

ACTS

Chapter 1

The promise of the Holy Spirit

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 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. 4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The author of Acts is Luke. While we might think of him as the research scholar of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and the traveling companion of the apostle Paul, we can see him also as an evangelist, a preacher, a proclaimer of the Gospel. Our text is in the second account (*logos*) written to Theophilus by Luke. In the opening sentence (Acts 1:1–5), Luke invites the reader to remember the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ as it is given in the first account, and he introduces the content of this account: the work of the kingdom, as the apostles carried on the task Christ had given them to do (Lk 24:44–49). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

1:1-5 “All that Jesus began to do and to teach” (present infinitives). Luke here reminds us that the teachings and works of Jesus, as recorded in his gospel account, are still being carried on by Jesus’ disciples. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised, would now come and would bring them to understand the tie between the Old Testament promises, the fulfillment in Jesus, and the meaning it all had for their future ministry. His words, brought home by the Holy Spirit, work that understanding (see Lk 24:25–32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Jesus used those 40 days following his resurrection to reinforce the truth and purpose of his death, that they might be sure that he was indeed risen from the dead. Why this proof? They had seen him die! While we do not use Ascension Day as another time to preach a Good Friday sermon, his resurrection proves his death for sin; his ascension is another proof of the plan of salvation completed, the Father’s reconciliation of the world to himself through his Son, and the assurance that we have a message to proclaim! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

“Baptized with the Holy Spirit” is a clear reference to Pentecost. We should encourage our hearers to be present then to hear his word and to be filled with this Holy Spirit, as they are filled with hope by the reminders of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Why the teaching “about the things of the kingdom of God”? The need for clarification is shown in the next part of the text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

1:1 *my former book*. The Gospel of Luke. Acts was addressed to the same patron, Theophilus. (CSB)

Theophilus – Luke then politely addresses the man for whom his summarized investigations were primarily intended, namely, one Theophilus, probably a Roman, whom he calls honorable,

and who may therefore have occupied a high official position. This man had already received catechetical instruction (the first case in which such instruction is implied), but he had not made great advances in religious knowledge outside of the fundamentals, probably for lack of an authoritative textbook. (Kretzmann)

“All that Jesus began to do and to teach” is the content of the writer’s first book to Theophilus, the gospel of Luke. This second book will be a continuation of the work and teachings of Jesus—sometimes through his intervention directly, but more frequently through the power of the Holy Spirit working in Jesus’ apostles (v 2). The purpose of Luke’s writing, expressed in Lk 1:4, is equally pertinent for Acts: “so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught” (*katēchēthēs* is literally “you have been catechized”). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Theophilus was a relatively common name meaning “friend of God.” He likely was a Roman convert to Christianity, perhaps a government official. The vocative title Luke accords him in Lk 1:3, *kratiste*, “most excellent,” was sometimes used by authors to describe the patrons for whom they wrote. F. F. Bruce (*The Book of the Acts*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954] 32) cites a close parallel in Josephus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Recipient of Luke’s account. Possibly a patron who helped Luke produce and publish his Gospel. Because “Theophilus” means “friend of God,” some interpreters take this name as a symbolic reference to anyone who reads the Gospel in faith. (TLSB)

Luke and Acts form a two-part account, with Acts depicting the growth of the apostolic Church as a consequence of Christ’s life death and resurrection. (TLSB)

began to do and to teach. An apt summation of Luke’s Gospel, implying that Jesus’ work continues in Acts through his own personal interventions and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (CSB)

Despite Jesus’ ascension, He constantly exercises active lordship over the Church as He works and speaks through His apostles. (TLSB)

1:2 taken up to heaven. The last scene of Luke’s Gospel (24:50–52) and the opening scene of this second volume (vv. 6–11). The ascension occurred 40 days after the resurrection (v. 3). (CSB)

The Father exalted, crowned, and enthroned the Son, giving Him as a man a full share in His own divine glory. (TLSB)

through the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ post-resurrection instruction of his apostles was carried on through the Holy Spirit, and succeeding statements make it clear that what the apostles were to accomplish was likewise to be done through the Spirit (vv. 4–5, 8; see Lk 24:49; Jn 20:22; see also Introduction to Judges: Theme and Theology). Luke characteristically stresses the Holy Spirit’s work and enabling power (e.g., v. 8; 2:4, 17; 4:8, 31; 5:3; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 8:16; 9:17, 31; 10:44; 13:2, 4; 15:28; 16:6; 19:2, 6). (CSB)

The Holy Spirit conceived Jesus’ human nature in Mary’s womb, descended on Jesus at His Baptism, and worked with Jesus in His ministry. Mentioned 57 times in Acts, the Holy Spirit, with the exalted Christ, exercises ongoing lordship over the Church. (TLSB)

The phrase “through the Holy Spirit” is the theological keynote of Acts. At Baptism, Jesus had been anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38), then was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom 1:4). To empower the apostles to carry out their mission—the continuation of Jesus’ mission—he had promised them the Spirit (Lk 24:49). Throughout Acts, “Luke makes it plain that it is by the power of that same Spirit that all the apostolic acts which he goes on to narrate are performed, so much so that some have suggested, as a theologically more accurate title for his second volume, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*” (Bruce, p. 33). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

1:3 *many convincing proofs*. See the resurrection appearances (Mt 28:1–20; Lk 24:1–53; Jn 20:1–29; 1Co 15:3–8). (CSB)

The resurrection’s compelling evidence moved the apostles to believe this startling truth; Christianity rests on a bedrock of hard fact. (TLSB)

Luke’s concern for evidence accords with his overall intention of providing assurance to his reader (Luke 1:4). Note his emphasis on physical evidence in Luke 3:22 (the baptism) and 24:38–40 (the resurrection). (Sacra)

A token as a defining fact. Criterion of certainty. (Strong)

His appearances were firmly accredited as real, says Luke, using a word not elsewhere found in the New Testament denoting valid proof. Thirteen in number, in various circumstances, to different kinds of witnesses and with amply sufficient tests of reality. (PC)

Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:6 that on one occasion more than 500 believers saw him alive. (PBC)

forty days – A term of 40 days appears often in Scripture as a complete period of time given to accomplish something (cf. Gen 7:12; Jonah 3:4). In this case, it is the time allotted to give final instructions to the disciples before the ascension. These 40 days contrast sharply with the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness (Lk 4:1–13). Then he was alone; now he appears repeatedly to his apostles. Then he spoke of the kingdom only after the 40 days were over (Lk 4:14–15); now he speaks of the kingdom during the 40 days. Moses was absent from his people as he stayed on the mountain 40 days (Deut 9:9–11) and then appeared to the people with God’s old covenant. Now one greater than Moses, Jesus, crucified on one mountain to establish the new covenant, and taken up into heaven on another mountain 40 days later, is with his apostles during those 40 days. Moreover, he will remain with them permanently through the Spirit. Jesus erases all doubt from their hearts and minds that he is indeed risen. The most complete record of the appearances referred to here is 1 Corinthians 15, although we know from the gospels that even that list is partial. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus used this time to instruct the disciples about the kingdom of God—the chief subject of much of his earlier teaching, particularly in his parables. Monographs have been devoted to this topic; a good resource is *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, by G. R. Beasley-Murray (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986). Despite this instruction by Jesus, the disciples’ question in v 6 would indicate that they had not fully grasped the kingdom concept, and were still thinking in earthly, nationalistic terms. The subsequent history of the church under the Spirit’s guidance, as recorded in Acts, would clarify it for them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

kingdom of God. The heart of Jesus' preaching (see notes on Mt 3:2; Lk 4:43). – Mt. 3:2 CSB note: The kingdom of heaven is the rule of God and is both a present reality and a future hope. The idea of God's kingdom is central to Jesus teaching and is mentioned 50 times in Matthew alone. – Luke 4:43 CSB note: It occurs over 30 times in Luke. Some of its different meanings in the Bible are: the eternal kingship of God; the presence of the kingdom in the person of Jesus, the King; the approaching spiritual form of the kingdom; the future kingdom. (CSB)

A subject which had deeply engaged their thoughts (Luke 19:11), and on which it was most needful that they should now be fully instructed, that they might teach others (Acts 20:25) The main work of Christ's servants is witnessing, not theorizing, not building up ecclesiastical structures, but showing forth the great facts. (PC)

1:4 eating – Table fellowship simply means the eating of a meal together and the fellowship among the participants that such a meal entailed in ancient Near Eastern culture. Throughout the various peoples and cultures in ancient Near East, table fellowship signified a high level of friendship and unity. To invite a guest to a meal was a universally understood act of hospitality. In the East, even today, to invite a man to a meal was an honor. It was an offer of peace, trust, brotherhood, and forgiveness; in short, sharing a table meant sharing life. . (Concordia Commentary – Luke p. 231ff.)

In Judaism in particular, table-fellowship means fellowship before God, for the eating of broken bread by everyone who shares in a meal brings out the fact that they all have a share in the blessing which the master of the house had spoken over the unbroken bread. Thus Jesus' meals with the publicans and sinners, too, are not only events on a social level, not only an expression of his unusual humanity and social generosity and his sympathy with those who were despised, but had an even deeper significance. They were an expression of the mission and message of Jesus (Mk. 2:17), eschatological means, anticipatory celebrations of the feasts in the end-time (Lk. 13:28f; Mt. 8:11-12), in which the community of the saints is already being represented (Mk. 2:19). The inclusion of sinners in the community of salvation, achieved in table-fellowship, is the most meaningful expression of the message of the redeeming love of God. . (Concordia Commentary – Luke p. 231ff.)

Table fellowship was an integral part of Jesus' ministry. He frequently used the occasion of a meal to create fellowship with people. Jesus' table fellowship may be defined as the gracious presence of Jesus at table, where he teaches about the kingdom of God and shares a meal in an atmosphere of acceptance, friendship, and peace. His usual table fellowship practice combined those three ingredients; his presence, his teaching, and his eating. (Concordia Commentary – Luke p. 231ff.)

The meaning of *sunalizō* (NW: "he was eating with them") is disputed, but most likely it relates to *halas*, "salt" (the word in Mt 5:13, for example) in which case it would literally mean "together partake of salt." The gospels record instances of Jesus eating with the disciples as proof of his bodily resurrection (Lk 24:30, 43; Jn 21:13), saying, "a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have" (Lk 24:39). The table fellowship of Jesus with his disciples would continue after his ascension in the Supper he instituted. As in the gospels, meals are chosen by Jesus as the setting for instruction and teaching. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

It must have been tempting for the apostles to flee back to their various home towns. To have done so would be like a child running away from home the day before Christmas. The gift that Jesus promised—the Holy Spirit (v 5) had not yet been given. Should they depart now, they

would not have the means to fulfill their mission. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

not depart from Jerusalem – It was necessary, according to the prophecy, Micah 4:2; Isaiah 2:3, that the gospel should go forth from Jerusalem. (PC)

The New Testament Church, founded in Jerusalem, becomes the center from which then the Gospel is spread into all the world. So also the statement “coming of the nations to Zion and Jerusalem,” must not be taken literally, but must be understood figuratively, namely, that in spirit they come into the church. The heathen people all remain in their respective lands, but from Zion and Jerusalem, i.e., the New Testament Church, is brought to them the Gospel. (Micah – Stoeckhardt)

The Torah, the Law of the New Covenant, is meant. It goes out into heathen lands. It goes out from Zion, from Jerusalem. (Isaiah – Stoeckhardt)

The phrases Mt. Zion, the mountain of the Lord’s house, the mountain of the Lord, the house of the God of Jacob, Zion, and Jerusalem all refer to the same thing or nearly the same thing – the place where God meets His people. It is still ongoing (2 Peter 3:9). (Isaiah – Lighthouse)

but wait – The cross reference is Psalm 27:14. The word “wait” is repeated to impress the faint hearted or slow to learn. Faith encouraging faith (see also 42:5,11; 43:5; 62:5). (CSB)

This is the proper attitude of the faithful in both testaments; cf. Ps. 27:14. (TLSB)

Promise attends all obedience; and perhaps the highest blessings belong to the patient attitude of the soul, the unhaste of perfect confidence in God. (PC)

There are times when the hardest thing in the world is to do nothing, yet there are times when that is the only thing to do. Life is a composition of activity and passivity. We have become experts in activity and are only novices in passivity. Yet in religion there is a primary place for passivity. It is the mood in which the soul is receptive to power from the outside, responsive to intimations from above. A man who waits upon God is like a man waiting for the sun, expectant, ready to obey his bidding. (IB)

the gift my Father promised. The Holy Spirit (see Jn 14:26; 15:26–27; 16:12–13). (CSB)

Cyril of Jerusalem: “After His resurrection He breathed on the. (John 20:22) But though He bestowed His grace then, He was to lavish it yet more bountifully...Receive is in part now; then, you shall wear it in its fullness. For he who receives, often possesses the gift but in part; but he who is clothed, is completely enfolded by his robe” (NPNF2 7:127). (TLSB)

The “promise of my father” exactly repeats Luke 24:49 and refers to the Holy Spirit, which Luke understands as the fulfillment of the promise God made Abraham (Acts 3:25-26) (Sacra)

1:5 *John baptized with water.* See Lk 3:16. (CSB)

Just as John poured water onto people’s bodies, the Holy Spirit would be poured out lavishly on the apostles and all Christians. (TLSB)

John preached “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:3), and the apostles had received the forgiveness of sins in that baptism. What they were to receive in the future was the baptism with the Holy Spirit which would give them the power to do their apostolic work (Acts 1:8). (PBC)

