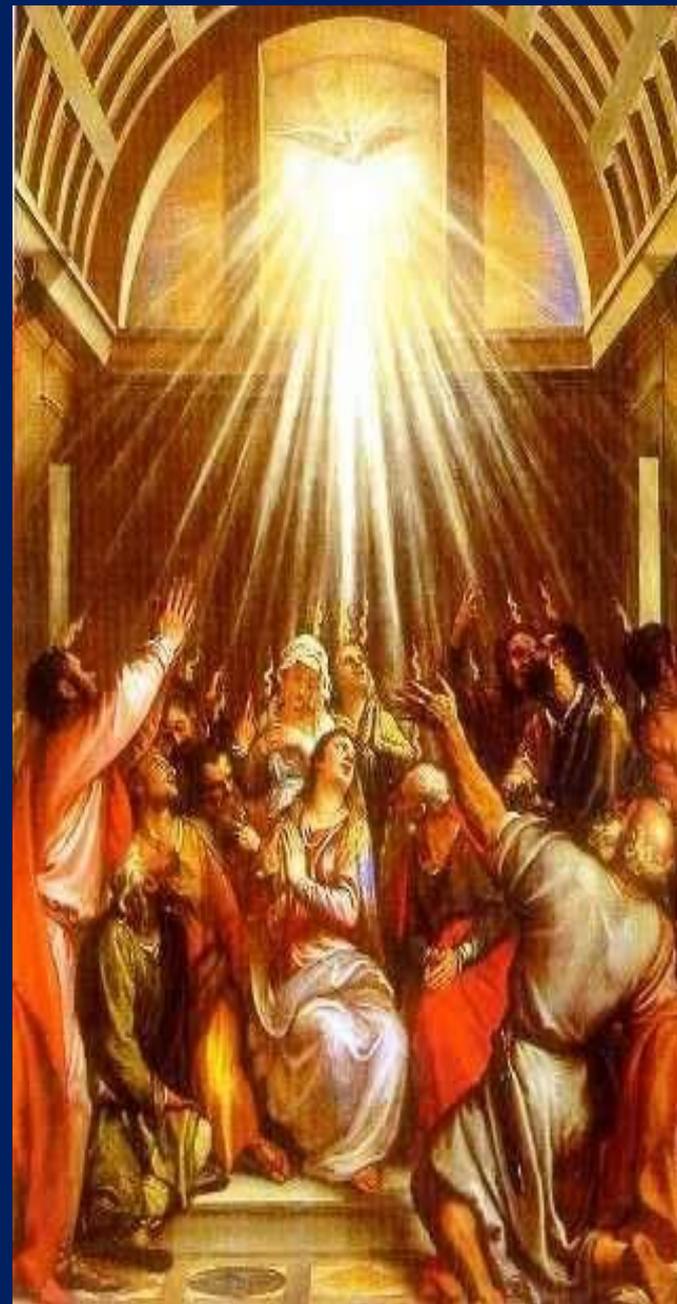


PURPOSE OF THE BOOK
THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

- **To record the establishment and early growth of the church**
- **Examples of conversions to the gospel of Christ**
- **The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the apostles and the early church**



