

God has promised extraordinary Holy Spirit power for everywhere witness

In the year 410AD the city of Rome was overthrown. Known popularly as the “eternal city”, to say it was a shock would be an understatement. To the citizens of Rome and to many throughout the world, the fall of Rome delivered a fatal blow to their view of the world. Rome represented all they knew, all they believed, all they lived for; to have it destroyed was devastating. Rome wasn’t only home for many, for many it represented their hope. It was the city of man. It showed what human intellect and effort could create. To have it overthrown shook the lives of those who had built their hopes on it. It was into this confusion that Augustine wrote one of his best-known works, *The City of God*. Augustine knew that the kingdoms of this world were passing, but the kingdom of God was eternal. His book was written to instruct and encourage his readers in living for the kingdom of God with its eternal rewards, rather than living for the kingdoms of the world. *Isn’t that always the temptation, to live for the things of this present world, rather than living for the kingdom of God?* The things of this world are so tangible, and many of the people we rub shoulders with each day are concerned only with the things of this world. But we’ve been called to something else, something more, something infinitely greater. We’ve been called to live for the kingdom of God. And what’s more, we’ve been called to bear witness to the people living for the things of this world that there is more to life, and that real joy is found in living for the kingdom of God. And, as we’ll see in our passage this morning, **God has promised extraordinary Holy Spirit power for everywhere witness.**

Scripture Passage: Acts 1:4-11

As we come to our passage this morning, realize that we’re still in the introductory section of the book of Acts. Written by Luke to a man named Theophilus, Acts is a detailed account of what Jesus continued to do after his ministry on earth was accomplished. Acts is a record of the expansion of the kingdom through the preaching of gospel. This morning we’ll learn more about how that is made possible, how that is enabled; we’ll see that **God has promised extraordinary Holy Spirit power for everywhere witness.**

The Dispatch of the Spirit (vv.4-8)

The Holy Spirit is Dispatched according to promise (vv.4-5)

1. **v.4** “*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father...*” - Again, this is post-resurrection. Jesus died and rose, and spent 40 days teaching his disciples, primarily about the kingdom of God (**v.3**) and the Holy Spirit (**vv.5, 8**).
2. **v.5** “*for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*”
 1. **Matthew 3:11** “*I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*”
 2. Baptized in the Holy Spirit - What we have recorded for us here in **Acts 1-2** with the day of Pentecost is unique in the history of salvation. Certainly the Holy Spirit had been at work in the disciples (just look at Peter’s statement in **Matthew 16:16**), but Pentecost would be the day when they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit, which marks the beginning of a new age in salvation history. **John 16:7** “*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*” God had orchestrated it to be a day of monumental significance, a day that would mark the beginning of the New Covenant, a day that would mark the beginning of the church as we know it.
3. Now, baptism in the Holy Spirit happens at regeneration, when a person is born again. Paul seems to make this clear in **1 Corinthians 12:13** “*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.*” Baptized in one Spirit, which brings believers into one body and unifies them. Of note is that this was written to the Corinthians, a church made up of very immature believers.
4. While there is one baptism in the Spirit, we are encouraged to be filled with the Spirit - **Ephesians 5:18** “*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,*” **Acts 4:31** “*And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*”
 1. **Do you see the Holy Spirit as integral to your Christian walk? Do you depend on the Holy Spirit? Are you careful not to quench or grieve the Holy Spirit in your life (1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30)?** As Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure, he told them it was better for him to go and to send the Holy Spirit. This is something they anticipated and something that was extremely significant.

The Holy Spirit is Dispatched to accomplish a purpose (vv.6-8)

3. **v.6** “So when they had come together, they asked him...” - John Calvin comments on this, saying, “There are as many errors in this question as there are words.” They were looking for a geographic kingdom (*restored*), and they were looking for a national kingdom (*to Israel*). In this they resorted more to their traditional views and understandings instead of what Jesus had taught them. Their earthly hopes and ambitions started to creep back in. National pride was more prominent in their thinking than kingdom purposes.

1. There’s a strange encouragement that comes from knowing the disciples were so easily taken off track, but it should also serve as a warning to us. If they, the disciples of Christ, personally taught by him for 3 years, erred, then how susceptible are we to error? Don’t let national, political, racial, or social differences surpass kingdom purposes. Don’t let geographic differences surpass kingdom purposes.

Revelation 7:9-12 “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,” We are to be kingdom-minded and kingdom-oriented, living for the kingdom of God while we remain here on earth. And, living as citizens of God’s eternal kingdom will result in us being the best citizens of these temporary earthly kingdoms.