The repeated references to Baptism in Holy Spirit in Acts indicate that it does not refer solely to Pentecost but relates to a process in which the Spirit progressively passes to new groups. (Tannehill)

in a few days. The day of Pentecost came ten days later, when the baptism with the Holy Spirit occurred (2:1–4). (CSB)

The litotes translated by NW “in a few days” is literally “not many after these days.” Pentecost, of course, turned out to be 10 days after his ascension. But just as Christ refused to give the exact times and dates of future events during his earlier earthly ministry, so now he continues to require his disciples to live in expectant faith, as also in v 7. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The Ascension

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

1:6-8 Now the disciples did not yet understand the meaning of the kingdom of God. The physical resurrection of their master must have encouraged them in their hope and expectation of a political kingdom here on earth. They “asked” *ērōtōn*, imperfect) him repeatedly if this was the time for them to receive the kingdom. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Jesus told his disciples that they were not to be concerned with the “times” (longer stretches) or “seasons” (shorter times); these things were “in the Father’s authority.” Thus they were his to set as he willed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

From that negative, Jesus now brings out the positive. “You will receive power . . . you will be my witnesses.” The disciples, freed from worrying about the things that were under the control (authority) of the Father, would be ready and able to carry out the task given them by their Lord. All of the great things these disciples had heard and seen needed to be made known to those who had not been there, or who had not understood them properly. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Jesus told his disciples to stay in Jerusalem. Perhaps they wanted to leave that place as soon as possible—to return to their homes, to leave the city that had so many reminders of his death and their weaknesses, or to escape from the many enemies of their Lord and his followers. But Jesus

instructed them to stay there; they were to wait for the fulfillment of another promise. Their work was to start in Jerusalem! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Power! They were still looking for power in the kingdom of power—this earth. Jesus promised them the power that would enable them to spread the Gospel—the report of the words and works of their Lord and Savior—in and to a world they knew was unfriendly to the message of “salvation by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith.” Today, the hearer and the preacher also need to be reminded that this power is ours through the constant and continuing presence and work of that same Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

1:6 *restore the kingdom to Israel?* Like their fellow countrymen, they were looking for the deliverance of the people of Israel from foreign domination and for the establishment of an earthly kingdom. The reference to the coming of the Spirit had caused them to wonder if the new age was about to dawn. (CSB)

“Restore,” *apokathistanō*, is the same word Dr. Luke uses in Lk 6:10, where Jesus tells the man, “Stretch out your hand. He did so, and his hand was completely restored.” Wouldn’t it be great if Jesus did that for the withered, divided, weak kingdom of David? Can we fault the apostles for such an earthly hope when they saw that the Son of David, the Heir to David’s throne, was risen? There are plenty of OT prophecies that would seem to justify such a hope (for example, Amos 9:11–15; cf. Mt 16:28; 24:34). Their question is not far from the modern “gospel” of prosperity and success, but people today have much less of an excuse for thinking of God’s kingdom in such terms, since we have the advantage of seeing just how God did advance his kingdom in the subsequent history of the church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

A popular hope among the Jewish people was that the Messiah would bring back the days of David and Solomon, when the kingdom of Israel was at its greatest. They hoped that Israel would not only be free from Roman domination but would also be a world power. Even the select group of apostles still needed instruction about Messiah’s purpose and the nature of God’s kingdom. (PBC)

1:7 *the times or dates.* The elapsing time or the character of coming events (see 1Th 5:1). (CSB)

Only the Father knows when His Son will return in glory. Speculation is out of place; confident hope is in. (TLSB)

It is interesting to notice that Jesus did not answer the question; he corrected it. He shifted the emphasis from speculation about the future to demonstration in the present. When times are hard, it is always a temptation to some people to dream about the future, and to project into the future all the things they long for. Jesus has a different mind. “Be witnesses for me,” he said. Begin now. Let the world see a demonstration of what the power of God can do when it works through the fellowship of those who trust in him.” He would say the same to us. Some people, when times are hard, take refuge in the past. (good old days) The disciples were doing just that. (IB)

The apostles were not to busy their minds with what they could not know. Rather, they were to be occupied with the great mission assignment that Jesus was giving them. (PBC)

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mt 24:36). Any preoccupation with determining “that day “ is time taken away from the

real task of the church, which is given in the next verse. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

1:8 will receive power – *dunamis*, *force*, specifically miraculous *power* ability, abundance, meaning, might, power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work. – Dynamite. – The spatial image of the Spirit “coming down on” corresponds to that of Jesus “going up into heaven.” (Sacra p. 26)

This is connected to Matthew 28:18-20. There Jesus notes that he has all authority *ezousia*. Ability to perform an action” to the extent that there are no hindrances in the way. The possibility granted by a higher norm or court, and therefore “the right to do something or the right over something.” It denotes the power which decides, so that it is particularly well adapted to express the invisible power of God whose Word is creative power. Especially in the community, the Word is indispensable to express the fact that we cannot take anything, but that it has been given to us. (Kittel – Volume 2, Pages 562 & 566).

The limitlessness of Jesus’ command in Matthew is matched here also by having no stopping point. A virtual outline of Acts: The apostles were to be witnesses in Jerusalem (chs. 1–7), Judea and Samaria (chs. 8–9) and the ends of the earth—including Caesarea, Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece and Rome (chs. 10–28). However, they were not to begin this staggering task until they had been equipped with the power of the Spirit (vv. 4–5).

The “power” (*dunamis*) Jesus speaks of is the power of the Gospel—the power of God to salvation, since it reveals the righteousness of/from God through faith (Rom 1:16–17). Subsequent speaking in tongues and healing miracles witnessed to the power, but were not the power itself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The power transformed the disciples into “witnesses,” *martures*. A witness is one with firsthand knowledge who testifies to the truth. It is no coincidence that *martyr* is the transliteration of the Greek word for “witness,” and that most of the apostolic witnesses died as martyrs. The apostles could and would testify to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, even to the point of being among those who “witnessed unto death.” This is no more than Jesus did for the apostles: “Christ Jesus, who while testifying [*martureō*] before Pontius Pilate made the good confession” (1 Tim 6:13). Can the disciple be above his Master? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit provides the superhuman strength that enables the Church to fulfill God’s commands. (TLSB)

my witnesses. An important theme throughout Acts (2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; 13:31; 22:15). (CSB)

Persecution helped push the witnesses beyond the city of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). It took further persecution for the witnesses to arrive in Rome, and perhaps India (Thomas) and Spain (Paul). The question for us is, Will it take fierce persecution to make us more bold, more world-oriented? Note that during this century the church grew stronger under severe persecution in Russia and China. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The Lord charges these and all His people to bear brave (and often costly) witness to what they have seen, heard, and touched (1 John 1:1-3; Psalm 145:4-13). Luther: ‘Bearing witness’ is nothing but God’s Word spoken by angels or men, and calls for faith” (AE 20:213). (TLSB)

