Him “go into Heaven” -

**Acts 1:11 -**

When He comes again He will be seen first by all His Own people, then by everybody.

Compare -

**1 John 3:2 -**

**Revelation 1:7 -**

**Zechariah 14:4 -**

These precise references assure us that in these three important respects, as our Lord ascended so He will descend.

The same Jesus Whose birth is recorded, Whose ministry is chronicled, Whose crucifixion is described, Whose resurrection is declared, Whose ascension is so clearly stated, will surely come again personally, bodily and visibly.

**1#. “THIS SAME JESUS“: ASCENDING.**

Where is Jesus now?

Compare -

**Hebrews 1:1-3 -**

**Ephesians 1:19-23 -**

Why did He ascend, and why is He in Heaven now?

Many answers could be given to these questions, but consider the following:

*a. Because His earthly mission was completed and He must now commence His heavenly ministry from the throne.*

His earthly mission culminated in His death upon the cross, where He made atonement for our sins.

Having finished this He “*sat down*” -

**Psalm 40:8 -**

**John 1:29 -**

**John 17:4 -**

**John 19:30 -**

**Hebrews 1:3 -**

From **1 Timothy 2:5 -**

We learn that He is in Heaven as our Mediator.

**John 14:6 -**

He is in Heaven as our great High Priest.

**Hebrews 4:14-16 -**

**Hebrews 8:1 -**

He is there as our Advocate.

**1 John 2:1-2 -**

He is our Intercessor.

Compare -

**Romans 8:34 -**

**Hebrews 7:25 -**

**Luke 22:31-32 -**

He is working through His Church.

Compare -

**Matthew 16:18 -**

**1 Corinthians 12:13 -**

**Acts 1:1 -**

**Luke 19:12 -**

In Heaven He continues the work which He began on earth. He is now “receiving a kingdom unto Himself”.

***b. In order that all His people everywhere might enjoy His continual presence.***

While He was down here upon earth He could only be in one place at one time. From Heaven now, in the Person and by the presence of the Holy Spirit, He is with every one of His people.

**Matthew 18:20 -**

**Matthew 28:20 -**

This could only be possible by His ascension.

He is with us now, in our joys -

**John 2:1-11 -**

in our testings -

**Matthew 14:27 -**

and all the time -

**Hebrews 13:5-6 -**

***c. To prepare our Heavenly home.***

***This is clearly stated in the Saviour’s own words.***

***John 14:2 -***

*At His ascension, the Bridegroom went to prepare a place for His Bride. He is our Forerunner, we are to follow!*

**Hebrews 6:20 -**

## **2. “THIS SAME JESUS”: DESCENDING.**

Why will Jesus come back again? What will He do when He comes?

- a. *He is coming to receive all His people to Himself so that they may be with Him for ever.***

**To begin with, compare -**

**John 14:2 -**

**1 Corinthians 15:23 -**

*When He comes, He will rapture all believers into His presence. The dead will be raised and the living will be changed, and we shall have new bodies.*

*This rapture will not be partial but complete in that every redeemed person will go to be with the Lord, for we are saved by grace and not by works.*

**1 Corinthians 15:51-54 -**

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 -**

- b. *He is coming to establish His earthly and millennial kingdom.***

This is referred to six times in **Revelation 20**. Of course the burden of all Old Testament prophecy that still waits fulfillment refers to the coming kingdom of Christ.

**Matthew 6:10 -**

This will only be initiated at His return.

**Luke 1:31-33 -**

Underline the seven “*shalls*”.



*c. He is coming to judge His enemies and to usher in an eternity of blessing for all who love and belong to Him.*

How solemn this is!

**2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 -**

**2 Thessalonians 2:8 -**

**2 Peter 3:7 -**

**Revelation 21:8 -**

Also read **Revelation chapter 20.**

How glorious is the prospect for God's people!

**Revelation 22:1-5 -**

**Revelation 22:20 -**

In view of the Lord's present exaltation and imminent return, we need to heed -

**2 Peter 3:9-14 -**

Even now while we taste of His love  
We are filled with delight at His Name:  
But what will it be when above  
We shall join in the song of the Lamb.

***NOTES***

# **MATTHIAS CHOSEN IN THE PLACE**

## **JUDAS**

### **STUDY 5**

**Scripture Portion: Acts 1:15-26**

The decision to choose Matthias to take the place of Judas Iscariot was evidently an important one, as twelve verses are given to a description of all that took place. In this section of scripture, we have an account of the first business meeting held by the Lord's followers.

In this connection read -

#### **Matthew 19:27-28 -**

Twelve in scripture is a number of perfect administration. Our Lord chose twelve disciples to be with Him. These He commissioned to take the gospel to the whole world.

#### **Mark 3:13-14 -**

But now there were only eleven, for Judas who betrayed Him was missing.

Thus it was that Peter urged the action described in -

#### **Acts 1:15-22 -**

We are told of the method adopted and of the actual appointment of Matthias to take the place of Judas in -

#### **Acts 1:23-26 -**

What are the lessons to be learned from this section of scripture?

**1#. Throughout the subsequent history of the Church, there has been lively discussion as to whether Peter was right or wrong in acting as he did.**

There are those who say that he was right.

There are those who say he was wrong, that he acted carnally, that he was impetuous and was not directed by the Lord. Anyway, they say, the principle of selection was

wrong. Surely it was wrong to choose two and then to cast lots, even though they did pray before they cast lots.

We lean to the view, however, that Peter was right in what he did. We cannot be dogmatic about this. We must remember, however, that it was to Peter that the Lord said -

**Matthew 19:27-28 -**

Although it has been stated that Paul was selected in order to make up the number of the twelve apostles, in actual fact, his name is never associated with the other eleven. To those who say that “after this we never hear of Matthias again”, this does not prove anything, for neither do we hear of some of the other disciples.

As a matter of fact, we do hear about Matthias, though not actually by name.

**Acts 2:14 -**

**Acts 6:2 -**

Peter stood up “*with the eleven*”, and “*the twelve called the disciples together*”.

But surely it is wrong to cast lots? Not necessarily, for these disciples were still acting under the old dispensation.

**Leveticus 16:8 -**

**Proverbs 16:33 -**

**2. Is it not possible that the Holy Spirit has recorded this incident because of the valuable lesson it contains in relation to Church administration?**

There are three lessons in particular. All who are engaged in the Lord’s work would do well to heed them.

