

Introduction: Some thirty-five years after The Lord Jesus ascended back to heaven, after He told His apostles they would receive power from The Holy Spirit to testify of Him to the ends of the earth; and, the apostles were told that He would return in the same way He left; the apostle Peter wrote his last inspired letter to all who had graciously received faith. *** Peter was about sixty-five years old and would be executed by Nero less than two years after this. Because of the persecution and suffering of all Christians, many people were also mocking them and their Savior. The mockers knew Christians were expecting Jesus to return to rule as King of everything, and they would serve Him in love, joy and peace. Peter, perhaps thinking of the last words he heard from Jesus, wrote The Lord is not slow concerning His promise; but, He is very patient, not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:1-9). Then, Peter exhorts all Christians to live holy and godly lives and hasten His coming by testifying to His salvation with their whole lives (2 Peter 3:10-15). *** An amazing thing about God is that, even though He has no need of anything, He created people out of His great LOVE. And out of His LOVE for people, He graciously delegates to them the responsibility and privilege of working with Him to accomplish His will on earth, even as His will is done in heaven. *** So, starting now, based on The Word of God we have heard this morning, let us live our lives so all may know Jesus as their Savior; because **God is not willing that any should perish**. *** Let us now hear the words of Jesus: from His last six months on earth until the hour He ascended back to heaven; and, let us be praying to be motivated to obey them.

I. Jesus tells His apostles to wait for The Holy Spirit; they will receive power when The Holy Spirit comes on them to witness to Him everywhere; then, He is taken to heaven. (Acts 1:1-11)

A. Luke tells his reader about Jesus showing the apostles He is being alive and commanding them to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:1-6)

1. The first narrative I made, Theophilus, of all Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day, having commanded the apostles whom He chose, He was taken up. (Verses 1-2)

First narrative: The first narrative is the Gospel of Luke. Notice the higher priority on what Jesus did than on what He said. This is consistent with the Hebrew worldview reflected in their language.

Until taken up: The Gospel of Luke ends with Jesus' ascension. Acts begins with His ascension.

2. To whom also He showed Himself being alive after He suffered, in many positive proofs through forty days being seen of them, and speaking things concerning The Kingdom of God. (Verse 3)

Shows Himself alive: Over forty days Jesus convinced the remaining eleven apostles He was indeed alive, including Thomas (John 20:24-29).

Speaks of God's Kingdom: Before Jesus was crucified, His apostles struggled to understand the true nature of The Kingdom of God, especially the call on disciples to both suffer and serve (Mark 8:34-38; 10:41-45).

3. Being assembled together, He commanded them not to be departed from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of The Father which you all heard from Me. (Verse 4)

Wait for promise: The promise is The Holy Spirit (Counselor, Comforter, Helper) whom Jesus said The Father would give them (John 14:15-21). Jesus knew they would be tempted to leave Jerusalem before receiving The Holy Spirit, so He said 'departed' so they would not wait in their own strength.

4. For indeed, John baptized in water; but, you all will be baptized in Holy Spirit after not many days. (Verse 5)

Baptized in Holy Spirit: John himself had said that the One coming after him would be greater and would baptize in The Holy Spirit (Mark 1:4-8).

5. Therefore they, having come together, they were asking Him: Lord, at this time, are Thou restoring the kingdom of Israel? (Verse 6)

Kingdom of Israel: They knew Messiah would establish David's throne forever (2 Samuel 7:8-13); and, that David extended the borders of Israel's kingdom from the Red Sea to the Euphrates and east to the desert wilderness (2 Samuel 5:1-25; 8:1-14; 10:6-19; 12:26-31). They want to be part of those glory days of Israel. It turns out they are thinking too small!

B. Jesus says they will receive power, The Holy Spirit coming on them, they will witness to Him to the ends of the earth; then, He was taken to heaven and 'men' promised them He would return. (Acts 1:7-11)

1. But He said to them, 'Not of you all it is being to know times or seasons which The Father put in His own authority'. (Verse 7)

Not to know: They want Israel restored to glory now. Jesus says only His Father knows the exact times, and the conditions of the times, when earthly kingdoms will rise and fall.

2. 'But, you all will receive power, having come upon you all The Holy Spirit; and, you all will be witnesses of Me; both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria; and, as far as the ends of the earth'. (Verse 8)

Holy Spirit power: Jesus tells His apostles The Holy Spirit will fill them with power after coming upon them. They will be enabled to testify of Him (all He did and said as Savior) to everyone on earth! This is the fulfillment of Abraham's call (Genesis 12:1-3) that all nations will be blessed through his 'Seed' (Galatians 3:15-29). May we all be continuously aware of the power of The Holy Spirit in us to testify to Jesus.

God is not willing that any should perish

3. He having spoken these things, they are beholding He was taken up and a cloud received Him from their sight. (Verse 9)

Jesus taken up: Jesus is now taken up through a cloud to His Father in heaven.