Judea. The region in which Jerusalem was located. (CSB)

Samaria. The adjoining region to the north. (CSB)

Jerusalem...Judea...Samaria and to the end of the earth – The use of the phrase in Acts 1:8 should also be understood in light of Is. 49:6. The point of the phrase is to eliminate any stopping point before the whole world has been covered. These Galileans will not fulfill the mission to the end of the earth by themselves. In spite of the commission now being given them, they will not even be in the forefront of some of the new developments in the mission in its early stages. Others will begin the work in Samaria and Antioch (8:5; 11:20). Even Gentiles in or near the Jewish homeland are not evangelized or accepted without additional prodding from God and argument in the church (10:1-11:18). Nevertheless, these Galileans will fulfill their commission within certain limits, and others will step in to help. The mission does not develop according to a clear plan worked out by the apostles. There are unexpected twists and turns, and the necessary work will be done by unexpected agents. When Paul and Barnabas announce their mission “to the end of the earth” in 13:47, they are claiming the mission originally given to the Galileans in 1:8. There is no hint of Paul’s role in 1:8, but the fact that Paul later makes a major contribution to the fulfilling the mission authorized by Jesus is one of many indications of the importance of his work in God’s plan. (Tannehill)

The account of the Church’s mission is headed for Rome (chapters 27-28) and beyond. Luther: “The promise is to be found in all the prophets, namely that through the Seed of the woman the blessing will come upon all nations... the Holy Spirit is given through Christ to all who hear the Word of Christ and believe in Him” (AE 8:254). “Without any doubt God also knows and has determined for everyone the time and hour of his call and conversion. But this time has not been revealed to us. Therefore, we have the command always to keep proclaiming the Word, entrusting the time and hour (of conversion) to God (Acts 1:7)’ (FC SD XI 56). (TLSB)

We don’t live where we live or work by accident. That’s where Christ has placed us, so that through us He can reach those who don’t as yet know and love Him as we do. (LL)

1:9-11 “After he said this”—the Lord was done speaking. He was taken up “before their very eyes” as “they were looking intently.” Jesus ascended according to his human nature; the disciples watched him go. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

However, Jesus did not leave them there without specific directions. The two men in white garments, signifying holiness and heavenly presence, were angels, God’s heralds. Their message: this same Jesus will come again and you will recognize him when you see him. The disciples are strengthened at his ascension. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

1:9 *lifted up* – This being taken up and hidden from their sight made it clear that they must not expect him to establish a political kingdom with visible glory. It brought home to them that they must wait for the promised Spirit to empower them for their mission task. (PBC)

So long as Jesus was physically present, he was available only to those he directly encountered; by the Spirit he became powerfully present to many through his prophetic successors. (Sacra)

a cloud – OT symbol of God’s immediate, majestic presence (e.g., Ex. 16:10). Jesus takes His throne at the Father’s right hand. (TLSB)

Note on “right hand”...In Israelite thought, the right hand was the favored one. As such, it symbolized the place of privilege or strength. The chief court official was seated at the king’s right hand as a symbol of his power and authority. The term can describe God’s chosen servant. (TLSB)

1:10 *gazing into heaven* – We can hardly blame the disciples for straining to catch one more glimpse of Jesus. But the angels’ question sets up the promise. Why search for only a glimpse now, since the day is coming when you will see him as never before! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

two men dressed in white. A common description of angels. (CSB)

Angels appear here at the ascension as they had at the annunciation (Luke 1:26-27), Jesus’ birth (Luke 2:8-14), ministry (Mark 1:13; Luke 22:43), and resurrection (Matthew 28:2-7). As God’s messengers, they explain the significance of these events. (TLSB)

1:11 *Men of Galilee.* All the Twelve were from Galilee except Judas, and he was no longer present. (CSB)

in the same way. In the same resurrection body and in clouds and “great glory” (Mt 24:30). (CSB)

In the supernatural, divine way marked by the image of the cloud (v. 9). John of Damascus: “The Lord shall come out of heaven, just as the holy apostles beheld Him going into heaven, perfect God and perfect man, with glory and power, and will destroy the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, with the breath of His mouth” (NPNF2 9:99). (TLSB)

1:1–11 Jesus, truly risen in His body from the dead, reigns as unseen King over the here and now. He will return in full sight of all in the Father’s good time. Therefore, do not let the evil one lock Jesus in the past or reduce His ministry to you now. Boldly pray to Jesus, and acknowledge Him as your Lord. Your good standing today and your eternal tomorrow flow from Jesus’ victory over the grave and His enthronement at the Father’s right hand. • Lord, increase our faith in Jesus’ past, present, and future triumph, and make us bold witnesses to Him in every facet of our lives. Amen. (TLSB)

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. **13** And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. **14** All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. **15** In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, **16** “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. **17** For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this

ministry.” 18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “‘May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’; and “‘Let another take his office.’ 21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 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.” 23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

1:12-26 Luke intentionally writes two volumes. The first, the *Gospel of Luke*, focuses on the course of Jesus’ earthly life from his conception by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary until his assumption into heaven. The second volume, the *Acts of the Apostles*, focuses on the narrative of the Church beginning with the twelve apostles and the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost. However, Luke’s narrative of the Church is only a beginning and remains open ended. While the *Gospel of Luke* ends with Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem, the Book of *Acts* ends with Paul’s arrival in Rome, where he is left to preach and await his destiny (Acts 28). For Luke, the ministry of Christ continues in the apostles, and the apostolic ministry continues in the Church until Jesus’ second coming. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The transition from the ministry of Christ to the ministry of the apostles is located, for Luke, precisely in Jesus’ ascension. Luke includes this event in both his volumes; it brings his account of Christ’s Passion to perfection (Luke 24) and inaugurates his narrative of the Church (Acts 1). Thus, the Ascension is recorded in two different ways. In Luke’s Gospel, the Ascension is the fitting conclusion to Easter Sunday and the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is the High Priest who offers the benediction (Lk 24:50–53), perhaps the benediction Zechariah was unable to proclaim in Luke 1. However, in Acts, the Ascension is the conclusion of the apostles’ catechesis. Like Elisha in 2 Kings 2, Jesus is taken into heaven right before the apostles’ eyes. They receive a portion of his Spirit on Pentecost. Through the Spirit, the apostles’ ministry is the continuation of Jesus’ own work. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:12 returned – Responding to the angels’ prompting, the apostles return to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke 24:52). Remembering Jesus’ words that they were to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit, they made an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem their headquarters until that would happen, dividing their time between this room and the temple (Luke 24:53). Whenever they met together, one in heart and mind, they joined together in worship and prayer. (LL)

Mount called Olivet. The ascension occurred on the eastern slope of the mount between Jerusalem and Bethany (Lk 19:28–29, 37. (CSB)

