

THE DUST OFF THEIR FEET

*lessons from
the first church*

THE BOOK OF ACTS RETOLD BY BRIAN MCLAREN

COMMENTARY ESSAYS BY:

Chris Seay

ARTICLES BY:

David Capes	Tim Keel
Robert Creech	Evan Lauer
Greg Garrett	Kerry Shook
Andrew Jones	Chuck Smith, Jr.

the voice

A SCRIPTURE PROJECT TO REDISCOVER THE STORY OF THE BIBLE



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CONTRIBUTORS

The Dust Off Their Feet: Lessons from the First Church

SCRIPTURES RETOLD BY: Brian McLaren

COMMENTARY ESSAYS WRITTEN BY: Chris Seay

CONTRIBUTION TO ARTICLES BY:

David Capes
Robert Creech
Greg Garrett
Andrew Jones
Tim Keel
Evan Lauer
Chris Seay
Kerry Shook
Chuck Smith, Jr.

SCHOLARLY REVIEW BY:

David Capes
Darrell L. Bock

EDITORIAL REVIEW BY:

Maleah Bell
James F. Couch, Jr.
Marilyn Duncan
Amanda Haley
Kelly Hall
Merrie Noland

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voice

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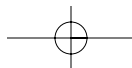
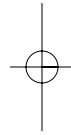
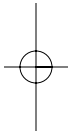


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PREFACE

the voice.
A Scripture project to rediscover the story of the Bible

Any literary project reflects the age in which it is written. **The Voice** is created for and by a church in great transition. Throughout the body of Christ, extensive discussions are ongoing about a variety of issues including style of worship, how we separate culture from our theology, and what is essential truth. In fact, we are struggling with what is truth. At the center of this discussion is the role of Scripture. This discussion is heating up with strong words being exchanged. Instead of furthering the division over culture and theology, it is time to bring the body of Christ together again around the Bible. Thomas Nelson Publishers and Ecclesia Bible Society together are developing Scripture products that foster spiritual growth and theological exploration out of a heart for worship and mission. We have dedicated ourselves to hearing and proclaiming God's voice through this project.

Previously most Bibles and biblical reference works were produced by professional scholars writing in academic settings. **The Voice** uniquely represents collaboration among scholars, pastors, writers, musicians, poets, and other artists. The goal is to create the finest Bible products to help believers experience the joy and wonder of God's revelation. Four key words describe the vision of this project:

- holistic // considers heart, soul, and mind
- beautiful // achieves literary and artistic excellence
- sensitive // respects cultural shifts and the need for accuracy
- balanced // includes theologically diverse writers and scholars

Uniqueness of *The Voice*

About 40 different human authors are believed to have been inspired by God to write the Scriptures. **The Voice** retains the perspective of the human writers. Most English translations attempt to even out the styles of the different authors in sentence structure and vocabulary. Instead, **The Voice** distinguishes sentence structure and vocabulary of each author. The heart of the project is retelling the story of the Bible in a form that is as fluid as modern literary works yet that

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remains true to the original manuscripts. First, accomplished writers create an English rendering; then, respected Bible scholars adjust the rendering to align the manuscript with the original texts. Attention is paid to the use of idioms, artistic elements, confusion of pronouns, repetition of conjunctives, modern sentence structure, and the public reading of the passage. In the process, the writer or scholar may adjust the arrangement of words or expand the phrasing to create an English equivalent.

To help the reader understand how the new rendering of a passage compares to the original manuscripts, several indicators are imbedded within the text. Italic type indicates words not directly tied to a dynamic translation of the original language. Material delineated by a screened box or set apart in a box expands on the theme. This portion is not taken directly from the original language. To avoid the endless repetition of simple conjunctives, dialog is formatted as a screenplay. The speaker is indicated, the dialog is indented, and quotation marks are not used. This helps greatly in the public reading of Scripture. Sometimes the original text includes exposition that interrupts the dialog. This is shown either as a stage direction immediately following the speaker's name or as part of the narrative section that immediately precedes the speaker's name. The screenplay format clearly shows who is speaking.