*a. The business of the Church must always be conducted in the atmosphere of prayer.*

We learn this from -

**Acts 1:12-14 -**

Those who took part in this business meeting had been present at the prayer meeting.

It is only in this way that we can know the mind of the Lord and enjoy the unity of the Spirit.

The business of the Church is not our business - it is God's business.

**Luke 2:49 -**

He is the Director of His work. Therefore it is essential for us to know His mind in order that we may do His will.

The place for all this is in "the upper room".

**Acts 1:13 -**

- b. We must guard against making our plans and then asking God's blessing upon them.***

It is significant that we learn from -

**Acts 1:24 -**

that they did not choose Matthias and then say, "Now, Lord, bless him!".

They prayed first and committed the whole matter to the Lord, and then they trusted Him to direct them and to give the answer that would be glorifying to Him.

It is very easy to arrange and to plan our service for the Lord and then to ask Him to bless our efforts. Need we wonder why the blessing does not come when we have acted in this way?

- c. God has the plan for His Church and for His work.***

We get this clearly brought before us in -

**Acts 1:24 -**

There was an admission on the part of the people who were praying that they did not know what God's will was.

**Jeremiah 10:23 -**

But they did believe that God had a plan and a purpose and that He was willing to reveal this to them. So, they prayed for His will to be made known.

**James 1:5 -**

All this emphasizes the supreme importance of the prayer life of the Church.

*When there is no prayer, there is no blessing.*

*When there is little prayer, there is little blessing.*

*When there is more prayer, there is more blessing.*

*And when there is much prayer, there is much blessing.*

**3. Notice the kind of man who was needed to fill this office.**

The question is this: What is the supreme and all-inclusive qualification for a servant of God, whether he be a minister, a missionary, a pastor, a deacon, or a Sunday School teacher?

He must be, first and foremost “a witness of the resurrection”.

**Acts 1:22 -**

In other words, he must have had a vision of the risen Lord Jesus. There must be a recognition of Who Jesus is and a surrender to Jesus as Lord and Master.

**Romans 10:9-10 -**

Or, to put it concisely, the kind of men and women needed for Christian service are:

***a. Those who are thoroughly converted.***

That is to say, they must be men and women who have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ personally and who have entered into a saving experience of His grace - like Saul of Tarsus.

**Acts 9:3-6 -**

***b. Those who show forth the risen Lord in their lives.***

For an illustration of one in whose life the risen Lord very evidently manifested His presence and power, read about Stephen in -

**Acts 6:8-15 -**

**Acts 7:54-60 -**

*c. Those who are living as a risen man should live.*

To get the force of this turn to and study **Colossians 3:1-4** and then the verses which follow - **Colossians 3:5-25**.

When a man has really seen the risen Lord, has been captivated by Him and has yielded fully to Him, everything becomes changed. He then knows what it is to be a new creature in Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** -

And to live for the Lord from day to day.

**Colossians 3:17** -

**4. Notice the confidence that these believers had in the scriptures.**

This is important. We must ever be impressed with the fact that these disciples of the Lord were very well versed in the Old Testament. When he stood up to make his speech, Peter immediately referred back to -

**Psalm 41:9** -

**Psalm 69:25** -

**Psalm 109:8** -

He said, "*These scriptures must needs have been fulfilled*". He also attributed the scriptures to which he referred to "the Holy Ghost".

**2 Peter 1:21** -

Again, in -

**Acts 1:20** -

he was quick to say, "It is written in the Psalms".

Is the Bible the Word of God? Indeed it is!

**2 Timothy 3:16** -

## **5. Finally, notice the title of our Saviour in -**

**Acts 1:21 -**

Who was it that Peter and the other disciples had come to follow and love? It was “the Lord Jesus”. This is the Christian testimony.

**1 Corinthians 12:3 -**

Not just “Jesus” (though that is His saving Name); not just “Christ” (though that is His official Name); but “the Lord Jesus“.

Always think of Him and speak of Him as the Lord Jesus.

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# **THE HISTORY OF JUDAS SUMMARIZED**

## **STUDY 6**

**Scripture Portion: Acts 1:15-26**

The most tragic name in human history is that of Judas Iscariot. This name is a synonym for all that is traitorous, treacherous and unholy. Of all the sad stories in God's Word, what we are told about Judas makes the saddest reading. We can think of the folly and sin of Cain, David, Saul, Samson, Ananias and Sapphira - but Judas! What a chill that name sends through one's spirit.

We are told about Judas in a number of places in the four Gospels, but here in **Acts 1:15- 26** we have this man's history summarized. The following points are clearly stated.

### **1#. JUDAS NEVER WAS A CONVERTED MAN.**

This is not the case of a backslider, of one who really knew and belonged to the Lord and who became side-tracked.

The word "fell", in -

**Acts 1:25 -**

means that Judas fell from his privileged position and office - not that he fell from or out of grace.

That is not possible -

**John 10:28-29 -**

Judas was a professor but not a possessor.

**2 Timothy 3:5 -**

### **2. JESUS KNEW ALL ABOUT JUDAS WHEN HE CHOSE HIM.**

There is a reference in -



**Acts 1:16 -**

to

**Psalm 41:9 -**

which should be read in conjunction with -

**John 2:25 -**

**John 6:64 -**

**John 6:70 -**

There is a great mystery here, but we are left in no doubt about the fact that, from the beginning, Jesus knew all about Judas. Compare -

**Psalm 139:23-24 -**

**John 1:47-48 -**

### **3. JUDAS WAS CHOSEN AS ONE OF THE TWELVE.**

We are told this in -

**Acts 1:17 -**

The question arises: Why did Jesus choose Judas? Joseph Parker's answer to the question was, "The greater mystery is, why did Jesus choose me?" We cannot tell why Judas was chosen, but we can be, and should be, warned by all that we know about Judas.

### **4. JUDAS SOLD THE LORD FOR A PALTRY SUM OF MONEY.**

This is referred to in -

**Acts 1:18 -**

which should be read in conjunction with -

**Zechariah 11:12-13 -**

**Matthew 26:14-16 -**

**Matthew 26:21-25 -**

**Matthew 26:47-50 -**

Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, for thirty pieces of silver - the price in those days, of a slave.