THEME OF THE BOOK

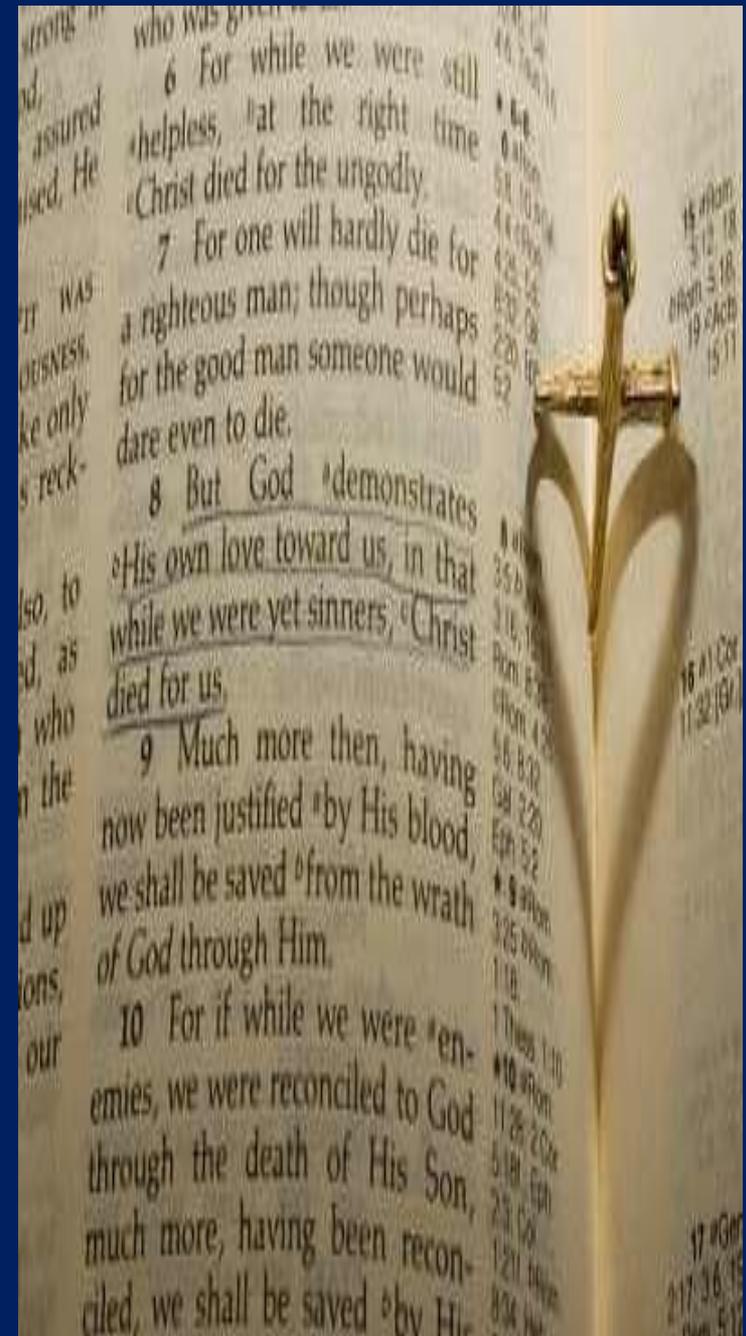
*“WITNESSES FOR
THE LORD JESUS
CHRIST”*

Acts 1

- **Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (verse 8) to the disciples and ascends to heaven before their eyes.**
- **Matthias is chosen as an Apostle to replace Judas.**

Acts 2

- **The outpouring of the Holy Spirit.**
- **Peter gives an anointed and prophetic sermon.**
- **About 3,000 souls are added to the Church.**
- **Signs and wonders follow.**





Acts 3

- Peter and John are used by John to heal a lame man at the beautiful gate.
- Peter preaches under the anointing.

Acts 4

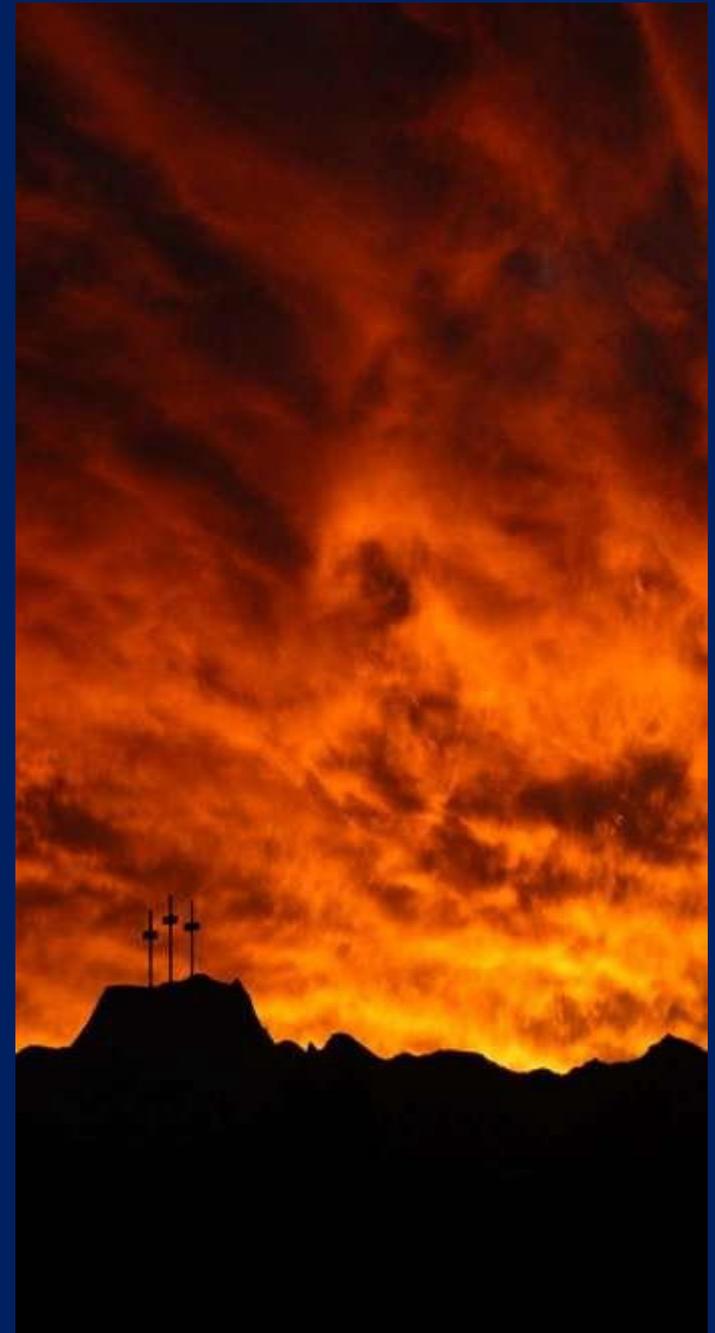
- More people believe the word and are added to the Church (verse 4).
- Peter and John are arrested.
- The Apostles are filled anew with the Holy Spirit (verse 31).
- The Apostles preach with great power.

