

SENT BY LOVE: ACTS—PART 1

STUDY OUTLINE & SCHEDULE

- I. Preparation for Witness: August 16—September 6, 2020**
 - A. August 16, Acts 1:1-2, “Introduction to Acts”
 - B. August 23, Acts 1:1-5, “The Promise of the Holy Spirit”
 - C. August 30, Acts 1:6-11, “The Ascension”
 - D. September 6, Acts 1:12-26, “The Next Disciple”
- II. The Spirit Empowers for Witness: September 13-27, 2020**
 - A. September 13, Acts 2:1-13, “The Holy Spirit Comes”
 - B. September 20, Acts 2:14-41, “Peter Preaches”
 - C. September 27, Acts 2:42-47, “The Believers Meet Together”
- III. Witness in Jerusalem: October 4—November 15, 2020**
 - A. October 4, Acts 3:1-26, “Peter Heals and Preaches in the Temple”
 - B. October 11, Acts 4:1-22, “Peter and John Before the Council”
 - C. October 18, Acts 4:23-37, “The Believers Pray and Share”
 - D. October 25, Acts 5:1-16, “Awe and Wonder”
 - E. November 1, Acts 5:17-42, “Opposition”
 - F. November 8, Acts 6:1-15, “Seven Chosen to Serve”
 - G. November 15, Acts 7:1—8:1a, “The Martyrdom of Stephen”
- IV. Witness Beyond Jerusalem: November 22—December 6, 2020**
 - A. November 22, Acts 8:1b-25, “Scattered for Witness”
 - B. November 29, Acts 8:26-40, “Philip and the Ethiopian”
 - C. December 6, Acts 9:1-31, “The Conversion of Saul”
- V. Witness Among the Gentiles: December 13, 2020—January 17, 2021**
 - A. December 13, Acts 9:32—10:33, “Gentiles Hear the Good News”
 - B. December 20, Acts 10:34-48, “Gentiles Believe the Good News”
 - C. December 27—No Sunday Morning Classes
 - D. January 3—No Sunday Morning Classes
 - E. January 10, Acts 11:1-18, “Peter Explains His Actions”
 - F. January 17, Acts 11:19—12:25, “Outreach and Persecution”
- VI. Witness Through Paul’s 1st Journey: January 24—February 14, 2021**
 - A. January 24, Acts 13:1-12, “Paul and Barnabas Sent Out”
 - B. January 31, Acts 13:13-43, “Antioch of Pisidia”
 - C. February 7, Acts 14:1-7, “Iconium”
 - D. February 14, Acts 14:8-28, “In Lystra and Derbe”

TEACHING HELPS

Sent in Love: A Study of Acts, Part 1

I. Preparation for Witness: August 16—September 6, 2020

A. August 16, Acts 1:1-2, “Introduction to Acts”

Points to Ponder

1. Acts Focuses on Christian Witness First and Foremost

One way to look at Acts 1-14 notes the focus upon the witness of the early Christians. “The Book of Acts is more than first-century church history; it is a narrative about the Triune God on an unstoppable mission to the ends of the earth... The momentum of Acts is ever outward, not only geographically, as promised in Jesus’ final words (1:8), but also ethnically—from Jews to Samaritans to God fearers to pagan Gentiles. And that momentum extends beyond the book’s last verse, as it draws us, the evangelized, into the company of those on mission, who also evangelize boldly” (*Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, 351). A brief review of the first 14 chapters bears this out. Seminal events in Acts 1-14 include the “thesis statement” of Acts 1:8; the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost; Peter and John’s witness in Jerusalem; the stoning of Stephen and the subsequent persecution; Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch; the conversion of Saul; Peter’s evangelism of Cornelius; and Paul and Barnabas’ visit to Antioch of Pisidia. All these events enable Christ-followers to share the good news. The “Sent By Love” study outline helps us see this flow:

I. Preparation for Witness, Acts 1:1-26

II. The Spirit Empowers for Witness, Acts 2:1-47

III. Witness in Jerusalem, Acts 3:1—8:1a

IV. Witness Beyond Jerusalem, Acts 8:1b—9:31

V. Witness Among the Gentiles, Acts 9:32—12:25

VI. Witness Through Paul’s 1st Journey, Acts 13:1—14:28

2. Who Is the Author of Acts?

It’s pretty clear Acts wants the reader to know Luke is its author. But we should note Luke’s name is neither mentioned in Acts nor the Gospel of Luke. But church history and tradition are steadfast about Luke’s authorship of both books. Who is Luke? Is he Jewish or Greek? Many believe he is Gentile. One plausible answer suggests Luke is a Hellenistic Jew, a Jew whose mother tongue is Greek, not Aramaic (*Cornerstone*, 351-2). In many ways, Luke as a Hellenistic Jew connects with Acts’ vision and with Paul’s mission. But ultimately the matter is still up for discussion.

3. Who Is Theophilus?

We know Acts is intended for the whole church through the ages and for us today. However, commentators debate the intended initial reader. Who is Theophilus, “lover of God”? A fictitious name meant to hide the recipient’s true identity? A symbolic name representing all in relationship with God? Both *Cornerstone* and the *NIV Application* commentaries believe Theophilus was a real person with real status, perhaps serving in government given the honorific “most excellent” used in Luke. *Cornerstone* supports the view that Theophilus is a non-Christian to whom Luke is bearing witness, thus connecting Theophilus with the rationale behind the specific information given about the Christian movement’s evangelistic outreach and the conversion experiences detailed.

Sample 45-Minute Lesson Plan for “Introduction to Acts”

1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 1:1-2. [5 minutes]
2. Discuss the “Sent by Love: A Study of Acts, Part 1” basics. [5 minutes]
3. Share information about the author of Acts and its initial reader. [5 minutes]
 - Talk about who Luke is and why he is an especially apt communicator of the church’s witness and growth
 - Talk about who Theophilus is and why he is an especially apt recipient of Luke’s communication
4. Review the basic outline of our study; as you do so, highlight briefly some or all of the significant events noted. [15 minutes]

I. Preparation for Witness, Acts 1:1-26 (“thesis statement” in 1:8)

II. The Spirit Empowers for Witness, Acts 2:1-47 (the coming of the Spirit)

III. Witness in Jerusalem, Acts 3:1—8:1a (Peter & John; Stephen’s martyrdom)

IV. Witness Beyond Jerusalem, Acts 8:1b—9:31 (Philip & Ethiopian; Saul/Paul)

V. Witness Among the Gentiles, Acts 9:32—12:25 (Peter & Cornelius)

VI. Witness Through Paul’s 1st Journey, Acts 13:1—14:28 (Antioch of Pisidia)

5. Read the statement below and discuss the focus on witness. [15 minutes]

“The Book of Acts is more than first-century church history; it is a narrative about the Triune God on an unstoppable mission to the ends of the earth... The momentum of Acts is ever outward, not only geographically, as promised in Jesus’ final words (1:8), but also ethnically—from Jews to Samaritans to God fearers to pagan Gentiles. And that momentum extends beyond the book’s last verse, as it draws us, the evangelized, into the company of those on mission, who also evangelize boldly” (*Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, 351).

- How is Acts more than history? How are we included in its “momentum”?
- What keeps most of us from being bold witnesses like the early Christians? How can we be transformed into those who “evangelize boldly”?
- What are examples of the witness to Jesus Christ we may communicate with others by word and deed today?

6. Close in prayer.

Sample Discussion Questions for “Introduction to Acts”

After starting your small group with prayer, read Acts 1:1-2 and discuss the following:

- Who wrote Acts? To whom? What do we learn about Acts from this information?
- Theophilus means “lover of God.” What does this name’s meaning open up for you?
- Chapters 1-14 in Acts focus on witness. Use the study outline below and review the events mentioned for each point. How do you see this focus on witness unfolding?
 - I. Preparation for Witness, Acts 1:1-26 (“thesis statement” in 1:8)*
 - II. The Spirit Empowers for Witness, Acts 2:1-47 (the coming of the Spirit)*
 - III. Witness in Jerusalem, Acts 3:1—8:1a (Peter & John; Stephen’s martyrdom)*
 - IV. Witness Beyond Jerusalem, Acts 8:1b—9:31 (Philip & Ethiopian; Saul/Paul)*
 - V. Witness Among the Gentiles, Acts 9:32—12:25 (Peter & Cornelius)*
 - VI. Witness Through Paul’s 1st Journey, Acts 13:1—14:28 (Antioch of Pisidia)*
- How is Acts more than history? How are we the book’s intended audience today?
- What keeps most of us from being bold witnesses like the early Christians? How can we be transformed into those who “evangelize boldly”?
- How can we be witnesses today in word and deed? Please be specific.

