

# A SURVEY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## 2. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CHURCH

Acts 1:6-26

Adult Sunday School  
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## PREPARATIONS FOR THE CHURCH

The purpose of the Book of Acts of the Apostles is to chronicle the expansion of the church in the first century. It covers the beginning of the church, the churches activities at Jerusalem, and how the church began to advance to the rest of the earth. Chapter one of the Book of Acts tells of the events prior to the beginning of the church. Jesus has risen from the grave and is spending time preparing His disciples to do the work of the Gospel after He leaves them. The disciples are still under the impression that Jesus will now begin His kingdom here on earth. *“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”* (1:6) They did not understand His plan nor did they realize their inability to fulfill their role in that kingdom. It seems that Jesus did not directly answer their question, but moves to the promise of power of the Holy Spirit. Later they would understand that this was His answer. Corrie Ten Boom tells a story of her father’s wisdom in her book, The Hiding Place. As a small child Corrie often accompanied her father on trips to repair watches that he had sold. He carried a large, heavy case that contained his tools and spare parts. On one of these trips young Corrie asked her father a question that was difficult to answer at her young age. He knew that

she would not be mature enough to understand the answer. As they were leaving the train he asked her to carry the heavy case for him. When she complained that it was too heavy for her he agreed. He said, “yes, and it would be a pretty poor father who would ask his little girl to carry such a load. It’s the same way, Corrie, with knowledge. Some knowledge is too heavy for children. When you are older and stronger you will be able to bear it. For now you must trust me to carry it for you. (borrowed from the September 19, 2014 blog on JourneyonWord.com) The Lord Jesus knew the disciples (or the church) were not strong enough for the knowledge they were seeking about the Kingdom. At that moment, what they would need was power to live and serve. *“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.”* (Vs. 1:8) With that power they would change the world. He then was enveloped in a cloud from Heaven and ascended in the Shekinah glory of God. (cp. Exodus 40:34)

Back in the upper room in Jerusalem 120 disciples (1:14) waited until Peter assumed a leadership role. He reminds them that since Judas had disqualified himself with his treacherous act it was necessary to appoint a replacement. He suggested that a person should be chosen who had accompanied the disciples with Jesus. This person should also have been an eye

witness to the risen Lord Jesus. (cp. John 15:27) We conclude from this then that an apostle (a special messenger for the Lord) must have met the Lord Jesus and be a witness to the reality of His resurrection. “Two OT passages were quoted by Peter to show that the apostasy of Judas demanded his replacement. Psalm 69:25 spoke of the removal of the psalmist’s enemy, and Psalm 109:8 mentions the replacement of an enemy by someone else.” (Kent. P. 27) As they considered the replacement of Judas, they discovered two men who met these qualifications. *“And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.”* (1:23) Their attitude was that the Holy Ghost had already chosen the proper person for the role. They began to pray for the Lord to reveal the correct choice to them. It was decided that Matthias would be the new, 12<sup>th</sup> disciple. Barsabas was considered but was not selected. We are not told anything else about him in the New Testament record. One wonders what his reaction was to being passed over. No doubt he returned to the ministry that the Lord had given him in the church in Jerusalem. It is reasonable to assume that he might have been one of the preachers at Pentecost. Maybe he helped the deacons later in the book. (Chapter 6) Whatever his role, the lesson for us is that there is always a work we can do for the Lord. We should not allow Satan to discourage us when we do not get a job we thought we wanted. We must do the work we find

in front of us at the moment. When it is time for another task The Lord will show it to us.

We must remember that Acts is a transitional book. There are things that the early Christians did that we would not do the same way today because we have the completed Bible. They relied on the Old Testament for their guidance. Often the Holy Spirit spoke through them to communicate His will in a manner that He does not do today. Later, when the Scriptures were completed, they used them as the rules for their actions. The events in the Book of Acts demonstrate to us how much of the New Testament was written. When we study an epistle, it is helpful to refer to an episode in the Acts to shed light on how the epistle came to be. An example of this would be the Books to the Corinthians. We could not do an adequate study of those two books without referring to chapters 18 and 19 of Acts. Philippians could not be studied adequately without referring to Acts 16.

Chapter one of Acts sets the stage for the study of the beginnings of the church. Here we see the preparation of the disciples, and their empowerment of the disciples at the departing of the Lord Jesus back to Heaven. We see the disciples assume leadership roles and we see the selection of Matthias so the work could continue after the loss of Judas. The Lord has set the stage for a wonderful adventure.

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Some material found in:

Jerusalem to Rome. Homer A. Kent. BMH Books.  
Winona Lake, Indiana. 1972.

Ideas to consider:

1) How was Jesus' promise of the Holy Ghost an answer to their question of the Kingdom? -

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2) How was Barsabas a good example for us today?

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3) What can we learn about the church in Thessalonica by studying the book of Acts?

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