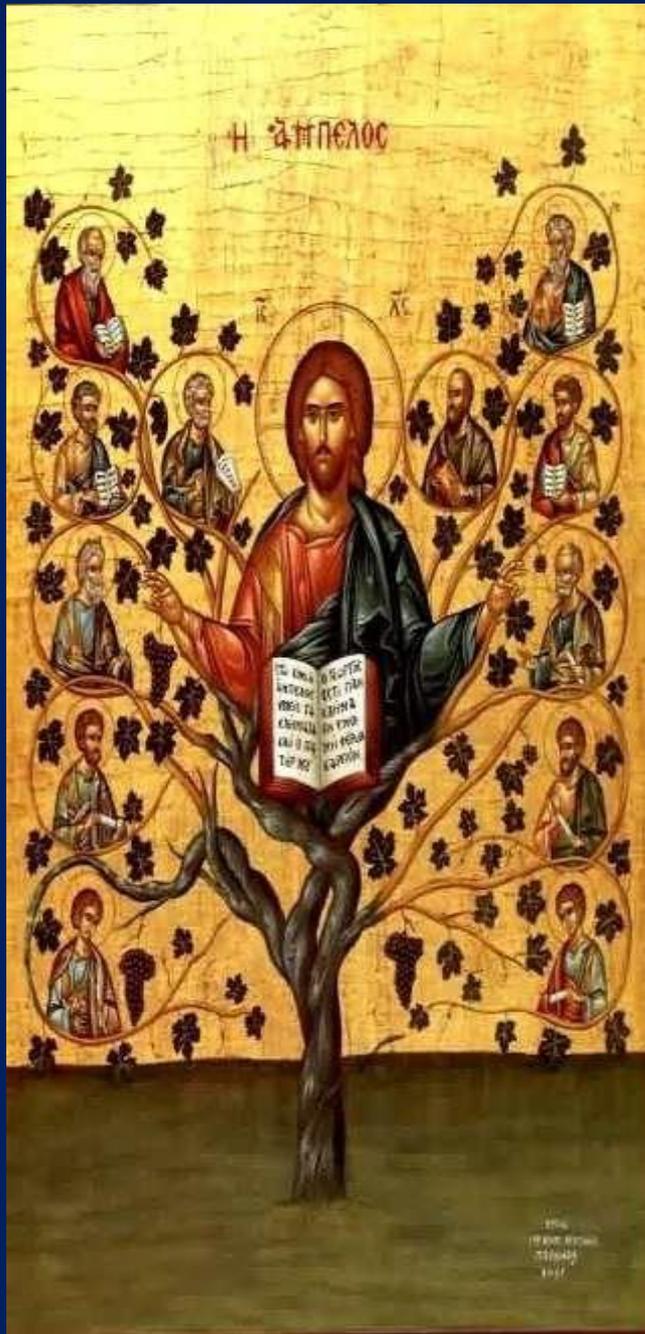
Acts 5

- **Ananias and Sapphira lie to Peter (and the Holy Spirit) and fall down dead.**
- **The Apostles display signs and wonders.**
- **The sick and those oppressed by evil spirits are healed (verse 16).**
- **The Apostles are arrested and released from prison by an angel (verse 18).**

Acts 6

- **Stephen, full of faith and power does great wonders and signs among the people (verse 8).**





Acts 7

- **Stephen's anointed sermon. He sees Jesus standing on the right hand of the father. He becomes the first martyr.**

Acts 8

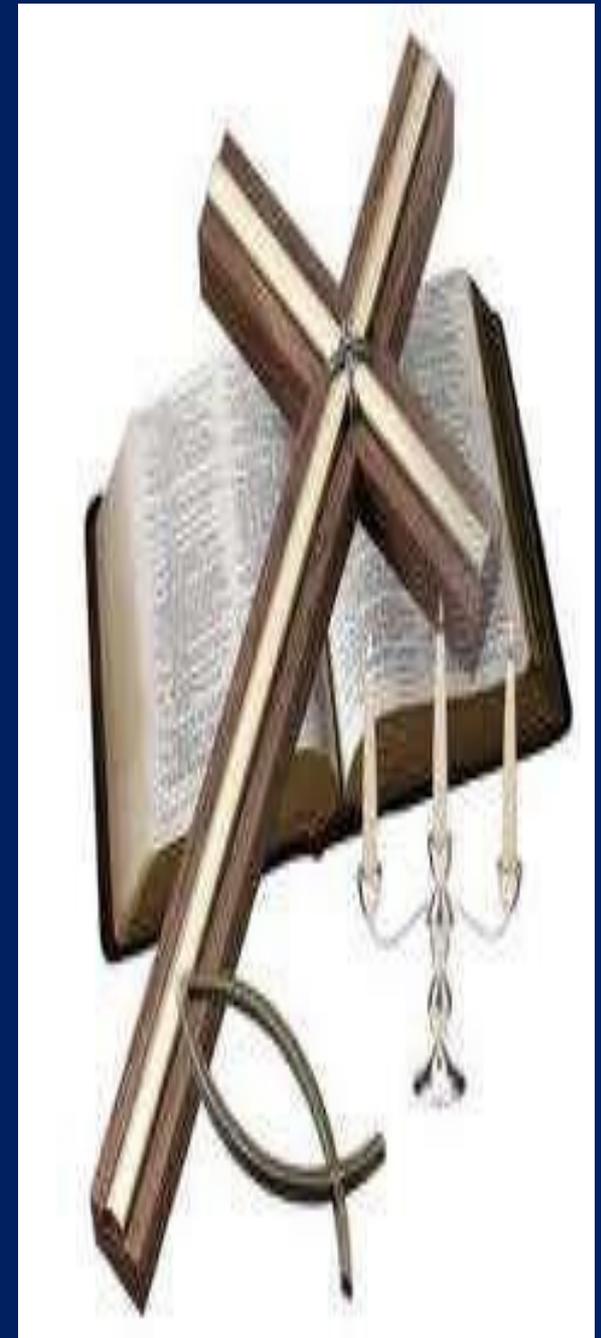
- **Simon the sorcerer is saved.**
- **Philip does miracles and signs.**
- **Peter and John go to preach in Samaria and the Holy Spirit falls on some people.**
- **The Holy Spirit leads Philip to the Eunuch from Ethiopia.**
- **The Eunuch is saved.**
- **The Holy Spirit carries Philip away to Azotus.**

