

## ***More Power***

Acts 1:1-9  
April 7, 2024

Please open your Bibles today to Acts 1. Pew Bible. How many of you remember the sitcom Home Improvement starring Tim Allen? Ar, ar, ar. I loved that show and Nancy were just watching some reruns a week or so ago. Great wholesome family entertainment with a lot of laughs. One of the things Tim Taylor was known especially for was his obsession with souping things up. Whether it was automobiles, power tools, or Christmas lights, he had a quest for more \_\_\_\_? More power! And of course it was always over the top.

Today we're going to see what the Bible has to say about the **more power** God has given us to fulfill His Great Commission. If you are able, please stand as we read from Acts 1:1 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 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. 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." 6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at **this time** going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for **you** to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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." 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Ever since the first Sunday in January we've been focusing on Jesus' Great Commission and today we find Luke's version of it recorded here in Acts which he wrote for Theophilus, which as I've said before is the awful name I've ever heard. Last week we celebrated Jesus' resurrection and what a joyous time that was! We noted last week how Matthew goes straight from the resurrection at the beginning of Chapter 28, to the Great Commission a few verses later at the end of that same chapter. Luke on the other hand, included a few more details and holds off on the Great Commission until the first chapter of his second book here in Acts.

But he prefaces that by saying that Jesus gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. Keep in mind that Luke himself was a physician and he knew the difference between dead people and those who were alive and he underscores that these were **convincing** proofs. Say Convincing. Not questionable. Not dubious or

debatable. But obvious and convincing proof that Jesus was alive. The Amplified Bible says, “[a series of] many convincing demonstrations [unquestionable evidences and infallible proofs].” And He says, there were many. Say Many. He didn’t just appear to one or two people just once or twice. We mentioned I Cor 15 last week where Paul provides a list of several hundred people who were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ. This makes it clear that not all of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances are recorded for us. Praise God for many convincing proofs!

These appearances took place over a period of 40 days both in Jerusalem as well as up in Galilee. Where this particular meal took place we do not know but it’s probably the same Upper room where they ate the Last Supper, but here is another meal Jesus shared with His disciples after His death and resurrection. So technically, I guess this was the very last supper. This is another convincing proof for dead people don’t eat food and ghosts can’t digest it. He was physically raised. This indicates that our resurrected bodies will also be able to eat and drink and I look forward to the grand buffet at the great marriage supper of the Lamb.

While they were eating, Luke says, Jesus commanded them not to leave the city until a special gift arrived. Until the delivery occurred. Not from Fed Ex or Amazon, but from His Father. It was a gift Jesus had spoken about quite a bit, especially after dinner on the night He was betrayed. In John 13-16, we find many things Jesus said about the Spirit and He promised His arrival. And here He does so again.

Vs 6 makes it sound like perhaps it was sometime later when were together and His Disciples are still hung up on a physical kingdom. "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Although Jesus had risen from the dead, they were still living under Roman oppression. They were still under the thumb of Pilate and all the other rulers who kept the Jewish people in submission. And the disciples, having witnessed the greatest miracle of all knew that nothing else was impossible for Jesus. So, they think, bring it on! Now’s the time! Kick out these bad boys and let’s get this party started!

Vs 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by **his own** authority.” God has a calendar of events. Future dates and times are all established. Certain things **will** come to pass at particular times. In our church newsletter, we have a list of planned dates for Antioch for 2024, if God wills. But God hasn’t posted His calendar of events on His website. He hasn’t revealed what all is going to happen when or even how. He’s told us some things that will happen and He’s given us signs and seasons to be watching for, which I think we’re seeing unfold today. But as far as exact dates when certain things will happen, God hasn’t revealed. Jesus told them here, “Noneya! It’s none ya business!” Regardless of what some preachers may say. Jesus said that even He Himself didn’t know the date of His return. So unless

you're smarter than Jesus, we better just take His advice and be ready always.