4. While they were looking steadfastly into heaven, Him going; behold! two 'men' had been standing by them in white apparel. (Verse 10)

Two 'men' in white: These two are not human 'men', but heavenly messengers (angels) from God, appearing as men.

5. Who said, 'Men! Galileans! Why you all have stood looking straight into heaven? This same Jesus, having been taken up from you all into heaven, in the same way He will come, whom in like manner you all observed Him going into heaven'. (Verse 11)

Message: With a very long-winded answer, they say that as Jesus went up to heaven to rule with His Father, at some future time He will return to set up His Kingdom over all the earth.

II. The apostles returned to Jerusalem where they persistently prayed with one mind, perhaps reflecting on their two-by-two three-fold ministry six months before. (*Acts 1:12-14; Mark 6:7-13*)

- A. They returned to Jerusalem and went to the upper room where they persistently prayed with one mind with women and brothers. (*Acts 1:12-14*)
1. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain being called Olivet, being near Jerusalem, a Sabbath journey. (*Verse 12*)
Return to Jerusalem: The apostles and Jesus were on the mountain of olive groves. Rabbis calculated the maximum walk allowed from Torah (Exodus 16:29; Numbers 35:5) to be two thousand cubits, three thousand feet (or five-eighths of a mile).
 2. When they came in, they went up to the upper room, where they were abiding: Peter and John, Jacob (James) and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, Jacob (James son) of Alphaeus and Simon the zealot, and Judah (brother) of Jacob (James). (*Verse 13*)
Upper room: All the eleven remaining apostles are listed by name. They were continuing to abide in the upper room where they had their last Passover meal with Jesus (Mark 14:15).
 3. These all were being persistent with one mind in prayer, with women and Mary the mother of Jesus and His brothers. (*Verse 14*)
Persistent, devoted prayer: This was an extended and intense prayer meeting where one hundred twenty people (verse 15) were devoted together to seek God in prayer while waiting for the promised Holy Spirit so they would have the power to witness to Jesus to the ends of the earth.

Application: God wants us to witness to as many people as we can about salvation in Jesus so none may perish with their sins unforgiven. Such a great task always requires much intense prayer.

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- B. Six months earlier Jesus sent the twelve out, giving them authority over unclean spirits; and, having gone, they preached repentance, drove out demons, and healed many sick. (*Mark 6:7-13*)
1. And He calling the twelve, He began them to send forth, two-by-two; and He was giving them authority (power) over the unclean spirits. (*Verse 7*)
Sent with authority: Some six months before His crucifixion, Jesus sent out six teams of two apostles, while giving them power and authority over unclean spirits, demons.
 2. He commanded them that nothing they may take for the journey: only a staff, no bread, no bag, no coins; but, shod (in) sandals, and they may not wear two coats. (*Verses 8-9*)
Travel very light: They were to travel very light. Positively, they could take a walking staff and wear sandals. But they could not have bread, a bag with coins, or an extra coat.
 3. And, He was saying to them, 'Wherever you all may enter a house, there you all must be abiding until you all may depart that place'. (*Verse 10*)
Stay in one house: Each team was to stay in the first house they found for the entire time of their ministry in a town. Moving from one house to another would waste valuable time.
 4. 'And (of) place, whoever may not receive you all nor may hear you all, going out from there you all must shake off the dust under your feet to a testimony to them'. (*Verse 11*)
IF rejected: If a team and its message are rejected, they must leave the place enacting disapproval. They were doing rather than speaking.
 5. Having gone out: they proclaimed that men may repent; and many demons they were driving out; and they were anointing with oil many (being) ill and they were healing. (*Verses 12-13*)
Obeded Jesus: Every team obeyed Jesus by doing a three-fold ministry for the people to whom they were sent.
Preached repentance: First they called everyone to repent, turn from themselves and their ways to God and His Way. This is how Jesus began His ministry (Mark 1:14-15).
Delivered from demons: They exercised the specific power and authority Jesus gave them to deliver people from demons and the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19).
Healed sick: They healed many who were ill. We need to be careful with how we apply this. God does many miracles; but, the final healing for Christians is to be absent from the body and present with The Lord (Philippians 1:20-26). However, when someone dies without being reconciled to God IN Jesus, that one suffers eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:11-15).

Application: We must pray, asking what Jesus wants us to do concerning the three-fold ministry: to preach repentance; to deliver those oppressed by demons; and, to pray in faith for healing.

He has given all His disciples authority to do everything that is according to God's will.

Jesus gave authority to His disciples

Conclusion: Jesus tells His apostles to wait for The Holy Spirit to come on them because they will receive power to witness to Him to the ends of the earth. After He was taken into heaven, two 'men' said He would return the same way. Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem where they passionately prayed with others with one mind in the upper room. Perhaps they were reflecting on their two-by-two three-fold, sent out from Jesus, ministry six months before this.

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