TEACHING HELPS

Sent in Love: A Study of Acts, Part 1

I. Preparation for Witness: August 16—September 6, 2020

B. August 23, Acts 1:1-5, “The Promise of the Holy Spirit”

Points to Ponder

1. Training Time

What does Jesus do with the disciples during the time post-Resurrection and pre-Ascension? “During the forty days after He suffered and died, He appeared to the apostles from time to time, and He proved to them in many ways that He was actually alive. And He talked to them about the Kingdom of God” (1:3-4 NLT). We’re reminded of how Jesus opened the minds of His followers to the Scriptures in Luke 24 both on the road to Emmaus and in the gathering place in Jerusalem. We’re also reminded that what’s accomplished through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is but the beginning of the full rule and reign of God, eventually consummated in the new heaven and earth. The disciples are being prepared for what is to come. It’s not fully here yet. But it will come.

2. The Promise

Luke locates the promise of the Holy Spirit early on in his narrative. From the brief mention, it’s evident to the reader this is only the latest time the Spirit is mentioned. Luke’s Gospel is replete with references to the Spirit at work. Most often Jesus is the one in and through whom the Spirit is active, as in His birth, baptism, temptation, and earthly ministry. There are occasional references to others being filled or indwelt with the Spirit on specific occasions, like Elizabeth (Luke 1:41) and Simeon (Luke 2:25). Early on, Jesus makes it clear the Holy Spirit is in Him, guiding and empowering Him to follow the Father’s will. He reads aloud in the synagogue from Isaiah 61:1-2, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for He has anointed Me to bring Good News to the poor” (NLT), and then declares that what everyone heard “has been fulfilled this very day” (Luke 4:16-21). But now the coming Spirit’s presence and power are not just for Jesus. The Holy Spirit’s presence and power are for all Jesus’ followers. Acts 1:5 acknowledges John the Baptist’s prophetic utterance in Luke 3:16, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (NIV).

3. The Third Person of the Trinity

It never hurts to be reminded. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force as in *Star Wars*. The Holy Spirit should not be given little attention compared to the Father and the Son. Rather, the Holy Spirit is God, fully divine, “One in essence, Three in persons.” What does this mean? Among other things, it means Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons, each with personal attributes, while at the same time each shares equally in the divine essence of deity. There is no inherent contradiction here in the Trinity. We Presbyterians have a squeamishness in addressing the Holy Spirit’s ministry among us. Our heritage has focused more on the person and work of Christ usually to the exclusion of sustained reflection upon the Spirit’s role in our lives as Christ-followers. It’s good to note this now as we explore how the Spirit worked in the lives of the early Christian community and works in our lives.

Sample 45-Minute Lesson Plan for “The Promise of the Holy Spirit”

1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 1:1-5. [5 minutes]

2. Remind the class about the connection between Luke and Acts and the relationship between Luke and Theophilus. [5 minutes]

3. Discuss Acts 1:2-3a as Jesus prepares His followers for service with appearances and proofs of His resurrection. [10 minutes]

- Jesus has been with His followers for 3 years, yet more instruction needed.
- The Resurrection is essential for Christianity; see 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 for an explanation by the Apostle Paul
- Why is the Resurrection central to a growing, dynamic Christian faith? What happens if we're not firm on this tenet?
- What is the role of ongoing instruction in our Christian growth? Do we ever learn enough? What happens if we stop?

4. Discuss Acts 1:3b as Jesus instructs His followers about the Kingdom of God. [10 minutes]

- In Luke, the reality of the Kingdom of God is a primary message of Jesus
- Examples in Luke: 4:43; 7:28; 9:60; 10:11; 11:20; 12:31; 13:18; 17:21; 22:16
- How would you put into words the gospel message about the Kingdom of God?
- How has the Kingdom already come? How has it not yet come?