But what Jesus says next is what we want to particularly focus on today. Entire books have been written on this one verse. It is jam packed with not only hope and promise, but also directions for us. Jesus said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." Say will. Not might, not could, not should but will receive! Even after Jesus' resurrection, the disciples were not yet fully empowered but they soon would be. Say when. Not **if** the Holy Spirit comes on you, but when He does! Jesus had promised the Spirit earlier and here He repeats that promise assuring the disciples of the Spirit's delivery. No tracking codes would be needed. No delivery receipt or certified mail. The Spirit would come upon them. And about ten days after this discussion, on the Day of Pentecost, the Gift was delivered just as Jesus said!

And when He does arrive, they will receive power. Say power. They would receive so much More Power that it would make Tim Taylor envious. It would surpass anything they'd ever experienced and He would be with them and is now with us. The power would be contained in the promised gift. Say Spirit. The Holy Spirit **is** God! He has all of God's power and all of God's ability to do the same things God the Father does, which is literally anything! And that Holy Spirit would enter His Disciples and today He enters all become His disciples by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior. The book of Acts is a record of the great power of the Holy Spirit working through the disciples.

The Greek word for power is *dunamis*, from which we get our words dynamite and dynamo. How much power does dynamite have? Explosive power to demolish strongholds! Power to change landscapes, power to radically alter what currently is. And that helps us understand a bit of the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us! A dynamo converts mechanical energy into electrical energy. But the Holy Spirit doesn't convert any energy, He possesses it all and when He empowers a believer, He enables that person to do things far beyond their own natural ability. The Amplified Bible says, "... you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might)." The Holy Spirit makes us more efficient and able. He gives us power to face Satan, to face death, both our own and those of our loved ones, and the power to face life.

But Jesus didn't stop there. He told us what the dynamite, that dynamic power was to be used for. It wasn't for show or entertainment, because the next part of vs 8, says "you will be my witnesses..." Say witnesses. A witness tells what he or she knows. What they've experienced. And this Holy Spirit was going to give them, and us, the power to be Jesus' witnesses. To tell others. To make known abroad. To Go and tell what we have come and seen.

If you're a believer, the unlimited Holy Spirit power is in you. You just have to hook the crankshaft up to the drive shaft. We have to connect the Holy Spirit power in

our souls to the tongue in our mouths, to the feet on our legs, to the brains in our heads. Some people have cars they've never used the full power of. They've never gotten up to see how fast it will go. Or how much a tractor will pull. Or how much a person can lift. So too with the Holy Spirit. I fear that too often we are sitting on this great power without ever utilizing Him in our church, in our families, in our relationships, in our jobs, or in our prayers.

Now unlike an impersonal force such as dynamite or electricity, the Holy Spirit is personal. He's God. And so we can't use Him in whatever way we want like electricity. He is not our servant. He will not empower us to disobey God nor allow His power to be used to hurt another. Praise God for that because we humans invariably misuse the gifts God gives us for our own selfish purposes. The particular use of the gift of the Holy Spirit is to be for witnessing and telling others about Jesus, His death, His resurrection, and His teachings. Doing His will and expanding His Kingdom.

The Greek word for witness used here is *Martus* from which we get our word martyr. One who dies for sharing Jesus. That wasn't the original meaning but so many of the disciples were killed for witnessing, that the word stuck. The disciples would be filled with power to tell about Jesus even to their deaths, and all but one did die for sharing Jesus and he died in exile. We don't seek death, but if it comes for being a faithful witness, the Holy Spirit will give us that power.

Jesus here also lays out the strategic map for us. He told His followers they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. So they were to start right where they were, in Jerusalem. Really? The very place where Jesus was arrested, tried, tortured, and executed? You want us to start here? Yes! For it's also where He was resurrected! The very place where the Jewish leaders and Romans both were scrambling to try to cover up the truth.

