

Acts 1

v1-2

Compare the beginning of Acts with the beginning of Luke. What does this tell us about Acts?

What is the book of Luke about, according to Acts?

What, then, might we say the book of Acts is about?

v1-11

By what "convincing proofs" did Jesus show himself?

Why do you think Jesus didn't send the Spirit immediately after he had ascended?

What does it mean IN THIS CONTEXT to be "baptized in/with the Spirit"?

What were the disciples thinking when they asked, "will you restore the kingdom"?

Is this the same "kingdom" that was preached in v3?

How do we best apply Jesus' response?

Is v8 only to the apostles, or to us as well?

Is the order Jerusalem - Judea - Samaria - the ends of the world important?

Why is it relevant in this context that Jesus will return the same way he left?

v12-14

Do you think this is the same upper room as in Mk 14:15/Lk 22:12?

How do we know what parts of Acts are descriptive and what parts are prescriptive?

What aspects of v14 should we imitate? How?

How did they attain one mind?

How many days were the disciples without Jesus before the Spirit came?

v15-26

How did they manage to get 120 people to gather?

Why were only 120 gathered (cf. 1Cor 15a)?

What would these people have been thinking about what happened to Judas?

Should the disciples have been discouraged and humiliated by Judas' betrayal?

How do v18-19 fit with Mt 27:3-8?

Does Ps 69:25 naturally apply to Judas?

Does Ps 109:8 naturally apply to Judas?

Would Peter be right to argue that because of these scriptures, it was necessary to appoint another in Judas' place?

Do you think this is what Peter was thinking?

Why did Peter require that the men have been with them from John's baptism?

For Joseph, cf. Acts 15:32. Why were only these two proposed?

Which "ministry and apostleship" was Peter talking about?

Were they right to appoint Matthias as an apostle?

How do we best avoid making the same mistake?

How do we best deal with discouragements?

How do we know we're carrying on Jesus' ministry?

1:1: Theophilus is referred to as "most excellent" in Luke 1, but only by his name in Acts 1. Some take this as evidence that Theophilus was converted by Luke and is now regarded as a brother, and therefore as an equal.

1:1: Some argue that since Luke is about what Jesus BEGAN to do and teach, Acts is naturally about Jesus' continued ministry. Acts is certainly about Jesus' continued ministry, but it is in my opinion unlikely that this is Luke's point in his introduction - rather he says Luke is from the beginning of Jesus' ministry up to his final commissioning of the apostles whereupon he was taken up to heaven (Lk 24:46-49f).

From chabad.org, a Jewish site:

Q: How far am I allowed to walk on the Shabbat?

A. Because driving, biking, blading, skateboarding or other device-driven means of transportation are prohibited on Shabbat, we walk rather than commute to synagogue.

However, even walking on Shabbat has its limits. B. Negative Mitzvah #321 sets the maximum walking range from one's city to 2,000 cubits (3,049.5 feet, 0.596 miles (960 meters).

[However, this measurement starts 70 2/3 cubits (112.24 ft.) from the city limits.] Practically speaking, this means that you may not walk a straight line more than .598 miles (3161.74 ft.) in any direction in the wilds outside your city limits. C.

"City limits" are not defined by the map you carry in your glove compartment. Halachah considers all contiguous housing to be part of the same city. Therefore it would be permitted to walk hundreds of miles, from city to city, as long as the whole way is populated. D. Therefore, this Mitzvah is usually not practicable if you live in the suburbs, and certainly if you live in any big city. Why? Because when G-d gave the Torah thousands of years ago, almost all of civilization lived in walled cities, with nothing but wilderness surrounding them. Today, you can walk for miles on end without seeing a single field or forest. Houses are everywhere, and cities just blend into each other with no spaces between, so you can't really set where civilization ends and wilderness begins. However, if you live in Montana, Vermont or other place with lots of raw country, the techum, or perimeter, rule is very much in force and one needs to be careful.