## **5. JUDAS BETRAYED THE LORD WITH A KISS.**

We read in -

**Acts 1:16 -**

that he “was guide to them that took Jesus”.

How would the soldiers have known who Jesus was, so that they could arrest the right one?

Ah! Judas would kiss Jesus. Think of it!

## **6. JUDAS, FILLED WITH REMORSE, HANGED HIMSELF.**

One of the most solemn verses in the whole Bible is -

**Acts 1:18 -**

Should this verse be read in conjunction with -

**Matthew 18:3-8 -**

Try to feel the remorse of Judas as you read -

**Matthew 27:3-10 -**

## **7. JUDAS DIED AND WENT TO HELL**

There is a clear statement about this in -

**Acts 1:25 -**

This verse ends the sad record of Judas Iscariot. How different his end was from that of the repentant thief.

**Luke 23:42-43 -**

How sad it was in the light of -

**John 14:2 -**

Thus, we have seen in this portion of scripture and in short compass, a summary of the life, death and destiny of Judas Iscariot.

What lessons should we learn from all this?

Consider the following.

**8. HELPFUL ENVIRONMENT, SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES AND BENEFITS ALONE DO NOT PRODUCE CHANGED HEARTS.**

Think of the privileges and benefits Judas had in being with the Lord and His disciples for three years. Yet his heart was unchanged.

We must always thank God for the privileges of Church membership and of Christian fellowship. But, it is possible to “enjoy” these and still be lost.

**Mathew 7:21-23 -**

**9. THERE IS NO SALVATION IN OUTWARD MORALITY.**

Outwardly, at any rate, Judas was a most moral and good living man. The disciples evidently never suspected him. He was even chosen to be their treasurer, an office which is always filled with special care! But, morality and status do not save.

Compare -

**John 3:3 -**

**John 3:5 -**

**Ephesians 2:8-10 -**

**Titus 3:5 -**

**10. OFTEN, VERY LITTLE VALUE IS PUT UPON THE LORD JESUS AND HIS LOVE.**

Judas was willing to sell the Lord for a very small sum.

How much is He worth to you? Sometimes He is denied and His love and grace are spurned by a small thing such as a friendship or a business deal.

What little things keep some people away from the Lord!

**Luke 9:57-62 -**

**11. ONE SIN UNREPENTED OF MAY LEAD TO PERDITION.**

Was it in Judas' case the love of money? He was certainly not a notorious sinner in the sense that he had committed a long list of crimes. His was the sin of covetousness and of hypocrisy.

**Matthew 6:19-23 -**

**John 12:6 -**

**12. OPPORTUNITIES AND WARNINGS  
PERSISTENTLY SPURNED SPELL FINAL  
DISASTER.**

No man had more or better opportunities for knowing and loving the Lord, yet Judas was lost.

**Proverbs 27:1 -**

Face up to -

**2 Corinthians 13:5 -**

## **13. AT DEATH WE SHALL GO TO A PREPARED PLACE FOR WHICH WE ARE PREPARED!**

God has two prepared places.

Turn to and compare -

**John 14:2 -**

**Matthew 25:41 -**

Then turn to -

**Revelation 20:11-15 -**

**Revelation 22:1-5 -**

## **14. ALL OF US ARE KNOWN FOR SOMETHING!**

**Acts 1:19 -**

This verse gives us a word picture of the tombstone over Judas' grave. What a memorial!

Dr. J. Stuart Holden once said, "What a warning flare is the story of this man, a flare whose warning none of us dare disregard!"

If we do so, it is at our peril. For, unhappily, there is nothing very exceptional in a divided heart on the part of those who profess the faith of Christ.

Judas only did what many another does and seems to get away with. But, thank God, no one need ever tread this dreadful path to Hell. Indeed, no truly saved soul ever will.

If you are not sure of your own salvation, you can make sure now!

**John 3:16 -**

**John 5:24 -**

**John 6:36 -**

**John 10:9 -**

**Romans 10:9-13 -**

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# THE MEANING OF PENTECOST

## STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: Acts 2:1-21

### Acts 2:12 -

In this verse in this section of scripture a very important question is asked - "*What meaneth this?*" If we had been in Jerusalem on this particular day we would have asked the same question, for something tremendous had happened.

Jerusalem was packed with people. Many had come to present the first fruits of the harvest of the year. They had come from many different places.

The Lord Jesus had completed His earthly ministry, having died, risen and ascended. But before going back to Heaven, He had given a command and a promise to His own disciples.

### Acts 1:4-5 -

In simple obedience, these disciples met together to wait upon the Lord. They did this for ten days.

### Acts 1:13-14 -

### Acts 2:1-3 -

Then something very wonderful happened. We read of this in **Acts 2:1-3**. In the opening part of **verse 4**, we read of the essential thing which happened.

### Acts 2:4 -

They were all filled in known languages (though unknown to themselves) so that people from foreign countries heard God's message in their own native tongue.

### Acts 2:4-12 -

But what did all this mean? What does Pentecost mean? Here are some straightforward scriptural answers to that question.

**1#. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL HAVE TO DO WITH CERTAIN GREAT FACTS OF HISTORY, GREAT ACTS OF GOD.**

It is in this respect that Christianity differs from, and is superior to, every other religious system.

The Christian gospel is not just a lovely story, although it is that. It is the story of something great and wonderful that God has done in history. He has sent His own Son into this world.

**John 3:16 -**

**1 Timothy 1:15 -**

In the fulness of time Jesus came, died, rose, ascended and went back to the right hand of God.

**Galatians 4:4-6 -**

The other wonderful thing that God has done in history is this. He has sent the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower His own people.

In this **second chapter of Acts** we have a record of this.

**2. PENTECOST MEANS THAT GOD IS WORKING FOR THE REDEMPTION OF MEN AND WOMEN ACCORDING TO A CAREFULLY PRE-ORDAINED PLAN OR PROGRAM.**

There is nothing haphazard about God. As one of our hymns reminds us: "God is working His purpose out.....". Pentecost teaches us this.

From -

**Acts 2:1 -**

we learn that Pentecost was a pre-determined epoch in the mind of God. The Holy Spirit was not poured out as the result of the prayer meeting that was held by the



disciples.