Sabbath day’s journey. This distance was drawn from rabbinical reasoning based on several OT passages (Ex 16:29; Nu 35:5; Jos 3:4). A faithful Jew was to travel no farther on the Sabbath. (CSB)

Pious Jews were expected to stay within the permitted distance of 2,000 cubits (just over ½ mi) from home on the holy day (Ex 16:29; Nu 35:5; Jsh 3:4). (TLSB)

hodon. The theme of the road or the way is a prominent one in Luke's writing and ties his account together into one narrative. This theme is rooted in the Old Testament. Sin leaves Adam and Eve barred from "the way" that leads to the tree of life (Gen 3:22–24). The journey motif is essential to the narratives of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. *Exodus*, the title for the second book of the Pentateuch, literally means "the way of departure." "The way" is also an important catechetical theme (Psalm 1). In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is determined to journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51); this road to Jerusalem forms the substance of Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Lk 9:31). In Acts, "the Way" becomes the very name by which the Christian Church is known (Acts 9:2). Here in v 12, the return journey from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem is the first road walked by the apostles after Jesus' ascension. The apostolic Church journeys the intervening period between Jesus' ascension and his return (1:11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The Sabbath day's walk was set at 2000 paces, from one-half to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. The expression was thought to go back to the time when Israel was wandering through the desert. The distance was supposed to be reckoned from the farthest tent on the fringe of the camp to the place of worship at the center. The base of the Mount of Olives is 2000 paces from the city. (PBC)

1:13 room. Probably an upper room of a large house, such as the one where the Last Supper was held (Mk 14:15) or that of Mary, mother of Mark. (CSB)

Possibly the site of the Last Supper, though Luke uses a different word here than in his Gospel. (TLSB)

huperōion. Luke notes that the Church originates in the "upper room." This room appears to be the same room where Jesus had the disciples prepare the Passover feast (Lk 22:12). In Luke 22, this room is called a *kataluma*, or "guest room." *Kataluma* connects the room of the Passover feast with Jesus' birth narrative. In Luke 2, there is no *katalumati* for Jesus, so he is laid in a manger instead. Thus, it seems that the *kataluma* in which Jesus was destined to dwell is the upper room where he institutes the Sacrament of his Supper. This same room is the place in which the Church is given birth (Acts 2:1–2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

where they were staying – Luke is setting the scene for the replacement of Judas. At the same time Luke expands the group that gathered together each day. He adds the women, probably those at the crucifixion and the resurrection. The only name mentioned is Mary, Jesus' mother, who was in John's care. Without comment or explanation Jesus' brothers also are listed as part of the worshiping and praying group. Named as unbelievers by John (7:5), it is highly probable that the resurrection of Jesus brought them to faith so that now we find them here. (LL)

Bartholomew. Apparently John calls him Nathanael (see Jn 1:45–49; 21:2). (CSB)

James son of Alphaeus. The same as James the younger (Mk 15:40). (CSB)

Zealot. "the Zealot" is to say that he belonged to a sort of "freedom party" of political activists, people who were not only zealous in the Jewish religion but who also sought freedom from Roman rule. It is a mixed group of ordinary men with ordinary names. The Lord would accomplish extraordinary things through them. (PBC)

Judas son of James. Not Judas Iscariot, but the same as Thaddaeus (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18). (CSB)

1:14 *with one accord* – For a great many people religion is an occasional thing, something to enjoy on great festivals, something to rely on in time of danger. But real religion is more than an emergency measure. It is continual. It sets the pattern of man’s daily thought and practice. Like regular meals, it silently stocks the storehouses of his spirit with power. It works by the law of accumulated reserves. Tracks are laid, patterns formed, habits established. Like the continual presence of the masterworks of art, it cures the heart of second-rate satisfactions. It is hard for a man brought up on the music of Bach to be completely satisfied with the tunes of tin-pan alley. It is hard for a person raised in the company of Jesus to be satisfied with chiselers and compromisers. (IB)

Because the early Christians were close to Christ, the earliest Church had a natural unity that has since been tragically fractured. (TLSB)

homothumadon. This word, often translated with reference to being in harmony or in one accord, is a common expression describing the Church in Acts (2:46; 4:24; 8:6). The *thumos* root suggests the notion of desire or passion (7:57; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29). The Church shared one and the same desire or passion, that is, a desire for Christ and his presence. Similar language is used in Luke’s account of the Lord’s Supper (Lk 22:15). Jesus begins his celebration of the Passover by saying that he has desired with a great desire (*epithumiai epethumēsa*) to eat this Pasch with his disciples. While the devil inspires a passionate hatred toward Christ and his disciples, Jesus unites the Church in a passionate love for God and for one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

devoting themselves to prayer – With undivided attention, their hearts and minds were open to receive the promised Spirit. (TLSB)

with the women. Possibly wives of the apostles (cf. 1Co 9:5) and those listed as ministering to Jesus (Mt 27:55; Lk 8:2–3; 24:22). (CSB)

Mary the mother of Jesus. Last mentioned here in Scripture. (CSB)

brothers. These brothers would include James, who later became important in the church (12:17; 15:13; Gal 2:9). (CSB)

Listed in Mark 6:3; James and Jude were the most notable in the Early Church. See p 2134 in TLSB.

tois adelphois. The gathering in the upper room consists of the eleven apostles, the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. This gathering constitutes the origins of the Church and is described in terms of family relations (v 15; 15:7, 13). The reordering of the family of God is a significant theme in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 3:8; 8:19–21; 11:27–28; 12:49–53; 13:28–30; 14:25–26; 15:11–32; 19:9; 20:9–18). This gathering also recalls Luke’s account of the resurrection of Jesus (Lk 24:1–11), which mentions the eleven, the women, Mary, and all the rest. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:15-26 Luke describes the earliest church in the interim between the ascension and Pentecost. The visible physical presence of Jesus in the church is gone, and the Spirit has not yet been

poured out. The community is led by Peter. He has gained popularity among the “believers” (brothers), so named here for the first time in Acts. This designation became the standard nomenclature for the group. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:15 *in those days* – During the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost. (TLSB)

The purpose of this gathering was to discuss the appointment of a replacement for Judas. Luke makes a few interesting comments regarding the involvement of the body of Christians, the use of Scripture, and the use of prayer. The 11 disciples felt compelled to include the larger group of “brothers” to help in selecting a replacement. One hundred twenty persons were present. Perhaps the number is symbolic of 12 times 10 or simply an indication of the growth of the church. But it certainly indicates the involvement of members of the body of Christ, as well as their unity and togetherness (*epi to auto*), when decisions need to be made. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

