

# PART 1: SPIRIT-EMPOWERED WITNESSES

## ACTS 1:1-11

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### I. MAIN IDEA

Luke begins his second volume by concluding the ministry of the ascended Christ that continues through his Spirit-empowered witnesses.

### II. SPIRIT-EMPOWERED WITNESSES (1:1-11)

#### A. THE CONCLUSION OF JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY (1:1-8)

*"In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. 3 During the forty days after his crucifixion, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.*

*4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. 5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

*6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" 7 He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to*

know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere-- in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'" (Acts 1:1-8 NLT)

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1:1 The first book is referring to the Gospel of Luke where an account is given of the life and teaching of Jesus, through his death, resurrection, and ascension (Luke 25:51).

1:2 Taken up is describing Jesus Christ's ascension to the Father. Luke uses this term three other times (vv. 9, 11, 22) to describe the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. It was the Holy Spirit who was the source and power of Jesus' earthly ministry.

1:3 Following Jesus' resurrection he appeared to the apostles and to many other people listed below, speaking to them about the Kingdom of God.

- To Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:14).
- To women returning from the tomb (Matthew 28:9, 10).
- To Peter later in the day (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5).
- To the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13-33).
- To the apostles without Thomas (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-24).
- To the apostles with Thomas present (John 20:26-29).
- To the seven by the lake of Tiberias (John 21:1-23).
- To a multitude of 500-plus believers on a Galilean mountain (1 Corinthians 15:6).
- To James (1 Corinthians 15:7).
- To the eleven (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:33-52; Acts 1:3-12)
- At the ascension (Acts 1:3-12).
- To Paul (Acts 9:3-6; 1 Corinthians 15:8).
- To Stephen (Acts 7:55).
- To Paul in the temple (Acts 22:17-21; 23:11).
- To John on Patmos (Rev. 1:10-19).

1:4 Eating with them<sup>1</sup> gave additional proof that Jesus has a physical body after his resurrection. The same holds true to believers in Jesus who will also be physically resurrected (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2).

1:5 The apostles had to wait until the day of Pentecost, but since then all believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit at salvation. God's promise was fulfilled just ten days later.

- To wait means that it was worth waiting for.
- To wait means that they had a promise it would come.

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<sup>1</sup> "Eating with them" is a better translation than "staying with them."

- To wait means they must receive it; they couldn't create it themselves.
- To wait means that they would be tested by waiting, at least a little.

1:6 Restore the kingdom of Israel. The apostles asked Jesus when he would restore the kingdom of Israel. They were assuming from Jesus' resurrection, and the promise of his Holy Spirit, that the restoration of a military and political kingdom of Israel would rise up and drive out the Roman armies. (cf. Ezek. 36; Joel 2)

1:7 Jesus tells them that the ultimate authority in determining the events of history belongs exclusively to God the Father.

1:8 This verse is the key verse in this book. It reveals how Jesus' command to be his witnesses was carried out in the first century...and continues to today. It also reveals an overall structure of the book of Acts.

- Jerusalem → Chapters 1-7
- Judea & Samaria → Chapters 8-12
- To the ends of the earth → Chapters 13-28

## **B. JESUS' ASCENSION (1:9-11)**

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*"After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. 10 As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!" (Acts 1:9-11 NLT)*

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1:9 Taken up. God the Father took Jesus, in his resurrection body, from this world to his rightful place at the Father's right hand (Luke 24:51; cf. 2:33; John 17:1-6).

1:10 Two men...in white apparel. These were two angels in the form of men. (cf. Gen. 18:2; Josh. 5:13-15; Mark 16:5).

1:11 Men of Galilee. All the apostles were from Galilee except for Judas, who had killed himself by this time. In like manner...one day Jesus will return to earth (to the Mount of Olives), in the same way he ascended (with clouds), to set up his kingdom (cf. Dan. 7:13; Zech. 14:4; Matt. 24:30; 26:64; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 1:7; 14:14).

- He left *physically* and will so come in like manner.
- He left *visibly* and will so come in like manner.
- He left from the *Mount of Olives* and will so come in like manner.
- He left in the *presence of his disciples* and will so come in like manner.
- He left blessing his church and will so come in like manner.

### III. APPLICATION

1. As believers in Jesus Christ we also are to continue his ministry by being Spirit-empowered witnesses.
2. As believers in Jesus Christ we are to wait patiently for Jesus' physical return.

#### Resources used in this study

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