

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns, rendered in a light gray color, frames the central text. The border is composed of repeating motifs of leaves and scrolls, creating a classic, elegant frame.

**A Layman's  
Commentary on  
The Acts of the  
Apostles**

**T.O.D. Johnston**

A Layman's Commentary on Acts – T.O.D. Johnston - [www.biblestudylessons.pdf.info](http://www.biblestudylessons.pdf.info)

T.O.D. Johnston's Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles

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A Layman's Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles

Religious Non-fiction

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T.O.D. Johnston's Commentary on Acts

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A Layman's Commentary  
On The Acts of the Apostles:  
Composed In 38 Lessons

1st Edition - 2011

Written by T.O.D. Johnston  
Published by Owen Johnston  
<http://www.biblestudylessons.pdf.info>

Dedicated for knowledge, understanding, and inspiration as we seek to follow Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ.

T.O.D. Johnston's Commentary on Acts  
Preface

After reading many scholarly commentaries on different books of Scripture, it became my mental habit to sift through the minute discussions of individual words and/or phrases, and the quoting of various scholars of the past of many differing opinions, and center on the most logical and inspirational truths that remained. Thus I relied on the studied scholarship of those who had learned the original languages and had read all the previous scholars that had written to get the best possible understanding of Scripture that I, as a non-scholar, could. It seemed that most church members would not attempt to read scholarly works - but would benefit from their knowledge if presented in a plain and straightforward manner, the truths they had perceived. The following commentary is my attempt to do this. May God bless my efforts to the extent that they increase the understanding and faith of the reader.

T.O.D. Johnston  
2005

## Lesson I

### Introduction

The title of The Acts of the Apostles was given to this treatise by the Christian Church from the first century onward. It records what the Apostles "did" in establishing Christ's Church. It centers around the acts of Peter and Paul. Peter was to proclaim the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles. Paul was to carry the Gospel to the pagan world of the Roman Empire. Some mention of some of the other Apostles was also included. Only the death of James, of the original 11, is recorded.

The book of Acts is the companion record to the Gospel of Luke. Acts has been accepted from the beginning as having been penned by the same author. This treatise claims so, and is addressed to the same individual as the former one (see Luke 1:3). It takes up the narrative at the same place left off in the former record (Acts 1:1,2).

The time written designates the time as around 62 A.D., and no later 63 A.D. This is based on internal evidence of events mentioned, specifically the second year of Paul's residing in Rome. It has been assumed that Luke wrote the book of Acts in Rome. This is based on the mention of Luke's arrival with Paul in Rome (Acts 28:16), and no mention of his leaving that city. The authenticity of the book of Acts has never been questioned. It is selective and limited in its inclusions.

Certain things of importance are highlighted:

1. The historical record of the Promise and coming and working of the Holy Spirit. This was the promise of power from on high to empower the Apostles that they were to tarry in Jerusalem for (Luke 24:49). The greatest triumphs of His finished work would take place after His ascension. Thus this record uniquely shows the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Great Work of Redemption. This book was the unique record of the Holy Spirit's work. It continues from the Gospel accounts of Christ's work for man's salvation. The Old Testament shows the Father's preparation.

2. It is the first inspired account of the great working of the Holy Spirit in the minds and hearts of a multitude of people. Also, it shows the power, given to the speakers of the gospels. It also shows the proper response to the Gospel. It is a measure and guide to all subsequent "revivals" and movements: what is proper and genuine.

3. This record suggests that the power and operations of the Holy Spirit should always be expected to occur within the Christian Church. It should also be expected in the spread of the Gospel throughout the world, until Christ comes for His Church.

4. The Church was founded by the bold proclamation of the truth of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This book contains several of the best examples of this preaching. It also contains the record of the organization of the beginning church. It was the working out of the effect of the Gospel on the mind and heart of each believer individually, and then collectively. Its purpose was to worship God in spirit and truth, and love one another, sharing together and encouraging one another in the faith. There were no outward trappings, no magnificent edifices, no dazzling shows, rites and ceremonies, or fancy clothes, no popes and priests, no show of wealth, no hierarchy of persons, no books of dogma or lists of rules. There was only the Word of God and the Love of Christ.

5. We also observe the nature of the carrying out of the Great Commission. People put this mission first, giving up whatever stood in the way, whether wealth, position, vocation,

home, family, even to giving up their lives. Stephen and Paul come to mind immediately. This is the true spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

6. This book also includes many incidental references to persons, places, and events that are recorded in other places in the New Testament – especially the Epistles. Each proves how genuine the authors and their records were.

