



1 | ACTS 1:1-11

CLOTHED WITH POWER

If you get ahold of the full orb ed discipleship in the Spirit that God has for you, you can expect global reverberations.

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One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. ⁷Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! ⁸You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek."
—Psalm 27:4, 7-8

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Breathe on Me Breath of God
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet from the Welcome Center if you are visiting with us.

GIVING: Please give a love offering to David and Yadi Mead. Mark your envelope or Zelle: Mead love offering.

You can still give over Zelle through your bank with no fees.

Use secretary@livinghopechurch.net.

We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center

Verse: “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.” – Proverbs 11:24-25

LIFE GROUPS: LIFE Groups begin the week of February 7. If you don't have a life group, look on the front page of our web site for a group. If you already have one, see your group leader to see where you are meeting, or if it is online. Most groups meet Wednesdays at 7pm

LADIES' BIBLE STUDIES: Cindy Klikas leads a Bible study for women online at 10am every Wednesday. If you need the Zoom link, please email or text Cindy. Nicole Andrews also has a Ladies' Bible Study every other Thursday at 7pm. If you are interested in joining, email or text Nicole.

Introduction

We begin a new series in the book of Acts called “Life on Life Discipleship.” Our title this morning is: “Clothed with Power”.

We begin a **new series** in the book of Acts. The entire book of Acts is how the whole world was transformed by a small group of people who were committed to being true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were **empowered to climb out of their pain** and sin and live in the resurrection power of Jesus. There was an incredible change that took place in all the disciples in the first two chapters of Acts.

The **Roman Empire was slowly falling apart**, and there was a small group near the Mediterranean Sea that would turn the world upside down. That's how God always works in history. Infinite power through weak vessels. In Acts it started with 120 gathered in an upper room for prayer. It turned the world upside down. That's how it always begins.

The Great Awakening in Britain

Something similar happened in the middle of the 1700s in France and Britain. Society in Europe was falling apart. The advances in the Industrial Revolution had just begun. The tensions between rich and poor was a powder keg. In **France** the people turned to civil war, and there was the bloody revolution. So many lives were lost. *Les Misérables* depicts some of that revolution.

In **Britain** something else happened. Historians now pretty much concede that what happened *instead* of a bloody revolution was something that's called the **Great Awakening**.

In the first few decades of the Great Awakening, millions (nobody knows exactly how many), a fifth to a sixth of the entire population of the British Isles, found themselves converted and swept up into the churches as true believers, born again! It also spread into **America** under the ministry of Jonathan Edwards.

After that, the next few decades saw a tremendous amount of social healing, and here's why. The power that fell on Pentecost fell on Britain and America. Rich and poor were transformed. The rich became just and generous with their resources. The poor became hard working by the Spirit's power. It turned **Britain** upside down for good. Meanwhile **France** languished in secular humanistic darkness.

The converts of the Great Awakening abolished **the slave trade in the British Empire**. Instead of the economy tanking, the economy boomed. There was a reform of the child labor laws. There was a huge increase in literacy. Why? Because the rich and the poor were changed by the Spirit of God. God, through the Gospel of Christ, **poured out his Spirit on all flesh**, once **again**, just as he had so many times before.

The Spirit of God is in the business of renewing entire societies of people. Most recently, it happened in Britain. It happened several times in **America**. What preceded these awakenings? Just like Pentecost, small, unknown groups of believers were praying.

A Great Awakening in Rome

The **first of all the Great Awakenings**, occurred in the Roman Empire, in the province of Judea, in the city of Jerusalem. It's the prototype of all true awakenings and revivals.

Remember that little group that the Spirit fell on? When the first awakening began, the church began! And this little group of people had:

- no political power,
- no educational power,
- no cultural power, and
- no economic power

Yet within two centuries it had swept up **millions of people** in the Roman Empire. It gave them a joy and peace they'd never known.

Christians became the **leading force in a Roman society that was falling apart**, so that by the third century the emperor had to acknowledge that this was a Christian society, because it was the Christians and the Christians alone who were holding that world together.

There was one, who gathered the eyewitnesses of this first Great Awakening, and wrote about it. It's **Dr. Luke**, who wrote the book of Acts.¹ I wonder if God's desire in studying the

¹ Timothy J. Keller. "Many Convincing Proofs," *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013), preached October 12, 2003 on Acts 1:1-11.

book of Acts for us as a congregation is to bring **a new spiritual outpouring** upon the families of this nation. Will you pray that this will happen as I preach the Word?