4. **v.8a** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...” - Jesus, in answering their question about the restoration of the kingdom, turns their attention back to the Holy Spirit. In one sense, he doesn’t directly answer their question. But in telling them about the Holy Spirit, he gives them what they most needed to know. The Holy Spirit would enable them beyond any human power, beyond what human effort or intellect could ever hope to accomplish. Extraordinary Holy Spirit power. And what is the purpose of this extraordinary power?

5. **v.8b** “...and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” - Everywhere witness.

1. witness - This is someone that has seen something take place and reports it to others. For these disciples, and for us, what we bear witness to is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Here we see a change from the OT, where Israel was established as a witness to the kingdoms of the world, but only as they came to Israel. Now, the church is to be a witness to the kingdoms of the world by going out.

2. Jerusalem, where the disciples were presently at. Judea and Samaria, which was pushing the bounds. Judea would be no issue, but Samaria? **John 4:9** “The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)” But Samaria wasn’t all; they were to go even to the end of the earth. **Mark 16:15** “And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”

3. Jerusalem (**Acts 1-7**), Judea and Samaria (**Acts 8-12**), and to the end of the earth (**Acts 13-28**)

2. The kingdom Jesus taught his disciples about is not about one ethnicity, geography, not gender, or economic status.

The Departure of the Son (vv.9-11)

1. **v.9** “And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.” - This is, as promised, in preparation for the dispatching of the Spirit. Jesus ascended and now ministers at the right hand of the Father, continually making intercession for us (**Heb. 7:25**).

1. **John 14:15-17** “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

2. **John 16:7** “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”

2. **v.11** “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?” - **Verse 10** tells us they were gazing into heaven. These two men in white robes, presumably angels, speak what amounts to a rebuke.

1. Jesus spent 40 days teaching them about the kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit, which they follow with a question about when Jesus would overthrow Rome and restore Israel’s national kingdom. Jesus corrects them and commissions them, telling them that they would bear witness to his work and his kingdom everywhere. Next scene, and what are they doing? Staring into heaven. **Granted, it was a marvelous and miraculous sight and I think I would’ve done the same thing. It reminds me of the recent solar eclipse and everyone staring into the sky.** But there was work to be done, and it required their attention.

1. They’ve gone from one extreme to the other. First concerned only with earthly kingdoms, the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Then, focused only on heaven, gazing into heaven and forgetting about the kingdom work to be done on earth.

Conclusion: Church, we must beware these extremes and live for something even greater - to live as citizens of God's eternal kingdom. God has promised extraordinary Holy Spirit power for everywhere witness, so we can live in this world and bear testimony to something greater than all the riches, kingdoms, pleasures, fame or power in this world. Is your life centered on the city of man, a present-day Rome that will one day topple and fall? Or is your life centered on the city of God, living in the today for the eternal, and seeing witness to the gospel as the greatest aim and highest work that all of our efforts can further and the Spirit of God can accomplish? We are to depend on the Spirit so that we can witness, to every and any one, every and any where.

Family

Table Talk



March 4, 2018

Family Discussion ?s

1. What is the most exciting gift you've ever received? What is the most useful gift you've ever received? Did you have any idea these gifts were coming? Maybe you had asked for it and excitedly anticipated its arrival; maybe its presentation was a total surprise. Whatever the case, did these gifts help you or change you to be able to serve God?
2. Jesus' disciples had a promised gift coming to them. Jesus told them He would give it to them. He even reminded them to wait for it and anticipate it. What did Jesus promise them?
3. What did Jesus say this gift would cause the disciples to be? The disciples lived in a unique time. They already believed in Jesus, but did not receive the Holy Spirit until Jesus ascended into Heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to them. When the fruition of Acts 1:8 came, the Church age began. As new believers came to a saving faith in Christ, they, too, received the Holy Spirit. Are you a Christian? Have you also received the gift of the Holy Spirit?
4. As Christians, with God's indwelling Spirit inside us, what are we encouraged to do?

GOD'S TRUTH

God has promised extraordinary Holy Spirit power for everywhere witness!

Key Verse

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

TABLE READING

Lead your kids further into God's Word...

2. Acts 1:4-5; Matthew 3:11; John 14:15-17; John 16:7
3. Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 4:4-6
4. Ephesians 5:21; Romans 5:1-5; Romans 8:1-5

Scripture Memory: Acts 1:8

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." - Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (ESV)