In -

**Leveticus 23:15-16 -**

we read of the feast of Pentecost, or “the day of first fruits”, which was to take place fifty days after the Passover feast. The Lord Jesus ascended into Heaven forty days after His resurrection. Then, ten days after that came the day of Pentecost.

It is also important to notice in -

**Acts 2:13-17 -**

that Pentecost was the first fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy which had been made 850 years previously.

**Joel 2:28-32 -**

**3. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHO IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TIMES CAME UPON SOME OF GOD’S SERVANTS TO EMPOWER THEM, HAS NOW COME TO DWELL FOREVER WITHIN EVERY CHRISTIAN.**

In many of His sayings, the Lord Jesus anticipated the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell every Christian.

Here are two -

**John 7:37-39 -**

**John 14:16-17 -**

He promised that the Holy Spirit would come to indwell (all) Christians.

At Pentecost that is exactly what happened -

**Acts 2:4 -**

Since the Day of Pentecost, immediately a man becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit takes up residence within him. This is the distinctive mark of a real Christian.

Compare:-

**Romans 8:9 -**

**1 Corinthians 6:19 -**

**4. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO INDWELLS EVERY CHRISTIAN, WAITS AND WANTS TO FILL EVERY CHRISTIAN.**

If you look again carefully at -

**Acts 2:4 -**

you will notice that they were “all filled.....”.

All of them, which means young and old, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, preachers and pray-ers, mothers and fathers, were filled. This is God’s plan and provision for every one of His children. This is to be the normal experience for Christians in this dispensation.

**Acts 4:31 -**

**Acts 9:17 -**

**Acts 13:52 -**

**5. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE POWER OF GOD IS AVAILABLE TO ENABLE EVERY CHRISTIAN TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND TO SERVE GOD EFFECTIVELY.**

The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost.

He indwells and empowers God’s people today to make actual in their experience all that the Lord Jesus died, rose, and ascended to make possible.

If you study our Lord's pattern for Christian living and serving, you will find that Christians are to be new people.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 -**

They are to be love-filled.

**John 13:34-35 -**

They are to be holy.

**1 Peter 1:15 -**

They are to be courageous.

**Acts 4:13 -**

They are to be willing to suffer.

**Acts 5:41 -**

They are to witness with power.

**Acts 1:8 -**

They are to take the gospel to the ends of the world.

**Matthew 28:19 -**

But how is all this possible? It is only possible in one way, as we learn from -

**Zechariah 4:6 -**

**6. PENTECOST MEANS THAT CHRISTIANS ARE NOT ISOLATED UNITS BUT ARE JOINED TOGETHER AS MEMBERS OF ONE GLORIOUS BODY, THE CHURCH.**

In this connection, read -

**1 Corinthians 12:12-13 -**

Notice that there is only one body.....there are many members.....all Christians have been baptized or united into the one body.....and all Christians have received the Holy

Spirit.

This is true ecumenicity!

It is the Holy Spirit Who creates the true unity of the Spirit and Who unites believers.

**Ephesians 4:3 -**

**7. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE GOSPEL IS FOR EVERYBODY AND THAT ANYBODY, ANYWHERE, MAY BE SAVED BY FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

We get this clearly brought before us in -

**Acts 2:21 -**

What a wonderful thing it is that provision has been made by the Lord for “whosoever will” to know the Lord Jesus Christ as the living Saviour and the Holy Spirit as the abiding, indwelling Comforter!

Oh, fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,  
Until my very heart o'erflow  
In kindling thought and glowing word,  
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

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# THE EXPERIENCE AND EVIDENCE OF PENTECOST

## STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: Acts 2:1-4

The experience of Pentecost is indicated by the words, “*They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.....*”.

The evidence of Pentecost is indicated by the words, “*and began.....*”.

The experience came to about 120 who were in the upper room, a wonderful and a transforming experience which since that day has come to multitudes of God’s people. But we read not only of the experience of Pentecost but of the evidence of Pentecost when, because they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they “*began.....*”.

Whenever God fills the heart, life and personality of any one of His children with the Holy Spirit, there will always be the evidence. The evidence here is indicated by the fact that those who were filled.....began.

In this study we shall see that the historical event of over 1900 years ago may, and must, become a personal experience in our individual lives.

## 1#. THE EXPERIENCE OF PENTECOST.

### Acts 2:1-4 -

This portion contains the record of what actually happened on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus had promised the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell and infill His people.

### Acts 1:4-5 -

In obedience to His command, about 120 of His first followers were awaiting the fulfilment of His promise.

### Acts 1:12-14 -

Then, suddenly He came! - and “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost”. But, was this wondrous gift and blessing only for these first disciples? No!

- a. *The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, is just as real an experience for us today as it was*

*for those first disciples.*

The Spirit-filled life is God's command.

**Ephesians 5:18 -**

It is meant to be the normal experience of God's people. It is so definite and real that one knows whether or not one has entered into the experience.

Compare -

**Acts 4:8 -**

**Acts 4:31 -**

**Acts 6:3 -**

**Acts 6:5 -**

**Acts 7:55 -**

**Acts 9:17 -**

**Acts 11:24 -**

**Acts 13:9 -**

**Acts 13:52 -**

*b. The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, is for every Christian everywhere.*

Notice the significance of the little word "all" in -

**Acts 2:4 -**

No one was excluded -

**Acts 2:39 -**

Some of those present that day are mentioned in -

**Acts 1:13-14 -**

There were all kinds of people - and all were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit-filled life is God's provision for every one of His children in order to make vital Christian living and effective Christian service possible.

*c. The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, frequently comes subsequently to conversion.*

We are not basing this statement upon the experience of these first disciples, because they lived through a period of transition - before Calvary, after Calvary, before the Ascension, after the Ascension, before Pentecost and after Pentecost.

There is no parallel to this in our experience. Judicially, as far as God is concerned, we get all at conversion.

**Ephesians 1:3 -**

but we do not necessarily know this or enter into God's plan and purpose for us when we are first converted.

To put it another way: every Christian has the Holy Spirit -

**Romans 8:9 -**

But not every Christian is filled, possessed by the Holy Spirit.

*d. The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, is an experience greater than that of conversion.*

Life abundant is more than life.