The Acts of Jesus continued

The book of Acts is really **volume 2** of Luke's first book, called the Gospel of Luke, which bears his name. The book of Acts has traditionally been called 'The Acts of the **Apostles**', but in truth we should really think of it as 'The Acts of **Jesus** (II)' since it is the Acts that Jesus began in his life that is being carried out through his church.² This is really the acts of Jesus continued through his church, and through you today.

STRUCTURE OF ACTS

How is the world turned upside down in the book of Acts? The structure of Acts tells the story. We could look at it in a couple of ways.

A Geographic Outline

First, you have the promise of Christ, which is a geographic outline of how the Spirit moves on an anointed people. We see the power of the Spirit from a **geographical perspective**.

Acts 1:8 | But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

So there's the geographic outline. In Acts you see the Gospel move in power first in Jerusalem, then in all Israel (Judea and Samaria), and finally to the uttermost parts of the earth. And here's what I want you to understand.

Key thought: If you get ahold of the full orbbed discipleship in the Spirit that God has for you, you can expect global reverberations.

When you understand the power that you can have in the Holy Spirit, you will not want to live a life less than being "clothed with power". The only way to this abundant life of full discipleship is humility.

Disciple means "learner". Without the humility of a child, you cannot be Christ's disciple.

With a tender spirit, and a teachable attitude, you can follow Christ with full power and victory. We can be discipled and disciple each other. We see this in **Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria (all Israel), and to the uttermost parts of the earth**. Let God do what he wants. Surrender to him completely. *You be the clay; let him be the potter*. And you will see full power through you to the uttermost parts of the world. That's the message of Acts from a **geographical perspective**.

A Biographic Outline

But there is a second outline, a **bibliographical perspective** that people have noticed, and that is one of personalities. You have two primary personalities in the book of Acts: **Peter** who is the apostle to the Jews, and **Paul** who is the apostle to the Gentiles.

² Tom Wright, *Acts for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-12* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2008), 2.

The first part of Acts deals a lot with Peter's ministry (1-12) and the last part of Acts (13-28) covers Paul's ministry.

How to Change the World

We may only cover the first part of Acts (1-13) before we take a break. This is a great series to talk about **the world we live in today**. So many have asked me questions: what should we do in our current political environment?

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." —John 18:36

I like what John MacArthur said recently, commenting on Jesus' words.

Nothing that happens in our earthly political systems has any effect on the Kingdom of God... Even if we had the most ideal human government, it could ultimately do nothing to advance God's kingdom. The kingdom of God is in no way linked to the kingdoms of men. Christ's kingdom is not advanced in the realm of human politics. This is what sets the church apart. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." —John MacArthur³

I believe that. **It's not what the secular government does that advances the Kingdom. It's what you, the church, does that changes the world!** And what we are going to see in our study of Acts is that as we live in the Spirit's power for life-on-life discipleship, our lives are going to change. The local church is going to change. Your community is going to change. Then the world will change. That's the idea of the book of Acts, and you have that DNA in verse 8.

Acts 1:8 | But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

As the Spirit has more hold of us, he will have more hold of the world around us. As Christians grow in Christ and utilize the power of the Spirit in holiness and fellowship and discipleship, the church expands. The Church matures.

Acts is a book with a wonderful theme, **tracing the work of the Holy Spirit through the birth, infancy, and adolescence of the Church.**⁴

Ok, so let's get started. Before we can look at Acts 1, you need to understand the context and background of what's going on. Jesus the Messiah was crucified. In the middle of it all, Peter is just out of control. He's denied the Lord. Of course, we remember the first 13 chapters of Acts revolve a lot around Peter's story. So **as we look at Peter's story before Acts, I want you to think about your story.** Have you ever thought your life was out of control?

PETER'S STORY

Let's jump into Peter's life and see the mess he's made.

³ John MacArthur. Comments at the morning service of Grace Community Church of Sun Valley, California. 17 January 2021. Accessed 23 January 2021, <https://www.gracechurch.org/sermons/17225>

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 13.

Peter's denied his Lord and Savior three times. He's a royal failure. Peter says, basically, "I'm done. I can't do this apostle thing anymore. I'm disqualified." Have you ever felt disqualified? I think Peter really thought what he did was unforgivable. Think about it. The Messiah that he and all Israel had waited for century after century after millennia had finally come to earth, and in his greatest hour of need, Peter fell apart. He was seized with fear. "I don't know him!" "I don't know the man!" "I swear I don't know that Jesus of Nazareth." Three times.

