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**Third Presbyterian Church**  
**Bible Study**  
**Acts 1:1-11**  
**Lesson 1 – Power of the Holy Spirit**

**Acts 1:1-11 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach <sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

<sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." <sup>6</sup> So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

<sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. <sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

During the days between his resurrection and ascension, Jesus built the confidence of his disciples. He demonstrated and spoke truth about himself. And then he left them with a clearly defined task and the promise of the power to carry out that task. Thus, Luke was able to write with confidence to Theophilus about Jesus.

**Additional notes to read before answering questions:**

**Acts of the Apostles**

Written by Luke because of the Greek medical terms used in the writing.... The writer is close to Paul.... Close to Paul....and accompanied him on a journey. This letter was written to Theophilus a gentile convert.... he was also the recipient of the Gospel of Luke.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** Theophilus, a Gentile convert (Acts 1:1). The Gospel of Luke was also addressed to him personally.

Highlight the **ministry of the Holy Spirit**...shows the power of the **Holy Spirit**, shows the **witness of the holy spirit, shows** what can happen in the life of the believer **when there is submission** to the holy spirit **in our lives**.....We speak about the holy spirit, we reference the holy spirit but now we will have our primary focus on the Holy Spirit. You see because it was through the ministry of the Holy Spirit that the church **grew through** the witness of believers "both in **Jerusalem** and in all **Judaea and in Samaria** and unto the uttermost part of the earth"

This is Luke's great aim in writing this letter. **He shows how the church** in Jerusalem **was persecuted** and how **believers were forced** to scatter throughout the **whole world**. He shows how the **church moved out from**

Jerusalem, and in less than **thirty-five years** captured the very capital of the **world**, Rome **itself**. In brief, he shows how the **expansion of Christianity took place....**

Before we enter this study of the Holy Spirit we must be convinced in the person of Jesus, the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus. So was Jesus a real person....well our bible tells us yes, but lets look beyond that....nearly every religion on earth either acknowledge him as Christ, the messiah, a prophet, a teacher.....there is some reference to his existence.... whether it is believed in who he claimed to be or not his existence is not in question.....so if he lived then **what about him.....**

Our bible speaks of his miracles and his ministry.....and let's see from these miracles and ministry got him a jew crucified by romans, without cause, publicly executed and many saw it....a death that had been prophesied not only by him but all the way back to the book of Genesis we see proof texts of the Messiah. The crucifixion of Jesus is an event that history hangs on...since this event occurred it has been known in some capacity by everyone regardless of culture, socio economic status, regardless of advances in technology regardless of your faith...we see seemingly godless people reference the cross.

So, there does not **seem to be much argument** and pushback on the existence of Jesus or the death of Jesus but when it comes to his resurrection...this is a question that has challenged the faith of many....even some who profess **Christianity have doubts** about the resurrection.....and this must be cleared up...because if there is no resurrection there is no Holy spirit....**so in order for us to** receive the teaching that will come about the Holy spirit if we don't get this piece the teaching will be fruitless.

How do I prove that....well **there is witness in the bible** but let's look at science...

**Indirect proof of the resurrection.....**Bible speak of it....With our born natural instinct of survival, no one in their right mind would give their life for what they know to be a lie.

One example of such courage and bravery is seen in the life and **death of Polycarp**, a man who lived in the **second century A.D.** He was arrested and brought into the great **amphitheater in Smyrna (in Asia Minor)**. Thousands of people were there to watch what **would take place**.

The ruler reminded **Polycarp of his great** age and he urged him to deny his Christian faith: "**Revile Christ**, and I will **release you**." But Polycarp answered, "**Eighty and six years have I served Him**, and He has never **done me wrong**; How can I blaspheme **Him, my King**, who has **saved me**? I am a **Christian**." The ruler then cried out to the crowd, "Polycarp has **confessed** himself to **be a Christian**." The crowds yelled, "**Let him be burned!**"

"I will have you **consumed** with fire unless you **change your mind**." Polycarp replied, "**You threaten fire which** burns for an **hour and is soon quenched**; for you **are ignorant of the fire** of the **coming judgment** and eternal **punishment reserved for the wicked**" (see Matthew 25:41-46).