Throughout *The Voice*, other language devices improve readability. We follow the standard conventions used in most translations regarding textual evidence. *The Voice* is based on the earliest and best manuscripts from the original languages (Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic). When significant variations influence a reading, we follow the publishing standard by bracketing the passage and placing a note in the margin or at the bottom of the page while maintaining the traditional chapter and verse divisions. The footnotes reference quoted material and help the reader understand the translation for a particular word. Words that are borrowed from another language or words that are not common outside of the theological community (such as baptism, repentance, and salvation) are translated into more common terminology. For clarity, some pronouns are replaced with their antecedents. Word order and parts of speech are sometimes altered to help the reader understand the original passage.

ABOUT *THE VOICE* PROJECT

As retold, edited, and illustrated by a gifted team
of writers, scholars, poets, and storytellers

A New Way to Process Ideas

Chris Seay's vision for *The Voice* goes back 15 years to his early attempts to teach the Bible in the narrative as the story of God. As western culture has moved into what is now referred to as postmodernism, Chris observed that the way a new generation processes ideas and information raises obstacles to traditional methods of teaching biblical content. His desire has grown to open the Bible in ways that overcome these obstacles to people coming to faith. Instead of propositional-based thought patterns, people today are more likely to interact with events and individuals through complex observations involving emotions, thought processes, tactile experiences, and spiritual awareness. Much as in the parables of Jesus and in the metaphors of the prophets, narrative communication touches the whole person.

Hence, out of that early vision comes the need in a postmodern culture to present Scripture in a narrative form. The result is a retelling of the Scriptures: *The Voice*, not of words, but of meaning and experience.

The Timeless Narrative

The Voice is a fresh expression of the timeless narrative known as the Bible. Stories that were told to emerging generations of God's goodness by their grandparents and tribal leaders were recorded and assembled to form the Christian Scriptures. Too often, the passion, grit, humor, and beauty has been lost in the translation process. *The Voice* seeks to recapture what was lost.

From these early explorations by Chris and others has come *The Voice*: a Scripture project to rediscover the story of the Bible. Thomas Nelson Publishers and Ecclesia Bible Society have joined together to stimulate unique creative experiences and to develop Scripture products and resources to foster spiritual growth and theological exploration out of a heart for the mission of the church and worship of God.

About *The Voice* Project

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Traditional Translations

Putting the Bible into the language of modern readers has too often been a painstaking process of correlating the biblical languages to the English vernacular. The Bible is filled with passages intended to inspire, captivate, and depict beauty. The old school of translation most often fails at attempts to communicate beauty, poetry, and story. *The Voice* is a collage of compelling narratives, poetry, song, truth, and wisdom. *The Voice* will call you to enter into the whole story of God with your heart, soul, and mind.

A New Retelling

One way to describe this approach is to say that it is a “soul translation,” not just a “mind translation.” But “translation” is not the right word. It is really the retelling of the story. The “retelling” involves translation and paraphrase, but mostly entering into the story of the Scriptures and recreating the event for our culture and time. It doesn’t ignore the role of scholars, but it also values the role of writers, poets, songwriters, and artists. Instead, teams of scholars partner with a writer to blend the mood and voice of the original author with an accurate rendering of words of the text in English.

The Voice is unique in that it represents collaboration among scholars, writers, musicians, and other artists. Its goal is to create the finest Bible products to help believers experience the joy and wonder of God’s revelation. In this time of great transition within the church, we are seeking to give gifted individuals opportunities to craft a variety of products and experiences: a translation of the Scriptures, worship music, a worship film festival, biblical art, worship conferences, gatherings of creative thinkers, a Web site for individuals and churches to share biblical resources, and books derived from exploration during the Bible translation work.

