

Session 3 The Waiting Company and Judas Numbered with the Twelve

Acts: The Book That Explains Everything

Session 3 | Acts 1:12-17



Before You Read

Big idea: Acts 1:12-17 shows the apostles returning to Jerusalem in obedience, the waiting company continuing in prayer and Peter beginning to address Judas's vacancy before Pentecost.

How to use this guide: Read each KJV verse first. Then mark what the verse says before deciding what it means doctrinally.

Four words to keep watching

- **Returned** - The apostles obey the command to wait in Jerusalem.

- **Continued** - The waiting company remains together in prayer before Pentecost.
- **Scripture** - Peter treats Judas's fall and replacement as matters already addressed in the Psalms.
- **Numbered** - Judas held a real place among the twelve, so his fall left a real vacancy.

A simple right-division reminder: Acts 1 is still before Pentecost, before Saul's conversion, and before the revelation of the mystery through Paul. The passage is still in the twelve-apostle, kingdom-witness setting.

Acts 1:12

Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

What does the passage say?

- The apostles returned to Jerusalem.
- They came from the mount called Olivet.
- Luke notes that Olivet was a sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem.

Words to notice

- **Then returned** - They obeyed the command of Acts 1:4.
- **Jerusalem** - The city remains central at this point in Acts.

- **Mount called Olivet** - The ascension is tied to a real location.
- **A sabbath day's journey** - A short, recognized distance in Jewish practice.

Cross-references worth marking

- Luke 24:52-53 - After the ascension they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.
- Zechariah 14:4 - The mount of Olives is connected to the Lord's future return.
- Acts 1:4 - Jesus had commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem.

Do not miss

- The apostles are not leaving Jerusalem to begin a Gentile mission. They return to Jerusalem because the Lord told them to wait there.

Acts 1:13

And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

What does the passage say?

- The apostles entered the city and went to an upper room.
- Luke lists the eleven apostles.
- Judas Iscariot is no longer included.
- Judas Iscariot is absent, creating the issue Peter begins to address in this passage.

Words to notice

- **Upper room** - A place of gathering and lodging.
- **Peter...Judas the brother of James** - Luke names the remaining apostles.

- **Simon Zelotes** - Simon the Zealot.
- **Judas the brother of James** - The text simply says “Judas of James.” The KJV supplies “brother,” while the ESV and others supply “son.” The “brother” tradition goes well back into early English translation. If “brother” is correct, it raises the possibility that James the son of Alphaeus and his brother Jude wrote the New Testament books of James and Jude, though there is no tradition supporting that suggestion.

Cross-references worth marking

- Luke 6:13-16 - Luke’s earlier list of the twelve.
- Matthew 10:2-4 - Matthew’s apostolic list.
- John 14:22 - Judas, not Iscariot, asks the Lord a question.
- Acts 1:17 - Judas had been numbered with the apostles.

Do not miss

- The named group is still the kingdom-apostle company. Paul is not present, and the body of Christ is not being revealed in this room.

Acts 1:14

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

What does the passage say?

- The apostles continued together with one accord.
- They continued in prayer and supplication.
- Women were present with them.
- Mary the mother of Jesus was present.
- Jesus’ brethren were present.

Words to notice

- **Continued** - They remained steadfast during the waiting period.
- **One accord** - Shared purpose and unity.
- **Prayer and supplication** - Dependence on God while

waiting for the promised provision.

- **His brethren** - The Lord’s brothers, who had not always believed during His earthly ministry, are now with the believing company.

Cross-references worth marking

- John 7:5 - Jesus’ brethren did not believe on Him during His earthly ministry.
- 1 Corinthians 15:7 - The risen Christ was seen of James.
- Acts 2:1 - They are together in one accord when Pentecost comes.
- Acts 4:24 - The early Jerusalem believers lift up their voice to God with one accord.

Do not miss

- Mary is present among the waiting believers, but she is not presented as an object of prayer, a mediator, or the head of the group. The text simply places her with the company waiting on God.

Acts 1:15

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

What does the passage say?

- Peter stands up during the waiting days between the ascension and Pentecost.
- He speaks in the midst of the disciples.
- Luke notes that the gathered company numbered about one hundred and twenty.

Words to notice

- **In those days** - The waiting period just described in Acts 1:12-14.
- **Peter stood up** - Peter acts as a spokesman among the

Jerusalem company.

- **Disciples** - The larger believing group, not only the eleven apostles.
- **Number of names** - A way of counting the gathered persons.

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 1:13-14 - The apostles and other believers were gathered in prayer.
- Luke 22:31-32 - The Lord had spoken to Peter about strengthening his brethren.
- Acts 2:14 - Peter will again stand with the eleven and speak at Pentecost.

