

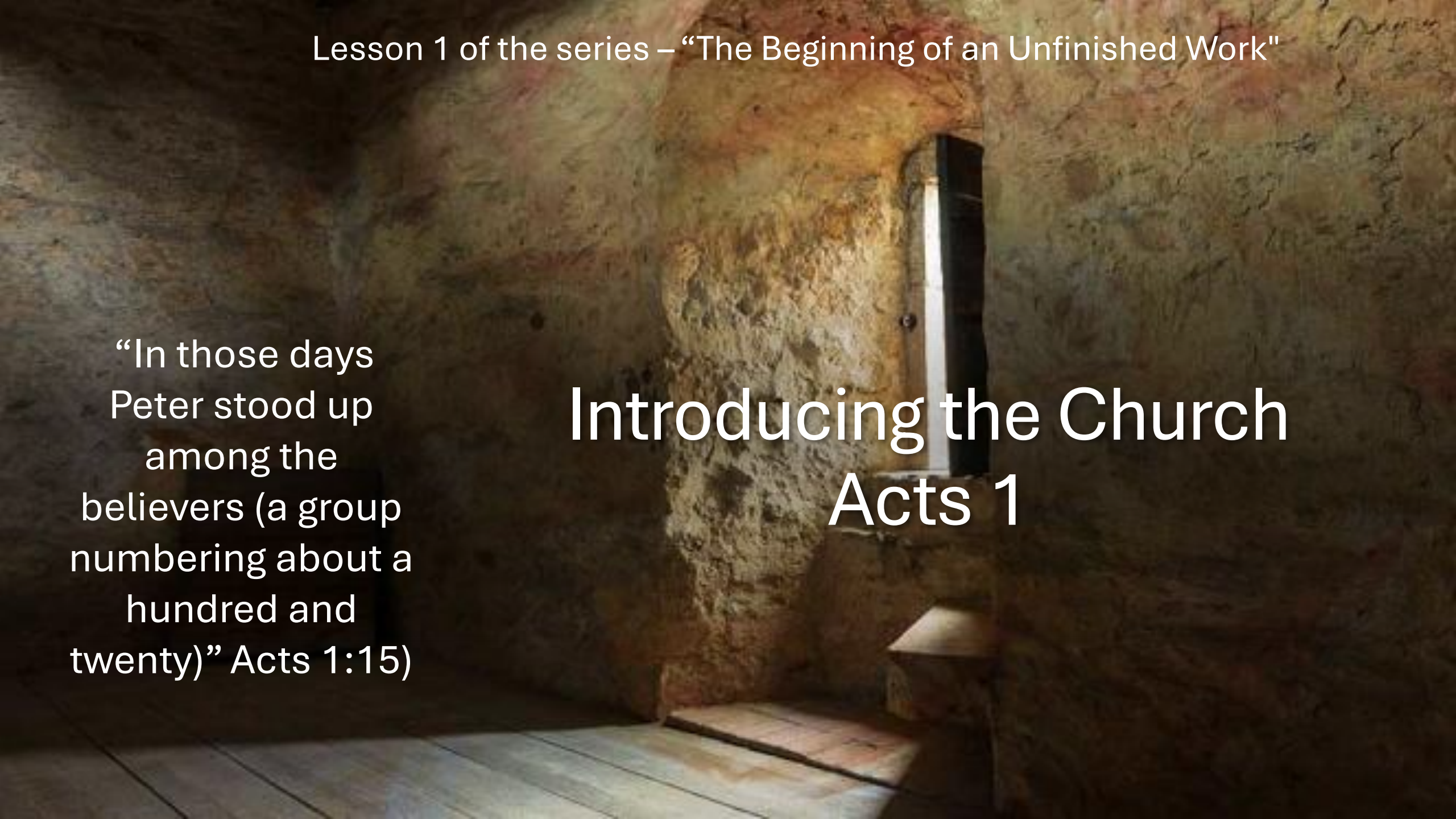
ACTS

The Beginning of an Unfinished Work

Lesson 1 of the series – “The Beginning of an Unfinished Work”

“In those days
Peter stood up
among the
believers (a group
numbering about a
hundred and
twenty)” Acts 1:15)

Introducing the Church Acts 1



“In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.” (Acts 1:1-2)

- ✓ The writer of this historical record of the church (Acts) is most likely Luke who also most likely wrote the Gospel of Luke
 - In all fairness to the skeptic – Luke doesn’t mention himself by name neither in the Book of Acts nor in the Gospel of Luke
 - Most Bible scholars draw the conclusion that Luke is the author by comparing a variety of similarities found in both Books – such as writing style and the reference to this writers **“former book”** (most likely the Gospel of Luke) as well as the identification of his friend **Theophilus**

*“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. **With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.**” (Luke 1:1-4)*

“In my former book, Theophilus, **I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven**, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.” (Acts 1:1-2)

- ✓ For the sake of this study, we are going to accept Luke as the author of The Gospel of Luke and Acts and trust the efforts of a host of qualified Bible scholars as well as the inability for the skeptic to arrive at a compelling argument to the contrary.
- ✓ Let’s look back at Jesus’ final words in Luke’s Gospel record:

“**He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “**This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.** You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but **stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.** When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. **While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.** Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. **And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.** (Luke 24:44-53)

Here are the other Gospel accounts of Jesus' final words before he ascended to heaven

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, **go and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16-20)

“He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.” (Mark 16:15-20)

Note – This portion of the Gospel of Mark is not found in the earliest available manuscripts

“In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.” (Acts 1:1-2)

✓ What instructions did Jesus give to his disciples:

➤ This group of disciples, also known as “apostles” (currently numbering eleven) were given instructions by Jesus to remain in Jerusalem for a season.

“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49)

“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”” (Acts 1:4-5)

➤ After that they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and **you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**, and to **the ends of the earth.**” (Acts 1:8)

“In my former book, Theophilus, **I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach** until the day he was taken up to heaven, **after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.**” (Acts 1:1-2)

- ✓ What was the significance of the disciples waiting in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come upon them?
 - Once Jesus ascends into heaven (Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-10) it will mark the end of the earthly ministry of Jesus.
 - After the ascension of Jesus, the apostles will receive their instruction from the Holy Spirit just as Jesus taught them previously.