7. This book is irrefutable proof of the reality of the truth of Christianity. Within 30 years of Christ's death and resurrection, His Gospel had been spread to all parts of the Roman Empire, and well beyond. Its progress was public, profound, and lasting. It penetrated every class, religion, vocation, race, gender, and age. Major cities had churches established, including Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and Rome. This was all in spite of great and deadly opposition by Jews and pagans alike. This faith was to unseat the established pagan religions, temples, and bloody rites.

Christianity was not spread by force, influence, power, or coercion. There was no wealth, army, hierarchy, indoctrinators, or enforcers. They had experience with Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, the truth of the Gospel message of love, forgiveness, and salvation – all by the grace and mercy of the only true God.

Whoever does not acknowledge this must explain how this change took place, and then how it continued to this day. If God did not bring this to pass, could men have done it by their own power, by magic, by charisma, or any other means. The preaching of the Gospel still brings people to faith in Christ, that changes them from selfish, self seeking, sinful ways of life to a path of forgiveness, love, faith, and helping and sharing with others. Jesus Christ is and will always be the power of God unto salvation. This remains true in spite of all the things people have added to it: all the pomp and circumstance, rules and regulations, power and wealth, fancy robes and edifices that show man's own vanity.

Intro finis!

The Acts of the Apostles 1:1-8.

1 The former treatise have I made, O The-oph'ilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,  
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:  
3 to whom also he showed 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:  
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.  
5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.  
6 ¶ When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?  
7 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.  
8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: 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.

1:1.

The former treatise: this indicates what we know as the Gospel of Luke – treatise meaning narrative. This book is written to the same "Theophilus" as the previous one, for the same purpose: to record the genuine and true historical account of the ascension of Christ, the descent, of the Holy Spirit, and the organization of the church. It would also included examples of preaching the true Gospel of Christ.

Luke accompanied Paul on many of his travels and therefore was eyewitness to most of the activities here recorded. "Of all" means the most important parts of the activities of Christ, both what He did and said. "Began to do!" is a Hebrew expression that means the same as the simple statement of what He did.

Verses 2-5.

Luke continues to summarize the ending of his Gospel account that included the forty days after His resurrection until the day He was taken up into heaven. These included the commandments to stay in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which Jesus had promised. Even though John baptized with water, they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

He had shown Himself to be alive after His passion "by many infallible proofs". He was seen of His disciples and He spoke to them about the kingdom of God for 40 days. All these appearances, His eating with them, and His meeting and speaking with them on various occasions were indisputable proof of His resurrection. There was absolutely no chance that they could have been fooled for such a long period of time, and that so many could be included in such a ruse. There are 13 recorded appearances of Christ to His disciples after His resurrection. That He continued the teaching as He had before also shows that it was the same Person who addressed them: the same purposes, and focusing on the future about the spread, organization, and edification of His church.

Verse 4.

Having assembled them together, Jesus gives them direct instruction as to what they must do after He departs from them. He had previously told them about the promise of the Holy Spirit (another comforter). (John 14:6,26; 15:26; 16:7-13.)

Verse 5.

From Matthew 3:11, and John 1:33, John was characterized by baptizing with water, but the Messiah was to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. This was to take place "not many days hence", on the day of Pentecost.

Verse 6.

At the Mount of Olives, the disciples again questioned Jesus about the common understanding of the Jews concerning the Messiah as conqueror over the foreign oppressor. His death had, at least temporarily, destroyed those hopes. His resurrection had brought these hopes back. This was in spite of Jesus continually teaching the true nature of His mission as the Suffering Servant.

Now, He had shown power even over death, as well as all adversaries. Would He now restore the kingdom? They took it for granted that He could, and that this was part of Biblical prophecy. Jesus answers their specific question - "wilt thou at this time...?" They had in mind a restoration to the former glory, as in the reign of David and Solomon, with the Messiah ruling over all nations.

Verse 7.

Jesus does not discount their question about what He would do - only and directly about the time. The rule was that it is not given for man to know the time of the major events in God's plans. In Matthew 24:3, Jesus says that they were not to know the day or hour, the times or seasons. They were held by the power and authority from the Father only. He will bring them to pass at the time He keeps in His own knowledge. Not even the Son knows the day or the hour. As such, no one can speculate or set dates as to their fulfillment. This does not, unfortunately, stop people from doing so, from the 1st century to the 21st. They are to come as a thief in the night, unexpectedly. This prevents man from focusing on some future event, rather than the necessities of the present. This remains as true as the knowledge of the time of our own death. The possibility of its imminence makes every day of the greatest importance to be about the Lord's work.