And so we also are to start witnessing right where we are. Say start here. If you live in Woodstock, start in Woodstock. If you live in Edinburg, start in Edinburg. If you work at the school, start at the school. Start right where you are. "But you don't know how hard it is where I live and work." No, perhaps not, but I've got a pretty good idea because I live and work here too. We're not likely to do a good job on a mission field overseas if we're not first telling the people around us now about Jesus. The disciples were in Jerusalem when they received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and started preaching right there and 3000 people got saved in one day. They continued to stay and preach and teach in Jerusalem even as they got repeatedly arrested and persecuted for doing so. In fact, James and Stephen both were martyred for doing so right in Jerusalem.

But they didn't stay there. For Jesus told them to go into Judea. Say Judea. Judea was the region around Jerusalem. For us it would be like Shenandoah County, although

Judea was more like the Shenandoah Valley. It was larger than a county. Go into the area around your hometown. Let's blanket the whole valley and make sure everyone knows Jesus is risen. And that He has power to raise them if they will receive Him.

Then He said go to Samaria. Say Samaria. This gets complicated. 1. Samaria was the next region to the north of Judea so logistically, it would take some more effort to get there. You had to travel a bit, like us going to WV or to Maryland. But 2, they were the people the Jews hated. Remember the woman at the well? Remember the Good Samaritan? These were the half-breeds who they had been taught to never associate with. Not to touch or talk to, much less go into their territory and give them good news. We want them to die, not live forever with us. We don't want to share the earth with them, so we certainly don't want to see them in heaven. Nope- Jesus specifically said, "Samaria." He could have leapfrogged over them or just lumped them into the "ends of the earth" which we'll get to in a minute. But He didn't. He specifically mentioned despised Samaria by name. There is **no one** Jesus doesn't want saved. No one is to be excluded from our gospel strategy. If you're a republican, it includes democrats and vice versa. If you're a country boy, it includes the city slicker and if you're a city slicker, it includes the hick. It's not His will that **any** should perish, not even a Samaritan. It might be more difficult to go there. It might even be dangerous to go there. You may not come back from there. But Jesus commissioned us to go there and be His witnesses.

And then He said, go to the ends of the earth. The KJV says, "the uttermost part of the earth." Say uttermost. That means go as far as you can possibly go! It means to travel to Africa and China and Russia. It means to go to Papua New Guinea as the pastor and wife from Calvary CBC in Winchester are right now on a mission trip. It means to go to Panama, Guatemala and the Congo where the CBC is going. It includes Ukraine and Israel where Samaritan's Purse is. Not for vacation or relaxation, but to spread the Gospel of Jesus! To be His witnesses! In Matthew 28, Jesus said go to **all nations**. Mark 16 says go into all the world. We start where we are supporting Family Promise and Weekday Religious Education as well Samaritan's purse that goes into all the world.

So there is no where He doesn't want us to go. He wants us to go literally everywhere on the planet! Because of Jesus' command here and in Matthew 28 and Mark 16, missionaries have sought to go to the uttermost, to every country and tribe, to the end of every road and then to make roads where there aren't any. And many have been reached and are being reached although some have still not heard. You and I may not be able to go to all these places ourselves, but we can support those who do. We can pray for them. We can support them with our money. Every Christian should be going or supporting those who do go.

Be a witness for Jesus. Vs 8 is actually the table of contents for the book of Acts. Chapters 1-7 are about the disciples' witnessing in Jerusalem and Judea, in Chapter 8, Philip goes to Samaria, and the whole second half of the book Paul sails to the uttermost parts of the earth. And praise God they did! Because they did, the gospel has been passed along until it has come to us and now it's up to us to be His witnesses. So start where you are. But don't stay there. Go into our surrounding region, outside our comfort zones, and to the ends of the earth today. Thankfully He gave us the more power of His Holy Spirit to accomplish this holy work. But the word for receive can also mean to take or to accept. So it's up to us to accept the Holy Spirit and His power into our lives. Have you? If not receive Him today by receiving Jesus and then use His dynamite power to become His witness.