

Moving On from Here (Acts 1:9-26)

While We Wait (Acts 1:9-14)

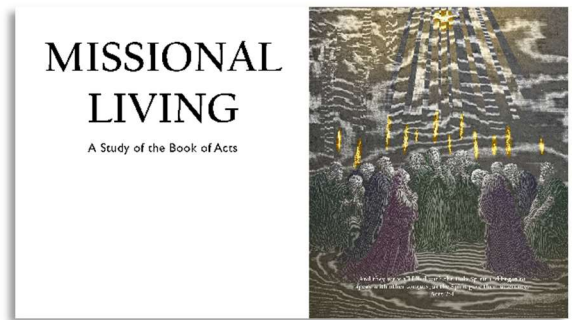
⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹

who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey. ¹³

And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son* of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son* 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 brothers.

The final words of Jesus are the **these things** (ταῦτα εἰπὼν – 4:9) from Acts 1:4-8. Among **these things** are a means and a mission: (1) the means is mentioned as a baptism that they are to wait on - *wait for the baptism* (Acts 1:4) and then the mission (2) *you will be My witnesses* (Acts 1:8). Regarding the latter, God's desire to have witnesses for Himself is not new. It is in fact ancient (Deuteronomy 4:6-7; 30:19); even Creation is called to serve Him in this capacity (Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:19-20). If there is no one ready to raise their voice to declare God's goodness the stones under our feet are ready to do the job (Habakkuk 2:11; Luke 19:40). It was to this great work that Israel was called out from among all peoples; God wanted the nation to bear witness to the nations that there is but one God (Isaiah 43:10; Isaiah 44:8).



God's Desire for Witnesses	Passages
Deuteronomy 4:6-7 – Moses summarizes God's desire to witness to the nations through Israel concerning the goodness of His commandments and their benefit to humanity. God's is wanting the witness of a good example to win others to Himself.	⁶ Therefore be careful to observe <i>them</i> ; for this <i>is</i> your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation <i>is</i> a wise and understanding people.' ⁷ "For what great nation <i>is there</i> that has God <i>so</i> near to it, as the LORD our God <i>is</i> to us, for whatever <i>reason</i> we may call upon Him?"
Deuteronomy 30:19 – God desires Creation to stand as witnesses against anyone who would deny that He has offered life and prosperity or death and punishment to Israel.	¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, <i>that</i> I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;
Psalm 19:1-6 – Creation itself testifies about the greatness and goodness of God.	To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. ² Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. ³ <i>There is</i> no speech nor language <i>Where</i> their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵ Which <i>is</i> like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, <i>And</i> rejoices like a strong man to run its race. ⁶ Its rising <i>is</i> from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end;

And there is nothing hidden from its heat.	
Romans 1:19-20 – Creation itself testifies about the sovereignty, the omnipotence, and the goodness of God.	¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown <i>it</i> to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible <i>attributes</i> are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, <i>even</i> His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,
Habakkuk 2:11; Luke 19:40	¹¹ For the stone will cry out from the wall, And the beam from the timbers will answer it. (Habakkuk 2:11) ⁴⁰ But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.” (Luke 19:40)
Isaiah 43:10; 44:8	¹⁰ “You <i>are</i> My witnesses,” says the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I <i>am</i> He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. (Isaiah 43:10) ⁸ Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared <i>it</i> ? You <i>are</i> My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed <i>there is</i> no other Rock; I know not <i>one</i> .” (Isaiah 44:8)

But where Israel failed to fulfill this calling the Son of God succeeded (Luke 4:16-19). And those that become His disciples take up His work by becoming His witnesses. When describing the ongoing witnessing mission in the work of Jesus and the life of His disciples FF Bruce says it well:

The close relation between God’s call to Israel, “you are my witnesses,” and the risen Lord’s commission to his apostles, “you will be my witnesses,” can be appreciated the more if we consider the implications of Paul’s quotation of Isa. 49:6 in Acts 13:47. There the heralds of the gospel are spoken of as a light for the Gentiles, bearing God’s salvation “to the end of the earth”; here “the end of the earth” and nothing short of that is to be the limit of the apostolic witness.

Bruce, F. F. (1988). *The Book of the Acts* (p. 36). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Regarding the command to be witnesses (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8), the heavenly hosts are leading by example and encouraging the disciples to get going with the work:

Luke intends his readers to understand these men to be angelic messengers, like the two men who appeared to the women at the empty tomb of Jesus “in dazzling apparel” (Luke 24:4). In both instances the fact that there were two suggests that they are viewed as witnesses, two being the minimum number for credible witness-bearing (Deut. 19:15). On the former occasion the two men bore witness to Jesus’ resurrection; here they bear witness to his forthcoming parousia.

