

Book Study #1

ACTS

Acts 1:1- 2:13

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven – Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas – The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost



Before we begin this journey...

1. If you could take a trip somewhere far away, where would you go?
2. If you had to serve on a church committee, which one would you choose?
3. When working with others as part of a team, do you prefer to give orders or follow orders?
4. If you could speak another language fluently, which one would you choose? Why?



Do Some Research and Mapping...

5. What task did Jesus assign the apostles? (1:8)
6. Who were the figures in white? (1:10)
7. How did the men in white encourage the apostles? (1:11)
8. How did Peter take leadership of the early Christians after Jesus' ascension? (1:15-17)
9. What did Peter propose to do about the vacancy left by Judas? (1:21-22)
10. How did the apostles choose Judas's successor? (1:24-26)
11. When the Holy Spirit filled the believers, what did they do? (2:4)
12. How did the God-fearing Jews visiting Jerusalem react when they heard Christians speaking their languages? (2:6-11)
13. Besides being amazed, how did the crowd react to the happening they witnessed? (2:12-13)



Sort, Organize, Discuss, Understand...

14. What is the importance of Jesus' final promise and command to you?
15. What specific means (abilities, opportunities, relationships) has God given you to carry out the task of being His witness?
16. How do you make important decisions in your family?
17. Why is prayer important in our decision-making process?
18. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
19. How can we cultivate sensitivity to the Holy Spirit?



Application for this week...

20. What steps can you take to be actively involved in telling others about Christ?
21. What is one way you can include God in all important decisions you make?
22. How can you be more open to seeing, hearing, and feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit in your prayer and Bible reading?



Reflection

Thoughts about the journey with the Holy Spirit

A prayer for your journey... “Lord Jesus, as I walk through this coming week, help me prepare for my journey by reading my Bible more regularly, seeking help as I need it from my Christian friends and focusing on the needs of others instead of myself. Help me to demonstrate my faith by stepping into the unknown, untried, and untested areas of my life.” -Amen

He Carried the Cross for Jesus: Simon of Cyrene

(To answer Ed Medved's question from the last meeting)

Because his home town, Cyrene, Libya, was located in northern Africa, a connection arose making Simon of Cyrene the first African saintly Christian. Cyrene was, however, a Jewish community where 100,000 Judean Jews had settled during the reign of Ptolemy Soter (323-285 BC). They had a synagogue in Jerusalem, where many went for annual feasts.

Tradition states his sons Rufus and Alexander became missionaries; the inclusion of their names in Mark suggests that they were of some standing in the early Christian community at Rome. It has even been suggested that the Rufus mentioned by Paul in Romans 16:13 is the son of Simon of Cyrene.

Some also link Simon himself with the "men of Cyrene" who preached the Gospel to the Greeks in Acts 11:20. On the other hand, Simon's name does not prove he was Jewish, and Alexander and Rufus were both common names and may have referred to others.

The Cyrenian or Simon Movement, centered in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, takes its name from Simon of Cyrene. It has as its guiding principle 'sharing the burden' which it uses to explain its approach to providing services to homeless and other disadvantaged groups in society, often using volunteers.

Source: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_of_Cyrene

REFERENCES IN THE BIBLE (TWO VERSIONS)

Matthew 27:32 (Amplified Bible)

³²As they were marching forth, they came upon a man of Cyrene named Simon; this man they forced to carry the cross of Jesus.

Matthew 27:32 (New American Standard Bible)

³²As they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they pressed into service to bear His cross.

Mark 15:21 (Amplified Bible)

²¹And they forced a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the field (country), to carry His cross.

Mark 15:21 (New American Standard Bible)

²¹They pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross.

Luke 23:26 (Amplified Bible)

²⁶And as they led Him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross and made him carry it behind Jesus.

Luke 23:26 (New American Standard Bible)

Simon Bears the Cross

²⁶When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.

1. Regarding the statement in John 19:17 : *"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: ..."*

[Bearing his cross] He bore it all alone first; when he could no longer carry the whole through weakness, occasioned by the ill usage he had received, Simon, a Cyrenian, helped him to carry it: see the note at [Matt 27:32](#).

2. Matthew 27:32 : *"And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross."*

[A man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.] In John, John 19:16-17, we are told Christ himself bore the cross, and this, it is likely, he did for a part of the way; but, being exhausted with the scourging and other cruel usage which he had received, he was found incapable of bearing it alone; therefore they obliged Simon, not, I think, to bear it entirely, but to assist Christ, by bearing a part of it.

It was a constant practice among the Romans, to oblige criminals to bear their cross to the place of execution: insomuch that Plutarch makes use of it as an illustration of the misery of vice. "Every kind of wickedness produces its own particular torment, just as every malefactor, when he is brought forth to execution, carries his own cross."

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John 19:17-18

D. THE CRUCIFIXION (19:17-30)

19:17-18. Carrying His own cross, Jesus went out. These words fulfill two Old Testament symbols or types. Isaac carried his own wood for the sacrifice (Gen 22:1-6) and the sin offering used to be taken outside the camp or city (cf. Heb 13:11-13). So Jesus was made sin (2 Cor 5:21).

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John 19:17-18 : *"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:..."*

Bearing his cross. All the Synoptics state that Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear the cross. John alone states that Jesus carried it. Luke's account makes room for both. Jesus started, but could not carry it all the way. Golgotha. Probably named from its appearance; hence a rounded hill. Its Latin equivalent is Calvary (Luke 23:33). It must have been outside the city (Heb 13:12). 18. Jesus in the midst. His was the place of central importance, even in death.

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