Acts 9

- It was near Damascus that Saul was blinded by a vision of the risen Jesus.
- The Lord then appeared to a disciple named Ananias and sent him to restore Saul's sight and tell him what he would do as a chosen vessel for Christ.

Acts 10

- Cornelius sees a vision (1)
- Peter sees a vision (9)
- The Holy Spirit falls on Cornelius household.



Acts 11

- **The disciples first called Christians at Antioch.**
- **Paul defends himself to the Apostles in Jerusalem.**
- **Barnabas sent out.**
- **Many people added to the Lord.**
- **Agabus prophesies about a great famine throughout the entire world.**

Acts 12

- **James killed and is Peter arrested.**
- **Angel rescues Peter.**
- **Church goes into continuous prayer for Peter.**
- **Herod is struck by an angel and eaten by worms.**
- **God's word grows and multiplies (24).**



Acts 13

- **The Holy Spirit asks for Barnabas and Saul to be set aside for God's ministry, first missionary journey (2).**
- **Saul now called Paul pronounces judgement on Elymas the sorcerer.**
- **Elymas goes blind for a time (11).**
- **John leaves them and returns to Jerusalem.**
- **Many people added to the church with Paul and Barnabas preaching.**

Acts 14

- **Signs and wonders done by Paul and Barnabas (3).**
- **They flee a violent attack.**
- **Paul heals lame man in Lystra crippled from birth.**





- Paul stoned and left as dead, the disciple gather round him, pray and he revives (19).

Acts 15

- Certain men preach circumcision as a requirement for salvation.
- The Holy Spirit directs the apostles not to accept this (28).
- Paul and Barnabas set out for their second missionary journey (36)

Acts 16

- Paul meets Timothy, circumcises him and take him along.
- Paul encourages the church.
- The church increases in number.
- The Holy Spirit forbids Paul to preach in Asia (6) and in Bithynia (7).

- Paul receives vision to go to Macedonia (9).
- Lydia is saved (14).
- Evil spirit of divination cast out by Paul (18).
- Praise and worship release Paul and Silas from jail (v26).
- The jailers and household saved (v33).

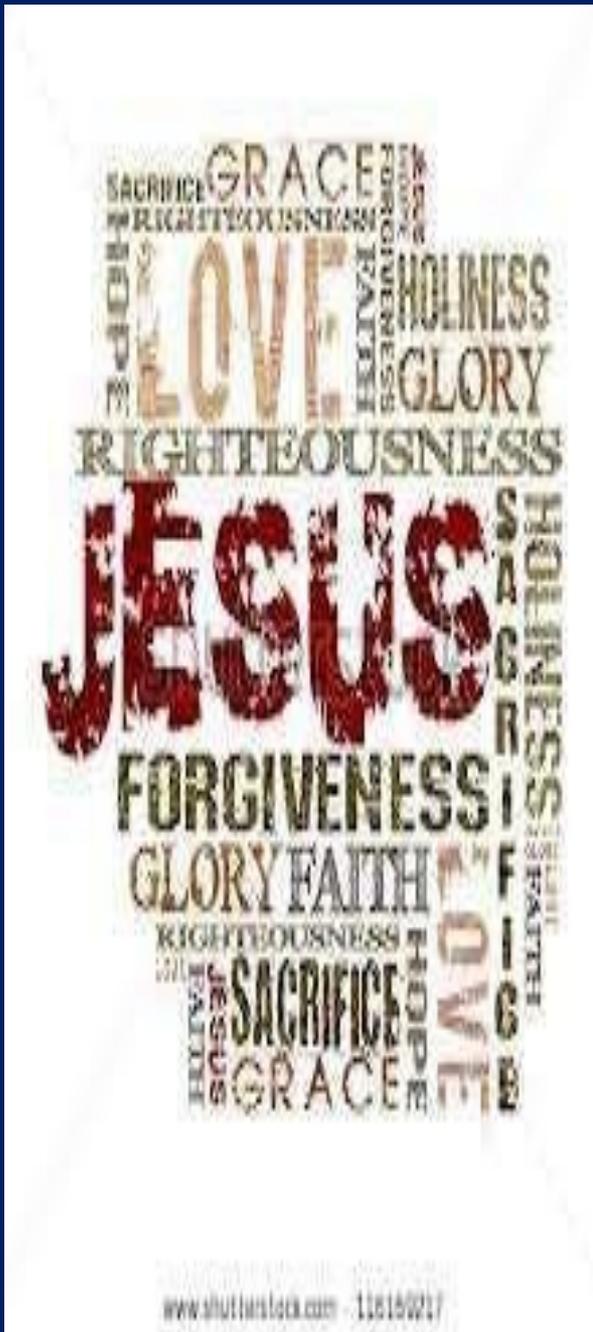
Acts 17

- Greeks join Paul and Silas (v4).
- The Thessalonians show a commendable desire to search the scriptures personally (v11).
- Many believe (v12) and several are saved (v34).