The heart of each product within *The Voice* project is the retelling of the Bible story. To accomplish the objectives of the project and to facilitate the various products envisioned within the project, the Bible text is being translated. We trust that this retelling will be a helpful contribution to a fresh engagement with Scripture. The Bible is the greatest story ever told, but it often doesn’t read like it. *The Voice* brings the biblical narratives to life and reads more like a great novel than the traditional versions of the Bible that are seldom opened in contemporary culture.

Readable and Enjoyable

A careful process is being followed to assure that the spiritual, emotional, and artistic goals of the project are met. First, the retelling of the Bible has been designed to be readable and enjoyable by emphasizing the narrative nature of Scripture. Beyond simply providing a set of accurately translated individual words, phrases, and sentences, our teams were charged to render the biblical texts with sensitivity to the flow of the unfolding story. We asked them to see themselves not only as guardians of the sacred text, but also as storytellers, because we believe that the Bible has always been intended to be heard as the sacred story of the people of God. We assigned each literary unit (for example, the writings of John or Paul) to a team that included a skilled writer and biblical and theological scholars, seeking to achieve a mixture of scholarly expertise and literary skill.

Personal and Diverse

Second, as a consequence of this team approach, *The Voice* is both personal and diverse. God used about 40 human instruments to communicate His message, and each one has a unique voice or literary style. Standard translations tend to flatten these individual styles so that each book reads more or less like the others—with a kind of impersonal textbook-style prose. Some translations and paraphrases have paid more attention to literary style—but again, the literary style of one writer, no matter how gifted, can unintentionally obscure the diversity of the original voices. To address these problems, we asked our teams to try to feel and convey the diverse literary styles of the original authors.

Faithful

Third, we have taken care that *The Voice* is faithful and that it avoids prejudice. Anyone who has worked with translation and paraphrase knows that there is no such thing as a completely unbiased or objective translation. So, while we do not pretend to be purely objective, we asked our teams to seek to be as faithful as possible to the biblical message as they understood it together. In addition, as we partnered biblical scholars and theologians with our writers, we intentionally built teams that did not share any single theological tradition. Their diversity has helped each of them not to be trapped within his or her own individual preconceptions, resulting in a faithful and fresh rendering of the Bible.

About *The Voice* Project

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Stimulating and Creative

Fourth, we have worked hard to make *The Voice* both stimulating and creative. As we engaged the biblical text, we realized again and again that certain terms have conventional associations for modern readers that would not have been present for the original readers—and that the original readers would have been struck by certain things that remain invisible or opaque to modern readers. Even more, we realized that modern readers from different religious or cultural traditions would hear the same words differently. For example, when Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox readers encounter the word “baptism,” a very different set of meanings and associations come to mind than those that would arise in the minds of Baptist or Pentecostal readers. And a secular person encountering the text would have still different associations. The situation is made even more complex when we realize that *none* of these associations may resemble the ones that would have come to mind when John invited Jewish peasants and Pharisees into the water of the Jordan River in the months before Jesus began His public ministry. It is far harder than most people realize to help today’s readers recapture the original impact of a single word like “baptism.” In light of this challenge, we decided, whenever possible, to select words that would stimulate fresh thinking rather than reinforce unexamined assumptions. We want the next generation of Bible readers—whatever their background—to have the best opportunity possible to hear God’s message the way the first generation of Bible readers heard it.

Transformative

Finally, we desire that this translation will be useful and transformative. It is all too common in many of our Protestant churches to have only a few verses of biblical text read in a service, and then that selection too often becomes a jumping-off point for a sermon that is at best peripherally related to, much less rooted in, the Bible itself. The goal of *The Voice* is to promote the public reading of longer sections of Scripture—followed by thoughtful engagement with the biblical narrative in its richness and fullness and dramatic flow. We believe the Bible itself, in all its diversity and energy and dynamism, is the message; it is not merely the jumping-off point.

The various creations of the project bring creative application of commentary and interpretive tools. These are clearly indicated and separated from the Bible text that is drawn directly from traditional sources. Along with the creative

resources and fresh expressions of God's Word, the reader has the benefit of centuries of biblical research applied dynamically to our rapidly changing culture.