**John 10:10 -**

Fullness of joy is greater than joy.

**John 15:11 -**

Power for service is greater than and different from the "power" to enter God's family. Compare -

**John 1:12 -**

**Acts 1:8 -**

Undoubtedly the greatest day in Peter's life was the Day of Pentecost.

There are many who can say the same today.

*e. The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, is a radical experience.*

To be filled with the Holy Spirit implies being emptied of every “unholy” spirit - of everything that is unlike the Lord and that is displeasing to Him.

It is only when we are willing to be emptied of sin and self, and cleansed in the blood of Christ that the Holy Spirit can fill us.

## **2. THE EVIDENCE OF PENTECOST.**

When these first disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit”, we read that they “began”. There was immediate evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power in their lives.

Consider the following questions that arise in this connection.

*a. WHAT did they begin?*

In the narrative we read that “they began to speak in tongues”. This was IMPORTANT.

This did happen, but it was not the only thing. The essential thing is that they began to be vital and effective.

They began -

to live and work for Christ,

**Acts 4:33 -**

to speak for Christ,

**Acts 8:4 -**

to suffer for Christ,

**Acts 5:41 -**

How mightily they were transformed when “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost”!



After Pentecost they were completely different people from what they had been before Pentecost.

**b. *WHEN did they begin?***

The answer is, when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and not before. Here we see one cause of much of our ineffective service. How often we go forth to serve the Lord.

We go in our own strength, forgetting the truth of -

**Zechariah 4:6 -**

These first followers began to witness for the Lord after Pentecost, not before.

Compare-

**Luke 24:49 -**

**Acts 1:4-5 -**

We are only ready to live for the Lord and to serve the Lord when we are filled with the Spirit.

**c. *WHERE did they begin?***

In Jerusalem. When God fills us with His Spirit, it is in order that we may first of all be effective witnesses among our own people.

Compare -

**Acts 1:8 -**

**Acts 9:26-30 -**

An experience of Pentecost should give us a burden for the salvation of our loved ones and friends. Spirit-filled witnesses begin to honour the Lord by living and working for Him among their own people.

**d. *WHY did they begin?***

Because they could not help doing so! They were empowered and motivated by the Holy Spirit Who now possess them. They could not do otherwise.

**Acts 4:20 -**

**Acts 5:42 -**

*e. HOW did they begin?*

There is a very real sense in which “they” did not begin at all. It was the Lord from Heaven, by the Holy Ghost, Who began doing His gracious and glorious work.

**Mark 16:19-20 -**

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# **PETER'S SERMON ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST**

## **STUDY 9**

**Scripture Portion: Acts 2:14-36**

It has been rightly said that Peter's pronouncement on the Day of Pentecost "was homiletically correct as well as doctrinally sound.

This theme needed skillful development. Before getting to the heart of his subject, it was necessary for him to adjust to the excited minds of the people to whom he was giving the message".

There is valuable help here for all who would preach the gospel.

To begin with, notice that Peter's sermon resolved itself into three distinct parts -

- (1) The introduction.**
- (2) The development.**
- (3) The application.**

Each of these parts carries a pronoun for its title.

The introduction explains "This".

**Acts 2:16 -**

The development proclaims "Him".

**Acts 2:23 -**

The application concerns "ye" or you.

**Acts 2:36 -**

Here then is a model gospel address. The **Book of Acts** is the textbook on gospel preaching. Twenty-two sermons or speeches are recorded - nine by Peter, nine by Paul, and one each by Stephen, Philip, James, and Ananias.

Take a look at Peter as he preached the gospel on the Day of Pentecost and notice - the Method he adopted, the Message he proclaimed, the Miracle he witnessed.

## **1#. THE METHOD HE ADOPTED.**

There is clear, down-to-earth instruction here for all who would preach the gospel - the Good News that God gives to sinful men and women.

There are five important things to notice about Peter's preaching.

### ***a. It was short and straight to the point.***

His speech was vital and urgent, with no unnecessary word and no enticing words.

**1 Corinthians 2:4 -**

There was no pointless repetition. His sermon, as we have it recorded, consisted of 520 words.

Notice also that it was directed to the mind - giving instruction: to the heart - producing enthusiasm: to the conscience - resulting in conviction: and to the will - leading to decision.

### ***b. It was simple, plain and clear.***

All in the congregation could understand exactly what Peter was saying. Although he was proclaiming the great and glorious and "new" message of the gospel, it was against the historical background with which his hearers would be familiar. It was a case of the masses of the people hearing Peter gladly.

**Mark 12:37 -**

Peter spoke with great simplicity of speech.

**2 Corinthians 3:12 -**

He also spoke clearly and loudly.

**Acts 2:14 -**

### ***c. It was instructive and informative.***

Peter's preaching was not merely "emotional evangelism". As a matter of fact, there is no such thing mentioned in the New Testament, though there is much of it about today.

In the New Testament, the appeal of the gospel is always an appeal to the mind, the heart, the conscience and the will.

**Isaiah 1:18 -**

The great need today is for a teaching evangelism.

This is true -

because God commands it -

**Acts 5:42 -**

because of man's need of being taught the truth -

**1 Corinthians 2:14 -**

*d. It was scriptural.*

Paul's injunction to Timothy was to "preach the Word" -

**2 Timothy 4:2 -**

Peter certainly did this here. Two hundred words in his sermon are words quoted from the Old Testament. His sermon was full of the prophetic word. This is a convincing method of preaching - to show that all fulfilled prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

Notice also that Peter's preaching was in its right dispensational context and setting. Peter was familiar with God's program for the days in which we are living. He was not expecting the conversion of the world, or the kingdom of God to come on earth now, but the calling out of the Church to be the Bride of Christ.

**Acts 15:13-18 -**

*e. It was bold, fearless and without apology.*

This was a distinctive characteristic of New Testament preaching.

It was done with holy boldness as a result, of course, of the experience promised in -

**Acts 1:8 -**

**Acts 4:13 -**

**Acts 4:29 -**

## **2. THE MESSAGE HE PROCLAIMED.**

This is clearly stated in -

**Acts 2:36 -**

“Jesus.....both Lord and Christ”. Peter did not preach religion, a religious system or even a creed. He preached a living Person, the Person of God’s own Son and the work which He accomplished for guilty men and women.