Peter had sworn he would die before he would ever deny him. When they arrested Jesus, he cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Malchus. But now he'd denied the Lord three times! He was done. He feels unforgivable. "I'm going back to fishing," he says. "I can't be a disciple anymore. I've failed." Have you ever felt that way? But of course, you know who Jesus chooses to preach Pentecost.

Remember what Jesus did? The empathy that flows from Jesus is amazing. He just looks deeply into Peter's eyes and asks him three times: "Do you love me?" Peter basically says, "My actions say I don't love you, but I cannot lie. I love you!" Three times. "I love you. I love you. I love you." Jesus says: "You are supremely useful to me. Feed my sheep!" (Jn 21:15-17). And he preaches Pentecost.

Maybe you feel like the person in the letter I'm about to read. It's an imaginary letter, but it is similar to questions I receive from time to time.

Dear Pastor, I'm confused. No. Not about my salvation. I know I'm saved. I've received Christ's grace by faith. What I'm confused about is life. Not only mine, but the Christians around me. I look around and see saints who struggle just like sinners. Our relationships are not just messy, but often a mess. Our homes are sometimes harsh and cold places. At times we seem to handle suffering little differently than those who do not know Christ. I see Christians who have no sense of who they are in Christ. They seem to sway between self-hatred and self-sufficiency.

What gives? What is the gospel sufficient for? Heaven only? If grace is so sufficient, then why do we seem to be so powerless in our lives and relationships? So, is Christianity all I need or what? If Christ is sufficient, do I really need something more? And if the gospel is sufficient not only for eternal life but for daily life now, then why doesn't it seem sufficient to me and the rest of us? I know you're busy, but if you could find time to reply, I sure would appreciate it. Love, Brother Theophilus⁵

I think Luke was answering questions like this in his accounting of the book of Acts. How is it possible that someone so weak could change the world? We all feel like Peter at first. We have to look for that touch and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

In our study of the book of Acts, we are going to take a journey of discipleship of the Spirit and the Word. A disciple is a **learner**. We are going to hopefully **learn where and how we get the power to live** the Christian life, to be disciples and to be disciple-makers.

⁵ Robert Kellemen. *Gospel-Centered Counseling* (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 25-26.

1. KINGDOM TEACHING (1:1-3)

Now one of the most important things about discipleship in the Kingdom of God is sound teaching. You have to know who God is. Who is this Savior, Messiah? Who is this Spirit being poured out? Do you know your God? Do you know him?

THE AUTHOR AND RECIPIENT

Tradition tells us that Luke, Paul's beloved physician and companion in his missionary journeys, is the author of this book. He's writing to a nobleman named Theophilus.

Acts 1:1-2 | In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

Dr. Luke

Saint Luke, also known as Luke the Evangelist, is the author of both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts.

Luke wrote more of the New Testament than anyone else—even the Apostle Paul.

Luke wasn't an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry, but he lived during the first century, and according to his own writings, he "carefully investigated everything from the beginning" (Lk 1:1–4). Luke is a physician, but he's also an evangelist. He cares about the soul of a certain high ranking nobleman, it seems, named Theophilus. Luke's careful investigation had him talking to all of the apostles and other eyewitnesses. In total, Luke has a two volume work. Part 1 is the Gospel of Luke and Part 2 is the book of Acts. Luke's Gospel presents the life of Jesus incarnate *on earth*, and the book of Acts presents the life of Jesus *through his church*.

Theophilus

Who's Theophilus? We know a few things. He might have been wealthy. He might have been a person of nobility, because in Luke 1 he's called, "... most excellent Theophilus ..." which is a title (Lk 1:3). Luke is actually making a case to him about why Christianity is true. ⁶

Luke is writing to explain how the God's Kingdom is expanding through the people of the kingdom, like you and me. **How in the world does something begin so small, with 12 men and a teacher, and it spreads throughout the whole world? What is that powerful? The Kingdom with the King at the helm! Jesus is alive and at work!**

⁶ Keller. "Many Convincing Proofs," *ibid*.

40 DAYS OF KINGDOM TEACHING

Luke tells us where the apostles got their teaching. They learned a lot during the three years they were with Jesus, but it seems they learned infinitely more during Jesus' post-resurrection teaching! Luke is the **only scriptural writer** who tells us that Christ's post-resurrection ministry covered forty days. It's truly fascinating.