The products underway in *The Voice* include dynamic and interactive presentations of the critical passages in the life of Jesus and the early church, recorded musical presentation of Scripture originally used in worship or uniquely structured for worship, artwork commissioned from young artists, dramatized audio presentations from the Gospels and the Old Testament historical books, film commentary on our society using the words of Scripture, and exploration of the voice of each human author of the Bible.

The first product for *The Voice*, entitled *The Last Eyewitness: The Final Week*, released Spring 2006, follows Jesus through His final week of life on earth through the firsthand account of John the apostle. This book combines the drama of the text with the artwork of Rob Pepper into a captivating retelling of Jesus' final days.

Forthcoming projects include *The Voice of Matthew*, a retelling of the Gospel by Lauren Winner (author of *Girl Meets God* and *Real Sex*); *Eyewitness Live*, an audio dramatization of the Gospel of John; and *The Voice of Luke*, in which Luke sets the record straight with a doctor's analytical mind.

The Team

The team writing *The Voice* brings unprecedented gifts to this unique project. An award-winning fiction writer, an acclaimed poet, a pastor renowned for using art and narrative in his preaching and teaching, Greek and Hebrew authorities, and biblical scholars are all coming together to capture the beauty and diversity of God's Word.

Writers

The writers for *The Voice* who have contributed to *The Dust Off Their Feet: Lessons from the First Church* are:

Bible Text: Brian McLaren—internationally known speaker and author of ten books, including *A New Kind of Christian* and *A Generous Orthodoxy*.

Commentary Essays: Chris Seay—church planter, pastor, president of Ecclesia Bible Society, and internationally acclaimed speaker. His previous books include *The Gospel Reloaded* (coauthored with Greg Garrett), *The Gospel According to Tony Soprano*, and *Faith of My Fathers* (with his father and grandfather).

About *The Voice* Project

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Other writers for *The Voice* who contributed to the articles in *The Dust Off Their Feet* are:

David Capes—Chair of the Department of Christianity and Philosophy at Houston Baptist University.

Robert Creech—senior pastor of University Baptist Church of Houston, Texas, and author of articles in numerous journals and reference works.

Greg Garrett—professor of film and writing at Baylor University and author of several books, including *Free Bird* and *Cycling*.

Andrew Jones—pastor and international consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and DAWN Ministries.

Tim Keel—pastor of Jacob's Well in Kansas City, Missouri.

Evan Lauer—pastor of Coastlands Church of Pacific Beach, California, and a writer for *Planet* magazine.

Kerry Shook—senior pastor of Fellowship of The Woodlands of Houston, Texas.

Chuck Smith, Jr.—senior pastor of Capo Beach Calvary, Capistrano Beach, California, and author of three books, including *There Is A Season: Authentic, Innovative Ministry in Popular Culture*.

The two critical reviewers of *The Dust Off Their Feet* are:

David Capes, PhD—Chair of the Department of Christianity and Philosophy at Houston Baptist University. He has written several books, including *The Footsteps of Jesus in the Holy Land*.

Darrell L. Bock, PhD—Research Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, Elder Emeritus at Trinity Fellowship Church, Contributing Editor at *Christianity Today*, and author of commentaries on Mark, Luke, and Acts, as well as of a book on Jesus and Scripture.

Other writers for *The Voice*, who are working on forthcoming products, include:

Eric Bryant, pastor/author

Tara Leigh Cobble, singer/songwriter

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About *The Voice* Project

Don Chaffer, singer/songwriter, poet
Lori Chaffer, singer/songwriter, poet
Christena Graves, singer
Sara Groves, singer/songwriter
Amanda Haley, biblical archaeologist/editor
Charlie Hall, singer/songwriter
Kelly Hall, editor/poet
Justin Hyde, pastor/author
E. Chad Karger, counselor/author, pastor
Greg LaFollette, musician/songwriter
Phuc Luu, chaplain/adjunct instructor
Christian McCabe, pastor/artist
Donald Miller, author
Sean Palmer, pastor
Jonathan Hal Reynolds, poet
Robbie Seay, singer/songwriter
Allison Smythe, poet
Leonard Sweet, author
Phyllis Tickle, author/icon
Lauren Winner, lecturer/author
Seth Woods, singer/songwriter
Dieter Zander, pastor/author