He preached the mighty acts of God - what God had done in His Son for the salvation of men and women.

***a. He preached His incarnation.***

**Acts 2:22 -**

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man.....”. He was the God-man, for He was the man Who was “approved of God”, a phrase which indicates His deity.

***b. He preached His crucifixion.***

**Acts 2:23 -**

declares divine sovereignty and human responsibility and tells us that our Lord was born to die, and that His death was purposeful.

**1 Peter 3:18 -**

***c. He preached His resurrection.***

**Acts 2:24 -**

**Acts 2:32 -**

Peter showed that this was predicted in the Old Testament scriptures -

**Acts 2:25-28 -**

This was always the great emphasis of apostolic teaching and preaching. Compare -

**Psalm 16:8-11 -**

**Acts 17:18 -**

*d. He preached His ascension.*

This is implied in -

**Acts 2:33 -**

Compare -

**John 20:17 -**

**Acts 1:9-11 -**

**Epesians 4:8-10 -**

*(e) He preached His exaltation.*

**Acts 2:33 -**

**Acts 2:36 -**

What a triumphant conclusion this was to a great sermon! Thank God we proclaim a living and glorious Lord.

**Hebrews 7:25 -**

### **3. THE MIRACLE HE WITNESSED.**

This is outlined for us in -

**Acts 2:37-41 -**

As the result of Peter's preaching, many who heard him were "cut to the heart", and asked the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" - **verse 37.**

Peter at once gave the answer - "Repent of your sin, identify yourselves with this Lord Jesus Christ by open commitment to Him, and receive forgiveness of sins and

the gift of the Holy Ghost.“ - **verses 38-40.**

As a result of this, about three thousand souls were converted and declared their allegiance to the Lord Jesus by being baptized, by following on to know the Lord, and by entering into fellowship with His people. - **verses 41-47.**

Send forth the gospel! Tell it out!  
Go, brothers, at the Master's call.  
Prepare His way, Who comes to reign,  
The King of kings, and Lord of all.

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# HE INNER LIFE OF THE CHURCH

## STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: Acts 2:41-47

**Acts 2:41-47 -**

In these verses we have a pattern for the whole dispensation of what the Church should be like.

If we ask the question: What should our local church be like? the answer is to be found here in this passage of scripture.

What are the marks or characteristics of a true church?

**1#. THIS CHURCH WAS SPIRITUALLY  
CONSTITUTED BY CHRIST.**

That is to say, it was not the work of man but the work of God. He made this church. He constituted it and put it together.

**Matthew 16:18 -**

We have here our Lord's promise that He would do this.

If you will read -

**Acts 2:41 -**

**Acts 2:47 -**

you will see that it was the Lord Who made this infant Church in Jerusalem by adding to it those who were saved.

How is a church formed?

Well, the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit produces conviction, the Word is received, the miracle of the new birth takes place, and those who are born again are added to the Lord.

Thus the Lord's church is constituted by Him of believers - those who have received His Word,

**Acts 2:41 -**

and who have been “added to the Church” by Him,

**Acts 2:47 -**

## **2. THIS CHURCH WAS OPENLY COMMITTED TO CHRIST.**

These people of whom we read in this section of scripture had heard the gospel as Peter had preached it. They had been convicted of their sin and had repented and received the Word.

All this is described in -

**Acts 2:37-40 -**

But -

**Acts 2:41 -**

follows **Acts 2:40.**

In this verse we are told that those who received the Word “were baptized”. What a tremendous baptismal service that must have been, for about 3,000 were baptized! What a glorious testimony this was to the power and grace of God!

Here in these verses we have God’s blueprint, His picture of the early Church. We are told that, when 3,000 were converted, these 3,000 were baptized. All those who “gladly received His Word” were baptized. Why was this? They were baptized in obedience to the Lord’s command.

**Matthew 28:19-20 -**

They were also baptized as an open confession that they had renounced their old life and were now trusting Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Compare -

**Acts 2:37 -**

**Acts 2:40 -**

Baptism does not make Christians, nor does the New Testament teach adult baptism any more than we think it teaches infant baptism.

In the early Church when people believed, they were then baptized. Believing and baptism always went together. There is no case recorded in the **Acts** of an unbaptized believer.

### **3. THIS CHURCH WAS GLORIOUSLY UNITED IN CHRIST.**

The keyword in -

**Acts 2:44** -

is the word “together”.

They were different in age, background and temperament, but now, having trusted Christ and been added to the Church, “all that believed were together”, which means that they were not only together in the sense that they were near to each other, with each other, in each other’s presence, but they were “all one in Christ Jesus” -

**Galatians 3:28** -

Notice how this “togetherness”, this true unity in Christ, is described.

*a. They grew together.*

**Acts 2:42** -

They were babies in the family of God. Together they “continued” and began to grow in grace.

**2 Peter 3:18** -

What a grand thing it is when those who are converted go on to know the Lord!

*b. They fed upon the Word together.*

**Acts 2:42** -

They had no New Testament. They depended upon the teaching the apostles gave.

The greatest need today is for God's people to be biblically indoctrinated.

***c. They spent much time together.***

**Acts 2:42 -**

**Malachi 3:16 -**

Do we make friends of God's children? Do we get together? What do we talk about? Fellowship speaks of that which is our common inheritance in Christ.

***d. They remembered the Lord's death together.***

**Act 2:42 -**

This was the very heart of their united worship. It should be the heart and hub of ours.

At His table we look back to Calvary, up to the throne and on to His coming.

***e. They prayed together.***

**Acts 2:42 -**

How we have drifted away from this early pattern! Read through **Acts** and recapture the emphasis which is given there on the power, privilege and possibilities of prayer.

***f. They shared together.***

This is brought before us in -

**Acts 2:44 -**

We read there of the grace of generosity that was very apparent among these early Christians. Is it a pattern for today?

**Acts 20:35 -**

***g. They rejoiced together.***

What exciting reading is -

**Acts 2:46-47 -**

Has your love for the Lord, for His people, for His house and His Word grown stale?

Have you lost the thrill of being a Christian, the wonder of being “saved”

#### **4. THIS CHURCH WAS DYNAMICALLY EMPOWERED THROUGH CHRIST.**

See what the apostle said in -

**Philippians 4:13 -**

This Church, which is pictured for us here in **Acts 2**, was what it was “through Christ”.