ōsei hekatōn eikosi. Luke likes to use *ōsei* to change a literal number into a more theologically significant number. (In Lk 9:28, he uses it to place the transfiguration “about eight days” after the preceding events; both Matthew and Mark place the transfiguration “six days” after the events.) Here Luke approximates the number of those gathered to be 120 (12 × 10), which may connect the Church to the new Israel. Jesus had already made this connection for the apostles when he told them at his Supper that they would “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk 22:30). In Acts 1:6, Jesus answers the apostles’ question about the restoration of Israel with reference to the Church and the gift of the Spirit. The connection between the apostolic college and the twelve tribes of Israel may be a key in Peter’s call to restore the apostolic band to its proper number. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

en tais hēmerais tautais, “in [during] those days,” the period of time that followed the ascension. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Peter stood up – His words and the believers’ subsequent actions show that a major change has taken place in Jesus’ followers. Peter is now an interpreter of Scripture and of God’s purpose for the church. His insight into Scripture and God’s purpose will be demonstrated in his missionary speeches, but even before the mission begins he is presented as one who knows what “was necessary” now (1:16) and what Scripture indicates to be “necessary” now (1:20-22). Peter is taking over a major function of the departed Jesus. It might seem that there has been no preparation for this sudden shift in role, but that is not true. The language with which Peter begins his speech in 1:16 echoes the language that Jesus used when he was last presented as Scripture interpreter. (Tannehill)

In a suddenly widening circle of disciples, Peter strengthened his brothers (Luke 22:32) as Jesus had predicted (John 21:15-17). The location in vv. 15-26 may no longer be the upper room of v. 13, due to the number of people. A courtyard would better accommodate such a large group. (TLSB)

en mesōi tōn adelphōn, “in the midst of the brothers.” Peter arises to speak the Word, which gathers a community of believers around itself; thus, he who speaks the gathering Word is said to stand in the midst of those gathered by that Word. “Brothers” is used in a figurative sense of fellow members of the gathered community. NIV translates “believers,” which speaks to the relationship of each to the Lord, but lacks the note of mutual relationship and the role of the gathering Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

1:16 *brothers – edei plērōthēnai tēn grafēn.* *edei* is an indicative imperfect active of *dei*, indicating something that is compulsory, necessary, inevitable. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

the Scripture had to be fulfilled. For the Scripture referred to see. Both before and after Christ came, numerous psalms were viewed as Messianic. What happened in the psalmist's experience was typical of the experiences of the Messiah. No doubt Jesus' instruction in Luke 24:27, 45–47 included these Scriptures. (CSB)

All Scripture is God-breathed, with the Holy Spirit as its primary author. (TLSB)

edei plērōthēnai. This language recalls Jesus' instructions to the disciples before his ascension (Lk 24:44). *edei* is at the heart of Jesus' Passion statements and refers to his death and resurrection as a divine necessity. It is necessary because the heavenly Father has ordained it. In Lk 24:44–47, there are three things counted as a divine necessity. The Scriptures *must* be fulfilled, Christ *must* suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness *must* be preached to all nations. These three necessities become the substance of the apostolic sermons in Acts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

There is a divine necessity (*dei*) that Scripture must be fulfilled. However, God did not decree the betrayal; he merely foretold it. Judas fulfilled that prophecy of his own free will. This prophecy was through (*dia*) David as the instrument of divine inspiration. The Holy Spirit remained the speaker and the cause of inspiration. Interestingly, Scripture not only foretells events about Jesus, but also the fate of people other than Jesus (Ps 69:25)—in this case, Judas—as well as the action of the church (Ps 109:8) in replacing Judas. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

fulfillment of prophecies is dependent on human acquiescence. (Concordia Pulpit *plērōthēnai* is an aorist passive infinitive. The will of God that is set down in his Word must be fully accomplished. The NIV, “the Scripture had to be fulfilled,” should not be taken to mean that the Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The language with which Peter begins his speech in 1:16 echoes the language that Jesus used when he was last presented as Scripture interpreter: It was necessary that the Scripture be fulfilled” Luke 24:44. At that time Jesus “opened the mind “of his followers “to understand the Scriptures.” The disciples could not understand the scriptural necessity of Jesus' suffering prior to the revelation of the risen Messiah (Luke 18:31-34). Now they can, and this permits them to understand many things, including the defection of Judas, as part of God's way of working in a resistant world. In Luke 24:44-46 Jesus spoke of “all that is written...concerning me,” including his suffering. This could include the role of the betrayer, especially when the first of Peter's quotations in Acts 1:20 comes from Psalm 69, a psalm from which a number of references to Jesus' passion in the New Testament are drawn. Thus we are probably to infer that Peter is either reminding his audience of what Jesus had directly taught them from the Psalms (which are explicitly mentioned in Luke 24:44) or is following Jesus' lead in finding references to the events of the passion there. Faced with Satan's onslaught on the disciples during his arrest and death, Jesus asked Peter to “strengthen your brothers” following Peter's own recovery (Luke 22:32). Peter becomes the leader of the early church. What Peter does through his speech in Acts 1:16-22 may seem a rather small thing compared to the momentous events reported before and after. Nevertheless, it can be understood as an important step in strengthening the community in the faith that was shaken by Jesus' arrest and death. Reconstituting the twelve is an important step in

preparation for witness to Israel. This is an act of faith in Jesus and a first step in obedience to his new call. Peter's faith inspires the faith of others. (Tannehill)

Human eyes are blind to the reality of Jesus' presence even when he stands directly in sight, and ears are deaf to his words even when he speaks them audibly, unless Jesus himself heals the spiritual blindness and deafness (Luke 4:18-19). Eyes and minds must be opened and faith created by God in order to understand the mystery of the kerygma of his crucified and risen Son. Both salvation and its apprehension through faith are God's work. Jesus reverses the incomprehension and confusion exhibited by the disciples after his earlier passion predictions (Luke 9:44-45; 18:31-34). This illumination of darkened minds comes through Jesus' own radical Christological interpretation of the OT Scriptures. (Concordia Commentary – Luke)

The Holy Scriptures were of critical importance to Jesus, and the written Word of God is important for His people today too. (LL)

Holy Spirit spoke – hēn proeipen to pneuma to hagian dia stomatos dauid, “which the Holy Spirit put into the mouth of David” (author's translation). The will of God is neither unknown nor a matter of conjecture, for he has caused it to be spoken. Here the will and Word of God and his Spirit are tied together: his will is revealed in the Word put into man's mouth by the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

mouth of David Co-author with the Holy Spirit of the psalms quoted in v 20. As a prophet, David glimpsed the future fulfillment of his own calling in the life of Christ. (TLSB)

Judas – Our Lord regarded Judas's betrayal as the fulfillment of prophecy. (TLSB)

a guide – hodēgou. Peter describes Judas as a “guide” or a leader in the way for those wanting to arrest Jesus. This language is used in the LXX version of the Psalms for God's shepherding work (Ps 23:2; 25:5; 107:30); in Lk 6:39 referring to “blind guides” on the way of salvation; in Jn 16:13 of the Spirit guiding the Church into all truth; and in Acts 8:31, where the Ethiopian eunuch expresses his need for one to guide him in understanding the Scriptures. Thus, Peter seems to suggest Judas was an apostle in the kingdom of Satan, a kind of pastor for those seeking to kill Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:17 share - Usually rendered as “lot” and has two senses in the Bible: a plot of land, one's goodly heritage in the Promised Land, and means of determining God's will, carried out prayerfully and solemnly. (TLSB)

