

Who Are “THEM,” and Why Do “THEY” Matter?

Acts In Depth #1 – Acts 1:1-14

¹ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the **APOSTLES WHOM** He had chosen, ³ to **WHOM** He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by **THEM** during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded **THEM** not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “**YOU** have heard from Me; ⁵ “for John truly baptized with water, but **YOU** shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶ Therefore, when **THEY** had come together, **THEY** asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ And He said to **THEM**, “It is not for **YOU** to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ “But **YOU** shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon **YOU**; and **YOU** shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while **THEY** watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while **THEY** looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by **THEM** in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “**MEN** of Galilee, why do **YOU** stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from **YOU** into heaven, will so come in like manner as **YOU** saw Him go into heaven.”

¹² Then **THEY** returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. ¹³ And when **THEY** had entered, **THEY** went up into the upper room where **THEY** were staying: **Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James.** ¹⁴ **THESE** all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

1. Who Is “Them”? The Apostles

- Acts 1:1-14 – The APOSTLES → Men of Galilee → Named
- Matt 28:16-20 – A subtle error with great impact to the church

2. Why Does It Matter? Who Did Jesus Command?

SOME NOTABLE DIFFERENCES

- Determines if Jesus defined church leadership – or not.**
 - The church was placed under the apostles’ leadership
 - Church designed with structure (1 Tim 3:14-15)
 - Training and maturity | character qualification (1 Tim 3:1ff)
- Defines the nature of the local church – or not.**
 - An inter-dependent group or independent contractors?
 - A body or just a bunch of cells? (1 Cor 12; Rom 12)
- Indicates if there is responsibility and accountability – or not.**
 - Why pick 12 if everyone is responsible equally?
- Emphasizes the need for thorough training – or not.**
 - Why did Jesus train the Twelve more than others?
 - Why 3 years of intensive, progressive training?
- Differentiates between gender responsibilities – or not.**
 - Who did Jesus choose for apostles?
 - Who are defined as potential leaders in the church?
 - From Gen 1 to Revelation – gender is significant aspect of home, church, family, government, business
 - Who were the first “missionaries” sent out from Antioch?
- Suggests age and maturity prerequisites for service – or not.**
 - Who did Jesus choose for apostleship? (age...)

REGARDING THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES (AND PROPHETS)

- Acts identifies Apostles as apostles, adult males, & by names.
- Eph 2:19-22 – Foundation of the Apostles (not everyone)
- Eph 4:11-13 – Specific leaders are identified to lead
- Not apostolic **succession**; Rather apostolic **foundation**
 - Directed by their leadership, divine authority, and decisions
 - Directed by their direct revelation from God (early church)
 - Directed by their written revelation from God (Eph 2:20)
 - Directed by the God-given leadership structure (Eph 4:11ff)

Jesus directly commissioned the APOSTLES as foundational, authoritative leaders of the soon-to-be future church.

Through His working through His APOSTLES, Jesus established the foundation for local church order, leadership qualifications, authority structure, accountability, and reaffirmed gender roles.