

Acts

The Gospel on the Move

Study 1

Factors that Drive a Renewed Church

Acts 1:1-26

A. Gospel Driven

Acts 1:1-3 (NIV)

¹ In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ 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.

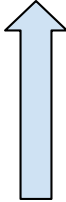
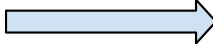
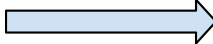
1. a) Fill in the Blanks. According to the video slide, fill in the location and which apostle the story follows under the different chapters.

Chapters	Acts 1-7	Acts 8-12	Acts 13-28 onwards
Location	Jerusalem	Judea Samaria	Ends of the Earth
Demographic	Jewish Evan City	Transition National	Gentile Evangelism Cross-cultural
Which Apostle	Peter	Peter	Paul
Time	AD 33 Acts 1-2:47	AD 36-40 Acts 8:1-9:32	AD 46-57 Acts 13-21
Main plot	Church is born Tested, Purified Strengthened	Gospel spread, multiplied, changing lives, breaking traditions	Gospel spread, extended, rejected, unifying Jew and Gentile

b) Fill in the Blanks. According to the video slide, who is the author and receipt of Acts?

	Author	Recipient
Name	Luke	Theophilus
Details	Race: Gentile Occupation: Doctor, educated person, give historical account	“Theo” = God “philus”= lover Possibility: i) Generic Christian reader ii) Titus Flavius Clemens Cousin of Emperor Domitian iii) Romans middle class

c) Fill in the Blanks. According to the video slide, fill in the plot continuity between the gospel of Luke and book of Acts.

Gospel of Luke	Jesus' Ascension	Book of Acts
What Jesus taught and did	 Luke 24:50-51 & Acts 1:1-2	What Jesus continues to do through his disciples by the Holy Spirit
		
All other religions' founders completed their mission in their lifetime and left their disciples to continue the work.		

d) Objective question. Choose the MOST appropriate answer. “Acts” refers to:

A. The Acts/actions of the disciples

B. Jesus continues to work through his disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit

e) Fill in the Blanks. According to the video slide, fill in the factors that drive a renewed church.

	Driven by	Relevant verses
1.	Gospel driven	He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3 ESV)
2.	Spirit driven	but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. (Acts 1:5 ESV)
3.	Vision driven	you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8 ESV)
4.	Prayer driven	All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (Acts 1:14 ESV)
5.	Leader driven	So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection. (Acts 1:21-22 ESV)

f) Comprehension Question. Verse 3 says: “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.”

i) Is that falsifiable evidence?

Yes.

ii) What is falsifiable evidence vs unfalsifiable evidence?

What is unfalsifiable is unscientific because it can't be proven wrong. If it is falsifiable, it has a chance to be proven wrong and therefore can be admitted as scientific or historical evidence.

iii) Objective question. Select all that apply. Which of the following statements can be considered falsifiable evidence?

A. Jesus' Spiritual Resurrection

B. Jesus' Physical Resurrection

C. Following 8 fold path will lead to Nirvana

D. Blowing yourself up will land you in heaven with 40 virgins

E. After public ministry Jesus was crucified publically

F. Jesus rose from the grave publically

G. Jesus publicly showed himself to crowds after the resurrection

H. The public told everyone they saw the resurrected Jesus

I. Private dream about God

J. Private angelic encounter about God

K. Private ideas about God

B. Spirit Driven

Acts 1:4-5 (NIV)

⁴On 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. ⁵For John baptized with^[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with^[b] the Holy Spirit."

2. Reflection Question. In the video lecture, it is mentioned that the Holy Spirit impresses the truth on us. Please share an incident of that in your life.

C. Vision Driven

Acts 1:6-11 (NIV)

⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But 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."

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “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.”

3. a) Comprehension Question. What was the misunderstanding the disciples had about the new kingdom and what is the kingdom actually like?

The disciples thought that it would be an earthly kingdom, geographically in Israel/Middle East, and mainly for the ethnically Jewish.