Another man who died in these early years of the **church was named JUSTIN**. He was **scourged** (whipped) and **beheaded in Rome about 165 A.D.** His last words were these: "we **desire nothing more** than to suffer for our **Lord Jesus Christ**." Because he was so **willing to die the death** of a **Christian martyr** he has been known as JUSTIN MARTYR ever since.

I build my **faith on the testimony of those** who saw and gave their lives for what they saw. And with that I can be **assured that Jesus was real, his death** was real and his resurrection was real. And with that real I hang my

faith as new testament Christian that he his **promise to return is my promise** and I live with that expectation, I work with that expectation I serve with that expectation, I love with that expectation....and I know I **can't just do that on my own**.....Jesus promised to send a comforter, a helper, one who will empower me to do all that Jesus expects and died for me to do.....**and this person is called the Holy Spirt**.....and this is why this study of Acts is so important to our **ministry right now**.....**the spirit has been at work no doubt....but there is so much that the Holy Spirit is about to do in us and through us.**

### Questions

1. The hope of the New Testament Christian is in the resurrection of Jesus.
  - a. What specifically gives you the assurance of the resurrection in that you **believe** it, can **share** it and **defend** it?
2. Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
  - a. What is your evidence that the Holy Spirit is in you?
  - b. Is there evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence at Third Church, if so, what is that evidence?
  - c. Although at times these things may look the same, explain the difference between "church work" and "anointed ministry."
3. Speak specifically about what it means to you the following
  - a. The Holy Spirit gives the power to say no
  - b. The Holy Spirit gives the power to love
  - c. The Holy Spirit gives the power to trust others to do a task
  - d. The Holy Spirit gives the power to serve without complaining
  - e. The Holy Spirit gives the power to be faithful
  - f. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to not be afraid of our own testimony
  - g. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to be a witness
4. Jesus told his disciples that they will be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth. The starting in Jerusalem is very significant, why because that is where they lived?
  - a. What is your "Jerusalem?"
  - b. What is Jerusalem for the Third Church?
  - c. What are the different ways you are going to personally help our ministry to be a witness to the ends of the earth?

**Workshop:** One person is an unbeliever in the group and the remainder of the group gives evidence of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection and why the unbeliever should believe what you are saying?

## COMMENTARY NOTES

### A. Jesus' Ministry on Earth, 1:1-5

(1:1-5) **Introduction:** note the words "former treatise" or book. Luke was referring back to his gospel. He was now writing to the same man to whom he had written his gospel, Theophilus. He was reminding Theophilus that in his gospel he had covered the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth. Note the word "began." Jesus' life and work on earth was only the beginning. Although He is in heaven, He *continues* to work and minister through the presence of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of believers. The book of Acts could well be called...

- the acts (works and teachings) of believers; or
- the acts (works and teachings) of Christ; or
- the acts (works and teachings) of the Holy Spirit.

Very briefly, Luke was saying that the life of Jesus Christ continues on. The book of Acts is the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ. Acts 1:1-5 is a summary of the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, a summary of the ministry of Christ covered in Acts.

**1. (1:1) Theophilus:** Luke wrote to Theophilus, reminding him of the former gospel which he had written, the gospel which covered the life and ministry of Jesus.

Who is Theophilus? We are not told, but note several facts.

1. Theophilus is called "most excellent Theophilus" in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:3). The words, "most excellent Theophilus," are a title of rank and honor. It is the same title used of Felix and Festus, two high ranking Roman officials (Acts 23:26; Acts 24:3; Acts 26:27). Theophilus must have been a Roman official of high rank.
2. Theophilus was a personal friend of Luke, close enough to correspond with Luke about the Lord Jesus. He was either a man interested in knowing the truth about Christ or else a new convert who needed to be grounded in Christ. Perhaps Luke himself had led Theophilus to Christ.

Note: Luke did not address Theophilus as "most excellent" in Acts. The title is dropped. Why? There are three possibilities.

- a. Luke and Theophilus were close friends, close enough to be on a first name basis.
- b. Theophilus had either retired or been removed from office between the writing of Luke and Acts.
- c. Theophilus, having grown in Christ, had grown so loving and humble he did not want his title used among his Christian friends, not in times of personal communication and fellowship.

**Thought 1:** There is a great lesson in this thought, a lesson on love and humility so needed by the world and among God's people (cp. Matthew 23:7-12).