“All this I have spoken while still with you. **But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.** Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:25-27)

- ✓ The Holy Spirit would be the source of power for the apostles (as well as all believers) and enable them/us to obey the Lord’s teachings.

“In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.” (Acts 1:1-2)

- ✓ During Jesus’ 3 years of ministry, he instructed thousands of people but his closest disciples (now called apostles) whom he had chosen, were now to be the ones to proclaim the message of salvation and teach others to live a life of holiness as Jesus had taught them. These instructions will come from the Holy Spirit.

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but **I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last**—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. (John 15:15-16)

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

“After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3)

✓ We don’t want to overlook this 40 day “historical” post resurrection appearance by Jesus, for it proves the indisputable fact that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead

➤ Jesus entered a room where the doors were locked:

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.” (John 20:19)

➤ Jesus showed the disciples his wounds and addressed the skepticism of Thomas

“A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:26-28)

“After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3)

✓ We don’t want to overlook this 40 day “historical” post resurrection appearance by Jesus, for it proves the indisputable fact that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead

➤ Jesus ate and drank with his disciples

“When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. (Luke 24:40-43)

“When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” So, Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. (John 21:9-13)

➤ Jesus restored Peter (John 21:15-17)

“After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3)

✓ We don't want to overlook this 40 day “historical” post resurrection appearance by Jesus, for it proves the indisputable fact that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead

➤ Jesus appeared to over 500 believers

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, **he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time**, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.” (I Corinthians 15:3-8)

➤ During these 40 days, Jesus taught his disciples about the Kingdom of God

“But you are **a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who **called you out of darkness into His marvelous light**” (I Peter 2:9)

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”** **Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son**, and if a son, then **an heir of God through Christ**.

(Galatians 4:4-7)

“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “**Do not leave Jerusalem**, but **wait for the gift my Father promised**, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**” (Acts 1:4-5)

- ✓ Luke mentions that on one of those occasions (during the 40 days), Jesus ate with his disciples and instructs them to stay in Jerusalem. There was a clear purpose in them waiting, for very soon (while in Jerusalem and approximately 10 days later) they would receive a special and unique power that would come from the Holy Spirit

“All this I have spoken while still with you. **But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:25-27)

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:1-4)

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” (Acts 2:38)

“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “**Do not leave Jerusalem**, but **wait for the gift my Father promised**, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**” (Acts 1:4-5)

- ✓ This command seems to be directed at the apostles themselves and was to be a fulfillment of the promise Jesus made to the apostles ; “***But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.***” (John 14:26)
- ✓ We also learn later throughout the New Testament that the enabling power of the Holy Spirit indwells all who believe in Jesus.

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, **in the name of Jesus Christ** for the forgiveness of your sins. And **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” (Acts 2:38)

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. **When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit**, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance **until the redemption of those who are God’s possession**—to the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:13-14)

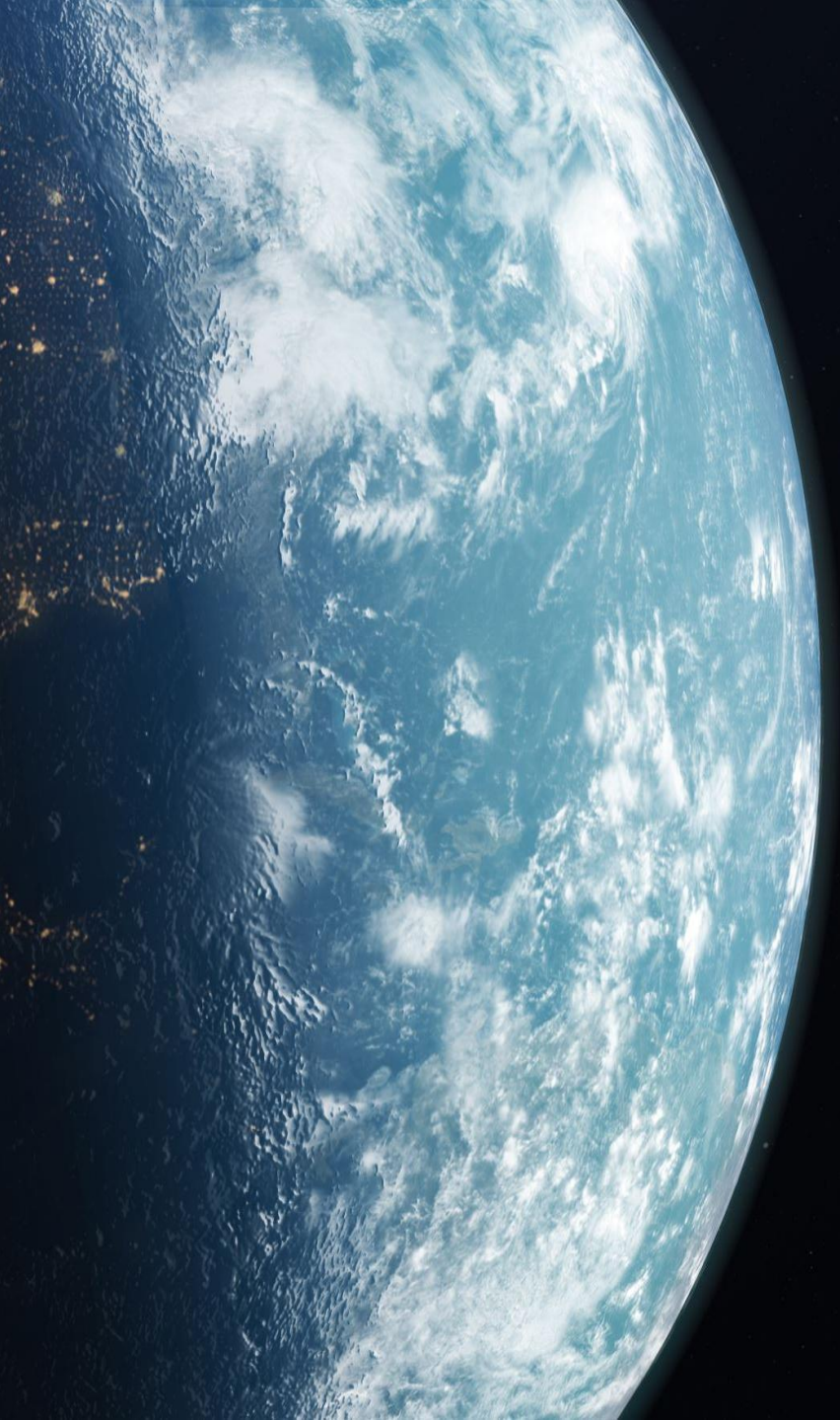
“Then they gathered around him and asked him, **“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”** He said to them: **“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.”** (Acts 1:6-7)