Acts 18

- Paul makes tents (3).
- Many believe the gospel (8).





- Paul has a vision (9) Apollos is equipped (25).

- Paul sets out on third missionary journey (22)

Acts 19

- Some disciples receive baptism of the Holy Spirit for the first time.

- Paul does unusual miracles.

- Seven sons of Sceva try to cast out demons.

- Many saved.

- God's Word grows (18, 20).

- Demetrius causes riot.

Acts 20

- Eutychus raised from the dead (9) Paul exhorts brethren.

Acts 21

- Paul warned not to go to Jerusalem by the Holy Spirit (4).
- Philip the evangelist has four daughters who prophesy (8)
- Agabus prophesies what will happen to Paul in Jerusalem (11)
- Paul beaten by a mob and arrested by soldiers.

Acts 22

- Paul tells of his conversion.

Acts 23

- The Lord appears to Paul at night.

Acts 24

- Felix touched by Paul's anointed speech (25).



Acts 25

- Paul witnesses to Agrippa (23).

Acts 26

- Agrippa perceives that Paul is innocent(30).

Acts 27

- Paul warns shipmates of dangerous trip, but is ignored (9)
- An angel appears to Paul telling him about the trip (v23)

Acts 28

- Paul survives vipers bite (4-3)
- Paul heals someone with fever and dysentery (8)
- Paul preached another anointed sermon and more believe the gospel (24)

Introduction Acts 1:1-8. The apostolic commission.

“...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”



The whole of the book of Acts should receive careful study. It is full of precious instruction; it records experiences in evangelistic work, the teachings of which we need in our work today. This is wonderful history; it deals with the highest education, which the students in our schools are to receive. {Lt100-1909}

Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, and Theophilus, to whom it is addressed, had been pleasantly associated. From Luke, Theophilus had received much instruction and great light. Luke had been Theophilus' teacher, and he still felt a responsibility to direct and instruct him, and to sustain and protect him in his work. At that time it was customary for a writer to send his manuscript to someone for examination and criticism. Luke chose Theophilus, as a man in whom he had confidence, to perform this important work. He first directs the attention of Theophilus to the record of Christ's life as given in the book of Luke, which had also been addressed by the same writer to Theophilus. [Acts 1:1-5 quoted.] . . . The teachings of Christ were to be preserved in manuscripts and books (MS 40, 1903).

“...He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight

“...two men stood by them in white apparel; and said, ‘You men of Galilee, why stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.’”



The whole of the book of Acts should receive careful study. It is full of precious instruction; it records experiences in evangelistic work, the teachings of which we need in our work today. This is wonderful history; it deals with the highest education, which the students in our schools are to receive. {Lt100-1909}

The disciples were anxious to know the exact time for the revelation of the kingdom of God, but Jesus tells them that they may not know the times and the seasons; for the Father has not revealed them. To understand when the kingdom of God should be restored, was not the thing of most importance for them to know. They were to be found following the Master, praying, waiting, watching, and working. They were to be representatives to the world of the character of Christ. That which was essential for a successful Christian experience in the days of the disciples, is essential in our day. "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." And after the Holy Ghost was come upon them, what were they to do? "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

This is the work in which we also are to be engaged. Instead of living in expectation of some special season of excitement, we are wisely to improve present opportunities, doing that which must be done in order that souls may be saved. Instead of exhausting the powers of our mind in speculations in regard to the times and seasons which the Lord has placed in His own power, and withheld from men, we are to yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, to do present duties, to give the bread of life, unadulterated with human opinions, to souls who are perishing for the truth.

Satan is ever ready to fill the mind with theories and calculations that will divert men from the present truth, and disqualify them for the giving of the third angel's message to the world. It has ever been thus; for our Saviour often had to speak reprovably to those who indulged in speculations and were ever inquiring into those things which the Lord had not revealed. Jesus had come to earth to impart important truth to men, and He wished to impress their minds with the necessity of receiving and obeying His precepts and instructions, of doing their present duty, and His communications were of an order that imparted knowledge for their immediate and daily use.

Jesus said: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." All that was done and said had this one object in view--to rivet truth in their minds that they might attain unto everlasting life. Jesus did not come to astonish men with some great announcement of some special time when some great event would occur, but He came to instruct and save the lost. He did not come to arouse and gratify curiosity; for He knew that this would but increase the appetite for the curious and the marvelous. It was His aim to impart knowledge whereby men might increase in spiritual strength and advance in the way of obedience and true holiness. He gave only such instruction as could be appropriated to the needs of their daily life, only such truth as could be given to others for the same appropriation. He did not make new revelations to men, but opened to their understanding truths that had long been obscured or misplaced through the false teaching of the priests and teachers. Jesus replaced the gems of divine truth in their proper setting, in the order in which they had been given to patriarchs and prophets. And after giving them this precious instruction. He promised to give them the Holy Spirit whereby all things that He had said unto them should be brought to their remembrance.