In **Acts 2:4 -**

we have the record of the empowering which took place on the Day of Pentecost.

In **Acts 4:31 -**

We read of a repetition of the Holy Spirit’s infilling in the hearts and lives of these Christians.

All we have seen of this Church was the manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s work. Christ from the throne, by the Holy Spirit, made this Church what it was. It was only what it was because of His empowering.

*In closing this study, notice two special ways in which this empowering affected the members of the Church, and through them, the outside world.*

*(1) The members of the Church were characterized by piety.*

This manifestly made a great impression upon all the people.

We learn this from -

**Acts 2:43 -**

“And fear came upon every soul”. These early Christians were holy and Christ-like. They were characterized by godliness.

**Acts 2:47 -**

tells us that they had “favour with all the people”.

**(2) *The numbers of the Church were characterized by power.***

**Acts 2:43 -**

tells us that “many wonders and signs were done by the apostles”.

Are we powerful or pitifully weak?

**In Acts 1:8 -**

we have the secret of power to live the gospel and to preach the gospel.

May God give us a church like this today and make us like these early church members!

Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God;  
He Whose word cannot be broken,  
Formed thee for His own abode.

Saviour, if of Zion's city,  
I, through grace, a member am,  
Let the world deride or pity,  
I will glory in Thy name.

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# THE OUTREACH AND MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

## STUDY 11

Scripture Portion: Acts 3:1-11

If, at the end of **Acts 2**, we have a description of the inner life of the church, here in **Acts 3:1-11**, we have a picture of the outer activity of the church.

In these verses we see what is to be the Mission, the Might and the Method of the Church, or what is the job of the Church, what power is available to do the job, and the way to do it.

### 1#. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

What is it?

From a study of -

**Acts 2:41-47 -**

we might get the impression that the church is to be a kind of mutual aid society! But the record does not end with **chapter 2**, it goes on into **chapter 3**.

Here we learn that in terms of service, believers are saved to serve. Their service consists of taking life to lame and helpless humanity.

Take a look at the man described in these verses. In him we see a picture of humanity without God. He is lame. He has been like this from birth. He is helpless, destitute and more concerned about material needs than about spiritual needs. He is near the temple, but outside it.

Peter and John took the gospel and offered salvation to this man. This is the job, the mission of the church in the world.

This was Jesus' program.

**Luke 4:18-19 -**

It is to be ours as well.

**John 17:18 -**

**John 20:21 -**

The mission of the church is to -

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.  
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,  
Tell them of Jesus, the Mighty to save.

## **2. THE MIGHT OF THE CHURCH.**

What is the church's power to deal with such a desperate need as lame and helpless humanity? It is certainly not material power - not the power of money as we learn from -

**Acts 3:6 -**

It is not the power of personality.

This is made clear from -

**Acts 3:4 -**

A reference to -

**Acts 4:13 -**

makes it clear also that the church's real power is not the power of human eloquence. The church's power is divine, spiritual power.

It is the power of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, as is made quite clear from -

**Acts 3:6 -**

His Name signifies His Person - all that He, our risen, ascended and exalted Lord is.

**Acts 3:12 -**

**Acts 3:16 -**

The Church of God is only powerful as she lifts up, exalts and preaches the Lord Jesus.



Compare -

**Acts 8:5 -**

**1 Corinthians 2:2 -**

This is why it is not only foolish but sinful to make much of a movement or a denomination.

Our one great concern must be to make much of Christ, to exalt and honour Him, and to strip away from our service and activity everything that is inconsistent with His mighty Name.

A church is never great because of numbers or finance or good preaching or worldly reputation. The only true might any church has is the might of the Name and the might of the Lord Himself.

**Acts 3:12 -**

**Acts 3:16 -**

If the Mission of the Church is to go out to save men and women, and the Might of the Church is that power of the Lord Himself, what is the Method of the Church?

### **3. THE METHOD OF THE CHURCH.**

*a. Their Method was one of Divine Co-operation.*

That is, it was the Lord on the Throne working with and through Peter and John, as we learn from -

**Mark 16:19-20 -**

The exalted Lord was doing His work (it was His work!) through human channels - in this case, Peter and John.

It was not Peter and John doing the work. They were available to the Lord and were simply the instruments in His hands.

*b. Their Method was one of Human Co-operation.*

It was not only a case of the Lord working with and through Peter and John, but of Peter and John working together. See this in the following verses.

**Acts 3:1 -**

**Acts 3:3-4 -**

**Acts 3:11 -**

Here were the Doer and the Dreamer in harness! What a glorious partnership this was!

**Acts 3:12 -** (Peter and John!).

There is variety in the Church. There is great need for the Lord's workers to respect one another's God-given ministry.

Read **1 Corinthians 12:3-31.**

*c. Their Method consisted of going out to and making contact with the World.*

This is what Peter and John did.

**Acts 3:6-7 -**,

We are to take the gospel, the message of the love and grace of God to the people where they are. Then, we are to have contact with them '.....*he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up.....*'

Compare the following scriptures.

**Psalm 126:6 -**

**Matthew 28:19 -**

**Mark 5:18-19 -**

Down in the human heart, crushed by the Tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving hand, wakened by kindness,  
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

*d. Their Method was primarily spiritual in its activity.*

It was not only evangelical, it was evangelistic.

**Acts 3:7-9 -**

He was healed physically, but more important than this, he was saved spiritually. The gospel is a social matter, but primarily it is a spiritual matter. Our souls need healing before our bodies.

**Mark 2:5-12 -**

Thank God for every bit of social outreach that is carried on by the Church today!

The gospel has a social application. Of course it does!

But social activity, ministering to the physical, material and temporal needs of men and women, must always be undertaken as an extension and expression of evangelistic concern.

**Mark 8:36 -**

*e. Their Method was empowered and made effective by prayer.*

We learn this from -

**Acts 3:1 -**

Probably the “temple” prayer meeting was “dead” - but Peter and John were there. Here we see the secret of their power:

individual prayer “Peter” ..... “John”.

**Matthew 6:6 -**

united prayer “Peter and John”.

**Matthew 18:19 -**

corporate prayer “at the hour of prayer”.