3. Theophilus lived outside Palestine, somewhere away from Luke.
4. Theophilus was a man of education and culture. His title and the fact that the Gospel of Luke and Acts are addressed to him point toward his being educated and cultured.

5. The name Theophilus means "beloved by God" or "the friend of God."

**Thought 1.** Theophilus was a man who sought to grow and mature in the Lord. Imagine! Luke and Acts were written to him! Two of the greatest books ever written! And why? Because he had such a deep hunger to know the Lord, to learn all he could about the Lord. What a legacy and testimony—to be known as a man who so hungered to know the Lord that God had two of the greatest books ever written addressed to him! May we all develop a hunger to learn all we can about the Lord and Savior of the universe.

**2. (1:1-2) Jesus Christ, Ministry:** Jesus' ministry on earth began with His work and teaching. Note the subject of this first chapter, "The Great Days of Expectation." The works and teachings of Christ launched these days. Jesus Christ brought the greatest expectation to earth imaginable to man; in fact, He brought the only hope man has of surviving...

- of conquering the sin and shame of the earth: its hatred, killing, maiming, selfishness, bitterness, division.
- of conquering the death and hell of man's destiny: his dread, fear, insecurity, ignorance, and baseless hope of what lies beyond the grave.

As stated, Jesus Christ brought the only hope man has of surviving. He taught men how to live together in peace and how they should live before God. Note three significant things.

1. Christ worked and taught until He was "taken up," that is, until He ascended back into heaven. He was faithful, using all He had for God until His life upon earth was completed.

**Thought 1.** The believer is to use his gifts for God until he enters heaven. There is no retirement from seeking to reach a world sunk so desperately in need.

**"Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).**

**"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).**

2. Christ worked and taught "through the Holy Spirit." While He was on earth in the flesh, Christ was totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit. He had to surrender Himself and to make Himself available to the Spirit.

**Thought 1.** Just think! If Christ was so dependent upon the Spirit of God, how much more are we! How much more do we need to make ourselves available to Him, available for His gifts and power!

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).**

3. Christ gave and taught His commandments to those whom He had *chosen*, His apostles. He taught throngs of people, but He zeroed in on the apostles. His whole mission depended upon them. They were to be the first who would carry His message to the world after His departure. If they failed, his mission would fail; if they succeeded, His mission would succeed. He had to concentrate upon them; to drill His commandments into them so that they in turn could teach His commandments.

**Thought 1.** Note a critical fact: every believer is the chosen servant of God to carry on the mission of Christ. Every believer is to be proclaiming the glorious message of hope to a world lost and doomed to death.

**"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).**

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).**

**3. (1:3) Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** Jesus' ministry on earth was climaxed in His passion and resurrection (cp. Acts 17:3; Acts 26:23). The word "passion" (*pathein*<sup>PWS: 2838</sup>) means suffering; it refers to the sufferings or death of Christ. His death and resurrection assured the salvation of man.

⇒ By death He paid the penalty for man's sin.

**"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).**

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18).**

⇒ By arising from the dead He conquered death for man and now makes available a new life of power for the believer.

**"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).**

**"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:20-23).**

Note the two proofs of salvation.

1. Jesus showed (*paristēmi*<sup>PWS: 3540; 3542</sup>), presented Himself alive. There are ten resurrection appearances of Jesus recorded in the New Testament (see Deeper Study #1—Acts 1:3). However, there were apparently many more that are not recorded (cp. John 20:30-31; John 21:25).

2. Jesus gave many infallible proofs of His resurrection. (See note—Acts 10:40-41 for more discussion.)

a. The word "proofs" (*tekmēriois*<sup>PWS: 3060</sup>) means positive proof; infallible proof; convincing proof; sure signs and ways.

b. The infallible, positive proofs and appearances went on for *forty days*.

4. (1:3) **Kingdom of God:** Jesus' ministry on earth was to proclaim the great hope of man, the promise of the Kingdom of God. (See Deeper Study #3—Matthew 19:23-24 for discussion.) Note the Kingdom of God is the focus of His message even after His resurrection. Man's only hope for survival is the Kingdom of God.