We are in continual danger of getting above the simplicity of the gospel. There is an intense desire on the part of many to startle the world with something original, that shall lift the people into a state of spiritual ecstasy, and change the present order of experience. There is certainly great need of a change in the present order of experience; for the sacredness of present truth is not realized as it should be, but the change we need is a change of heart, and can only be obtained by seeking God individually for His blessing, by pleading with Him for His power, by fervently praying that His grace may come upon us, and that our characters may be transformed. This is the change we need today, and for the attainment of this experience we should exercise persevering energy and manifest heartfelt earnestness. We should ask with true sincerity, What shall I do to be saved? We should know just what steps we are taking heavenward.

Christ gave to His disciples truths whose breadth and depth and value they little appreciated, or even comprehended, and the same condition exists among the people of God today. We too have failed to take in the greatness, to perceive the beauty of the truth which God has entrusted to us today. Should we advance in spiritual knowledge, we would see the truth developing and expanding in lines of which we have little dreamed, but it will never develop in any line that will lead us to imagine that we may know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. Again and again have I been warned in regard to time-setting. There will never again be a message for the people of God that will be based on time. We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ (RH March 22, 1892).

1:6 After him, David's descendants sat upon his throne for fourteen generations. In the reign of Zedekiah, king of Israel, the Lord speaks to him by the mouth of the prophet. Ezekiel 21:25-28. "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end; thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." Turn to the record of the fulfillment of this prediction, as far as it concerns Zedekiah. 2Kings 25:7. "And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with fetters of brass and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death." Jeremiah 52:11. Were the kings of Israel restored on the return from captivity? See Nehemiah 9:36, 37, a confession of those of the children of Israel who had returned from Babylon. "Behold we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers (not for an everlasting possession; this could not be till after the resurrection; but) to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us (they were still under tribute) because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress." Since the days of Zedekiah, the throne of David has been unoccupied, the Jews tributary in their best estate afterwards to other nations, and having no anointed kings of their own.

Josephus, after giving an account of the taking of Jerusalem and Zedekiah by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, says, [b.10, chap.8,sec.4,] "And after this manner have the kings of David's race ended their lives, being in number twenty-one, until the last king, who all together reigned 514 years, 6 months, and 10 days." From the prediction to Zedekiah we learn that some one had a right to David's throne, and that God promised to give it him. Let us ascertain who it was. In the annunciation to the virgin Mary, the angel says to her, [Luke 1:31, 32,] "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Also Acts 2:30. (Where was David's throne? Ans. In Jerusalem, on the earth; and his dominion extended over all Israel and Judah [2Samuel 5:5] as Christ's also will - remember "they are not all Israel which are of Israel.") The Jews understood that Christ was to take this literal throne, and when he appeared they expected the restoration of the kingdom of Israel; consequently we hear them exclaiming, being convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: hosannah in the highest." Mark 11:10. The Jews did not understand that Christ must suffer before he could be glorified. Luke 24:26. Their hopes were blighted. How deeply must the disciples have felt this disappointment when they saw him in whom their hopes centered, bound, led to a mock trial and crucified: "For as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead." John 20:9. But by "many infallible proofs" their faith is revived, and Jesus continues with them forty days after his resurrection.

Acts 1:3. (Peter in alluding to the resurrection of Christ says, [1Peter 1:3.] "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," etc.) The disciples being then convened together ask him, saying, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (showing the kingdom was not yet re-established.) "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Acts 1:6, 7, 9. They are again disappointed. Jesus has gone, and the kingdom of Israel is not yet restored - but again their hopes are renewed to the end. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:10, 11. Jesus likened himself to a nobleman, who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. (An allusion to the ancient custom of the governors of provinces repairing to head quarters to receive the right of rule, and then returning to exercise that right.) Luke 19:12. He spake this parable "because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Luke 19:11. {March 11, 1858 UrSe, ARSH 129.19}

1:8 (John 15:26, 27). Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth, He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him, and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. He determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be His donation... Christ longed to be in a position where He could accomplish the most important work by few and simple means. The plan of redemption is comprehensive; but its parts are few, and each part depends on the others, while all work together with the utmost simplicity and in entire harmony. Christ is represented by the Holy Spirit; and when this Spirit is appreciated, when those controlled by the Spirit communicate to others the energy with which they are imbued, an invisible chord is touched which electrifies the whole. Would that we could all understand how boundless are the divine resources (SW Nov. 28, 1905).

Jesus says, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me." It is the union of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the living witness that is to warn the world. The worker for God is the agent through which the heavenly communication is given, and the Holy Spirit gives divine authority to the word of truth (RH April 4, 1893).

1:9 (Psalm 24:7-10; 47:5, 6; Psalm 68:17, 18; Ephesians 4:8). Christ Ascended as King.--[Psalm 47:5, 6; 68:17, 18 quoted.] Christ came to earth as God in the guise of humanity. He ascended to heaven as the King of saints. His ascension was worthy of His exalted character. He went as one mighty in battle, a conqueror, leading captivity captive. He was attended by the heavenly host, amid shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song. . . . Only for a few moments could the disciples hear the angels' song as their Lord ascended, His hands outstretched in blessing. They heard not the greeting He received. All heaven united in His reception. His entrance was not begged. All heaven was honored by His presence. . . . The seal of heaven has been fixed to Christ's atonement (MS 134, 1897).

