

Descriptive vs Prescriptive Observation

- ▶ A passage is **descriptive** if it is simply describing something that happened.
- ▶ A passage is **prescriptive** if it is specifically teaching that something should happen.

Descriptive Observation

- ▶ If a verse or passage is simply describing something, with nothing said in the positive or negative about that something, then it is descriptive and should not be considered something we are commanded to do.

Prescriptive Observation

- ▶ It is only when Scripture specifically instructs (prescribes) that New Testament believers do something that we are to take it as a command to obey.

Descriptive vs Prescriptive Observation

- ▶ The difference is important. When a biblical passage is only describing something, but it is interpreted as prescribing something, it can lead to errant thinking, behavior, and inaccurate doctrine.

Examples

- ▶ The story of David and Goliath.
- ▶ Christian's meeting in homes.
- ▶ How often communion should be observed.

Key Differences

Aspect	Descriptive	Prescriptive
Nature	Describes events, actions, and beliefs	Provides commands and guidelines
Purpose	To understand historical context and narratives	To instruct on moral and ethical behavior
Application	Offers insights but not direct commands	Precepts directly applicable to believers today

The Book of Acts

Crucifixion



3 Days

Resurrection



40 Days

Ascension



10 Days

Pentecost



Early Church / Missionary Journeys

1. What is the connection between Acts and Luke?

Acts 1:1-2 and Luke 1:1-4

- ▶ Same author, believed to be Luke.
- ▶ Both written to Theophilus.
- ▶ “Luke” is the Part 1 - a narrative about Jesus.
“Acts” is Part 2 - a history of the early church and the first missionary journeys.

2. What do you learn about Luke from these cross-references?

Colossians 4:14

- ▶ He was likely with Paul when he wrote this letter. Luke was the beloved physician.

2 Timothy 4:11

- ▶ He was likely with Paul as he wrote this letter.

Philemon 24

- ▶ Luke was a fellow worker with Paul and others.

3. Who and what are verses 1-5 about?

- ▶ Jesus appeared to the eleven apostles and others for 40 days after His resurrection.
- ▶ Jesus gave evidence of who He was and the fact that He had risen from the dead.
- ▶ He spoke to them about the kingdom of God.

3. Who and what are verses 1-5 about?

He commanded them: not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise.

- ▶ The promise was that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Jesus contrasted this baptism with John's baptism of water.
- ▶ It would take place not many days from when Jesus said this.

4. What is the question and answer in verses 6-7?

- ▶ Q. Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?
- ▶ A. His answer was that they didn't need to know that yet.
 - ▶ All they needed to know was that the Father has fixed the times and epochs / seasons.

5. In Acts 1:8 Jesus puts the focused back on what was about to happen to them, what was that event?

They were soon When they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, when He came on them:

- ▶ They would receive power and be Jesus' witnesses
 - ▶ In Jerusalem
 - ▶ In Judea and Samaria
 - ▶ Even to the remotest part of the earth

(ESV—to the end of the earth)

Synonymous phrases in the Bible:

- ▶ Baptized with the Holy Spirit
- ▶ Holy Spirit comes upon you
- ▶ Clothed with power from on high

6. Let's look at some cross-references about the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:44-53

- ▶ When Jesus appeared to the disciples on the day of His resurrection, He told them about the promise of the Father. He said they would be clothed with power from on high.

6. Let's look at some cross-references about the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:15-17

- ▶ John the Baptist said one was coming who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.
 - ▶ **Baptized** - baptizō - “to immerse, submerge...to overwhelm”
 - ▶ **Fire** - pyros - “fire, combustion of material, bonfire, place of punishment - hell, cause to be ashamed”

6. Let's look at some cross-references about the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:17

- ▶ Fire in this passage refers to the unquenchable fire of judgment. Those who are not baptized with the Holy Spirit will be baptized with fire at Jesus' second coming.
- ▶ Fire is a symbol of judgement, Luke 3:7-9 and 17, failure to repent or being a Jew doesn't deliver one from the coming wrath.