Verse 8.

This was what the disciples would be blessed with: "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you." This was the promise of the Guide and Comforter. The power was that of the indwelling Spirit to speak through them with great effect, and to endure great trials and tribulations. They were to be focused on their role, not on temporal things (such as the kingdom of Israel). Their roles were to be witnesses unto Christ, both in Jerusalem, all Judea, in Samaria, to the uttermost part of the earth.

They had been with Jesus over three years. They had seen His way of living, healing, giving, teaching, reaching out to so many others. They had heard the message of the kingdom of God. They had seen Him after the resurrection, and were now about to see Him ascend to heaven. They were well-qualified as witnesses. They knew and experienced the truth of Christ, and so consistently spread their impartial and genuine experience – without doubt or misgivings. No one could convince them they had been deceived or fooled. They had no other motive than sharing the truth they knew.

The beginning was in Jerusalem, at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came with power. Most of the disciples stayed in Jerusalem until the persecution that began with the death of Stephen (Acts 8:1,4). The apostles stayed until James was put to death by Herod.

This was in about 8 years. During this time, Paul had been called as apostle to the Gentiles. Peter had shared the Gospel with Cornelius. Philip had preached to the Ethiopian Eunuch.

Judea was the southern part of the Holy Land and was reached from the capital at Jerusalem. The middle part of Israel was Samaria. This was only the beginning. As previously directed, they were to go to all nations with the Gospel. This directive continues to this day and remains part of the responsibility of the church.

Lesson II

The Acts of the Apostles 1:9-26.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 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.

12 ¶ Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Ol'ivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Al'pheus, and Simon Zelo'tes, and Judas the brother of James.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15 ¶ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about a hundred and twenty,)

16 Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called, in their proper tongue, Acel'dama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His bishopric let another take.

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthi'as.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthi'as; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Verse 9.

Though they did not see Christ rise from the dead, it is affirmed here that they were looking at the risen Christ. Also here they were watching Him at this time when, in normal day, they were talking to Him, and He was taken up out of their sight. This was unmistakably a work of God. This was affirmation of the truth of Christ's finished work.

It also affirmed where Jesus was going. This redirected their thoughts from earthly things to the truth of God's plan for Jesus and for them. This made certain that the nature of the kingdom Jesus came to inaugurate. It was not an earthly kingdom. Therefore, Jesus

finished the work the Father had given Him to do on earth, and now He was received back to the glory He had with the Father before the world was.

It was also proper and necessary for the new ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, as a man, could only be in one place at one time. The Holy Spirit could work in all places toward all men. Jesus' new work was intercession for the saints and their ministries. This was the work of an advocate. This followed the work of atonement of the High Priest who presented the blood of sacrifice of the mercy-seat, as priest representing the people. This Christ did in the Heavenly Temple as our High-Priest once and for all, offering His blood as the perfect and final Atonement for our salvation. Christ continues in God's presence interceding for us, continuing to secure the mercy of God towards us, for our best welfare. He appears in the presence of God for us (Hebrews 9:24), presenting the value of His spilt blood. All worlds were made subject to Him for the spread and welfare of His church.

Verse 10.

While they looked steadfastly toward heaven, a cloud received Him. Therefrom He was hidden from their view. It is said that He would in like manner return "in the clouds". They had just asked if He would restore the kingdom at that time. Now with disappointment and amazement and curiosity they gaze upon the ascension.

At the same time, two men appeared. From what they wore, and the nature of their message, they must have been angels. They were sent to give comfort. They took on human form, as did the two who were present at the tomb, after the Resurrection. Clothed in white symbolized purity and was the commonly mentioned apparel of angelic beings. (Revelation 3:4.)

Verse 11.

Their message: they greeted the disciples in general as "Ye men of Galilee", the place of most of their origin. They question why they are still looking up into heaven. He was not going to restore the kingdom. He was not going to return in a few moments. He had foretold this return to heaven, to the Father. They had a mission and a message to carry out.

"This same Jesus" would return from heaven (the immediate presence of God), from the right hand of God, in power, honor, and righteousness. This would be at the time of judgment (John 14:3). He will return in clouds "in like manner" as the left. His role as Mediator will have been completed. The Church will have been saved. It will be according to God's plan that He triumph over the wicked.

Verse 12.