From the Talmud, Shabbath 113b, Gamara:

As R. Huna said in Rab's name-others state, R. Abba said in R. Huna's name: If one is walking on the Sabbath and comes to a stream of water, if he can put down his first foot² before lifting the second,³ it is permitted;⁴ otherwise it is forbidden.⁵ Raba demurred: What shall he do? Shall he go round it? Then he increases the walking [distance]⁶ Shall he cross it [walking through]? His garments may be soaked in water and he is led to wringing [them] out!⁷ Rather [in such a case], since it is impossible [otherwise], it is permitted [to jump across]. But [what is meant]⁸ is as Rabbi asked R. Ishmael son of R. Jose: Is it permitted to take great strides on the Sabbath?⁹ — Who then permitted it on weekdays? he replied; for I maintain that a long stride takes away a five hundredth part of a man's eyesight,¹⁰ and it is restored to him by the evening Kiddush.

A Sabbath day's journey was the distance it was allowed to walk on the Sabbath - that is, 2000 cubits. There are several exceptions to this rule. For instance, if you the previous day place a meal 2000 cubits away, it's considered a residence and you can walk there, eat on the Sabbath, and walk another 2000 cubits from there.

v13: a different Greek word is used from Mk 14:15/Lk 22:12, yet the two words used are synonyms. It's not unlikely that these passages are about the same room - this would certainly remind them of the "upper room discourse" that they should wait for the Spirit. But it's far from certain.

v15: some newer manuscripts have "disciples" instead of "brethren".

v22: on "go in and out" cf Num 27:17, Deut 1:13, 1Ki 3:7, 2Cr 1:10, cf. Deut 28:6

Arguments for and against the apostleship of Matthias: why Martin is wrong.