Scholars

Biblical and theological scholars for *The Voice* include:

David Capes, PhD, department chair/professor
Alan Culpepper, PhD, dean/professor
Creig Marlowe, PhD, dean/professor
Peter H. Davids, PhD, pastor/professor
Jack Wisdom, JD, lawyer
Nancy de Claissé Walford, PhD, professor
Darrell Bock, PhD, professor
Dave Garber, PhD, professor
Joseph Blair, ThD, professor

About *The Voice* Project

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Kenneth Waters, Sr., PhD, professor
Peter Rhea Jones, Sr., PhD, pastor/professor
Troy Miller, PhD, professor
Felisi Sorgwe, PhD, pastor/professor

Artists

Art and images will be incorporated into many of the products that will provide a visual reference, source of meditation, and convey the splendor of God's story that cannot be captured in words. The first book, *The Last Eyewitness: The Final Week* contains numerous illustrations by Rob Pepper, an accomplished British artist.

Musicians

The passages meant for use in worship are being set to music with a number of music albums planned. The recordings themselves are experiences of collaboration and worship. A large studio was selected to allow up to 20 musicians to perform live, creating a truly dynamic sound. Most of the featured artists participated in many of the songs, making a diverse and rich sound. The spirit of the retelling of the story found in *The Voice* comes through in this unique collection of songs in a variety of styles and moods. The first CD, *Songs from the Voice, Vol. 1*, contains 13 original songs inspired by selected psalms from *The Voice*. The second CD, *Songs from the Voice, Vol. 2*, features music drawn from the same Scripture selections as *Handel's Messiah* and the unique retelling about Messiah in *The Voice*. The featured artists are:

Derek Webb	Jill Phillips with	Jill Paquette
The Robbie Seay Band	Waterdeep	Andrew Peterson
Jami Smith	Tyler Burkum	Steven Delopoulos
Sandra McCracken	Tara Leigh Cobble	Lori Chaffer
Seth Woods	Kendall Payne	Don Chaffer
Sara Groves	Andrew Osenga	
Maeve	Matt Wertz	

A Final Word

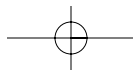
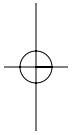
These times of transition in which we find ourselves have been described in many ways. It is widely agreed that both our secular and religious cultures—

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About *The Voice* Project

from the most liberal to the most conservative—have been deeply affected by a mind-set labeled “modern,” and we now are grappling with the appearance of a new cultural ethos often called “postmodern.” This transition has many dimensions: philosophical, artistic, technological, social, moral, economic, political, and theological. It is no surprise that in times of transition like these, fresh attention needs to be paid to how we translate, study, understand, teach, apply, and proclaim the vital message of the Scriptures.

During this unique time in the life of the church of Christ, there seems to be a change as to how we as the body of believers worship, fellowship, and communicate the truths of the gospel. ***The Voice*** appears at the point of impact where the modern church, with its tradition and stability, collides with the developing church of the future. We are working to help the church move through these changes and to focus its attention on God’s Word. In reality, ***The Voice*** is the product of a community of believers seeking to bring alive the story of the Bible. The goal is to reinvigorate followers of Christ with the Scriptures. Together we all are weaving together our talents to retell the story and create tools to use with the narrative communication of the Bible. Together we are rediscovering the story of the Bible.