(Luke 24:50, 51). The most precious fact to the disciples in the ascension of Jesus was that He went from them into heaven in the tangible form of their divine Teacher. . . .The disciples not only saw the Lord ascend, but they had the testimony of the angels that He had gone to occupy His Father's throne in heaven. The last remembrance that the disciples were to have of their Lord was as the sympathizing Friend, the glorified Redeemer. Moses veiled his face to hide the glory of the law which was reflected upon it, and the glory of Christ's ascension was veiled from human sight. The brightness of the heavenly escort and the opening of the glorious gates of God to welcome Him were not to be discerned by mortal eyes.

Had the track of Christ to heaven been revealed to the disciples in all its inexpressible glory, they could not have endured the sight. Had they beheld the myriads of angels, and heard the bursts of triumph from the battlements of heaven, as the everlasting doors were lifted up, the contrast between that glory and their own lives in a world of trial, would have been so great that they would hardly have been able to again take up the burden of their earthly lives, prepared to execute with courage and faithfulness the commission given them by the Saviour. Even the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which was sent to them, would not have been properly appreciated, nor would it have strengthened their hearts sufficiently to bear reproach, contumely, imprisonment, and death if need be. Their senses were not to become so infatuated with the glories of heaven that they would lose sight of the character of Christ on earth, which they were to copy in themselves. They were to keep distinctly before their minds the beauty and majesty of His life, the perfect harmony of all His attributes, and the mysterious union of the divine and human in His nature. It was better that the earthly acquaintance of the disciples with their Saviour should end in the solemn, quiet, and sublime manner in which it did. His visible ascent from the world was in harmony with the meekness and quiet of His life (3SP 254, 255)

Holy Humanity Taken to Heaven.--Christ ascended to heaven, bearing a sanctified, holy humanity. He took this humanity with Him into the heavenly courts, and through the eternal ages He will bear it, as the One who has redeemed every human being in the city of God (RH March 9, 1905).

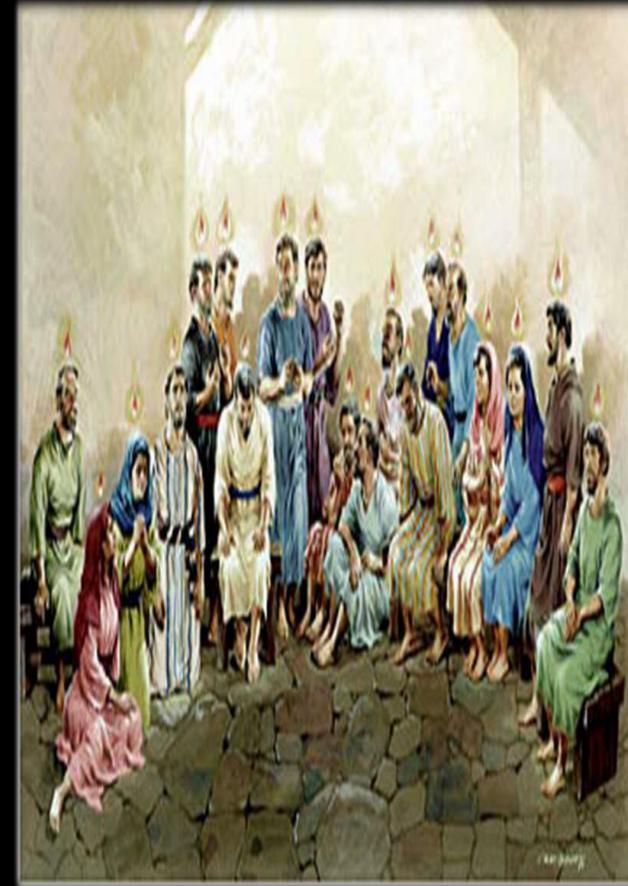
(John 12:45; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3.) A Personal Saviour.--Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. He ascended on high as a personal Saviour, and will come again as He ascended to heaven--a personal Saviour (MS 86, 1898).

(Matthew 28:20; 14:2, 3; John 16:24; Hebrews 9:24.) A New View of Heaven.--What a source of joy to the disciples to know that they had such a Friend in heaven to plead in their behalf! Through the visible ascension of Christ all their views and contemplation of heaven are changed. Their minds had formerly dwelt upon it as a region of unlimited space, tenanted by spirits without substance. Now heaven was connected with the thought of Jesus, whom they had loved and revered above all others, with whom they had conversed and journeyed, whom they had handled, even in His resurrected body, who had spoken hope and comfort to their hearts, and who, while the words were upon His lips, had been taken up before their eyes, the tones of His voice coming back to them as the cloudy chariot of angels received Him: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Heaven could no longer appear to them as an indefinite, incomprehensible space, filled with intangible spirits. They now looked upon it as their future home, where mansions were being prepared for them by their loving Redeemer. Prayer was clothed with a new interest, since it was a communion with their Saviour. With new and thrilling emotions and a firm confidence that their prayer would be answered, they gathered in the upper chamber to offer their petitions and to claim the promise of the Saviour, who had said, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." They prayed in the name of Jesus. Christ in human form, a man of sorrows; Christ in humiliation, taken by wicked hands and crucified; Christ resurrected, and ascended to heaven, into the presence of God, to be man's Advocate; Christ to come again with power and great glory in the clouds of heaven (3SP 262, 263).