5. (1:4-5) **Holy Spirit:** Jesus' ministry on earth was to proclaim the great promise to believers, the promise of the Holy Spirit. God knew and Christ proclaimed that no man could live and witness for God, not "in the arm of the flesh." No man or group of men were powerful enough to live for God or to convince others of the *foolishness of the gospel...*

- that love is more powerful than might.
- that God's Son actually came to earth as a man.
- that God's Son died but was raised from the dead, conquering death.
- that the cross is the way men are saved from sin, death and hell.
- that man can be *born again*, literally born again and made into a new creature by *believing* in Jesus.
- that man can live forever by being born again through belief in Jesus.

Christ knew that man needed a supernatural power, the power of God Himself. He knew that the very presence of God's Spirit had to *enter into* the very heart of man and...

- impart the divine nature of God (2 Peter 1:4).
- recreate his being completely (2 Cor. 5:17; Ephes. 4:23-24; Col. 3:9-10).
- live within his body, giving the believer the power to control his life for God and to courageously proclaim the gospel to a world that would consider it foolishness and often react in violence.

In these two verses, Christ is sharing how the apostles (and all succeeding believers) are to receive the Holy Spirit in all His fulness and power.

1. They are to "wait for the promise of the Father," *wait in prayer* for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

a. Note the phrase "the promise of the Father." The idea is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the *supreme gift* of God to the believer. The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God Himself, and God promises to give His Spirit to the believer.

**"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).**

**"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16-17).**

b. The believer must *wait* in prayer to receive the Holy Spirit. *Waiting, centering, and focusing* one's attention upon God is another way of saying believing, trusting, and focusing one's life upon God. If a person will *wait* upon God—if he will learn to *wait* more and more—he will...

- gain more and more awareness and consciousness of the Spirit's presence and power.
- gain more and more knowledge of the Spirit Himself, how He lives and works within the believer's heart and life.
- learn how to surrender more and more of his life to the Spirit's control and witness.
- experience more and more of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23. Note: the fruit of the Spirit is borne only as the believer is *filled* with the Spirit. Being filled is a command. Believers are not automatically filled. Too many walk around in the flesh, totally unconscious of the Spirit's presence and will.)

**"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).**

**"Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephes. 5:18).**

2. Believers have to hear about the promise of the Spirit before they can receive Him. A believer cannot sit with a wandering or preoccupied mind and be filled with the Spirit of God; he cannot expect to be filled with the presence of God and never center his mind upon the things of God. The believer has to hear and focus his attention upon, hunger and thirst for the things of God. He has to center his life upon God's Spirit in order to receive the promise of the Spirit.

**"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6).**

**"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12).**

3. Then, believers will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Note: this baptism is not water baptism, not the kind of water baptism John used. It is the baptism brought by Christ Himself, the immersion of the believer into the Spirit of God and of the Spirit into the believer. (Cp. Matthew 3:11. See Deeper Study #1—Acts 2:1-4 for discussion.)

### DEEPER STUDY #1

(1:3) **Jesus Christ, Resurrection:** Jesus appeared at least ten times after His resurrection before He ascended into heaven. There were apparently many more appearances not recorded (cp. John 20:30-31; John 21:25).

1. He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18).
2. He appeared to the women running to tell the disciples about the empty tomb (Matthew 28:8-10).
3. He appeared to Peter, probably to assure him of his restoration (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
4. He appeared to the two Emmaus disciples sometime in the early evening (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-42).
5. He appeared to the disciples with Thomas absent (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25).
6. One week later, He appeared to the disciples who had gone fishing (John 20).
7. He appeared to 500 believers (1 Cor. 15:6).
8. He appeared to the apostles (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18).

9. He appeared to James, the Lord's half-brother (1 Cor. 15:7).
10. He appeared to the believers at His ascension (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12).

It should be remembered that since Jesus' ascension He has appeared at least two other times.

1. He appeared to Stephen at his martyrdom (Acts 7:55-56).
2. He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3f).

## **B. Jesus' Last Day on Earth, 1:6-11**

(1:6-11) **Introduction**: this was Jesus' last day on earth. What He did is a most powerful and critical message for believers.

**1. (1:6) Jesus Christ, Last Day**: the disciples came together again. This is apparently a different occasion, a specific time planned by Christ when He would ascend back into heaven. He must have arranged for the apostles to gather all the disciples together (over five hundred) at one location. What He had to announce would be a momentous occasion (cp. 1 Cor. 15:6).

