

Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Inscription to Theophilus
- B. Description of Luke with emphasis on the period between resurrection and ascension
 - 1. Account of all that Jesus did and taught (throughout His ministry)
 - 2. Dealings with the apostles for 40 days after resurrection
 - a. Gave commands
 - b. Presented *infallible* proof that He was alive
 - c. "Speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 44-49)
 - 3. Length of time after crucifixion (40 days)

II. Ascension of Jesus

- A. Immediately on the heels of Luke (v. 2)
- B. Promise of the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit"
- C. Disciples still misunderstand
 - 1. They sought a physical kingdom
 - 2. Command to be still and wait
- D. Taken up into a cloud
 - 1. Witnessed event
 - 2. Prophecy of the men in white apparel

III. Replacing Judas

- A. Necessitated by prophecy
- B. Requirements
- C. Selection

Commentary

Some spend a great deal of time trying to ascertain whether Theophilus was an actual person, or a generic name given to the "Friend of God." Lenski, for instance, asserts that

“He wrote his Gospel in order to convert Theophilus and his Acts in order to enlighten this convert in regard to the course of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, from Judaism to the Gentiles” (p. 8). Others point out that name’s translation lends itself to widespread usage. Such debate seems pointless as both readings will cause us to interpret the book in the same way.

None of the gospels are as explicit as Luke is in verses 9-11 as to the manner of Jesus’ ascension into heaven. Neither Matthew nor John mention it at all, Luke, of course, saves any reference to the event for Acts, and Mark makes only a brief mention that Jesus was “received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God” (Mark 16:19, NKJV). I think it makes sense to link these verses with those immediately before (4-8) given the fact that verse 9 begins with “Now when He had spoken these things.”

There is much that we don’t know about Jesus’ family. It does seem that they were not believers at the beginning (cf. Mark 3:21-35). However, their belief now appears so solid as to allow them to be numbered with the remaining eleven apostles and believing women.

Many consider the manner of Judas’ death related here as in conflict with Matthew 27:3-10. There are any number of theories regarding the issue, but the following reconciliation makes the most sense to me:

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Falling headlong;*i.e.* from the tree or gallows on which he hung himself (see Matt. 27:3-8). The only apparent discrepancies in the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Luke in regard to the purchase of the field, and the name given to it, are that, according to St. Matthew’s more detailed account, it was the chief priests who actually purchased the field **with** Judas’s money, whereas St. Luke says, less accurately, that Judas purchased it. Again, St. Matthew explains the name *Akel-dama* as being given to the field because it was the price of the “innocent blood” of Jesus betrayed by Judas, whereas St. Luke’s account rather suggests



that it was Judas's own blood shed in his fall which gave the name. But both accounts of the name might be true, some understanding the name in one sense and some in the other. (Compare the different accounts of the name of Beer-sheba in Gen. 21:31 and 26:32, 33; of the origin of the proverb, "Is Saul among the prophets?" 1 Sam. 10:11, 12 and 20:24; and other similar cases.) (Spence-Jones, 5).

Thought Questions

Consider the following questions:

1. How many disciples were present when Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit? To how many was the Holy Spirit promised?
2. What were the disciples looking for and why?

3. How important was Old Testament prophecy to the early church?

4. Explain the reasoning behind the qualifications set for replacing Judas.