

Acts 1:1-2 The Prologue

Like Luke, the opening verses of Acts are dedicated to Theophilus, a name meaning friend of God or beloved by God. Luke concisely reminds Theophilus of the content of his first writing. That too was designed to be an orderly account.

The reader is being set down in the middle of an ongoing story – a larger story that began in Luke. Acts takes up with the new beginning created by the Resurrection. The focus shifts from Jesus and his earthly ministry to the work of the disciples under the guidance of the Holy Spirit

1:3-14

- This first chapter of Luke records the time – 40 days -between Easter and the ascension, in which Jesus appeared to his disciples a number of times – teaching them about the Kingdom of God
- After those 40 days,, Jesus commanded his disciples to remain in Jerusalem and wait to receive the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The disciples ask if now is the time for the kingdom of Israel to be restored – Jesus basically says you can't know that but here is what you can know – you will receive power – my power.
- Jesus ascended before them, as two men dressed in white appeared to them.
- Remember the two mysterious men in Luke who appeared to the women at the tomb.
- Why the Ascension is important to our faith – when we affirm our belief in the ascension we are saying that the Jesus who died and was raised from the dead now sits at the right hand of God. See the Apostles' Creed.
- The resurrection of Jesus brought the good news that death is not the last word.
- Easter proved that the power of God to give life is greater than the power of death.
- The ascension takes the good news one step farther by affirming that Christ has been given the place of honor by God. The ascension of Jesus is the final confirmation of God.
- It is also important to the disciples because with the ascension the responsibility for spreading God's word rested squarely on the shoulders of the followers of Jesus. The ascension was the handoff.
- The body of Christ was no longer the physical presence of Jesus but the corporate body of believers.
- And so the disciples waited but they also spent the time in prayer.
- Barbara Brown Taylor wrote: prayer is our hearts chasing after God's heart.

1:15-26

- During this time of prayer, as the disciples understood more of what they were to do, it became clear they needed all the help they could get. So Mathias came on board to complete the 12 once more.