Acts 1:3 | He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Evidently Jesus appeared at intervals, coming and going from Heaven at will, showing miraculous signs and instructing his disciples "about the kingdom of God." What was this kingdom teaching like? It was Jesus revealing himself in all the Scriptures so that their hearts burned.

Luke's record of the stunning encounter on the road to Emmaus is a typical example. Christ met the two followers in an altered physical form and "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Lk 24:27), so that they later said (Lk 24:32), "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" The picture of those forty days is one of enraptured excitement, unfolding mystery, suspense, and anticipation.⁷ All that God promised in the Old Testament regarding the nations would start to take place. The kingdom of God would be set up on earth, in the hearts of people from every nation under heaven.

Dear saint, Christ is risen from the dead, and he teaches you by his Holy Spirit. Let him teach you about the Kingdom and lordship of Christ over all things in your life. Embrace your great God!

Discipleship Principle: You can either look to yourself and shrink, or you can embrace our great God, and let him grow your heart. You will never grow in discipleship if you are looking to self.

2. KINGDOM POWER (1:4-8)

Let's go back to Peter. Remember him? **Remember his fear? He denied Christ.** Remember his despair? But **something radical happened to change the character of Peter** and the other disciples. The resurrection and the teaching of Christ was absolutely essential and foundational, but as Christ ascended, they still had no power. They had to wait.

THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

Acts 1:4-5 | And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you

⁷ Hughes. *Acts*, 14.

heard from me;⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Luke wants us to get excited. In the days of John the Baptist, he told of Jesus’ promise to baptize his people with the Holy Spirit.

I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. —Matthew 3:11

Jesus had reminded them that something amazing was about to happen during his post-resurrection ministry.

And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city [of Jerusalem] until you are clothed with power from on high. —Luke 24:49

Now the promised Holy Spirit is about to be sent. Jesus is about to ascend to heaven in a few days, 40 days from Resurrection Sunday. So Jesus is saying here in Acts 1:5, “**This is going to happen in just a few days** — you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. John immersed you in water; I am going to immerse you in the Holy Spirit. John drenched you in water; I am going to drench you in the Holy Spirit.”⁸

Didn’t they have the Spirit already?

The question always comes up, well didn’t they have the Spirit of God already? Hadn’t Jesus told Nicodemus that he should be “born of the Spirit” (Jn 3:5-6)? Yes! The Spirit was with them. The saints of the Old Testament had to be born of the Spirit, for sure, in order to enter the Kingdom of God. That’s Jesus’ teaching.

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. —John 14:16-17

Those disciples knew the Spirit of God *with* them, but he was about to dwell *in* them. So the ministry of the Spirit is increased in a great way at Pentecost. The Spirit lived with the saints of the Old Testament, but he would soon be in them at Pentecost.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

So what is this baptism of the Holy Spirit? What is this promise of the Father? Peter explains what is happening in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, he says in verses 16–17:

But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young

⁸ John Piper. “You Will Be Baptized with the Holy Spirit” Sermon from Acts 1:4-5. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethlehem Baptist Church, September 23, 1990) Accessed 23 January 2021. <https://desiringgod.org/messages/you-will-be-baptized-with-the-holy-spirit>

men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” —Acts 2:16-17

So when Jesus said in Acts 1:4, “Wait for the promise of the Father,” “Wait for the baptism of the Spirit,” what he is saying is, “**Wait till the promise of Joel 2 is fulfilled.**” I say that to help us understand that this baptism is not merely for the Apostles. It is for all flesh. Anyone who believes in Jesus.

So what is this baptism? John Piper helps us with his comments.

Being baptized with the Holy Spirit (the way Luke means it) is not the same as being born again or being united to Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. Well, what then does Jesus mean in Acts 1:5? I think when he says you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, he means you will receive extraordinary power for Christ-exalting ministry. —John Piper (commenting on Acts 1:5)⁹

Certainly, the Spirit comes to convert and indwell. But **the 120 who are waiting for the Spirit are already converted. The Spirit is with them.** Of course, the Spirit is going to convert many at Pentecost. But the emphasis of Pentecost is being empowered—clothed with power—for Christ exalting ministry.

Wasn't Pentecost Unique?

In some ways the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is a unique event, because it is the birth of the New Testament church. But in another way, it is something that we all have: empowerment. And we need that outpouring over and over and over again, on all flesh, in very generation.