- ✓ It is highly probable that in the minds of the disciples that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the coming of the promised kingdom were closely associated

“Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. I will no longer hide my face from them, for **I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel,** declares the Sovereign Lord.” (Ezekiel 39:28-29)

“Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. **But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets,** saying that his Messiah would suffer. **Repent, then, and turn to God,** so that your sins may be wiped out, **that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,** and **that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.**” (Acts 3:17-21)

- ✓ Their understanding of the promised kingdom was correct, but the timing of the establishment of the kingdom was something yet to be fulfilled and under the sovereign control of God. In due time the Holy Spirit will reveal this to them.



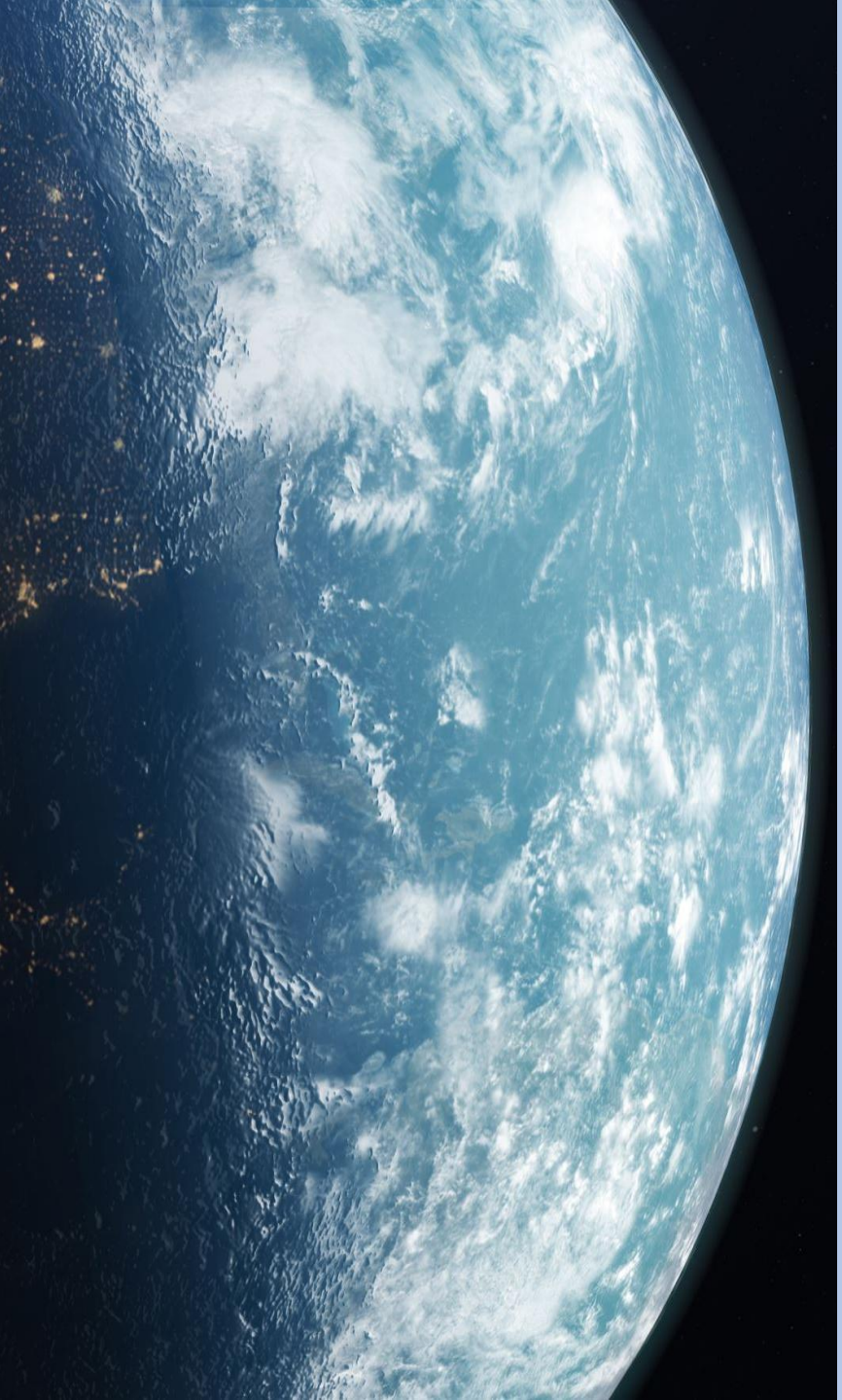
What were the Prophetic Expectations of that Day?

