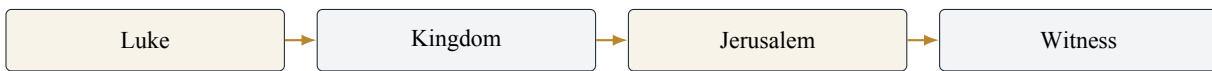


Session 1 The Former Treatise and the Father's Promise

Acts: The Book That Explains Everything

Session 1 | Acts 1:1-5



Before You Read

Big idea: Acts does not begin with a new church program. It begins with the risen Christ, His chosen apostles, Jerusalem, the kingdom of God, and the promise of the Holy Ghost.

How to use this guide: Read each KJV verse first. Then mark what the verse says before deciding what it means doctrinally.

Three words to keep watching

- **Kingdom** - In Acts 1, this is connected to Israel's promised restoration, not merely to religion in the heart.
- **Apostles** - The immediate audience is the chosen apostolic company, not all later believers in the same way.
- **Promise** - Pentecost is introduced as something promised before, not as a surprise mystery newly revealed.

A simple right-division reminder: Right division means letting each passage stand in its own audience, timing, and revelation. In Acts 1, Paul has not yet been saved, and the mystery of the body of Christ has not yet been revealed through him.

Acts 1:1

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

What does the passage say?

- Luke is writing a second volume to Theophilus.
- The first volume was about what Jesus **began** to do and teach.
- Acts continues the record of Christ's work. Jesus remains the main subject.

Words to notice

- **Former treatise** - The earlier written account, the Gospel of Luke.
- **Began** - Luke implies continuation. Christ's work did not become irrelevant after the ascension.

Cross-references worth marking

- Luke 1:1-4 - Luke's first volume was also written to Theophilus.
- Luke 24:44-53 - Luke ends with resurrection instruction, Jerusalem, and the ascension.

Do not miss

- Acts should not be treated first as a handbook for modern church practice. Luke begins by tying Acts to the Lord's ministry already recorded in his Gospel.

Acts 1:2

Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

What does the passage say?

- Luke's Gospel reached to the day Christ was taken up.
- Before the ascension, Christ gave commandments to the apostles He had chosen.
- The immediate audience is the chosen apostles, not all later believers in every respect.

Words to notice

- **Taken up** - The ascension.
- **Commandments** - Authoritative instructions from the risen Christ.
- **Holy Ghost** - The KJV's normal New Testament wording for the third Person of the Godhead.

Cross-references worth marking

- Mark 3:14-19 - The Lord chose the twelve.
- Mark 16:14-20 - The risen Christ commissioned the eleven.
- John 20:21-23 - The risen Christ sent the apostles with authority.

Do not miss

- These are kingdom apostles under direct instruction from Christ. Paul is not yet in the story.

Acts 1:3

To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

What does the passage say?

- Jesus proved He was alive after His suffering and death.
- The proof was not vague or emotional; Luke calls them "many infallible proofs."
- The forty-day subject was "the kingdom of God."
- The apostles had just received kingdom instruction from the risen Lord.

Words to notice

- **Passion** - Christ's suffering, especially leading to His death.
- **Infallible proofs** - Convincing proofs.
- **Kingdom of God** - In this setting, the promised rule and reign of God connected to Israel's hope.

Cross-references worth marking

- Luke 24:36-49 - Jesus showed His risen body and opened the Scriptures.
- Daniel 2:44 - God will set up a kingdom.
- Isaiah 2:1-4 - Zion and Jerusalem are central in kingdom expectation.

Do not miss

- If the apostles ask about the kingdom in verse 6, do not assume they are ignorant. Verse 3 says Christ had just taught them about the kingdom for forty days.

Acts 1:4

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

What does the passage say?

- Christ assembled with the apostles.
- He commanded them to stay in Jerusalem.
- They were to wait for “the promise of the Father.”
- This promise was something they had already heard from Christ.