“For” (*hoti*), though normally translated in a causal sense, here refers to the point on which the prophecy rests. Judas was an apostle who was numbered with the 12 and obtained the rank (*elachen*, “obtained by lot”) of the apostolic ministry of Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

katerithmēmenos (perfect passive participle), “he had been counted, numbered.” *elachen ton klēron*, “he was allotted his portion.” It was not through his own decision or efforts that Judas came to be included among the Twelve, but rather he received it (*elachen* from *lanchanō*). Neither was it by mere chance or fate, though his selection is rightly called by lot (*klēros*). The NIV translation, “he was one of our number and shared in this ministry,” blunts the notion of supernatural selection found in the Greek text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

katērihmēmenos. Peter refers to Judas as one “numbered” among the apostles. This is a perfect passive participle, which recognizes the divine origins of his place in the apostolic office. God established Judas as an apostle by lot (*ton klēron*). This language may suggest that Peter sees the original number of apostles as a divinely ordained number that must now be restored. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

in this ministry – The description of apostleship as diakonia (ministry or service) is also noteworthy. The closest preceding occurrence of this noun or its related verb is in the Last Supper scene, as Jesus corrects the apostles’ rivalry over rank and instructs them in the special quality of their future leadership. The leader, Jesus says in Luke 22:26, must become “like one who serves.” Jesus is speaking of the servant who waits on the table, in contrast to the honored participants in a banquet. In Luke diakonia (service) and diakonew (serve) always refer to the work of preparing and serving food, work normally performed by those regarded as social inferiors, such as women and servants (see Luke 4:39; 8:3; 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; 22:26-27). /// In John 13 – foot washing – Jesus does what only non-Jewish slaves did. /// Yet at the Last Supper Jesus not only describes his own role in these terms but also makes such service a norm for the apostles. The repeated description of apostleship as “service” in Acts 1:17, 25 can remind us of this fact and may imply that the early church now recognizes that its leadership must conform to Jesus’ way of service. (Tannehill)

1:18-19 Luke digresses from Peter’s speech to give an account of Judas’s fate. (TLSB)

1:18 *reward* – Payment Judas received from the Council for betraying Christ. He bought a field indirectly, because the Council did this with the money Judas returned. (TLSB)

acquired a field. Judas bought the field indirectly: The money he returned to the priests (Mt 27:3) was used to purchase the potter’s field (Mt 27:7). (CSB)

misthou tēs adikias. The notion of divine reward for work done is prominent in Luke’s Gospel (Lk 6:23, 35; 10:7). Peter sees the “field of blood” as the “reward” for Judas’s service in the ministry of death. Thus, later in his prayer, Peter refers to Judas as one who “turned aside to go to his own place” (v 25). Judas’s dwelling place is also the subject of Psalm 69, quoted by Peter (v 20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Judas does not return the money as a sign of repentance, but goes to buy a farm with the payment for his wicked deed. This action stands in direct contrast to his “having a share in this ministry.” Rather than be one of those who “left their own things” and will “sell their farms” and “call nothing their own,” Judas separates from the group by his purchase of property for himself. We notice that like Ananias and Sapphira, who will later be described as doing the same thing, Judas is said to have been possessed by Satan (Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3), and to have “entered into a conspiracy” to get money (Luke 22:4-6; Acts 5:9). Spiritual disaffection is symbolized by physical acquisitiveness. (Sacra)

Most Bible versions report vv 18 and 19 in parentheses, indicating that it would seem unnecessary for Peter to include this information in his speech, since most people were aware of it already (see notes on v 19). Luke later adds this information for the benefit of future readers. This man named Judas did not personally purchase the piece of real estate. The money that he received for betraying the Son of God was returned to the temple. Subsequently, the chief priests decided to use it to purchase the field of blood (Mt 27:3–8) “as a burial place for foreigners.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

fell headlong. Mt 27:5 reports that Judas hanged himself. It appears that when the body finally fell, either because of decay or because someone cut it down, it was in a decomposed condition and so broke open in the middle. Another possibility is that “hanged” in Mt 27:5 means “impaled” and that the gruesome results of Judas’s suicide are described here. (CSB)

The rope Judas hanged himself with (Mt 27:5) likely broke, causing his already decaying corpse to fall and rupture. (TLSB)

1:19 Akeldama. An Aramaic term, no doubt adopted by people who knew the circumstances, for the field was purchased with Judas’s blood money (Mt 27:3–8). (CSB)

Luke simply reminds his readers that the whole city knew the story of the field of blood. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:20 it is written. Two passages of Scripture were put together to suggest that Judas had left a vacancy that had to be filled. (CSB)

Vicious attacks on King David were ultimately directed at God and gave a preview of the trouble in store for Christ, the greater David. (TLSB)

become desolate – The first quotation is based on Ps 69:25 (LXX; H. T. 68:26). *ērēmōmenē*, “be brought to ruin,” becomes *erēmos*, “abandoned, forsaken,” and *en tois skēnōmasin*, “in the dwellings,” is left out. In Peter’s quotation from Ps 109:8 (LXX; H. T. 108:8), *laboi*, a wish, becomes *labetō*, a command. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Peter uses the common formula for introducing an Old Testament Scripture: “it has been written” (*gegraptai*). In two passages (Ps 69:25; Ps 109:8) the psalmist indicates that a habitation (*epaulis* can also mean “homestead,” “cottage,” “cabin,” but here refers to an office) has become vacant and another person should take this “place of leadership.” Peter adapts this prophecy by equating the leadership position with an office in the church (*episkopēn*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

another take his office – The fact that the number of apostles must be twelve according to the original choosing of Jesus appears to have been taken for granted. That this was necessary in order to match the 12 patriarchs, the 12 tribes of Israel, and the 12 thrones awaiting them to judge these 12 tribes was undoubtedly also the basis for this decision. (LL)

episkopēn, “office.” The KJV, “bishoprick,” is based on the use of the masculine of this noun to designate the ecclesiastical leader, the liturgical president and overseer of the assembly, the bishop. Here the word is used to designate official leadership and responsibility. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Judge 12 tribes – This refers not to condemning old, unbelieving Israel, but to the responsibility of shepherding and oversight in the new Israel, the church. This is the Lukan equivalent to Jesus giving to Peter the keys of the kingdom in Matthew (16:19 and his bestowal of the office of the keys upon the disciples in John (20:22-23). The OT judges were saviors and deliverers who led the people of God to repentance and faith (e.g., Judges 2:10-23; the LXX uses the verb *krino* “to judge,” for their leadership [e.g., Judges 10:2-3]). So too the apostles and pastors in the apostolic ministry will “judge” in the following way:

The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacrament, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent. (Concordia Commentary – Luke)

1:21-22 Because Peter has offered biblical warrants regarding this election, it is necessary (*dei*) that one of the men (*andrōn*) should become one with them in their future travels. This successor should have at least two qualifications: (1) he must have been with Jesus and the disciples from Christ’s baptism to his ascension, and (2) he must have been witness to the resurrection, as were the other disciples. Peter determined the requirements, but the final choice was left to the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:21 men – Greek aner, “male,” “husband.” Christ chose only men for the apostolic ministry (Luke 6:13-16). He also treasured the service of women (Luke 8:2-3; 24:9; Acts 9:36). The early Christians maintained a clear division in the callings of men and women. (TLSB)

Note from Luke 8:2-3... Women followed Jesus, support the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. This is striking, because females did not normally follow Jewish rabbis. (TLSB)

Note from Luke 24:9... Some modern interpreters emphasize that since God chose to have women first bear witness to the resurrection, this means God specially ordained the for service in the Church. This argument fails on two counts: the angels were actually the first to bear witness to His mighty acts (cf. Psalm 145), even children (Psalm 8:2). The “go-and tell” passages in the Gospels are not about ordaining or commissioning people to offices in the Church, but about people acting as couriers or witnesses (e.g., Matthew 11:4; 18:15; Mark 5:19; Luke 7:22; 13:32). (TLSB)

Note from Acts 9:36... Tabitha’s example shows that as believers grow in faith in Christ, they bear the fruit of faith, imitating Christ. Cf. Matthew 25:31-40; Acts 2:44-45; 1 Timothy 5:3-16. (TLSB)

accompanied us. Ministered publicly. (CSB)

He was a witness to the whole public activity of Christ, up to the resurrection. “in and out” is a Hebrew idiom encompassing everything Jesus did (cf. Dt. 28:6). (TLSB)

sunelthontōn is an aorist active participle, used here of those who lived and traveled with the Lord through his public ministry until after his resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

1:22 *with us a witness to his resurrection.* Apparently several met this requirement. On this occasion, however, the believers were selecting someone to become an official witness to the resurrection—thus, a 12th apostle (v. 25). (CSB)

martura tēs anastaseōs. The qualifications for the apostolic office are clearly described. The man must be a witness to the narrative of Jesus’ life with special emphasis on his resurrection from the dead. This language refers to Jesus’ own words. In Lk 24:44–48, Jesus speaks of the divine necessity that governs the fulfillment of the Scriptures, his own Passion, and the preaching of

repentance and forgiveness in his name. In Lk 24:48, Jesus concludes by calling the apostles “witnesses of these things.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:23 Barsabbas. Means “son of (the) Sabbath.” This patronymic was used for two early Jewish Christians, possibly brothers. One was Joseph (here); the other was Judas, a prophet in Jerusalem who was sent to Antioch with Silas (15:22, 32). (CSB)

Justus. Joseph’s Hellenistic name. Nothing more is known of him. (CSB)

Hebrew, Aram, and Latin names. Considerable detail concerning someone not chosen or not mentioned again. He was likely well known in the Early Church. (TLSB)

Matthias – Short form of Mattathias, a name famous as a result of the war to liberate Israel from the tyranny of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (cf. 1 Macc. 2:1). (TLSB)

There were only two nominees who could fulfill the requirements: Joseph, called Barsabbas, and Matthias. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:24-25 The apostles hold together despite Judas’s defection; they remain intact even after the martyrdom of James the Great (cf. 12:2). (TLSB)

1:24 *you have chosen* – Apostles are chosen directly by Christ Himself. He appoints overseers and elders indirectly through the mutual consent of clergy and people (cf. 20:17, 28). (TLSB)

Luke emphasizes the importance of prayer here and also throughout his gospel. The gathering implores the Lord to “show us which of these two you have chosen.” Peter prayed directly (*su*) to the Lord Jesus. “You have chosen” (*exelēxō*, aorist) indicates that Jesus had already made the choice, but he had not revealed the name of that apostle to the congregation or to Peter. Peter set an example for all congregations to follow in selecting not only pastors but also other people for congregational leadership. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:25 *this ministry* – In the NT, almost always specific, a concrete form of service laid on a particular person. (TLSB)

apostleship – The ambassadorial office Jesus instituted in Luke 6:13. (TLSB)

apostolēs, “[of] apostleship,” is literally a mission or a sending for the purpose of accomplishing a particular goal. Although Matthew uses the appellation *apostolos* very sparingly and prefers “the Twelve” (*dōdeka*), and even then only with reference to their initial mission (Matthew 10), Luke appears to use the term more generally. In this narrative, however, the reference is clearly to the Twelve whose full number is fully restored when Matthias is added to the Eleven (*hendeka*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

ministry – In the NT, almost always specific, a concrete form of service laid on a particular person. (TLSB)

diakonias, from *diakonia*, “ministry,” is descriptive of service toward others, charitable support and help, and of ministerial service to God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The job description is stated in two words: “ministry” (*diakonias*) and “apostolic” (*apostolēs*), which grants the new disciple the full right of apostleship, equal to that of the 11. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:26 *cast lots*. See Pr 16:33. By casting lots they were able to allow God the right of choice. The use of rocks or sticks to designate the choice was common (see 1Ch 26:13–1. (CSB)

klerous, “lots”; in the original sense, some small object thrown to make a determination, as in Mk 15:24. The word is also used to indicate that which has been assigned (Acts 8:21). In the ancient world this was not seen as mere chance; it signified a determination made by fate or destiny. The term is used here, in conjunction with its occurrence in v 17 referring to Judas, to indicate that the choice of a man to complete again the number of the Twelve is no more in the hands of men or blind fate than was the choosing of the Eleven and Judas. It is the Lord’s doing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

klērous. The “lot” (*klēron*) is the way Judas entered the apostolic band (v 17), and so it becomes the way Matthias takes his place. The *klēron* is the word used in the LXX referring to the lot of the priests (Deut 10:9). From this word, we get the term “clergy,” which means one whose portion or destiny or lot is found in God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

All offices and duties to be performed in the OT temple were chosen by lot. Names of candidates were written on stones which were put into a vessel, which was then shaken. The name on the first stone to fall out of the vessel was elected. (LL)

The name of Matthias was selected, and he was added to the number of the apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

eleven apostles – Twelve apostles were needed to confront the 12 tribes of Israel on the day of Pentecost. (TLSB)

1:12–26 The disciples and others seek the Lord’s will concerning the candidate of His choice to replace Judas as a leader of the Church, the new Israel. Today, entrust your future to the Lord in prayer. He will prepare your way before you. Since our Lord is present with us till the end of the age, He will knit together in love His faithful people with Himself and with one another. • Jesus, our King, may we never tire of watching in prayer before Your throne, and may Your will be our delight. Amen. (TLSB)