1:14. Faith of Jesus' Brothers Established.--[Acts 1:9-14 quoted.] "And with his brethren." These had lost much because of their unbelief. They had been among the number who doubted when Jesus appeared in Galilee. But they now firmly believed that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah. Their faith was established (Letter 115, 1904).

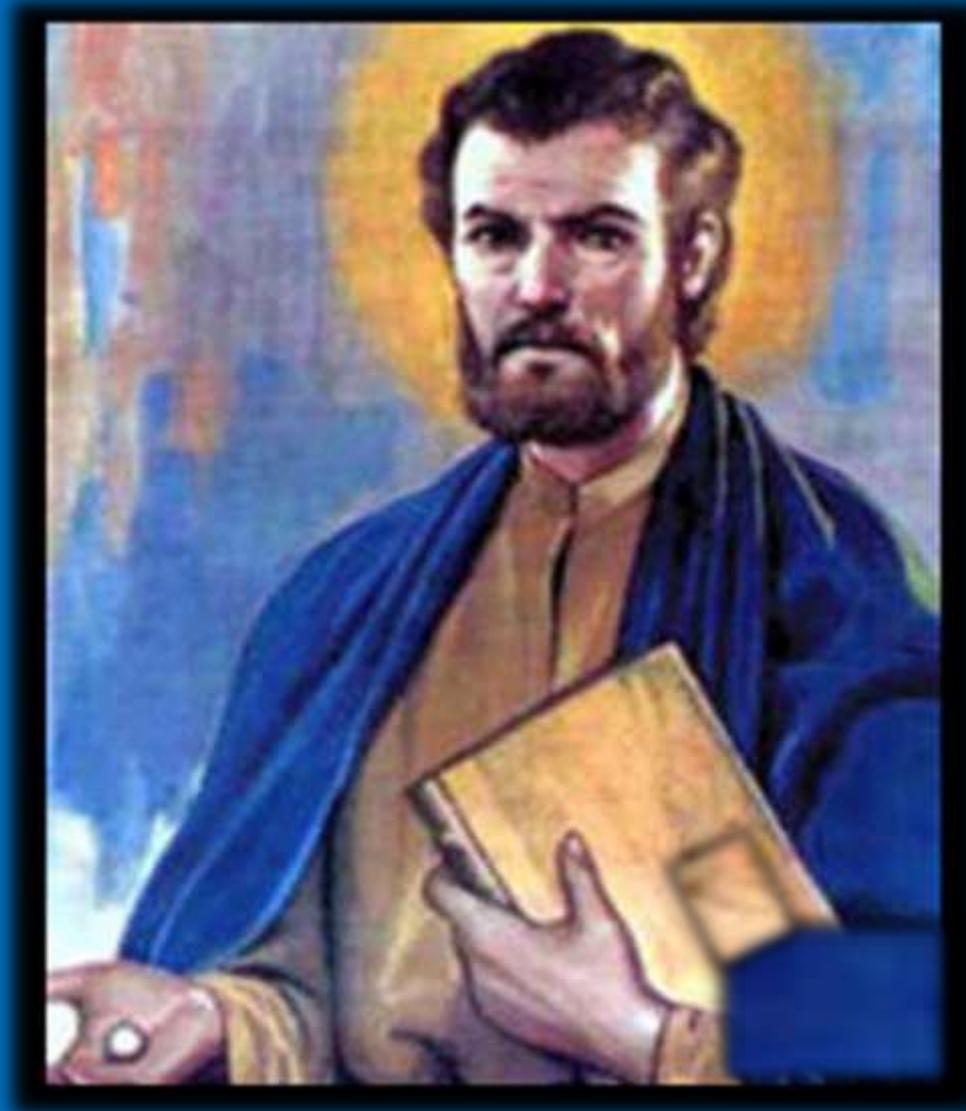
The Upper Room



Replace Judas



Peter leads the
disciples in
electing Matthias
to replace Judas.



1:26 (Joshua 7:16-18). No Faith in Casting Lots.--Let none be led from the sound, sensible principles that God has laid down for the guidance of His people, to depend for direction on any such device as the tossing up of a coin. Such a course is well pleasing to the enemy of souls; for he works to control the coin, and through its agency works out his plans. Let none be so easily deceived as to place confidence in any such tests. Let none belittle their experience by resorting to cheap devices for direction in important matters connected with the work of God. The Lord works in no haphazard way. Seek Him most earnestly in prayer. He will impress the mind, and will give tongue and utterance. The people of God are to be educated not to trust in human inventions and uncertain tests as a means of learning God's will concerning them. Satan and his agencies are always ready to step into any opening to be found that will lead souls away from the pure principles of the Word of God. The people who are led and taught of God will give no place to devisings for which there is not a "Thus saith the Lord" (SpT, Ser. B, No. 17, p. 28).

I have no faith in casting lots. We have in the Bible a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in regard to all church duties. . . . Read your Bibles with much prayer. Do not try to humble others, but humble yourselves before God, and deal gently with one another. To cast lots for the officers of the church is not in God's order (Letter 37, 1900)