In Luke 17:20-21 Jesus answered that the kingdom of God is in your midst, the word “midst” is “*entos*” which means inside. The new kingdom is a spiritual kingdom inside of us

Relevant Verse

Luke 17:20-21

²⁰ Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

b) Reflection Question. Verse 8 says “and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. How do you find your calling/role/mission in this instruction?

D. Prayer Driven

Acts 1:12-14 (NIV)

¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk^[a] from the city. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer,

along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

4. Reflection Question. What does your prayer life look like?

Hebrews 7:25 (NIV)

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

E. Leader Driven

Acts 1:15-26 (NIV)

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ¹⁶and said, “Brothers and sisters,^[d] 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. ¹⁷He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.”

¹⁸(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. ¹⁹Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

²⁰“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,”^[e]

and,

““May another take his place of leadership.”^[f]

²¹Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, ²²beginning 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.”

²³So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and

Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” ²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

5. a) Discussion Question. Does the account of Judas’ death in Acts contradict the one in Matthew 27:3-5 which states that Judas hung himself?

Matthew 27:3-5 states that Judas hung himself, but Luke here says that he died through a fall (Acts 1:18-19). Some see this as a contradiction. But it does not need to be read this way. If a man had hung himself and he had not been found quickly, his body would have been quite bloated and decayed and, if cut down, could have fallen and ruptured in a gory mess. That would certainly be reason enough for the name “Field of Blood” to be attached to the place.

b) Discussion Question. What’s the significance of the number Twelve?

The Israelites had Twelve Tribes which means one representative for each tribe, so the number 12 seems to be implicated with leadership, authority, and order. You can read more about it [here](#).

Revelation 21:12-14

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.

Takeaway

Acts 1 has shown that the renewed church is Gospel-driven, Spirit-driven, Vision-driven, Prayer-driven, and Leader-driven.

Case Study

Case 1 – The Rise of Christianity

According to Rodney Stark in his book *The Rise of Christianity*, FACTORS FUELING GROWTH (40% per decade) of Christianity in the first 300 years of the early church is:

1. Network of family and friends
2. Discontent with contemporary religions of the day
3. Economically privileged more likely to understand the faith and the need for its beliefs
4. Christian response to epidemics and earthquakes... understanding of why they occur and hope for the future. Larger numbers survive and mix with pagans
5. Women are treated better so more women came to Christianity
6. Christians didn't practice abortion and infanticide unlike their Greek peers
7. The composure of the Christian martyrs amazed and unsettled many pagans

1. a) Discussion question. Should we strive for that 40% growth rate?

b) Reflection question. Do you want to pray to be used by God like the early Christians? Why or Why not? What do you think God wants from us?

Case 2 – Cast Lots

Khen Bell saw that in Acts 1:26 the disciples cast lots to pick leaders. Proverbs 16:33 also says: "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord"

He is a new Christian and wonders then why shouldn't we just make decisions by casting lots?

2) Discussion question. You are Khen's life group leader, how would you answer him?

Further Reading

Many have pointed out that this was before Pentecost, and after the giving of the Spirit to the church there was no record of this kind of decision-making again, even when great decisions are made (cf. Acts 6:1-6; Acts 13: 1-3; Acts 15:6-21). It is important to note Peter's remark that an apostle is to be chosen by the Lord, not by the disciples (v.24), and so the drawing of lots was a way to let Jesus make the final choice. There have been those who have felt that the choosing of Matthias was illegitimate and that Paul was God's choice to "complete" the Twelve. But there is no comment in the text that indicates that.

The principles that are often lost in the discussion of these two details are very significant:

a) First, they prepared for their mission by waiting on God to raise up gifted and godly leaders. This was the other thing, besides prayer, which can be said to be a key for "revival", for spiritual empowering for the mission. God works through leaders, so they went about seeking those he had appointed.

b) Second, they sought them by studying the Scriptures (v.20) with regard to the leadership position, by prayer (v.24), and by group discussion and wisdom (v.23 — proposing two men). This is therefore strong testimony about the importance of raising up leaders for God to use and the "delicacy" of the process. It takes a balance of hard-nosed study and thinking together with a prayerful dependence on God's leading.

Article for further reading: [What was the practice of casting lots?](#)