INTRODUCTION

The Dust Off Their Feet: Lessons from the First Church

This book lives up to my greatest hopes that the Scriptures have the power to breathe new life into every generation. The Bible is as diverse as it is authoritative. Our canon is an anthology of unique and divinely inspired literature that must be translated with great care for the spirit, meaning, and literary style of each unique book. Previous generations have skillfully accepted the task of translation and given birth to wonderful translations and paraphrases. But until this project each Bible has carried an overt bias for homogeneity that is considered the status quo of modernity. The time has come for a rare collaboration between artists, poets, writers, pastors, and scholars that will celebrate the true literary diversity of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

There is no book in the Bible that compares in any way with the Book of Acts. It stands alone among all the narratives as a supernatural action-adventure. If this story were ever told on the silver screen, it would require actors of tremendous strength and presence to fill the sandals of Peter (for example, Bono) and Paul (for example, Russell Crowe). Brian McLaren has retold this spiritual adventure with the kind of power and grace that it deserves, and we have adapted his work to read like a screenplay.

Because of the importance of understanding the historical context in reading of the emergence of the first church, we selected a number of pastors and scholars to offer insight and to guide our reading. I am grateful to David Capes, Robert Creech, Greg Garrett, Tim Keel, Evan Lauer, and Chuck Smith, Jr., for their profound insight into this book.

It is also amazing to consider the impact this book has in radically different contexts that help to shape the values of the church. So I asked two of my very dear friends to reflect on places in this book that speak directly to their work.

1) Andrew Jones is a true postmodern prophet whose love for the gospel allows him to be heard equally by denominational leaders and kids who find their home on the streets of Height and Asbury in San Francisco. If you do not already follow his daily reflections at

Introduction

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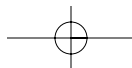
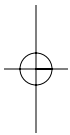
tallskinnykiwi.com, you will likely bookmark his blog after reading his reflections on the important shift to embrace Gentiles as true followers of God.

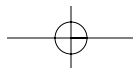
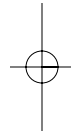
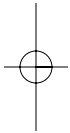
2) Kerry Shook is pastor of Fellowship of The Woodlands, a young mega-church in a north Houston suburb. His church has experienced amazing growth. Kerry and his wife, Chris, founded Fellowship of The Woodlands with eight people in 1993. In twelve years the church has grown to 13,000 in average attendance each Sunday. Kerry is recognized for his creative, practical, and relevant ministry. Fellowship of The Woodlands has been featured on Fox, NBC, and PBS. Kerry examines the lessons learned in Acts for a rapidly growing church from the perspective of a mega-church pastor.

So get ready to experience the supernatural power of God, public beatings, the beauty of true sharing, Christian community, imprisonments, powerful sermons, martyrdom, shipwreck, and almost everything in between. It's all here, it's all true, and it's anything but boring.

— Chris Seay

Section One // The Dust Off Their Feet





Acts 1

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

¹To a lover of God, Theophilus:

In my first book I recounted the events of Jesus' life—His actions, His teachings—²⁻³from the beginning of His life until He was taken up into heaven. After His great suffering and vindication, He showed His apostles that He was alive—appearing to them repeatedly over a period of 40 days, giving them many convincing proofs of His resurrection. As before, He spoke constantly of the kingdom of God. During these appearances, He had instructed His chosen messengers through the Holy Spirit, ⁴prohibiting them from leaving Jerusalem, but rather requiring them to wait there until they received what He called “the promise of the Father.”

Jesus | This is what you heard Me teach—⁵that just as John ritually cleansed* people with water, so you will be washed with the Holy Spirit very soon.

Scripture doesn't preserve Jesus' teachings during those mysterious meetings with the apostles after His death. We can only imagine the joy, curiosity, and amazement of the disciples as they hung on every word. What we do know is that His presence proved the reality of His bodily resurrection beyond any doubt and that He primarily wanted to talk to them about the kingdom of God. These words were

¹⁵ Literally, immersed, in a rite of initiation and purification

Acts 1

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undoubtedly intended to prepare each of them for this journey, a journey with a clear destination in sight—the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not a place, a belief system, a government, or a work of fiction—it's not even the heavenly kingdom. The kingdom of God is the rule of God in the hearts of His people. God is creating more than just the church out of this ragtag group of Christ-followers. He is birthing the kingdom of God, and the Holy Spirit is the midwife.