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

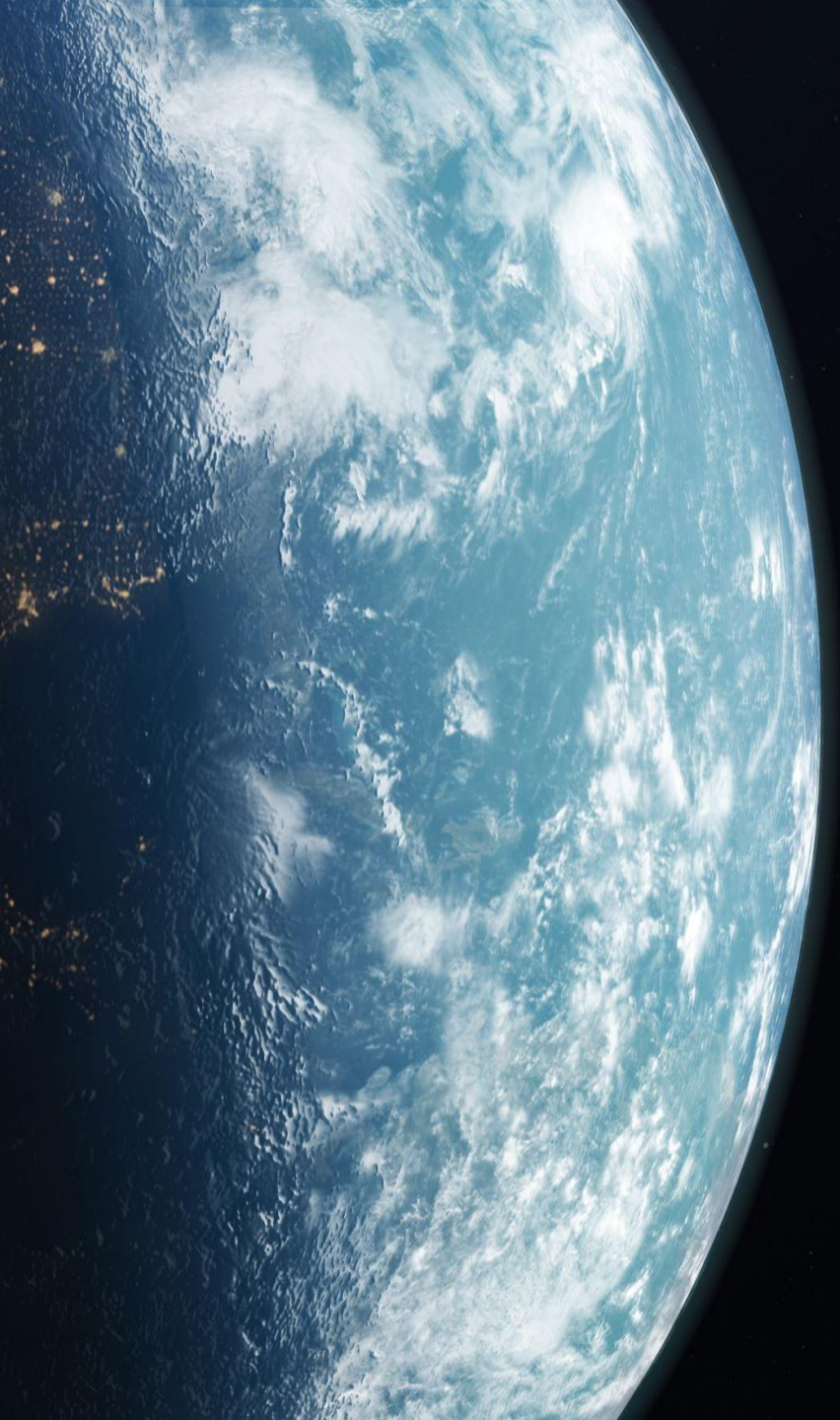
The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”

(Isaiah 9:6-7)



What were the Prophetic Expectations of that Day?

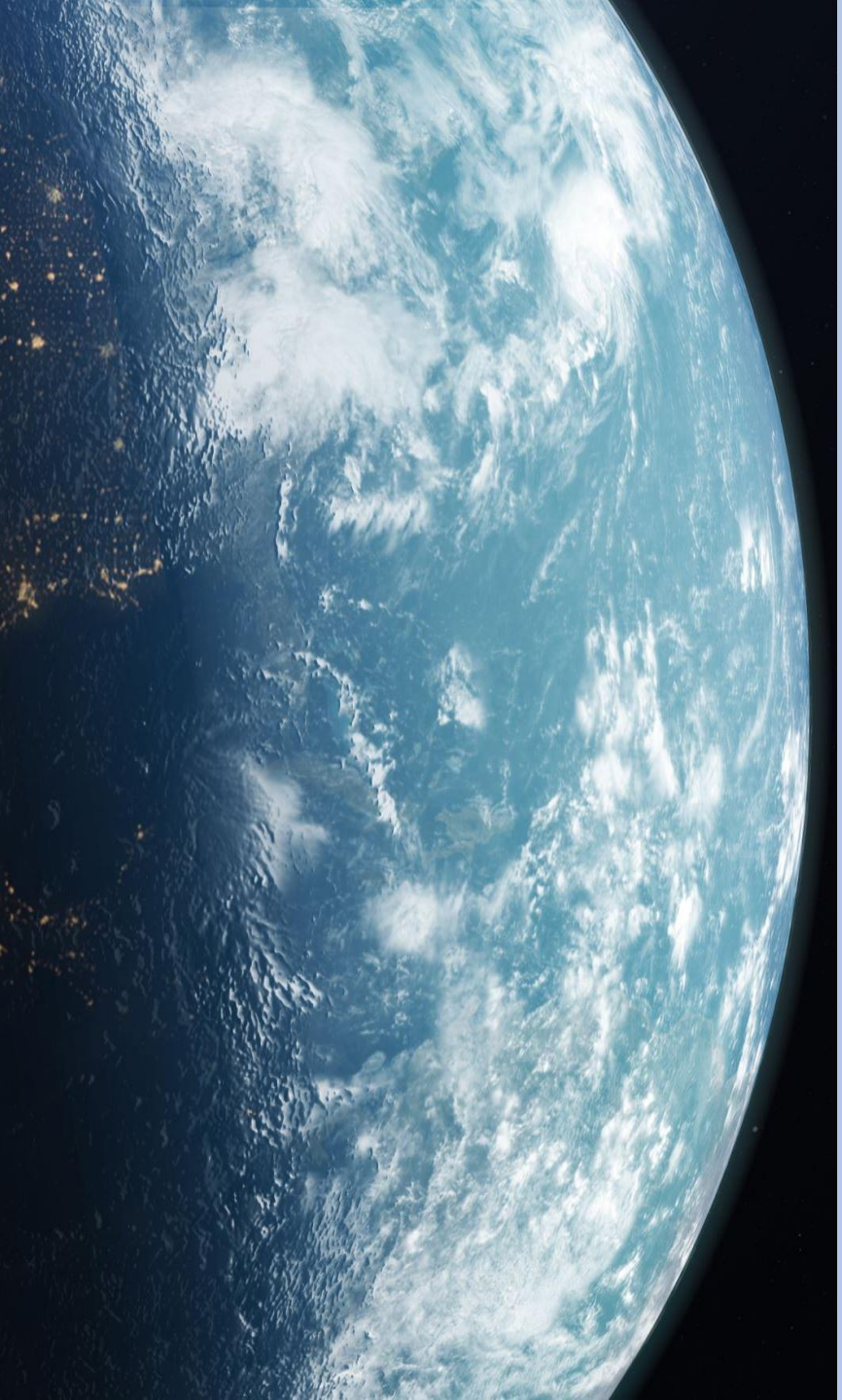
“The days are coming,” declares the Lord,
“when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, **a King** who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. **In his days**
Judah will be saved and Israel will live in
safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior
(Jeremiah 23:5-6)



What were the Prophetic Expectations of that Day?