FOR	AGAINST
Position: Matthias was one of the twelve apostles. Paul was a different kind of apostle, with a certain apostolic authority, but not with the full rank or privilege of an apostle of Christ.	Position: Peter and the others were wrong to appoint Matthias, for Jesus later appointed Paul who turned out to be the true twelfth apostle.
It says that Matthias was "numbered with the eleven" - there is no indication in the text that this decision was wrong.	But Acts, as a historical book (just as Joshua - Ezra) often does not mention explicitly when something is wrong, for instance in Paul's statement "May God strike you". It is up to the reader, therefore, to use context and known doctrine to determine whether or not the action was right.
The disciples prayed over this decision, strongly indicating that it was a right one.	But prayer must be according to God's will to be effective, and this prayer was not according to God's will (see later). Moreover, many decisions and plans made in prayer are wrong ones, as I'm sure most people can attest to - because they enter prayer seeking to establish their own will, with their own set of goals and purposes. Finally, the prayer was not about whether they should appoint an apostle, but only about which of the two they (humans) had chosen was better in God's sight - similar to a robber praying to God about whether he should rob DNB or Nordea, whereupon he flips a coin to determine God's will.
It was Peter, the rock on which Jesus would build his church, that decided to appoint Matthias.	But Peter is not infallible - we see both in the book of Acts and Gal 2 that he is quite fallible. Thus the fact that it is Peter making the decision does not assure that the decision is a good one.
But most of the apostles aren't mentioned after ch1 in Acts - this doesn't mean they're not apostles. Luke's purpose in naming Matthias in ch1 may not be a focus on the ministry of the individual, but perhaps something else.	Matthias is not mentioned anywhere else in Acts. If such a big deal is made of him in ch1, it seems reasonable to at least mention him later. Especially in light of the fact that their other candidate, Barsabas, is mentioned later in Acts 15:32.
Peter used the Old Testament to determine to appoint a new apostle.	But Peter's quote can just as fairly be used about hiring a new man for a job after someone has been fired - Peter does not prove anything with his Old Testament quote, but simply illustrates what he wants to do. Thus, if the quote is meant as proof, it is a bad one.
But Jesus had said that he would build his church on Peter, so it wouldn't be wrong for Peter, after prayer and together with the early church, to make such a decision.	Jesus said, "wait (literally, "sit") in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." (Lk 24:49). Jesus was with them for forty days after the resurrection, that is, until about 43 days after the Passover. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, 50 days after the Passover - thus they only had to wait one week for this "power from on high" that was supposed to teach them what they needed to know, empower them for ministry, guide them as Jesus had guided them, etc. (cf. Jn 14-17). The fact that they during these few days made a major decision before the Helper came, is worthy of criticism.
In 1 Cor 15:5, it says that Jesus was seen "by the twelve" - this indicates that a twelfth person must have been counted with the eleven previously existing apostles. Paul cannot have been included in "the twelve" here because he later says that Jesus was seen "last of all by me". Further, it was "the twelve" who chose the seven in Acts 6:2. Thus it is clear here that someone other than Paul - presumably Matthias is counted as an apostle.	But "the twelve" is used as the name of the group, regardless of the exact number in it. Similarly, the Septuagint is called the LXX because according to tradition it had 70 translators - it is called the LXX even by those who don't believe it had 70 translators. Similarly, Philip the evangelist is called "one of the seven" (Acts 21:8) even after Steven was stoned. Thus "the twelve" is clearly used as a title for the group rather than a numbering of them in Lk 9:12 and Mk 14:20. Similarly, Thomas is called "one of the twelve" (Jn 20:24) even after Judas had died but before Matthias was chosen. It is therefore very significant that Matthew says "the eleven" after Judas' betrayal in 28:16. It is therefore likely that Paul in 1 Cor 15 uses "the twelve" as a group name, to denote the group that at the time was in a temporary state of having only 11 members. But even if Paul (contrary to the evidence) had meant that the group had 12 members, Matthias was not "counted as an apostle" at that time anyway.
But the early church and Peter numbered Matthias with the apostles, which helps the reader understand that it was the right decision.	Acts 1:26 doesn't say that Matthias was an apostle, only that he was numbered with the apostles - a significant distinction.
But the fact that it was not mauld over for weeks does not necessarily mean that the decision was wrong - and the text doesn't say that they didn't have appropriate discussions about it.	A major decision should not be made hastily, especially when one has time to spare. The decision to appoint an apostle was concocted, discussed, and carried out in less than 7 days - hardly enough time for such a major decision, especially in light of the turmoil the church was in at the time.
Peter said that the apostles had to be appointed by Jesus and have been with them since the baptism of John - but Paul hadn't.	But Peter was wrong - God chooses what the requirements for apostleship is, man does not.
Agreed.	The twelve true apostles will have their names written on the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:14) and sit on twelve thrones with Jesus (Mt 19:28) - there can therefore only be twelve apostles throughout history.
But Paul was an apostle, in some ways like the twelve, but a lesser kind of apostle.	Paul takes upon himself apostolic authority (Phm 8, 1Cor 5:1-5) and frequently calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ - not an apostle sent from men, but one who writes a letter with authority directly from God (Rom 1:1, 1Cor 1:1, 2Cor 1:1, Gal 1:1, Eph 1:1, Col 1:1, 1Tim 1:1, 2Tim 2:2, Tit 1:1)
But while Paul certainly was an apostle like the twelve in some ways, he was not a full-fledged apostle.	Because Paul fulfills the requirements for being an apostle, Peter was wrong to assume what such requirements would have been - the apostles were chosen by God, not men, based on God's criteria, not Peter's (1Cor 9:1-2). Thus Paul states clearly in Gal 1:1 that he is an apostle "not from man nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father" - that is, his apostleship, like the other twelve, was directly from God. And his teaching he God "not from man", but "through the revelation of Christ" (Gal 1:12).
Paul was an apostle, in some ways like the twelve, but a lesser kind of apostle - not one who will sit and reign with Jesus. That's why he calls himself an apostle like "one born out of due time" (1Cor 15:8) and says "I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God"	But in 1 Cor 15 Paul's apostleship is not lesser, but Paul considers himself a less worthy person, in a sense. This is clear even in v9, but he goes on to say, "But by the grace of God I am what I am ... I labored more abundantly than they all" (v10). Thus Paul's apostleship is certainly not inferior.