5. Discuss the promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4-5. [15 minutes]

- Notice Jesus eats with His followers as He teaches, reinforcing His resurrected presence
- Jesus instructs them to remain in Jerusalem until the Spirit comes
- Jesus connects His command with John's prophecy in Luke 3:16
- Why would Jesus tell His followers to remain in Jerusalem, thus not starting their worldwide mission, until the Holy Spirit comes upon them? What does this say about the Spirit? What does this say about the early Christians? What does this say about us? Why are we often reluctant to talk about the Holy Spirit?

6. Close in prayer.

Sample Discussion Questions for “The Promise of the Holy Spirit”

After starting your small group with prayer, read Acts 1:1-5 and discuss the following:

- Jesus gives His followers further instructions. Why? They had been with Him for three years. Why do you think they need more guidance?
- What does the disciples' need for more instruction say about our need for instruction in Christian doctrine and practice? Why are we sometimes hesitant to receive it?
- Why would Jesus reinforce the reality that He is risen? What does this state about the importance of the Resurrection? Why do many have difficulty with the risen Christ?
- Jesus taught His followers about the Kingdom of God during this interim time. What does the phrase “Kingdom of God” mean? How would you describe it to someone new to the Christian faith?
- How has the Kingdom already come? How has it not yet come?
- Why would Jesus tell His followers to remain in Jerusalem, thus not starting their worldwide mission, until the Holy Spirit comes upon them? What does this say about the Spirit? What does this say about the early Christians? What does this say about us? Why are we often reluctant to talk about the Holy Spirit?

TEACHING HELPS
Sent in Love: A Study of Acts, Part 1
I. Preparation for Witness: August 16—September 6, 2020
C. August 30, Acts 1:6-11, “The Ascension”

Points to Ponder

1. *The “Thesis Statement” of Acts*

A thesis statement accomplishes two things: 1) it alerts the reader to what is about to come in the rest of the work, and 2) it gives clues for the work’s structure and how it will move from beginning to end. Most commentators believe Acts 1:8 serves as the thesis statement for the entire book of Acts, preparing its readers for what will be covered in the remainder of the book and guiding its readers as to the plot line the book will advance in order to carry out its purpose. Acts 1:8’s statement is divided into two sections. First, the announcement of the Spirit’s coming and for what purpose He comes: to give power for the followers of Jesus to be witnesses. Second, the elaboration on where the Christ-followers will be witnesses to the gospel. They will begin at home in Jerusalem, then move out to the rest of Judea, Samaria, and “the ends of the earth” (NLT).

2. *Power to Be Witnesses*

Here’s why Jesus earlier tells His followers to stay in Jerusalem and not to start yet on the Great Commission. The necessary power, providing the ability, giftedness, and boldness to be His witnesses, comes only through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Among other things, this emphasis tells us that when it comes to the witness borne by individual Christians, be they first-century or twenty-first-century ones, God is the true Evangelist. Witness simply can’t and won’t happen without the Holy Spirit’s empowerment. A lesson for first-century and twenty-first century witnesses to learn is never try to bear witness for Jesus Christ on your own. Instead, you must allow the Holy Spirit to work through your heart, thoughts, deeds, and words. It is the only way.

3. *The Importance of the Ascension*

The Ascension of Jesus Christ gets the short end of the stick with us. We may mention it on the appropriate Sunday, but not very often. In less liturgically strict communions, the Ascension is not mentioned at all. Yet the Ascension is incredibly important. In fact, far more so than the space allotted here. Below are links to helpful articles from sources as diverse as the Heidelberg Catechism (an ECO confession), Gerrit Dawson (pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Baton Rouge), the late R. C. Sproul, the Australian magazine “The Briefing,” and renowned theologian N. T. Wright. Either click on these links or type them into your web browser.