Words to notice

- **Jerusalem** - The required starting place.
- **Wait** - They were not told to launch immediately.
- **Promise of the Father** - A promised divine provision, not a new human program.

Cross-references worth marking

- Luke 24:49 - They were to tarry in Jerusalem until endued with power from on high.
- Joel 2:28-32 - The Spirit outpouring belongs to Israel’s prophetic expectation.

Do not miss

- Jerusalem is not just a convenient location. Acts begins where Israel’s kingdom hope would be expected to begin.

Acts 1:5

For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

What does the passage say?

- John baptized with water.
- The apostles would soon be baptized with the Holy Ghost.
- Pentecost is introduced as the fulfillment of a promise already announced.

Words to notice

- **Baptized with water** - John’s visible baptism connected to Israel’s kingdom preparation.
- **Baptized with the Holy Ghost** - The promised Spirit baptism soon to occur.
- **Not many days hence** - Not many days from now.

Cross-references worth marking

- Matthew 3:11 - John announced baptism with the Holy Ghost.
- Acts 2:16-21 - Peter explains Pentecost by quoting Joel.
- Acts 11:15-16 - Peter later remembers this saying of the Lord.

Translation note

- Modern Bibles normally say “Holy Spirit” where the KJV says “Holy Ghost.” That is an English wording difference, not a different Person.

Do not miss

- Fulfilled prophecy is not the same as newly revealed mystery. Acts 1:5 points backward to John’s announcement and forward to Pentecost, but it does not reveal the body of Christ.

Text And Translation Helps

- In Acts 1:1-5, there are no major Textus Receptus vs critical text differences that change the doctrine of the passage.
- The bigger danger is interpretive: turning kingdom words into church words before letting the passage speak.
- KJV phrases worth remembering:
 - “began both to do and teach” - Acts continues Luke’s account of Christ’s work.
 - “the kingdom of God” - the stated subject of the forty days.
 - “not depart from Jerusalem” - the commanded starting point.
 - “the promise of the Father” - the apostles are waiting for something promised.
 - “baptized with the Holy Ghost” - the coming event is tied to John’s earlier announcement.

Common Ideas To Test

- “Acts is the birth and pattern book of the church.”
 - Test it by Acts 1:1-5: the passage speaks of Christ’s continued work, chosen apostles, Jerusalem, Holy Ghost promise, and the kingdom of God.
- “The apostles were still confused about the kingdom.”
 - Test it by Acts 1:3: Christ had just taught them kingdom matters for forty days.
- “Pentecost must begin the present church because the Spirit came.”
 - Test it by Acts 1:5 and Acts 2:16: the coming event is connected to prior promise and explained by prophecy.

Session Summary

- Acts continues Luke’s account of what Jesus began to do and teach.
- The chosen apostles received commandments from the risen Christ.
- For forty days, Jesus taught them about the kingdom of God.
- The apostles were told to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Ghost baptism.
- Acts begins with Israel, Jerusalem, kingdom expectation, fulfilled prophecy, and the chosen apostolic company.
- The body of Christ and the dispensation of grace should be learned from Paul’s later revelation, not forced into Acts 1.

For Long-Term Study

Mark these themes as Acts unfolds

- Jerusalem first.
- Israel addressed and given opportunity.
- Signs and wonders connected to apostolic witness.
- Repeated Jewish resistance.
- Paul’s separate calling and ministry.
- Gentile blessing increasing as Israel resists.
- The movement from Jerusalem toward Rome.

Questions to keep asking

1. Who is speaking?
2. To whom are they speaking?
3. Is the passage explaining prophecy, revealing mystery, or recording transition?
4. Is Israel being addressed nationally, locally, or indirectly?
5. Has Paul received and begun proclaiming the later revelation of grace yet?

One sentence to remember

Acts begins with the risen Christ instructing His chosen apostles about the kingdom of God and commanding them to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Ghost baptism.