“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”

(Daniel 2:44)



What were the Prophetic Expectations of that Day?

“Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One, His kingdom will be an **everlasting kingdom**, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.”
(Daniel 7:26)

This is what the Apostle Paul will write on this topic

“Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.** While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. **But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day.** We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. **For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.** He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (I Thessalonians 5:1-11)

This is what the Apostle Peter will write on this topic

“Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. **I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.** Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, **“Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?** Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. **By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.** But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: **With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. **But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.** The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? **You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.** That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. **But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.** So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” (1 Peter 3:1-18)

This is what the Apostle John will write on this topic

“Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! **For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?** (Revelation 6:15-17)

“**Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”** for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “**Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes.** There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” (Revelation 21:1-5)

“**I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.** The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, **for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.** The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. **Nothing impure will ever enter it,** nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, **but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.** (Revelation 21:22-27)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

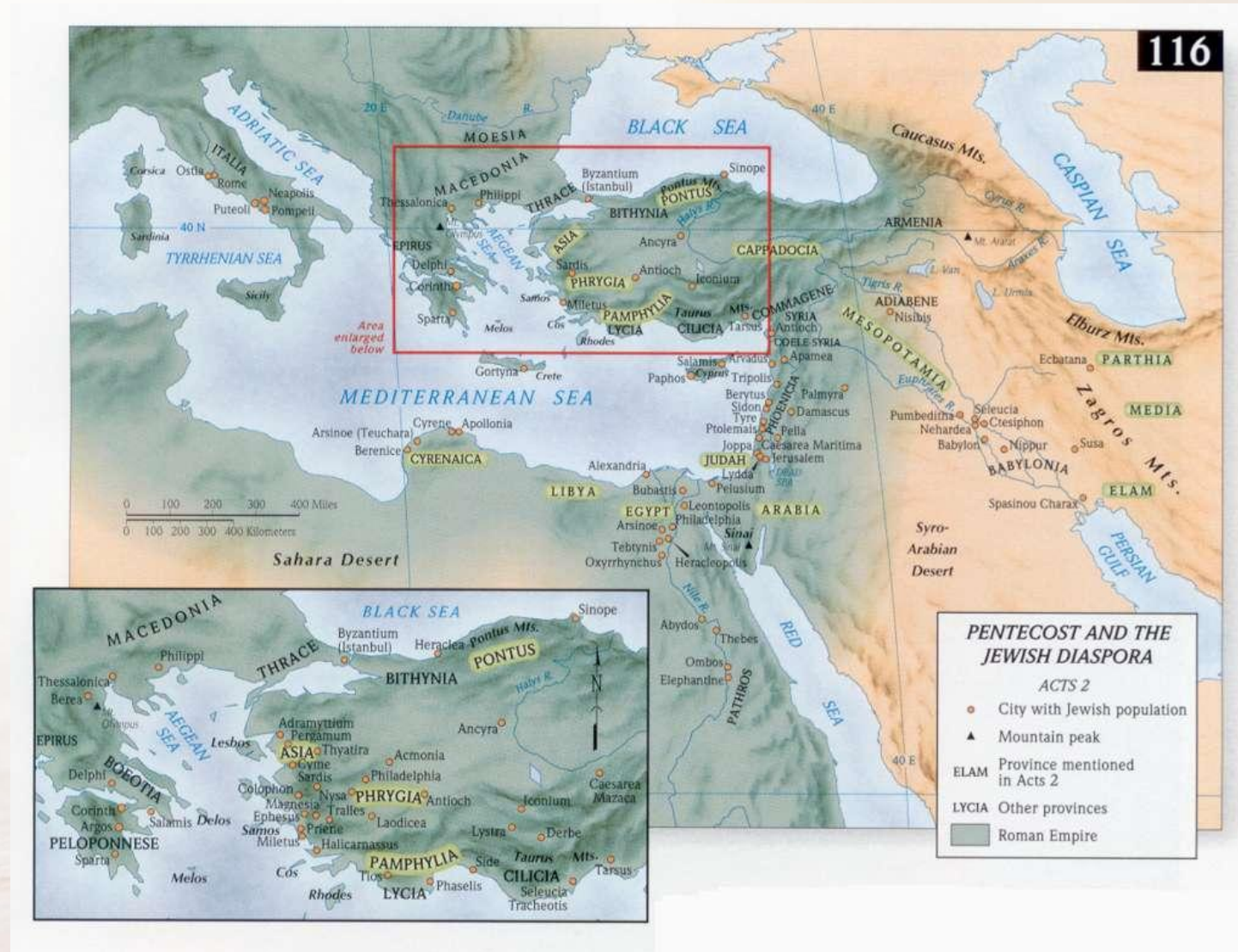
(Acts 1:8)

- ✓ This command is very similar to what Matthew writes in his Gospel – sometimes called the Great Commission:

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28;18-20)

- ✓ Shortly after Pentecost (Acts 2), where the Apostles will be empowered by the Holy Spirit, they will set out to complete the command the Lord has given them.
- ✓ They will begin in Jerusalem where the church will be established and grow (Acts 2-7), and persecution will drive them to other regions (Acts 8), and eventually to Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch in Syria (where they will be called Christians), Galatia, Ephesus, Macedonia (Greece), Alexandria in Egypt, and eventually throughout the Roman Empire and to “the ends of the earth” – Acts 9-26, Epistles of the New Test.

THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES



SIMON (PETER)

- He was born in Bethsaida in Galilee
 - His father was Jona
 - His brother Andrew also became an apostle
 - He became a fisherman just like his father and eventually partnered up with his brother and another fisherman by the name of Zebedee along with his two sons James and John. These are the same two men (James and John) who also follow Christ and are later referred to as apostles.
 - Peter faithfully follows Jesus along with the other 12
 - Peter makes this bold declaration about Jesus; “You are the Christ the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:16)

SIMON (PETER)

- Here are some of the significant works of Peter that are recorded through the **first four chapter of Acts**:
 - He preaches to the masses in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2)
 - He was used by God in the healing of a man who had been crippled since birth. In response to the request for alms from the crippled man; Peter responds with the powerful declaration; “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene – walk” (Acts 3:6 – NASB)
 - Peter continues to preach the Gospel and suffers persecution from the Jewish leaders. His second sermon is recorded in Acts 3.
 - Peter is subsequently arrested for preaching and refuses to stop declaring that; **“There is salvation in no one else**; there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved”. (Acts 4:12 – NASB)

SIMON (PETER)

- Peter begins to travel throughout the region of Judea where he will witness and confirm that Gentiles were coming to faith in Jesus
 - He will be used by God to heal a paralytic man named Aeneas (Acts 9:32-35). This took place in the town called Lydda which is modern day Lod (close to Tel Aviv).
 - From Lydda; Peter will travel to Joppa and the Lord will use him to raise a woman by the name of Dorcas (Tabitha) back from the dead. (Acts 9:36-43)
 - Acts 10 records the account of the vision by Cornelius and Peter that results in the acceptance of Gentiles becoming converts to Christianity.
 - This will spark great controversy but in the end it will be Peter who is instrumental in helping to solve the dispute over whether Gentiles could be saved. (Acts 11)

SIMON (PETER)



SIMON (PETER)

Peter will return to Jerusalem and helps to get the discussion going to help resolve the conflict over whether Gentile converts needed to be circumcised in order to be saved. The decision is made that they do not need to be circumcised but should abstain from their former pagan practices. (Acts 15:19-20, 28-29)

SIMON (PETER)

- Other noteworthy events in the life of Peter the apostle
 - Due to the emergence of persecution and various imprisonments from the Jewish religious leaders as well as various Roman leaders; Peter will leave the territory of Judea and minister in various regions of the Middle East and eventually find his way to Rome.
 - He will write the Epistle of I Peter
 - Peter's second Epistle is a more direct plea to guard against false teachers and prepare for persecution from all fronts

SIMON (PETER)

- Peter's ministry in Rome

- While he is in Rome he will help to establish/strengthen the church there
- While in Rome he will influence/mentor Mark who will write our earliest Gospel account of the ministry of Jesus. It is believed that Peter will dictate his own first-hand account of the life of Jesus which is known to us as the Gospel of Mark

SIMON (PETER)

- Peter's final days

- Peter spent his last day in a prison called the Mamertine prison. Tradition claims he was incarcerated for nine months and forced to remain in an upright position chained to a column
- Church tradition also claims that Peter was crucified upside down by order of the Emperor Nero
- The traditional date for Peter's death was 67 or 68 A.D.

ANDREW

- His birth, occupation and early days with Christ and the Apostles
 - He was the brother of Simon (Peter) and his father was Jona (John)
 - His occupation was a fisherman
 - He was a disciple of John the Baptist before following Christ
 - He was the first of the Apostles to follow Christ (John 1:35-42) and was instrumental in introducing Peter and others to Christ
 - You will find him mentioned in a few places in the Gospel accounts
 - The only place he is mentioned in the Book of Acts is in the list of the apostles and he is not mentioned in any of the Epistles or Revelation

ANDREW

Andrew settled in the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains (present day Georgia in Russia), and while there he ministered to the Scythians.



ANDREW

- Notable contributions from the apostle Andrew (according to church tradition)
 - It is also believed that he (like Paul) had an itinerant ministry as he traveled to Byzantium (modern day Istanbul, Turkey), then to Greece, Thrace and Macedonia
 - He eventually ends up in Patros (located on the Corinthian Gulf) and it is there where he is martyred
 - Andrew seemed to have considerable influence in the region of Russia for he is recognized as their chief patron

JAMES (SON OF ZEBEDEE)

- Although James was considered one of the inner circle (Peter, James, John), there is actually very little known about him
 - We know his father was Zebedee and his brother was John (The apostle)
 - It is possible that he (James) may have been a cousin to Jesus but the evidence is inconclusive
 - This is not the same James who wrote the Epistle of James nor is this the same James who presided over the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15

JAMES (SON OF ZEBEDEE)

- It is believed that sometime after witnessing the resurrection that James found his way to Spain and may have ministered there for a season. This information is taken from Josephus and other historians as well as some early church writings
- He was the first of the apostles to be martyred and was done so at the hands of Herod Agrippa I in 44 A.D. (Acts 12:2)

JOHN

- Also, a son of Zebedee and the brother of James....his mother was Salome which is believed to be Mary's sister
- Some conclude that the meeting between Nicodemus and Jesus took place in John's house....although we don't know for sure
- John is responsible for writing a total of 5 New Testament books which is second only to Paul who wrote 13:
 - The Gospel of John
 - I, II, III John
 - Revelation
- He moved to Ephesus sometime prior to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (A.D. 70) and he became the Pastor of the church, probably sometime after Timothy's ministry there had ended

JOHN

During his time in Ephesus, he developed a sort of regional ministry and had an influence over the churches in the area. We derive this from his mention of the “seven churches of Asia” in the Book of Revelation and his apparent unique relationship to them



JOHN

- He was exiled to the Isle of Patmos due to the ruling of the Roman Emperor Domitian – and was later released and allowed to return to Ephesus
- He lived until the time of the Roman Emperor Trajan and during that time would have witnessed a significant amount of persecution against Christians
- He is considered a Pastor committed to loving the people and work of God, for church tradition has him often quoted saying; “Little children love one another” and when questioned by his disciple as to why he would so often say those words his reply was; it is the Lord’s command, and if this alone be done, it is enough!”
- His ministry spanned a number of years in which he probably established several churches throughout Asia, and it is estimated that he didn’t die until approximately A.D. 100. There is no evidence that he was martyred, and it is believed that he died a natural death