- <http://www.heidelberg-catechism.com/en/lords-days/18.html>
- <https://www.uniontheology.org/resources/doctrine/jesus/seven-things-to-like-about-the-ascension>
- <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/ascension/>
- <http://thebriefing.com.au/2011/05/who-is-jesus-now/>
- <http://eerdword.com/2014/05/28/heaven-and-power-n-t-wright-on-jesus-ascension-part-1-of-2/>
- <http://eerdword.com/2014/05/29/heaven-and-power-n-t-wright-on-jesus-ascension-part-2-of-2/>

Sample Lesson Plan for "The Ascension"

1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 1:6-11. [5 minutes]
2. Remind the class about the direction by Jesus to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit's arrival. [5 minutes]
3. Discuss the disciples' continuing inability to grasp the mission of Jesus in Acts 1:6-7. [5 minutes]
 - Even with more teaching they continue to think of an earthly rule and reign
 - Jesus quickly cuts off this line of inquiry (as He does in the Gospel accounts)
 - Why do you think the disciples are still so clueless? How have we been similarly clueless about Christian faith and practice?
4. Discuss what the Spirit will empower in Acts 1:8. [15 minutes]
 - Power is promised with a focused aim: to be witnesses
 - The witness will start locally, then move regionally, nationally, and globally
 - Why do we need power specifically for being witnesses of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ? Can't we do it ourselves? What about witness makes it completely dependent upon the Holy Spirit?
 - How does this ability to bear witness of God's good news in Jesus reveal itself?
 - Why is the four-tiered structure of local, regional, national, and global witness important? How do we see this witness being made known today?
5. Discuss the Ascension of Jesus in Acts 1:9-11. [15 minutes]
 - Jesus ascends to the right hand of the Father
 - Angels promise Jesus will return in like manner
 - The Ascension reveals four crucial emphases: 1) the coming of the Holy Spirit (Jesus said the Spirit would come when He left—John 16:5-11), 2) the divinity of Christ (at the Father's right hand), 3) the humanity of Christ (His resurrected, changed body), and 4) the reign and rule of Christ (the new heaven and earth)
 - Why does the Ascension receive little emphasis within most of American Christianity? What makes it off-putting to us?
 - In today's climate, how are 1) Jesus' divinity, 2) Jesus' humanity, and 3) Jesus' reign and rule often deemphasized at best and rejected/denied at worst? Both outside Christianity and inside the church? How are all three items absolutely necessary for living the Christian life? How do we experience them?
6. Close in prayer.

Sample Discussion Questions for "The Ascension"

After starting your small group with prayer, read Acts 1:6-11 and discuss the following:

- Why do you think the disciples are still so clueless? Where have we seen them this way before? How have we been similarly clueless about Christian faith and practice?
- Why do we need power specifically to be witnesses of God's love and grace in Jesus? What about witness makes it completely dependent upon the Holy Spirit?
- How does this power to bear witness of God's good news in Jesus reveal itself? In history? In the church? In your life?
- Bearing witness to the good news of Christ locally, regionally, nationally, and globally is important. How do we see this witness today? Where do you fit in this plan?
- In today's climate, how are 1) Jesus' divinity, 2) Jesus' humanity, and 3) Jesus' reign and rule thought about? Both outside Christianity and inside the church? How are all three absolutely necessary for living the Christian life? How do you experience all three in your Christian walk?

TEACHING HELPS
Sent in Love: A Study of Acts, Part 1
I. Preparation for Witness: August 16—September 6, 2020
D. September 6, Acts 1:12-26, “The Next Disciple”

Points to Ponder

1. Life Between Ascension and Pentecost

From the Ascension until the festival of Pentecost, the disciples have free time until the Spirit comes. But they have not been given a date for the Holy Spirit’s arrival. Thus the calling to be witnesses of Christ’s life and message is on hold for now. What to do? They decide the vacant spot on the organizational chart must be filled. A question comes up: would the disciples have done better to make such a decision after the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit comes upon them? We’ll never know for sure. Perhaps you can argue the apostles jump the gun by noting the chosen Matthias is never referred to again in Acts. But then again, neither are other apostles, like Bartholomew and the other Judas. Matthias has a feast day in his honor on Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and some Lutheran calendars on either August 9, May 14, or February 24, depending upon denomination, and tradition holds he evangelized the area around Cappadocia (modern day Turkey).