The particular part of the mountain where they were was the eastern side, near the small village of Bethany. The distance was within the 2,000 paces or cubits – not quite one mile. This had been set by the Jewish leaders, not the law of Moses. This had come from the camp of the Israelites. No part was more than 2,000 paces from the tabernacle.

Verse 13.

They arrived in Jerusalem, and went into an upper room. This had apparently been set aside for their assembly – the first chosen apostles named here: Peter, James, and John, Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, James, son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, the other Judas, brother of James.

Verse 14.

They persevered with their constant attention, praying for each other and the ministry of the word. This was done with "one accord", one mind. Their focus was the same, their

desire to approach the throne of grace, seeking God's guidance and blessing for themselves and each other. Also mentioned are the women. These included those recorded by Luke 8:2,3; 23:49,55; 24:10; Matthew 27:55 – Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Jesus, the wife of Zebedee, Joanna, Chuzas' wife, and Susanna.

Others were not mentioned by name; sons of the relatives of apostles or of Jesus. At least one was with him in His travels (I Corinthians 4:5). Jesus' mother is particularly mentioned. She has been entrusted into John's care (John 19:2,27). This was her last mention in Scripture. Also Christ's half-brothers had become believers at some point; James mentioned first believing after the resurrection.

Verse 15.

On one of the days between the Ascension and the day of Pentecost Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (about 12) and brought up a necessary business of the church. This matter was so important as to be brought before the entire congregation of the assembled believers, the first such call to make a decision.

Verse 16.

"Men and brethren" was a customary form of address, especially towards those one respects and has affection for. Peter then refers to Psalms 41:9 as applied to Judas by Jesus in John 13:18, then to Psalms 69 (referred to in verse 20 – must needs be fulfilled). It is stressed that the Holy Spirit inspired David about Judas who guided the soldiers and Jewish leaders to Jesus.

Verse 17.

This same Judas, numbered as one of the 12, chosen as an apostle by Jesus (Luke 6:13-16). His character was known to Jesus when He chose him. He was made treasurer, party to the most intimate contact with Jesus. Judas did not have any accusation against Jesus – neither with His moral character, nor Jesus' lack of political aspiration against Rome. It was, then, his desire to handle the money as treasurer that made Judas a traitor. This forced him to experience remorse to the point of suicide. He realized that Jesus was completely innocent of all of the charges brought against Him.

Verse 18.

The 30 pieces of silver Judas had been given to betray Jesus, he returned to the Temple and threw the money down, rejecting the blood money. The chief priest used the returned bribe money to buy a potter's field (used to get clay) for burial for the poor. It is called "the reward of iniquity." The picture describes Judas as hanging himself, the rope breaking, then falling "headlong", or head first, as if he threw himself from a rock. The result was that he burst asunder – his bowels gushing out.

Verse 19.

The action of the priests in the purchasing the field from the returned blood money became known. The field was renamed the field of blood as a reminder of Judas' act of betrayal. The Syro-Chaldaic word "Alceldama" meant literally "the field of blood".

Verse 20.

Peter then quotes Psalm 69: though general and plural in the original, referring to Israel's enemies, he interprets it as referring to Judas. His death left his home desolate, with no one to ever inhabit it. This is the judgment against Jesus' betrayer.

The next part comes from Psalms 109:8 - "Let his days be few, and let another take his office." Judas was unworthy of his office, and by his death, left his place empty. The word translated "bishopric" does not affirm any particular office in the "church" that Judas held.

Verses 21,22.

To take Judas' place, one must be a witness to the life and works of Jesus, beginning with the baptism of John. This was the foremost qualification. He must be from the 70 disciples. "Went in and out" describes constant companionship. This was from Jesus' baptism by John until the time He was taken up into heaven. This person must be ordained as equally qualified as Judas had been. Ordained means to be set apart to the sacred position, traditionally by the laying on of hands. The main point here is that he be a witness of Christ's ministry and resurrection.

Verse 23.

Two men were set apart as candidates – most likely the oldest and most righteous in character. These two were about equal in these qualifications. One was "Joseph called Barsabas", son of Sabas, whose surname was Justus, so-called as indicative of his integrity. The other was Matthias. Nothing additional is recorded about this man.

Verse 24.

There was not general agreement, so they followed the Godly method, seeking an answer by prayer. They acknowledged God as the only One Who knows the hearts of all men, also Jesus (John 2:25; 6:64; 16:19). The regular use of the term "Lord" was used by the disciples in calling upon the risen Savior (Luke 24:52). They ask Him to show which of these two He has chosen as the best.