PHILLIP

- There is very little information about him but one significant notation worth mentioning was his response to Nathanael after meeting Jesus; “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph”. (John 1:45)
- He was from Bethsaida of Galilee – just like Peter and Andrew
- Some confuse him with the Philip the Deacon/Evangelist (Acts 6:1-5, Acts 21:8), but these would have been two different people
- Various church traditions claim that he was involved in the Apostolic College
- It is believed that he ministered in the region of Galatia (in Turkey) and tradition has him being martyred at the age of 87

BARTHOLOMEW

- His is also known as Nathanael. It was Nathanael who said this to Jesus; “Rabbi, You are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel” (John 1:49)
- Jesus (after His resurrection) appeared to Bartholomew along with several other disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee. (John 21:2)

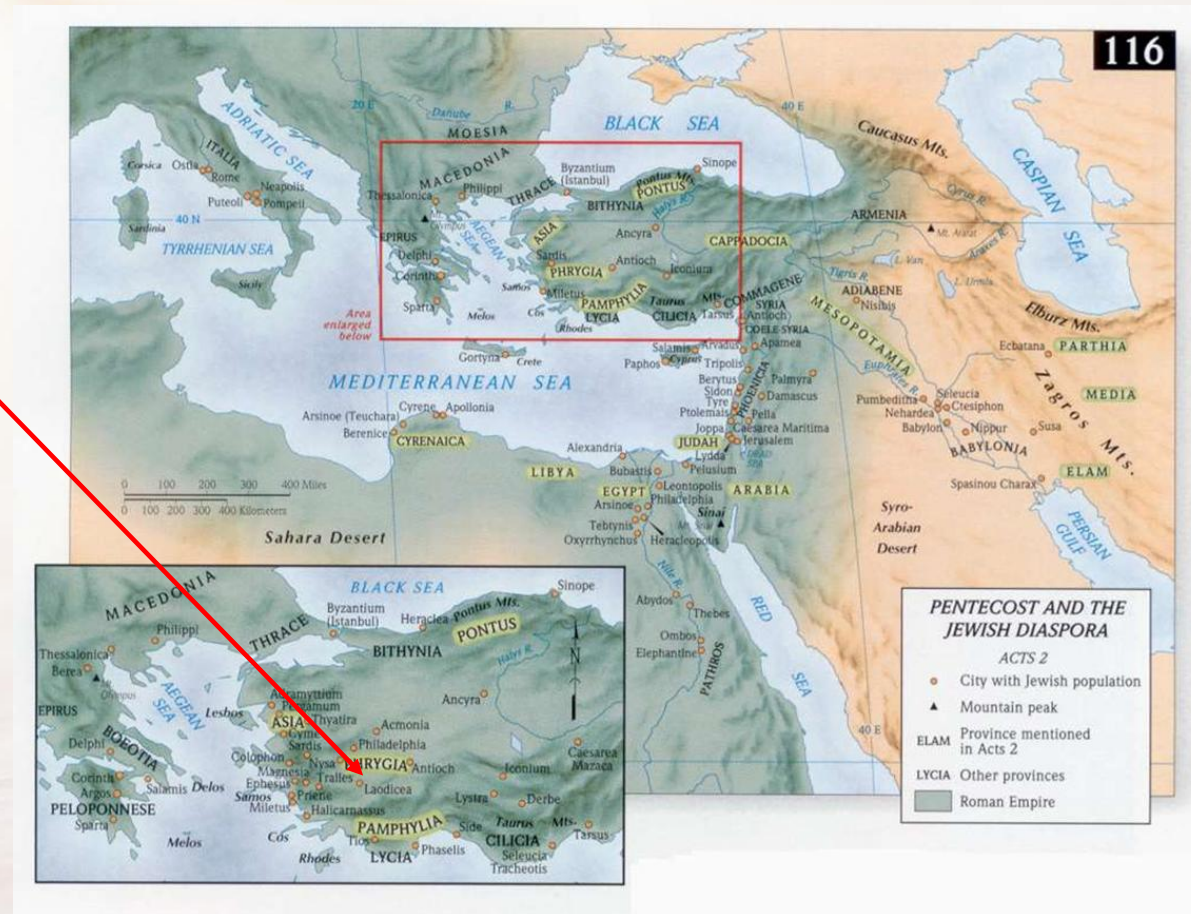


Armenia is the primary area where Bartholomew ministered.



BARTHOLOMEW

Church tradition has him first ministering in Hierapolis (located near Laodicea and Colosse – in modern day Turkey) along with the apostle Philip



BARTHOLOMEW

- Here are a few of the recorded events from various church traditions that are written about Bartholomew:
 - The historical record along with church tradition shows that while in Hierapolis; Bartholomew and Philip were responsible for the wife of a high Roman official (proconsul) coming to faith in Christ. This apparently enraged the Roman official and he ordered the two men (Philip and Bartholomew) to be crucified, but Bartholomew escaped after being taken down from the cross and subsequently dismissed for some reason
 - From Hierapolis Bartholomew traveled to the East and visited India and then eventually settled in the region of Armenia. According to their tradition, he joined up with the apostle Jude (Thaddaeus) who already had a ministry there

BARTHOLOMEW

- Here are a few of the recorded events from various church traditions that are written about Bartholomew:
 - Tradition also claims that on his missionary journey's that he carried the Gospel of Matthew with him, and it is believed that he left a copy behind in India. The book eventually ended up in the hands of a stoic philosopher by the name of Pantaenus who had previously become converted to Christianity. Pantaenus was responsible for founding the Catechetical School of Alexandria (in Egypt) and was a mentor to a very influential thinker, apologist and writer by the name of Clement of Alexandria (more on him at a later time)
 - The primary ministry of Bartholomew took place in the area of Armenia, and he labored there until his death. There is wide agreement that he was martyred while ministering in Armenia. Some traditions claim he was beheaded while others claim he was skinned alive and then crucified. The date of his death is commonly placed in A.D. 68 and the location is modern day Azerbaijan

THOMAS

- He is also known as Didymus (the twin); he was a fisherman by trade, and a native of Galilee
- Here are a few traditions about this apostle:
 - He traveled to Babylon (modern day Iraq) and established the first Christian Church there
 - From there it is believed that he evangelized in the region of India and may have traveled as far as China
 - While in India it is believed he was martyred and was killed with a lance. He was buried in Mylapore, India