2. Judas Iscariot’s Death

Acts 1:16-19 gives the account of Judas Iscariot’s death. According to Peter, Judas buys a field, falls while in that field, and is gruesomely disemboweled in a notorious death. An issue arises with this account, however. On its face, it is different from the account offered in Matthew 27:3-10, where Judas hangs himself and the Jewish leaders buy a field with the thirty pieces of silver they had given to him, thus fulfilling Jeremiah’s prophecy. Can these two accounts be harmonized? Going all the way back to St. Augustine, many have said “yes”: Judas commits suicide by attempting to hang himself, and then as the rope breaks he falls to his death; the field is purchased by the Jewish leaders in Judas’ name.

3. Casting Lots

The particular method employed by the gathered Christ-followers to decide upon which person, Matthias or Joseph Barsabbas, will become an apostle bothers many present-day readers. It seems arbitrary and capricious, not at all suited to such an important calling. Please observe we have often used equivalent methods to help us make tough decisions. The 1988 early Saturday morning coin flip at the Convoy Truck Stop halfway between Midland and Odessa on I-20, deciding which two of three teams—Odessa Permian, Midland Lee, and Midland High—would be in the playoffs, was televised live at 2 a.m. in west Texas and became part of *Friday Night Lights* lore. (For the record, it was Odessa Permian and Midland Lee; Midland High stayed home.) Casting lots as a way to make decisions that otherwise seemed nearly impossible was a common practice in the ancient world. The sailors carrying Jonah cast lots for guidance as to who was offending God and thus causing the violent storm. The key for understanding the decision to employ this method comes beforehand, in Acts 1:24 (NLT), “O Lord, You know every heart. Show us which of these men You have chosen as an apostle...” The intent is good even if we may quibble with the means used.

Sample Lesson Plan for “The Next Disciple”

1. **Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 1:12-26. [5 minutes]**
2. **Remind the class where the plot of Acts is so far. [5 minutes]**
3. **Discuss who is present, according to Acts 1:12-15. [5 minutes]**
 - The disciples who are now apostles are listed, and so are Mary, “several other women,” and the brothers of Jesus; the full roster of supporters is 120
 - What is it significant about the people mentioned? What is important about Mary, the other women, and the brothers of Jesus now being part of the team?
4. **Discuss Peter (and Luke) telling the story of Judas in Acts 1:15-21. [15 minutes]**
 - Peter, as leader of the disciples, expresses his thoughts about Judas
 - Luke fills in information for readers, differing significantly from Matthew (27:3-10)
 - Harmonization of Acts and Matthew: Judas commits suicide by attempting to hang himself, and then as rope breaks he falls to his death; field can be explained by Jewish leaders purchasing it in Judas’ name.
 - How does Peter explain what happened to Judas? What do you think of his explanation? How does it help the disciples take their next steps?
 - Have you ever had to come to terms with a traumatic death? How did you do it? What was helpful, comforting, and encouraging, and what was not?
5. **Discuss the selection of Matthias in Acts 1:20-26. [15 minutes]**
 - Qualifications for replacement: someone with them the entire time and thus knowledgeable and committed
 - Two names surface: Matthias and Joseph Barsabbas; fervent prayer follows
 - Cast lots: names on stone, placed in container, shaken then turned upside down
 - Matthias chosen, thus making the number of the core leadership 12 again
 - Why do you think the disciples make this decision in this way? (There were other ways to proceed, like Peter picking someone.) What theological presuppositions are behind the method they choose?
 - How do we find God’s will as we make major decisions in our lives? How do we choose well between available options?
6. **Close in prayer.**

Sample Discussion Questions for “The Next Disciple”

- After starting your small group with prayer, read Acts 1:12-26 and discuss the following:
- Who is on the list of leaders mentioned for the early church? What is significant about the people mentioned? What is important about Mary, the other women, and the brothers of Jesus now being part of the team?
 - How does Peter explain what happened to Judas? What do you think of his explanation? How does it help the disciples take their next steps?
 - Have you ever had to come to terms with a traumatic death? How did you do it? What was helpful, comforting, and encouraging, and what was not? How would you help a friend or a loved one deal with such a death?
 - Who are the two candidates for the open spot in the Twelve? Who is chosen?
 - Why do you think the disciples make this decision in this way? (There were other ways to proceed, like Peter picking someone.) What theological presuppositions are behind the method they choose?
 - How do we find God’s will as we make major decisions in our lives? How do we choose well between available options?