Do not miss

- Peter's leadership here is real, but the passage does not make him the head of a worldwide church. He speaks in a Jerusalem, kingdom-apostle setting before Pentecost.

Acts 1:16

Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

What does the passage say?

- Peter addresses the gathered believers as "Men and brethren."
- He says Scripture had to be fulfilled.
- He says the Holy Ghost spoke by David.
- The Scripture concerned Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus.

Words to notice

- **This scripture** - Peter will quote the Psalms in verse 20.
- **Must needs** - Divine necessity after Judas had committed the treason. Once Judas placed himself in the traitor's role, the Scripture could not fail.

- **Holy Ghost by the mouth of David** - David wrote, but the Holy Ghost spoke through him.
- **Guide** - Judas led the arresting party to Jesus.

Cross-references worth marking

- Psalm 41:9 - A familiar friend lifts up his heel against the Messiah.
- Luke 22:47-48 - Judas betrays the Lord with a kiss.
- John 13:18 - Jesus connects Judas's betrayal with Scripture.
- 2 Peter 1:21 - Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Do not miss

- Peter speaks after Judas had betrayed the Lord. Judas put himself into the place described by Psalm 41:9, and now the Davidic enemy passages necessarily apply to him.
- Judas was not a victim of prophecy. He became "guide" to the arresting party, and Scripture reads his treason for what it was.

Acts 1:17

For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

What does the passage say?

- Judas had been numbered with the apostles.
- Judas had obtained part of their ministry.
- His fall is serious because he held a real place among the twelve.

Words to notice

- **Numbered with us** - Judas was counted among the apostolic company.

- **Part** - A share or portion.
- **This ministry** - The apostolic ministry given to the twelve.

Cross-references worth marking

- Luke 6:13-16 - Judas Iscariot is listed among the twelve.
- John 6:70-71 - Jesus knew Judas would betray Him.
- Matthew 10:1-4 - Judas was included in the apostolic listing and mission.

Do not miss

- Judas was not an outsider pretending to be near the apostles. He held a real numbered place, and his fall left a real vacancy.

Text And Translation Helps

- In Acts 1:12-17, no major Textus Receptus vs critical text issue changes the doctrine of the passage.
- Acts 1:12 uses “a sabbath day’s journey,” a Jewish distance expression that confirms the nearness of Olivet to Jerusalem.
- In Acts 1:13, “Judas the brother of James” can also be understood as “Judas the son of James” depending on how the relationship is supplied in English. The important point is that this is not Judas Iscariot.
- In Acts 1:14, the KJV includes “and supplication.” Some critical-text translations omit those words and simply say they were devoting themselves to prayer. Either reading leaves the same scene: the company is waiting together before God.
- In Acts 1:15, the KJV reads “disciples.” Many critical-text translations read “brethren” or “brothers.” The difference does not change the scene: Peter speaks among the gathered believers in Jerusalem.

Common Ideas To Test

- “Peter is acting as the head of a worldwide church.”
 - Test it by Acts 1:15: Peter stands as spokesman among a gathered Jerusalem company before Pentecost.
- “Judas was never really part of the apostolic number.”
 - Test it by Acts 1:17: he was numbered with the apostles and had obtained part of the ministry.
- “Mary should be treated as the mediator of the waiting company.”
 - Test it by Acts 1:14: Mary is present with the waiting believers, but no authority or mediating role is assigned to her.
- “This is already the revelation of the body of Christ.”
 - Test it by Acts 1:12-17: they are in Jerusalem, waiting for a promised prophetic event, before Paul’s conversion and before the revelation of the mystery.

Session Summary

- The apostles returned from Olivet to Jerusalem in obedience to Christ.
- The eleven apostles gathered in an upper room.
- The waiting company continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.
- Mary, the women, and the Lord's brethren were present among the believers.
- Peter stood among about one hundred and twenty disciples during the waiting days.
- Peter began to explain Judas's fall by Scripture spoken by the Holy Ghost through David.
- Judas had been numbered with the apostles and had held a real part of their ministry.

For Long-Term Study

Mark these themes as Acts unfolds

- Jerusalem remains central at the start of Acts.
- The twelve-apostle witness belongs to Israel's kingdom setting.
- Peter leads in early Acts before Paul appears.
- Scripture interprets the events, including Judas's fall.
- The body of Christ and the dispensation of grace should be learned from Paul's later revelation, not read backward into Acts 1.

Questions to keep asking

1. Where are the apostles?
2. Who is gathered with them?
3. What has Christ told them to wait for?
4. How does Peter use Scripture?
5. Has Paul yet been saved or sent?

One sentence to remember

Acts 1:12-17 shows the Jerusalem company waiting in obedience while Peter begins to explain Judas's real apostolic vacancy from Scripture.