Pentecost was a unique experience, in that it was **the inaugural event of the church,** but it was **not unique in that the power being poured out is the continuing event of the church.** The power of Pentecost has not ceased. God intends to clothe all of us in that same power of Pentecost.

It was unique in that it was the **first time it happened.** It was unique in the miracles that occurred, **precisely the flaming tongues of fire** above their heads and the ability for that moment to reverse the **Tower of Babel division of the languages.** They could now all understand all nations. Foreign languages were not a barrier on the day of Pentecost. That's all **unique.**

But **what is not unique is the power.** We are to continue seeking that glorious power, and it's all yours in Christ. We are to live in that power. That's the difference with Peter and all the apostles. That power drove them to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Peter is changed! So let's consider Peter again for a moment. He's waiting and praying. But soon, he's going to stand before the entire crowd and preach with power. What was the difference between him fifty days earlier, and the day of Pentecost? Why the radical change? We know what it was. It was the promise of the Holy Spirit given in Ezekiel and Joel and Isaiah.

⁹ Piper, *ibid.*

We Need This Power

I believe we are in a time, when we need this **awakening power of the Spirit**. It is ours in Christ. It is a power that changes us. It is a power that changes nations. But how?

THE TIMES AND SEASONS

In the midst of this exciting speculation, Jesus called the eleven together at the crest of the Mount of Olives. The apostolic band was aflame with expectancy.¹⁰ So the apostles, after all this kingdom teaching, and the promise of kingdom power, they still don't get it.

Acts 1:6 | So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

What would the pouring out of the Spirit bring? Perhaps, **a new theocracy for Israel**, or so thought at least some of the apostles. They thought the kingdom of God was going to be **established by political, earthly power**. Their idea of the Messiah was a soldier like Judas Maccabeus (Judas the Hammer), who was going to be strong enough to drive out the occupying military forces and decimate Rome.¹¹ They had a different idea of Holy Spirit power than Jesus. They were excited, nonetheless.

Aren't we like that? We are so concerned about God's timing. We get so excited about life, and then a trial comes. We are just like the disciples, aren't we? We want to know how everything is going to turn out. We don't want to wait. We don't want to trust God. But that's precisely what Jesus tells them. Trust God with the times and seasons.

Acts 1:7 | He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

As far as what God does in the sphere of politics and nations, that's up to God. That's not something we direct. It's something the sovereign God directs. Then what's our part? Be a witness where you are. That's what we are called to do. This baptism of the Holy Spirit is for one thing: living out the life of Jesus in witness to the world.

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

Acts 1:8 | But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

It's essentially, the Spirit changing us. First, we are saved and indwelt. You know you are indwelt, because there is an empowerment. And we are to be witnesses to Christ in our own communities (our Jerusalem). Then the circle grows wider to all Judah and Samaria—all Israel (our nation), and then to the end of the earth (all other nations). There is a concern about my own community, my nation, and the world. If we don't witness for

¹⁰ Hughes. *Acts*, 15.

¹¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Acts: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 18.

Christ in our own immediate situation, we probably will not be concerned to do so anywhere else.¹²

Empowered in Life-on-Life Discipleship. But practically how did this happen? It was the normal means of grace in life-on-life discipleship. The disciples were meeting daily. They were praying. They were fellowshiping with the Word. We learn about that (Acts 2:42-47). We see life-on-life discipleship. Committed to God. Committed to each other.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul... —Acts 2:42-43

What's the point? It's in the midst of life-on-life discipleship, waiting on God, expecting his empowerment, that the awakening from God comes. It's the awakening that changes individuals and families and churches and nations. It is the enablement of the Spirit that helps us share Jesus with others.

Acts 1:8b | ...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Jesus' Last Words. These are Jesus' last words on earth. They are his marching orders. The disciples are to wait, and once they have the empowering Holy Spirit, they are to witness. That is what advances the Kingdom. Evangelism is not a calling for just some; it is a mandate for every believer. We are to obey Jesus' call to care enough to share Jesus. But it's clear here in Acts, that it's not just words. It's your life. You live out the life of Jesus.

Jesus' with Skin On. God calls us to be Jesus with skin on. We are to be empowered by his presence through the Holy Spirit, and then go be Jesus to each other and to this world. This is in the soil of life-on-life discipleship. Waiting. Prayer. Empowerment. They were living in life-on-life discipleship. That's what we need to be doing. That's when the truly first great awakening came. And thousands have followed.