**Acts 12:5 -**

“The prayers of the saints are the decrees of God beginning to operate.” (Luther).

Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;  
Strength for thy labour the Lord will provide:  
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;

Tell the poor wanderer a Saviour has died.

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# **PETER'S SECOND RECORDED SERMON**

## **STUDY 12**

**Scripture Portion: Acts 3:12-16**

Preaching is the primary task of the Church. This means that not only preachers but all who pray for preachers and who listen to preaching should be deeply interested in this Bible study.

Unfortunately, preaching is often looked upon as unimportant. Consequently many things have been put in the place of preaching.

Some have advocated the substitution of dialogue, discussion, films, and even of plays. There is no substitute for preaching itself. Preaching must come first, for this is the Church's primary task.

What is preaching? True preaching is the communication of divine truth through human personality in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Church's commission is to preach the gospel.

### **Matthew 28:18-20 -**

Preaching is the means by which faith is awakened in the hearer.

### **Romans 10:17 -**

Preaching is a necessity laid upon the preacher.

### **1 Corinthians 9:16 -**

Compare this with -

### **Jeremiah 20:8-9 -**

### **Acts 6:4 -**

Preaching is the means of salvation.

### **1 Corinthians 1:21 -**

The history of the early Church demonstrates its importance and primacy.

Read Peter's sermon recorded in **Acts 3:12-26**.

Notice seven things about it.

## **1#. THE OCCASION OF IT.**

We usually preach at appointed times, but that was not the case here. Something happened which produced an opportunity for preaching.

We read about this in **Acts 3:1- 11.**

In **Acts 3:12** -

We see how Peter quickly “cashed in” on the occasion and made it a glorious opportunity for presenting the message of the gospel.

**1 Corinthians 16:9** -

How often did these early preachers preach? The answer is, whenever they got the opportunity.

**Acts 5:42** -

**Acts 6:4** -

**Acts 8:4-5** -

If preaching is the communication of divine truth through human personality in the power of the Holy Ghost, how many times are we to do this?

**2 Timothy 4:1-5** -

## **2. THE DIRECTNESS OF IT.**

Notice how quickly Peter applied his message to his hearers.

He said -

**Acts 3:12** -

Some preachers are so general in their approach and in their proclamation and application of the truth that one wonders to whom they are speaking! They do not take aim. They fire at random and hit nobody.

Sometimes preachers are afraid to be too personal.

The apostles were not like this.

Compare -

**Acts 2:39 -**

**Acts 13:26 -**

When Nathan came to David with a solemn message, he was not vague or indefinite in his application of the truth.

He said “Thou art the man!” David knew full well that God’s word was meant for him and for him only.

Read **2 Samuel 12:1-13.**

Particularly note -

**2 Samuel 12:7 -**

**2 Samuel 12:13 -**

### **3. THE RELEVANCE OF IT.**

How carefully Peter related his message to the people to whom he was speaking.

How quickly and skillfully he got on to their wave length by speaking about “Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” in -

**Acts 3:13 -**

and “the prophets” in -

**Acts 3:18 -**

Compare also -

**Acts 3:22-25 -**

These people simply had to listen, because Peter was speaking about things with which they were familiar. He was speaking within the context of their own history.

We are to preach in terms that the people will understand and against the background of their knowledge and needs. This is the kind of preaching that God blesses.

## **4. THE HEART OF IT.**

What was the central and dominant theme of Peter's sermon? It was the love and grace of God revealed in His Son.

Hardly had Peter started his sermon when he mentioned "Jesus".

**Acts 3:12-13 -**

True preaching is all about Jesus.

If you want to find out the heart of Peter's message notice the names which he gives to our Lord in this one brief sermon.

These names reveal Who He is and what He is able to do for all who trust Him.

*a. Acts 3:13 - ".....His Son Jesus....."*

declaring His eternal Sonship and His saving work.

**John 1:1-2 -**

**John 1:14 -**

**Matthew 1:21 -**

*b. Acts 3:14 - ".....the Holy One and the Just....."*

The testimony of God, of His friends and enemies, of angels, demons and of Himself was that He was sinless.

**Hebrews 7:26 -**

*c. Acts 3:15 - ".....the Prince of life....."*

declaring that He is the One Who came to give life and that He slew death by dying and gives eternal life to all who trust Him.

**1 John 5:11-12 -**

*d. Acts 3:18 - ".....Christ....."*



The anointed One. This is His official title.

*e. Acts 3:20 - “.....Jesus Christ.....”*

The One Who was anointed to be Saviour.

**Acts 4:12 -**

*e. Acts 3:26 - “.....His Son Jesus.....”*

Here is the wonder of His perfect deity and true humanity.  
This is the preacher’s message.

It is the message of -

Christ’s incarnation (implied throughout the sermon).

His crucifixion declared in -

**Acts 3:15 -**

His resurrection presented in -

**Acts 3:15 -**

**Acts 3:26 -**

His glorification as stated in -

**Acts 3:13 -**

## **5. THE CHALLENGE OF IT.**

Peter’s attitude was not, “Take it or leave it!” It was, rather, “You are guilty. You must do something about it!”

**Acts 3:19 -**

**Acts 3:26 -**

These people were to repent and be converted. These are missing notes in much modern preaching, but they are essential notes in all true biblical preaching.

To repent and be converted is to be turned away from sin to faith in the Lord Jesus.

**Acts 3:26 -**

## **6. THE URGENCY OF IT.**

When Peter preached, it was a matter of life or death for his hearers.

In -

**Acts 3:23 -**

he reminded them of the solemn danger of rejecting God's message.

There are only two classes of people.

**Luke 19:10 -**

There are only two ways.

**Matthew 7:13-14 -**

There are only two destinies.

**Mathew 25:46 -**

We need to recapture the urgent notes of warning in the following verses -

“perish” - **John 3:16 -**

“wrath” - **John 3:36 -**

“die in your sins”- **John 8:24 -**

## **7. THE PREACHER OF IT!**

Take a quick look at the preacher.

He was a born again man, a Spirit-filled man, a Bible-believing man, but also -

*a. A praying man.*

Acts 3:1 -

*b. A reliant man.*

Acts 3:12 -

*c. A faithful man, bold, courageous man.*

Acts 20:27 -

Pray that God will raise up preachers like this to preach sermons like this.

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