Bruce, F. F. (1988). *The Book of the Acts* (p. 38). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Moving On (Acts 1:15-26)

Between the ascension of the Lord (Acts 1:9) and the arrival of the aforementioned Anointing (Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4) there is a period referred to as **those days** (ταῖς ἡμέραις - Acts 1:15). It was during **those days** that the disciples of Jesus spent their time together **in prayer and supplication** in an upper room (Acts 1:14). At some point in the mean of that while Peter **stood up in the midst of the disciples** to address an issue: *Judas is gone*.

Peter's description of the state of affairs is a marvelous lesson in leadership and testimony about the change that has been made in him by the Lord (Luke 24:45). Rather than starting with the negative fact that Judas was no longer in their number he begins with the positive - **Scripture had to be fulfilled** (ἔδει πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν). Does it matter? Certainly! It is the difference between seeing first the problem and seeing first the hand of Providence. It is the difference between focusing on Judas' failure and focusing on Scripture's

fulfillment. Some people naturally look at a situation and become overwhelmed by the sight of obstacles. Others look into the same situation and see the opportunities. It is hard to be an effective leader if you can only present the problem; to truly inspire people you have to also see clearly the problem and the possibilities that exist in the same dark situation.

Godly leaders see the enormity of intimidating issues in light of the fact that with God nothing is impossible. They confront their problems with a courage that comes from confidence in the risen Christ, the meaning of His cross, and the calling that is on their lives.

Peter is now such a leader. And according to the calling that is on his life he is again, having been restored and supernaturally enabled to understand Scripture (Luke 24:45), strengthening his brethren (Luke 22:32).

Among them Peter takes the leading place, as to a large extent he did during the period covered by the Gospel narrative. His denial of Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest might well have discredited him irretrievably in his colleagues' eyes, but the risen Lord's personal appearance to him and recommissioning of him rehabilitated him and ensured for him a position of leadership never to be forfeited.

Bruce, F. F. (1988). *The Book of the Acts* (p. 44). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

The Positive Perspective of Peter (Acts 1:16-19)

¹⁶ “Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; ¹⁷ for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.” ¹⁸ (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

The rugged fisherman addresses his fellow disciples with a candid and positive description of what has taken place: *Scripture has been fulfilled.*

- Judas' Fall was Foretold (Acts 1:16-17; John 13:18; 17:12; Psalm 41:9) - Jesus had prepared His disciples for Judas' defection. In their last supper together He had said that He would be betrayed someone who had the audacity to eat that meal with Him and then act with unthinkable meanness by handing Him over to His enemies. When the Lord reveals this information He quotes from Psalm 41:9. It is with this in mind that Peter says that there is an up side to what we have seen - *Judas deception and defection was all part of the plan.*

Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,
Who ate my bread, Has lifted up *his* heel against me. Psalm 41:9 (NKJV)

- Judas' Fate was Foretold (Acts 1:18-19; Matthew 27:3-10; Zechariah 11:12-13) - What else did Peter have in mind when he said the **Scripture had to be fulfilled**? Although it was not part of Peter's speech Luke says that even the way Judas dies was predicted:

Prophecy	Prophecy Passage	Fulfillment Recognized
The thirty pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12 - Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give <i>me</i> my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty <i>pieces</i> of silver.	Matthew 26:15 - and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. (See also Luke 22:3-6)
The return of the silver to the temple	Zechariah 11:13 - And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty <i>pieces</i> of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.	Matthew 27:3-5 - ³ Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴ saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What <i>is that</i> to us? You see <i>to it!</i> " ⁵ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.
The money being used to buy the potter's field was the betrayal money. Do not miss the fact that the field would become the place where Judas would die.	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:6-10 - ⁶ But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." ⁷ And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. ⁸ Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, " <i>And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, ¹⁰ and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me.</i> "

The Scriptures foretold that Judas would use the betrayal money to buy the place of his own death. It is with this in mind that Peter says that there is an up side to what we have seen - *Judas died according to plan.*

Peter cites two passages, one regarding the removal of Judas from his place and position, the other regarding the filling of his vacant place by another. Both passages deal with the enemies of the theocracy during David's time; it is thus that they apply to Judas who by his traitorous act stands forth among these enemies as their chief representative. All those enemies of David's time are the type of whom Judas became the great antitype. It is thus that the Holy Spirit spoke about Judas in advance. When he spoke through David, Judas was fully foreknown. When he quotes Ps. 69:25, Peter renders the LXX quite exactly and makes only verbal changes that retain the full meaning. David's plural is, however, made a singular because the passage is used specifically with reference to Judas. Lenski, R. C. H. (1961). *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (pp. 48–49). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House.

