



First Baptist

M A D I S O N

The Missional Church
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDES
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First Baptist MADISON

The Missional Church

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WAITING FOR THE FATHER'S PROMISE

ACTS 1:1-5

SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **What is the biggest transition that has happened in your life (graduating from high school or college, starting your first job, getting married, etc.)?**

- 2 **What were the biggest differences in your life following that transition? What changes did you have to make because of this transition?**

UNDERSTANDING

> Read Acts 1:1-5.

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them 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. ⁴ 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. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

1:1-3a. Book dedications were common among the Greeks. Luke had dedicated his Gospel to his Greek-speaking friend Theophilus (Luke 1:3). He continues his contact with Theophilus to complete the story from the birth of Christ to the establishment of the church all around the Mediterranean world. Immediately he emphasizes key ideas of his book: the command to witness; the role of the apostles; the significance of the Holy Spirit; and his literary launching pad, the ascension of the Lord. Luke connects Acts to his Gospel with the simple words, *after his suffering*. He refused to point to the resurrected, glorious, ascended Lord without pointing to the suffering Servant.

During the forty days that separated the resurrection and the ascension, Jesus further taught the disciples, preparing them to lead the early church. This is the only New Testament reference to these post-resurrection days. You will probably find it helpful to read at least the last chapter of Luke to get a feel for how Luke makes the transition into this second letter to Theophilus. To lead, they first had to be convinced that death had turned to life. During this time He gave many convincing proofs that He was alive and spoke about the kingdom of God.

1:3b. What did Jesus say during these question sessions? From everything we know, He used the Old Testament to emphasize that He was the Messiah Israel expected. Now He would turn the reins of responsibility over to the apostles and other believers. Jesus' life on earth was finished, but His work had only begun; the disciples now assumed the responsibility to carry on Jesus' work. We should never forget the full title of our book—"Acts of the Apostles"—though many have suggested it could more properly be titled "The Continuing Acts of Jesus Christ through the Apostles."

Luke uses the phrase “kingdom of God” throughout Acts as a summary for God’s work in the world. We should not confuse it with references either in the Old Testament or in other New Testament books. Jesus’ teaching did not center on prophecy alone but on the ongoing role of the King on earth through His people.

1:4-5. What would these disciples do after the Lord left them? The first command was to wait. They were not to engage in ministry until they had been empowered “by the gift my Father promised.” As we read words like this in the Bible, we’re reminded of the great history of the church that has preceded us and the resources he has provided to continue that heritage.

Jesus taught the disciples, the disciples taught people of their generation, who taught others, **until today you and I have both the opportunity and responsibility to enjoy the gift and to tell others about it.** In this case the gift is not just the gospel in general, but the specific coming of the Holy Spirit. This was not a new theme. Jesus had talked about it in John 14:16-21; 15:26-27; 16:7-15. Believers are somewhat divided on the terminology “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” To argue that issue in detail here is beyond the scope of this work. Certainly Luke had in view that as the New Testament church got under way, Spirit baptism placed believers into that group of believers the New Testament calls the body of Christ.

Throughout the Book of Acts we will see different reactions when people receive the Holy Spirit so we should not conclude that any one particular pattern is the only way God deals with us. The coming of the Holy Spirit took place ten days after Jesus’ ascension at which time the believers experienced the same power in which Jesus carried out His ministry.

What a lesson for us: wait. Don't rush off into ministry unprepared. Don't carry on the Lord's work in the strength of the flesh. The only way we can fulfill Christ's command to witness is to be under control of the Holy Spirit Who energizes us for service.

- **Who wrote this book, and to whom was it written?** (See also Luke 1:1-3.)

- **What should we expect this book to be about? Why did the author claim to have written it?**

- **Acts is thought of as the “hinge book” of the New Testament. What function does a hinge perform on a door? How does that help us better understand the purpose of Acts?**

- **As Jesus was about to ascend and return to heaven, what instructions did He give the disciples (see Acts 1:4-5)? Why would it be better for them to wait instead of jumping right into ministry?**

- **What can we learn about our ministry in the twenty-first century through their willingness to wait?**

> **Read Matthew 28:16-20.**

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

28:16-17. The lingering confusion among them about Jesus's resurrection undermines the skeptical theory that the disciples shared a hallucination of Jesus's resurrection because they all expected him to arise.

28:18. Before the resurrection, Jesus had authority (7:29; 9:6, 8; 11:27; 21:23). However, through the resurrection, the Father granted him all authority over heaven and ... earth, an authority far greater than that which Satan had vainly promised him (see note at 4:8-9).

28:19. The command to extend their mission worldwide brings to a climax Matthew's repeated theme of Gentile participation in God's salvation. The inclusion of four Gentile women in Jesus's genealogy and the summons of the magi to worship the infant Christ foreshadowed the disciples' mission of making disciples of all nations. Baptism marked a person's entrance into the faith community. In the

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is a reference to the Trinity. Matthew's language shows that a clear understanding of Jesus's nature and identity as God was required before baptism.

28:20. The Great Commission (vv. 19–20) is preceded by a reference to Jesus's authority and followed by the promise of Jesus's spiritual presence among us. Both are necessary if we are to fulfill our God-given mission.

- **What central command did Jesus give His disciples in this passage? How were they to carry this out? How was this connected to the waiting in Acts 1?**

- **Why was it important that Jesus closed the Great Commission by saying, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (v. 20)? What does that statement mean to you? How is Jesus with us in our efforts to share the gospel?**

> **Read Isaiah 40:31.**

but those who hope in the Lord

will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;

they will run and not grow weary,

they will walk and not be faint.

40:27-31. The prophet addressed Judah with a series of questions that showed them the weakness of their faith and the ridiculous nature of their complaints—complaints which he himself had shared (v. 6). The Creator who knew the names of all the stars certainly knew the problems of his own chosen people. He would certainly give strength to his people even in a time so trying that the youngest and strongest warriors were totally exhausted. Winning international conflicts by political and military means led to total exhaustion and the need to fight again. Escape from exhaustion comes only from God.

Those who place their hope in the Lord find new strength they did not know they had. They will be able to soar like eagles to new heights of achievement. They will be able to run the race and have energy left to run again. They can walk through the toughest situations without giving up or fainting. This was the comfort the Creator conceived for his confused and concerned creatures. The way was opening for Israel to run home to her fatherland and to her Father. God would build the highway, lead the way, and give strength to endure on the way.

- **How could this verse be connected to the waiting the disciples had to do following Jesus' resurrection?**

- **What might have happened if they didn't wait on power from God?**

- **When has the Lord renewed your strength as you waited on Him?**
- **How did this benefit you in the long run, even if it was difficult in the moment?**

APPLICATION

- 1 **Where in your life do you need to rely on the Holy Spirit to empower and prepare you for ministry?**
- 2 **What are some ways we can encourage one another to be witnesses in the world around us each week?**
- 3 **Where is God calling you to wait for His power and timing in your life?**

PRAY

Praise God for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to help you rely on His power as you seek to make disciples and grow the church from here to the ends of the earth.