**2. (1:6-7) Believers, Duty**: the first scene. Jesus promised the kingdom. Picture the scene: over five hundred disciples stood in some remote spot, probably on the top of a mountain. They surrounded Christ. One of the disciples asked Christ a revealing question: "Was He now going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Was that the reason He had called everyone together, the reason for His stressing the importance of the meeting so much?"

The revealing thing is this: the disciples were still thinking in terms of an earthly, physical Messiah, of a physical and material rule and reign for themselves and their nation, Israel. (See outline—' Matthew 1:18, and Deeper Study #2—Matthew 1:18; outline—' Matthew 18:1-2; note—' Matthew 18:1-2 for more discussion. Also see Index—Messiah.)

We must always remember this: Christ *is going to set up His kingdom on earth*. There is a future aspect to His kingdom as well as a present rule and reign in human hearts. His rule and reign will be done on earth. The Lord's prayer assures this (cp. Matthew 6:10). Christ promised the apostles they would sit upon thrones judging the people of Israel. He also promised believers they would receive a hundredfold and rule over the world. (See outline—' Matthew 19:27-30 and notes—' Matthew 19:27-30; outline—' Luke 16:10-12; note—' Luke 16:10-12; outline—' Rev. 14:13; note—' Rev. 14:13; outline—' Rev. 21:24-27; note—' Rev. 21:24-27 for more discussion.) But the concern of the believer is not to be a reward, not to be a carnal craving for...

- position and influence• authority and power• money and possessions• recognition and prestige
- rule and reign• the material and physical

The believer's concern is to be service and ministry, proclaiming the glorious salvation of Christ and meeting the cry of a world buried in desperate needs. Christ is direct, rebuking those who wish to pry into the timing of the Lord's return and the setting up of His kingdom upon earth. Christ had said that even He did not know when He was to return and set up the kingdom. He rebuked the question...

- "It is not for you to know."• "The Father hath put [the times] in His own power."

**Thought 1.** Believers are not to be focusing upon prophecy and the setting of dates. They are not to be craving for release from this world and for the heavenly positions of authority. What believers are to do is to look for Jesus' return and long for heaven. But even this—even the love of Jesus' return—is not to get in the way of the believer's task, the task Christ discusses in the next point. What is the task? It is the task of witnessing. Believers are to focus upon witnessing, upon sharing the glorious gospel of salvation with the world.

**"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).**

**"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7).**

**3. (1:8) Witnessing— Great Commission— Holy Spirit— Power:** the second scene. Jesus assigned the believer's great task—the great commission. Note three significant points.

1. The believer's equipping power was to be the Holy Spirit. The disciples had asked about the kingdom, the positions of leadership and authority Christ had promised. The point is critical and to be noted with all diligence. They were to receive power, but not the power of this earth, not the power of...

- position
- fame
- recognition
- wealth
- supervision
- politics

Their power was to be spiritual and supernatural. It was to be *the very power...*

- of God Himself,
- of the Supreme Being of the universe,
- of His presence,
- of His Spirit

God's very own Spirit was to dwell within the heart and life of the believer. No greater power could ever be possessed by anyone. This is clearly seen: once the early disciples experienced the coming of God's Spirit into their being, they *never again asked* about earthly power. Experiencing the presence and power of God within their lives was the summit, the supreme experience of their lives. Nothing else was ever needed. It is this for which the human heart craves, and once God's Spirit truly dwells within a person, that person is supremely fulfilled and satisfied. Nothing else can ever satisfy—not position or authority, recognition or fame—not if the person has truly received the Spirit of God into his heart and life.

The point is this: the believer is given a task by God, a mission to carry out on earth. The believer does not have the power to carry out that task. The power of God Himself, of His Spirit, is needed. Therefore, Christ promises, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you." Both the Spirit of God and His power are

promised. But note a critical point: the Holy Spirit comes upon believers as an *equipping power*. The major purpose for His coming is to *equip* the believer to carry out his task for God.

2. The believer's task is the great task of witnessing for God. The disciples had asked about the coming of the kingdom, just when the kingdom would come. When would believers be gathered and cloistered together in the fellowship and worship of God, free from worldly injustices and sin? Again, Christ had promised the kingdom, a day when He would gather all believers together in perfect fellowship and service of God. He promised a day when believers would be freed from the world, from its sin and shame, death and hell. But again, note: now is *not the time* to be cloistered together...