Verse 25.

He will be taking the part, ministry, and apostleship from which Judas, by transgression, fell. He was to go to his own place. This must refer to the result of this act of betrayal and suicide: landing him in Hades, to await final judgment unto condemnation.

Verse 26.

The casting of lots to decide a matter of great importance was traditional among the Jews. (I Chronicles 24:5; Numbers 26:55; Joshua 15,16,17.) Proverbs 16:33 - "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." The result of the lot showed that Matthias was reckoned as the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle. This is the last mention of him in the New Testament. There was no succession from the apostles, the office ceasing when they died. Only Paul was designated Apostle to the Gentiles, as the others were to the Jews. All were witnesses to the risen Christ.

The common way was to place the names on pieces of stone or wood, and put them into an urn. Also, other pieces naming the office were included, then others that were blank. The names were drawn at random to determine the outcome. The assumption was that God would direct the outcome according to His will. Thus the lot fell upon Matthias and his name replaced that of Judas Iscariot with the other 11 apostles.

This was the end and the only time that one was appointed to the apostolic office. Their role was unique and not to be repeated or carried on in the church. The only exception was the apostle Paul, by special commission as apostle to the Gentiles. The others were apostles to the Jews, as witnesses to His resurrection. All that came after were ministers of the words of the

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apostles. They were to establish, organize, teach, and govern the churches until Jesus returns to gather His church at the Rapture.

End of Chapter I. Next is Pentecost and Peter's Sermon.

Lesson III

The Acts of the Apostles 2:1-21.

- 1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
- 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.
- 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- 5 ¶ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.
- 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.
- 7 And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?
- 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?
- 9 Par'thi-ans, and Medes, and E'lamites, and the dwellers in Mesopota'mi-a, and in Judea, and Cappado'cia, in Pontus, and Asia,
- 10 Phryg'i-a, and Pamphyl'i-a, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyre'ne, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,
- 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.
- 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?
- 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.
- 14 ¶ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:
- 15 for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.
- 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
- 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:
- 18 and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:
- 19 and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:
- 20 the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:
- 21 and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Verse 1.

This refers to the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the Passover, also called the feast of weeks (Exodus 34:22; Numbers 28:26; Deuteronomy 16:10). It was also a harvest festival. Two loaves of new meal were offered as first-fruits (Leviticus 23:17,20; Numbers 28:27-31). The day arrived. This explains the presence of the amount of strangers and foreigners in Jerusalem. Also, this would be the perfect time for the Holy Spirit to empower the preaching of the Gospel to this assembled multitude in the very city of the crucifixion and resurrection. Those that respond in faith will carry the Gospel message to their home regions.

It is assumed that the number included the 120 mentioned in Acts 1:15. They were in one accord in the same location. There is no detail as to the exact place or even day of the week this took place, nor is it necessary.

Verse 2.

What then happened was sudden and dramatic in its coming. This was a striking and memorable experience. A sound seemed to rush down from heaven. The suddenness and direction and intensity filled the house completely where they all were. The sudden sound was like that of a violent storm, invisible but with great force, representing the working of the Holy Spirit. The sound and the effects would accomplish God's mighty work among them. The sound filled the house. It must be noted that the sound was 'like' a rushing mighty wind, without the presence of the wind itself. This was no natural storm.

It has been suggested that the number involved indicates that it must have happened in the larger courtyard of a private house, rather than in a room, though it may have begun there. Then they saw what appeared as flames of fire, resembling tongues, on top of their heads. This designates anything narrowing to a point. Here describing the appearance of the flame, first irregularly, then each part, sat upon each one of them.

This was a direct and visible emblem of the promised descent of the Holy Spirit. This made it unique and unquestionably a special work of God, especially that of fire that did not consume. This was the baptism by fire predicted by The Baptist. It was also emblematic of the diversity of languages that were to be spoken and understood.

Verse 4.

They were all filled with the Spirit, under His sacred influence and supernatural power. They began to speak with other tongues (languages). This was given by the power of the Spirit, not languages these Galileans would be familiar with or even recognize. This was predicted in Isaiah 28:11 and applied in Corinthians 14:21. Jesus predicted in Mark 16:17 "...they shall speak with new tongues." This existed for some time in the early church: I Corinthians 12:10,11 - "divers tongues and interpretation of tongues." This was apparently to others besides the apostles. This was the empowering to reach all nations. This was necessary in the beginning. In modern times there are still languages that the Gospel has not been translated into, and missionaries have spent extensive periods of time learning new languages.