The Prescription of Scripture According to Peter (Acts 1:20-22)

²⁰ "For it is written in the Book of Psalms: '*Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it*'; and, '*Let another take his office.*' ²¹ "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

Peter anticipates the work that is coming and he sees something wrong with the state of affairs: *we are down one apostle*. We must see that he has accepted the call on His life and the summons to strengthen His brethren (Luke 22:32). To see the significance of what Peter is doing we need to consider his profile:

Peter's Character Revealed	Passage
Considers himself unworthy of Jesus' company.	Luke 5:1-8
Clueless but desires the best God has to offer.	John 13:6-10
Promising insight but wholly lacking in humility.	Matthew 16:13-23
Willing to get out of the boat alone to walk on water to Jesus.	Matthew 14:27-32
Willing to get out of the boat alone to get to Jesus faster.	John 21:7-10
Jesus opens Peter's understanding	Luke 24:45

Did Jesus know that Peter was going to do this? That is, did Jesus know that the big fisherman would take it upon himself to lead his fellow disciples into a decision, into a destination, and into a new disposition on recent events. He counted on it (Luke 22:32). He counted on him getting out of the boat. But now Simon Peter helps his brethren to get out of the boat as well. "We are getting out of this boat of being downcast over the defection of Judas. We are getting out of this boat that feels like things are uncertain. We are getting out of this boat where people are wondering what to do next."

The decision to move on is sometimes more important than the direction.

Regardless of what many think about whether or not the disciples should have chosen another apostle we need to be mindful of three things: (1) Peter is a leader chosen by Jesus to take charge, (2) he sees a problem with the missing man, and (3) he is willing to get out of the boat in trying to get ALL OF THEM (not just himself) on track with serving Jesus effectively.

- Judas' Role has been Removed (Psalm 69:25) - There will be no more betrayal among the twelve. His role was predicted and necessary for the Scriptures to be fulfilled. But it is no longer needed and will not happen again.
- We Have to Move On (Psalm 109:8) - Peter takes a passage from the Psalter and says that the fallen must be replaced. Why? When James the apostle dies he is not replaced. Judas did not finish in faith but apostatized. Where James was faithful in his church-founding role until death Judas was unfaithful in life and was never restored. His office had not truly been fulfilled.

Peter is pressing his brethren to acknowledge the failure, to focus on the fulfillment of prophecy, and to forge ahead (Acts 1:8, 22).

The Product of Peter's Positivity (Acts 1:22-26)

²² beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." ²³ **And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.** ²⁴ **And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of**

all, show which of these two You have chosen ²⁵ to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” ²⁶ And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Peter has strengthened his brethren. With a new view of life that is rooted in the trustworthiness of God’s word they endeavor to fill the position vacated by Judas. Notice that they do not regard Jesus as being aloof. They talk with Him about the situation with the expectation that he could hear them. Do you talk with him about your situations with the expectation that he can hear you? Earlier Jesus had heard Thomas’ unbelief (John 20:25-27). It was reasonable to think that He can hear them speaking to Him in faith. After all, as Thomas had said, He is God (John 20:28).

The record of Luke says that they cast lots. Was the Lord involved in the decision? More than a few commentators and friends of mine say that they should not have done this. But this ignores the teachings of Jesus concerning their decisions (Matthew 18:18) and the regard of the church going forward concerning the outcome of the lot.

Acts 6:2 says: And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them. Notice the expression the twelve. Who are the twelve? It includes the eleven plus Matthias. It could not include Paul, because Paul was not saved at that time.

Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G., *A Messianic Bible Study from Ariel Ministries: The Book of Acts* (2005)

The decision to move forward was anticipated and encouraged by Jesus. He honors those that honor Him. We must see that Peter stood up to both honor the Lord and help his brethren move on with the plan of being witnesses (Acts 1:22).

Questions for Missional Community Discussion

1. We should evaluate anything we hear about the activities of angels in light of what is revealed about them in Scripture (Acts 17:11). What role do the angels play in the lives of Jesus (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43) and His disciples (Acts 1:9-11; Hebrews 1:14)?
2. What do you do in times when you are forced to wait? What does the missional community of Jesus do while they are waiting (Acts 1:12-14)? What do you think they are asking for?
3. In what ways has Peter remained the same? (Matthew 14:27-32; John 21:7-10) In what way has Peter changed (Luke 22:32)? What caused Peter to see the prophecies and fulfillments (Luke 24:45)? What does Peter do with his newfound insights?
4. Through what lens are you looking at life? Through what lens is Peter looking at life?