MATTHEW

- He is also called Levi
- He was a tax collector before being called By Jesus to come and follow Him
- After the resurrection it is believed that he initially stayed in the region of Jerusalem, and after about 15 years, he began a series of missionary journeys
- He went to Persia and ministered there for a season and Catholic tradition has him traveling to Ethiopia in Africa and eventually being martyred in Egypt. There is another tradition that has him being martyred in Parthia.
- We have Matthew to thank for a well penned Gospel account of the life of Christ. He was known as a gifted writer, a dedicated disciple, and probably the best educated of the original 12 disciples

JAMES (SON OF ALPHAEUS)

- He is sometimes referred to as James the Less
- There are two basic traditions that about this James:
 - He helped to establish the Syrian Church and was their first bishop
 - He was stoned to death in Jerusalem for preaching Christ
- This is also not the same James who wrote the Epistle of James

JUDE (THADDAEUS)

- Jude was one of the first apostles to leave Jerusalem and head to a foreign country. Tradition claims he was the first to witness directly to a foreign (Gentile) king.
- Most traditions have him ministering in the region of Armenia (some of his time being spent with Bartholomew and possibly some with Thomas), specifically in the city of Edessa.
- Some traditions also place him in Syria and Northern Persia where it is believed he was martyred.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

- Tradition has him ministering primarily in the region of North Africa and possibly even into Britain
- There are two basic traditions about his death:
 - One version is that he was crucified in Britain by the Romans in A.D. 61
 - Another version claims that sometime after leaving Britain he traveled to Persia and was martyred there by being sawed in two

THE OTHER APOSTLES

- Matthias

- He was the replacement for Judas Iscariot

- Tradition places him in the region of Armenia and may have been assisted by the apostle Andrew

- Most all traditions agree that he was martyred but the location of his death by martyrdom is unclear

- Paul (more on him later)

“After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**” (Acts 1:9-11)

- ✓ This was the ascension of Jesus into heaven (“taken up before their very eyes”) where Jesus would remain at the right hand of the Father (as he said he would) until he returns to establish the promised kingdom on earth.

“You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matthew 26:64)

“When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:54-56)

“He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.” (Revelation 21:5-7)

“Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. When they arrived, **they went upstairs to the room where they were staying**. Those present were **Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James**. They all joined together constantly in prayer, **along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers**.” (Acts 1:12-14)

- ✓ The apostles returned to Jerusalem (about ½ mile journey from where they saw Jesus ascend into heaven from the Mount of Olives) and gathered in room there
- ✓ Its exact location is unknown, but it was large enough to house at least 120 people
- ✓ The remaining **11 disciples were present**, along with some **unnamed women** (probably Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Martha, Salome and others), **Mary the mother of Jesus** (this is the last mention of her in the rest of the New Testament) and **Jesus’ brothers** (biological siblings from Mary and Joseph after Jesus was born) who were James (leader of the Jerusalem church), Joses, Judas/Jude (author of Jude), and Simon.
- ✓ In addition to prayer their purpose was also to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit

“In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said, “Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.”** (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) “For,” said Peter, “it is written in the Book of Psalms: **‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’** and, **‘May another take his place of leadership’**” (Acts 1:15-20)**

- ✓ Peter (speaking with authority) stood and declared to the 120 Christ followers that a replacement for Judas was necessary. He quotes from Psalm 41:9, 69:25, 109:8
- ✓ Why was Judas permitted to be counted as one of them? Because it was essential for him to betray Christ. God used Judas’ evil intent to accomplish His own predetermined purposes.
- ✓ ***“This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.”*** (Acts 2:23)

“Therefore, **it is necessary to choose one of the men who** have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus **was living among us**, beginning **from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us**. For one of these **must become a witness with us of his resurrection.**”” (Acts 1:21-22)

- ✓ The two requirements for Judas’ replacement:
 - He would need to have been **a witness to Jesus’ earthly ministry**
 - He would need to have been **witness to the resurrection**; which is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. (I Corinthians 15)
- ✓ **Why was a replacement for Judas even necessary?** Because Judas vacated his place of promise by turning to the devil and betraying Jesus

“Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, **you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**” (Matthew 19:28)

*“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. **The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb**” (Revelation 21:10-14)*

“So, they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so, he was added to the eleven apostles.” (Acts 1:23-26)

- ✓ Two men fulfilled those requirements:
 - Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) – other than being a follower of Jesus, we have no Biblical record of his life.
 - Matthias (also a follower of Jesus) is selected to replace Judas and after the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, will (according to church historians and church traditions) go to the region of Armenia and will ultimately be martyred.
- ✓ There are some who question why they didn’t wait longer and appoint Paul? The answer is simple; Paul was not there during the entire ministry of Jesus nor was he an eyewitness to the resurrection.

“So, they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so, he was added to the eleven apostles.” (Acts 1:23-26)

- ✓ Take note of the selection process:
 - In the same way that Jesus had chosen the 11 remaining apostles, they earnestly sought the Lord to know which one he chose to replace Judas and thus acknowledging the significance of the “apostolic ministry” of the 12 Apostles.
 - They cast lots (a common practice in the Old Testament – Leviticus 16:8ff Proverbs 16:33, Proverbs 18:18,) and the lot fell to Matthias
- ✓ Although this was an acceptable method; it seemed to be the last recorded occurrence where this practice (casting lots) was used for future determinations of God’s will. Going forward (after Pentecost), they will rely on the leading of the Holy Spirit through prayer.

A Few Concluding Remarks

- ✓ Is there such a thing as a “perpetual” office of Apostle, where there was a succession of Apostles as each one died off?
 - After the appointment of Matthias to replace Judas and fill the 12th Apostolic position/office, there is no further Biblical evidence to support this practice.
 - The Apostle James will be martyred (Acts 12:1-2 by King Herod) and there is no mention in scripture of him being replaced
 - The Apostle Paul’s ministry was unique (in which he primarily ministers to the Gentiles – Galatians 2:9) and even he considered himself the “**least of the apostles**” (I Corinthians 15:9), and Luke (Paul’s friend and traveling companion) acknowledges the “twelve” as a group and does not include Paul (Acts 2:14. 6:2)
- ✓ Now that Matthias has been chosen, all was ready for the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2)