- in heaven.
- in the eternal kingdom of God.
- in Christian societies.
- in the church.

Now is *not the time* for believers to be revelling in the love and fellowship, the enjoyment and comfort of each other. This is the point Christ is making, a critical point. It *is time* for...

#### • WITNESSING • BEING WITNESSES TO CHRIST

Witnessing to Christ, sharing the glorious salvation in Him, is the great task of the believer. This is understandable, clearly seen, for no greater truth exists in all the universe. Man can now live forever; man can now be delivered from sin, death, and hell. Just think about it! The perfect cure for...

- sin has been secured.
- death is known.
- hell now exists.

There is no reason for the world—no reason for any person—to suffer any longer under the weight and bondage of...

- |                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • selfishness and hoarding | • inadequate supply and hunger   |
| • bitterness and hatred    | • killing and maiming            |
| • war and power            | • insecurity and low self-esteem |
| • emptiness and loneliness | • guilt and shame                |
| • fear and anguish         | • ignorance and the unknown      |

(God have mercy upon all who know the cure and keep silent! No greater indictment against a person exists.)

Now note several points.

a. The word "you." It is the believer who is to witness. It is the believer who knows the cure, the truth of salvation.

b. The words "unto me." Christ is the message, not a man's ideas, not even the idea of religion. "Christ crucified" is the believer's testimony (1 Cor. 1:23. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:18, 24; GALATIANS 6:14.)

c. The word "witness" (Greek, *martures*<sup>PWS:4393</sup>). This is the same word as martyr. The believer is to be so committed to reaching men that he is ready to die as a martyr if need be. (See Deeper Study #1—Acts 1:8 for verses on witnessing.)

d. The word "witness" is not a command. Rather, it is a natural result of the Holy Spirit within a person. So is power. The Lord says very simply that a Spirit-filled person has power and becomes a witness for Him throughout the world. This is important, for it makes power and witnessing trademarks of Christian believers. A genuine believer possesses both the Spirit and power in his life and becomes by nature a witness for the Lord.

3. The believer's method: Jesus gives the method that the believer is to follow in his witness and spread of the gospel.

a. The believer is to witness where he is (Jerusalem) and move progressively outward (Judaea and Samaria) until he is having a part in reaching the uttermost part of the earth.

Every believer...

- is to go as far as he can personally go.
- is to give as sacrificially as he can for others to go.
- is to use and support every means he can to reach the world.

b. The believer is to witness where he is first, see to it that Christ is well known throughout his home and community before moving on. But once Christ is well known, the believer is to move out, ever pressing outward from where he is. His first witness is to be...

- in Jerusalem: where he is, his home and local community. (See Deeper Study #1—Luke 9:4 for more discussion.)
- in all Judaea: other communities and areas and cities and states. Note the words "all Judaea."
- in Samaria: other states and provinces where people are antagonistic. There was bitter hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Yet Christ tells His witnesses to carry the message of salvation even to their enemies. (See Deeper Study #2, Samaritans—Luke 10:33.)
- to the uttermost part of the earth: to the unknown countries and regions of the world.

A critical point is this: the believer is to see that each area receives the message of Christ. He is to stay there before reaching out. But once the area knows the message, the message is to be carried out into another area.

**Thought 1.** What a difference world evangelization would experience if each believer would simply do what Christ says.

### **DEEPER STUDY #1 (1:8) Witnessing**

**4. (1:9) Jesus Christ, Ascension:** the third scene. Jesus' ascended before the disciples' very eyes. Note Jesus' last words on earth (Acts 1:8). His concern was reaching the world for God. Now note what happened. Immediately after speaking the words, the most dramatic event began to happen. Jesus Christ began to slowly

arise from the earth, ascending ever upward toward the sky above. The disciples were shocked and spellbound, gazing at the spectacular sight. They were beholding one of the most dramatic and phenomenal events ever experienced:

⇒ the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

⇒ the return of God's Son into heaven, into the spiritual world and dimension of being.

Note the words "beheld" (Acts 1:9, *blepontōn*<sup>PWS:329</sup>) and "while they looked stedfastly" (*atenizontes ēsan*<sup>PWS:2400</sup>). The Lord ascended somewhat slowly in a dramatic, spectacular fashion. Why depart in this way? For the sake of the disciples. There are several significant reasons why they needed such a dramatic departure. (See note, Jesus Christ, Exaltation—Acts 2:33-36 for more discussion.)

1. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His final departure. Since His resurrection He had been appearing and disappearing spontaneously, at will, as though by thought or light. This departure was to be final. He would never return again, not as He had been doing. Therefore this departure needed to be different; it needed to be impressed and enforced in the minds and consciences of the disciples once for all.

2. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His claim upon the disciples. This was the last time He would have to confirm His claims while on earth. He wanted the disciples to have additional confirmation, a most dramatic confirmation that He was exactly whom He claimed to be. By actually ascending upward He was proclaiming seven glorious truths beyond all question.

a. He is the ascended Lord. (See Deeper Study #2—Lord—Acts 2:36.)

b. He is the ascended Mediator between God and man.

c. He is the ascended Advocate of man before God. (The word "advocate" [parakleton] is the very same word used for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter [parakletos]. See Deeper Study #1—John 14:16 for meaning. Cp. John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7.)

⇒ The Holy Spirit is God's Advocate on earth with men.

⇒ Jesus Christ is man's Advocate with God. (See note—1 John 2:1-2.)

d. He is the ascended Son of God, the One who came "out of" heaven to earth to save man

e. He is the ascended High Priest of God who makes reconciliation for the sins of men (Hebrews 2:17-18. Cp. 1 John 2:1-2.)

f. He is the ascended High Priest who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities and delivers and succors us through all trials (Hebrews 2:15-16. Cp. Romans 8:31-39; Hebrews 2:17-18.)

g. He is the ascended Christ (Messiah) who makes intercession for us (Romans 8:34; cp. Romans 8:31-39).

3. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce His return to earth, that it shall take place exactly as He said.

4. Christ needed to dramatize and enforce that the disciples were not to be standing around "gazing up into heaven." They were to get to the business at hand. They were to return to the upper room and...

- "wait" and pray for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
- move out witnessing to a world lost and reeling in desperate need.

**"So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19).**

**"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51).**

**5. (1:10-11) Jesus Christ, Ascension; Exaltation; Return:** the fourth scene. There was the prophecy of Jesus' return. Note that God had two men appear, standing by the disciples. They were dressed in white clothing which is the color of angels' clothing (cp. Matthew 28:3; John 20:12). These two messengers from God said three significant things about Jesus' return.

1. This "same Jesus" shall return just as He left. He shall not return in some strange way, in a way that He might be unrecognized and missed. He shall return in the clouds of heaven and every eye shall "see Him" (Rev. 1:7).

Note exactly what Scripture says about how Christ ascended.

⇒ Acts 1:9 says a cloud received (*hupelaben*<sup>PWS: 3187</sup>) Him. The Greek word literally means took, lifted, supported Him.

⇒ Luke 24:51 says He was "carried up" (*anephereto*) into heaven. The Greek means borne up, taken up.

⇒ Acts 1:2; Acts 1:11; 1 Tim. 3:16 says He was "received up" (*anelempthe*).

The point is this: it is as though the cloud *received and took* (*hupelaben*<sup>PWS: 3187</sup>) Him. The cloud was apparently the Shekinah glory (see note 2—John 1:14). Christ had said He would return to earth in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:30; Matthew 26:64; Mark 13:26; cp. Rev. 1:7). Seeing such a dramatic ascension confirmed for the disciples (and for us) that Jesus' promise of returning to earth will take place just as He said.

2. This "same Jesus" is the One who will come back. He will not be different, either in Person or in attitude. He will be the same.

⇒ He will be the *same Jesus*, the same Lord and Savior, the same One who came to earth to save men.

⇒ He will be the *same Jesus* in attitude, still loving and caring for those who follow Him.

⇒ He will be the *same Jesus* who promised to return and receive believers unto Himself that they may be with Him where He is (John 14:2-3).

**"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27).**

**"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27).**

**"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:31-32).**

3. This *same Jesus* who will return is the One who ascended into heaven. The Jesus in heaven is the same Jesus the disciples knew—the One who was their Lord and Savior; the One who came to earth to be their close companion, their Advocate, their Mediator, their Representative before God. Therefore when He returns, He will be coming back to receive all believers unto Himself. He will be coming back that we may all be where He is (John 14:2-3).

**"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).**

**"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thes. 4:16-18).**