Not Earthly Politics. We must not be confused as to how we are to spread the Kingdom. We are not to do things the world's way. We are not to establish the kingdom politically—by law, by getting Christians into high positions in government, and by imposing our vision of society on the world.¹³ No, we are to preach the death and resurrection of Christ, his power to save. That's the only hope for this world. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers who ever lived, said:

I'd rather lead one soul to Jesus than to unpack all the mysteries in the divine Word. —Charles Haddon Spurgeon¹⁴

We believe in the exclusivity of Jesus! He's the only way to the Father.

¹² William H. Baker, "Acts," in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 886.

¹³ Boice. *Acts*, 19.

¹⁴ Charles Haddon Spurgeon. "Christ in You" Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 29 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1873), preached May 13, 1883.

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. —Acts 4:12

Go into all the world! Preach the Gospel! Be my witnesses. And just as he said that, our Lord Jesus is lifted up on the Mount of Olives and ascends to heaven.

3. KINGDOM AUTHORITY (1:9-11)

THE AUTHORITY IN JESUS' ASCENSION

We see the one who gave these marching orders is the King of kings. He's the Messiah of Psalm 2. He's the Ancient of Days from Daniel (Dan 7:9). He ascends to heaven with all power and Kingdom authority. Truly, this is the one before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, that he is Lord (Yahweh) and Messiah. **Listen to what Luke writes about the ascension.**

Acts 1:9-11 | And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

THE AUTHORITY IN JESUS' RETURN

With rapt attention the disciples watch as Jesus is taken up from them in a cloud. The two men, probably angelic beings (*cf* Jn 20:12), explain that the ascension is a model for the second advent. Just as you watch him ascend, **so you should be watching and waiting for Jesus to return** (*cf* 1 Thess 1:10). ¹⁵ This is the one who's going to judge the living and the dead! Obey him. Listen to him!

By the way, if language means anything at all, then Christ's coming will be literal and physical according to the record. The angels said to the disciples:

Acts 1:11b | ...This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Nothing could be clearer. And it is important that we stress this physical aspect of Christ's return, for there are those of a liberal persuasion who maintain that it should be interpreted symbolically. They say that Christ came again with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, or that he is always coming again whenever a person commits his or her life to him in faith.¹⁶ We believe in the personal, physical return of our Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory. I was there on the Mount of Olives where Jesus ascended about three years ago (2018). Just as Jesus ascended into the clouds, he will return in the same way. He's going to split the Mount of Olives.

¹⁵ Baker. *Acts*, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Peter Williams, [*Acts: Church on the Move: An Expositional Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*](#), Exploring the Bible Commentary (Leominster: DayOne, 2004), 14.

On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. —Zechariah 14:4

We see it has been prophesied that at the moment Jesus' feet touch the ground at the Mount of Olives there will be a great earthquake that will cause the Eastern ("Golden") Gate to open. And he will walk through the Eastern Gate in Jerusalem when he returns to this earth at his Second Coming (*cf* Eze 44:1-2).

THE AUTHORITY IN JESUS' SESSION

Look at his victorious ascension to the right hand of the Father. What is he doing since he ascended? In heaven today, the Savior is our **interceding High Priest**, giving us the grace that we need for life and service (Heb 4:14–16). He is also our **Advocate** before the Father, forgiving us when we confess our sins (1 Jn 1:9–2:2). He ever lives to intercede for us (Heb 7:25). The exalted and glorified Head of the church is **now working with his people on earth** and helping them accomplish his purposes, to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every nation" (Mk 16:15–20).¹⁷

Look at his ascension: he's going up in victory over sin, death, hell and the grave. He **sits down in glorious victory at the right hand of the Father**. And just as he ascended, he will come again in power and victory. Saints, every eye will see him. You'll see him. The dead will see him. The living will see him. The graves will open, the sea will give up its dead, and the dead in Christ will rise. We will see him when he comes again.

Conclusion

Jesus' ascension means we have the authority and power to change the world. We are Jesus with skin on. We need to remember who God calls to this. It's not the **perfect. Remember Peter**. We are looking at his life for almost all of the first 13 chapters of Acts. He's a very feeble man. He's weak. But the power of Christ rests upon him. Thousands are saved. This weak man does life-on-life discipleship, and the world is turned upside down. If God could take such a weak vessel as Peter, he can use you.

Are you weak? Are you willing? Are you waiting for the Spirit's empowerment? Seek that empowerment with the Holy Spirit. You are born again. You are indwelt. But are you empowered? It's yours if you want it. Do you want it?

¹⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 404.