Miracles were used early on to be a powerful means of spreading the Gospel. However, this was a miracle to the heathen, that was a great contrast with the otherwise necessary time to learn a foreign tongue. The Gospel was preached in Arabia, Greece, Syria, Asia, Persia, Africa, Rome, each having their own unique languages.

It has been suggested that many wealthy Jews from foreign lands had residences in Jerusalem, to be able to often observe ceremonies at the Temple. They are described as 'devout'. They were careful to observe God's commandments in religious observations, especially in prayer. Also, they were sincere and solemn. There were Jews at that time who were scattered into almost all nations. Those financially able would choose to be present whenever possible, to participate in the great festivals in Jerusalem, though there were synagogues in most countries. According to contemporary records, there were about 3 million people in Jerusalem when Titus besieged the city, near the time of Passover.

Those that had come together were confounded or confused. They could not understand or explain this occurrence. That Galileans spoke in languages they had not learned in various foreign lands was a complete surprise. This was noised abroad as a remarkable work: how was this possible? Most of those in the audience accepted this as a mighty display of the power of God.

That they were Galileans was observed as remarkable because those from this region were considered 'country': unschooled, without proper customs and manners. Their dialect was considered simple and corrupt. For them to speak correctly in languages of other nations was a great surprise. This pointed to it in such a striking manner that this must be a work of God. This is often God's manner of working to use those without education, talent, position, power, or pride.

Verse 8.

They hear their native language (from where they were born).

Verse 9.

The different nations (and therefore languages) are recorded. The list begins on the east and continues to the west. Parthia was a part of Persia, to the northeast of Media, separated from the Roman Empire by the Euphrates as its western boundary. Their language was Persian. The Medes lived west and south of the Caspian Sea. Persia was to the south, Armenia to the west, about the size of Spain. They were often connected with the Persians.

Elamites descended from Elam, the son of Shem. Chedorlaomar was the chief king (Genesis 14:4). Shushan was the most known city. Persia was east; Media was north and the Persian Gulf was south. They were known as war-like and excelled with the bow. It was between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, in Hebrew Aram, now Syria. This was also Ur of the Chaldees, birthplace of Abraham (Genesis 11:27,28). The next, Mesopotamia, between the two rivers, with Babylon to the south. Armenia on the north, Syria on the west, Persia on the east. Syrian would have been the language.

In Judea, simply part of the enumerating of the extent of the languages. Cappadocia, a region in Asia Minor – west of the Euphrates and Armenia, and to the north, Pontus. To the west was Phrygia and Galatia. South was Mount Taurus, then Cilicia and Syria. The particular language of this region is not known. Probably a mixed dialect, Greek and Syriac. It was known as an eminently wicked place.

Pontus, another province of Asia Minor, north of Cappadocia. Peter addressed his letter to this place. This was the birthplace of Aquila, companion of Paul (Acts 18:2).

Asia refers to areas west of the above, not individually named: Mysia: Aeolis, Ionia, Caria, and Lydia. Ephesus was the capital of this region, frequently called "Ionia".

Phrygia and Pamphylia, also in Asia Minor. Pamphylia on the Mediterranean; Phrygia bordered on Galatia, Cappadocia, and Pisidia. Their language would have been pure Greek, as colonies of the Greeks.

In Egypt, the language there was Coptic. A vast number of Jews lived there, so a good number would be present in Jerusalem at the great feasts. The Septuagint, the first translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek was done there. Libya was the general name for the rest of Africa. It here refers to the region nearest Egypt. Cyrene, about 500 miles west of Alexandria, Egypt. It is now known as Tripoli. It was Simon from this region who was compelled to bear Jesus' cross to Calvary (Matthew 27:32). No language name is known.

How many Romans were dwelling in Jerusalem, whether permanently or temporarily is not known. Latin was their language. A great many Jews then lived in Rome. Josephus writes that there were 8 synagogues there.

There were also Jews, native born, and proselytes, or those converted to the Jewish religion from the Gentiles. This was a unique characteristic of the Pharisees mentioned by Jesus (Matthew 23:15). Crete, island in the Mediterranean, 200 miles long, 50 wide, about 500 miles south of Constantinople (now Istanbul), west of Syria (about 50 miles). Greek was most likely spoken here.

Arabians in the peninsula between the Red Sea on the west and the Indian Ocean on the south of the Persian Gulf and Euphrates on the east. The language spoken there was Arabic.

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