⁶When they had gathered *just outside Jerusalem at the Mount of Olives*, they asked Jesus,

Disciples | Is now the time, Lord—the time when You will reestablish Your kingdom in our land of Israel?

Jesus | ⁷The Father, on His own authority, has determined the ages and epochs of history, but you have not been given this knowledge. ⁸*Here's the knowledge you need:* you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you will be My witnesses, first here in Jerusalem, then beyond to Judea and Samaria, and finally to the farthest places on earth.

⁹As He finished this commission, He began to rise from the ground before their eyes until the clouds obscured Him from their vision. ¹⁰The apostles realized two men in white robes were standing among them.

Two Men | ¹¹You Galileans, why are you standing here staring up into the sky? This Jesus who is leaving you and

ascending to heaven will return in the same way you see Him departing.

¹²Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem—their short journey from the Mount of Olives was an acceptable Sabbath Day’s walk.

¹³⁻¹⁴Back in the city, they went to the room where they were staying—a second-floor room. This whole group devoted themselves to constant prayer with one accord: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot), Judas (son of James), a number of women including Mary (Jesus’ mother), and some of Jesus’ brothers.

¹⁵As the disciples prayed, Peter stood among the group of about 120 people and made this proposal:

Peter | ¹⁶⁻¹⁷My friends, everything in the Hebrew Scriptures had to be fulfilled, including what the Holy Spirit foretold through David about Judas. *As you know*, Judas was one of us and participated in our ministry until he guided the authorities to arrest Jesus. ¹⁸(He was paid handsomely for his betrayal, and he bought a field with the blood money. But he died on that land—falling so that his abdomen burst and his internal organs gushed out. ¹⁹News of this death spread to everyone in Jerusalem, so Judas’s property is known as Hakeldama, which means “field of blood.”) ²⁰In this way, one of *David’s* psalms was fulfilled: “May their camps be bleak, with not one left in any tent.”* But the psalm

1:20 Psalm 69:25-26

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also includes these words: “Let his position of oversight be given to another.”* ²¹So we need to determine his replacement from among the men who have been with us during all of the Lord Jesus’ travels among us—²²from His ritual cleansing* by John until His ascension. We need someone to join us as a witness of Jesus’ resurrection.

²³The group put forward two men: Joseph (who was also known as Barsabbas or Justus) and Matthias.

Disciples | ²⁴Lord, You know everyone’s heart. Make it clear to us which of these two is Your choice ²⁵to take on this ministry as an apostle, replacing Judas who went his own way to his own destination.

²⁶Then they drew lots, and the lot fell to Matthias, so he was added to the 11 apostles *to reconstitute the twelve*.

*T*he Creator of heaven and earth is orchestrating a redemptive story that will radically change the course of history. The most significant supernatural event in the history of this newly formed church will be the filling of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, God will direct the church’s growth. But how did the early church make important decisions before the Holy Spirit descended on them?

With much thought and prayer?

1:20 Psalm 109:8

1:22 Literally, immersion, an act of repentance

By a carefully appointed committee?

With a democratic vote?

No. They left their decisions up to the providential leading of God. They called it "drawing lots." To seek God's direction, Joseph and Matthias most likely wrote their names on scraps; then someone drew the replacement's name out of a bag. What seems to us like a 50/50 chance was, in fact, God's way of imparting His will. You see, the disciples weren't putting their faith in "chance." They were putting their faith in a God who lives. And this living God wasn't distant; He was a player in their lives, active when His people sought Him and His will. They believed that God directed the process, start to finish, and determined whose name was drawn to join the eleven. When they drew lots, these early believers were using a centuries-old method to discern God's will. But with the filling of the Holy Spirit, the communication from God became more direct, and the drawing of lots was obsolete.