6. Let's look at some cross-references about the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37-39

- ▶ Jesus spoke of the coming Holy Spirit. All who believe in Him receive His Spirit.
- ▶ But the Spirit wasn't given until Jesus was glorified. His glorification wasn't complete until He ascended to the Father.

7. What have you learned about power and being witnesses from Acts 1:8?

- ▶ The Holy Spirit empowers believers to be Jesus' witnesses.
 - ▶ Power—*dúnamis*—“inherent power”; “all the words derived from the stem *dúnahave* the meaning of being able, capable.”
 - ▶ Witnesses—*mártus*—“one who testifies”; “one who declares facts directly known to himself”
- ▶ This began in Jerusalem and spread to the end of the earth. Believers are still empowered by His Spirit to be His witnesses.

8. Let's look at some cross-references on this power and witness.

Luke 24:45-49

- ▶ Jesus opened His disciples' minds to understand the Scriptures, specifically about His suffering and resurrection. He told them about repentance for forgiveness proclaimed to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.
- ▶ He said they were the witnesses—the ones who heard and saw—of His death and resurrection.

8. Let's look at some cross-reference on this power and witness.

Matthew 28:18-20

- ▶ This also refers to Jesus sending His apostles to all nations, making disciples of others.

9. What is the order of events in verses 9-11?

- ▶ When Jesus finished talking
- ▶ Jesus was lifted-up and a cloud took him out of sight as the eleven apostles watched.
- ▶ Two men in white robes appear.
- ▶ They ask the “Men of Galilee” why they are looking into heaven? (Note: All but Judas were from Galilee)
- ▶ They said this Jesus will come in the same way as He went into heaven.

10. Let's focus again on verse 11. Why didn't the apostles need to look to heaven?

- ▶ The apostles didn't need to stand there continuing to look into the sky / heaven. Jesus would return the same way he left.
- ▶ They had work to do on earth.

11. What are the events and people recorded in verses 12-14?

- ▶ The apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's journey.
 - ▶ This distance had become 3,000 to 3,600 feet or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in Jesus' day.
- ▶ They went to the upper room.
- ▶ They were with one mind & accord continually devoted to prayer.
- ▶ Verse 14 tells who was with the eleven apostles.

Those in the upper room

Peter (Simon)	The women: possible list
John (son of Zebedee)	Mary Magdalene
James (son of Zebedee)	Mary (mother of James & Joseph)
Andrew (Peter's brother)	The mother of the sons of Zebedee
Philip	Salome
Thomas	Joanna
Bartholomew (Nathanael)	Mary the mother of Jesus
Matthew (Levi)	Jesus' brothers**
James (son of Alphaeus)	James, Joseph, Simon, Judas
Simon the Zealot	
Judas (son of James / Thaddaeus)	

12. What happens at this gathering of the disciples in verses 15-26?

- ▶ Verse 15 says about 120 believers were gathered.
- ▶ Peter stood and spoke to them about what must take place next.
- ▶ Peter says that scripture was fulfilled concerning Judas Iscariot as spoken by David.
 - ▶ Peter gives details of Judas' death.

12. What happens at this gathering of the disciples in verses 15-26?

- ▶ Peter simply declares that someone with the right qualifications is needed for the to take Judas's place.
- ▶ The requirements were:
 - ▶ Someone of was with them and Jesus from John's baptism until Christ's ascension.
 - ▶ He must be a witness of His resurrection

13. How did they select the new apostle in verses 23-26?

- ▶ Matthias was chosen by lot.
 - ▶ Proverbs 16:33 says the lot is decided by the Lord.
- ▶ The Greek does not actually use the word 'choose' at this point but reserves it until v. 24, where it's clear that the Lord himself must first choose and then demonstrate his choice.

14. What would you write as a possible chapter theme for Acts 1?