



Authority

# THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED, JESUS' ASCENSION, MATTHIAS CHOSEN

Acts 1

The Daily Word from Laura Martin

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After Jesus' death and Resurrection, He appeared to the disciples for 40 days before His ascension to heaven. During this time, He instructed the disciples on things concerning the kingdom of God. Jesus promised the disciples they would *receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them*. He also gave them the final instruction to be His *witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and throughout the entire world*. After stating this, Jesus was taken up to heaven, and the disciples returned to Jerusalem united in prayer.

Because Jesus has not yet returned, His promise and final instruction to the disciples still remains true for believers today. Your purpose as a believer is to bear witness of Jesus *through the power of the Holy Spirit*, not in your own strength, but as you receive power from the Holy Spirit. Whether you are in the grocery store, at school, hanging out with family, or in a country across the world and far from home, your instruction is to be a witness for Jesus. You have nothing to fear. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. So, go forth in power. Let your light shine before all men, bearing witness that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life!

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

— Acts 1:8

## FURTHER SCRIPTURE

- *Matthew 28:18–20* — "Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"
- *John 14:6* — "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"
- *Romans 8:11* — "And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then He who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through His Spirit who lives in you."



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Teaching Notes

## INTRO

The book of Acts is a fun book of the Bible. Many people say they love the book of Acts because they love hearing about what God did in that time period. But I hope and pray that you see God can do the same today. In this book, we get to talk about the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. We can learn about how He comes alive in our lives because we will see how He came alive in the lives of the apostles. Everything that happened in this book happened because Jesus gave the authority to do it.

The apostles can walk out what they were empowered to do because Jesus gave them the authority. In Matthew, the word we used for Jesus was *King*. In Mark, the word was *Servant*. In Luke, He was *Son of Man*, and in John, He was *Son of God*.

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus described to the apostles His game plan and said He had been given all authority on heaven and on earth. Jesus' authority is not limited. For the book of Acts, our word is *Authority*. Having established His *Authority*, Jesus told the disciples to go into all nations and make disciples (Matthew 28:19–20). When we understand the going, we understand Jesus has the Authority—and He gives it to us. How? The book of Acts shows us that Jesus gives us the authority through the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, the things the Holy Spirit gives us makes us uncomfortable. But we need the authority and the empowerment that can only come from Him. As we study the book of Acts, we'll realize all the Old Testament points to this.

Acts is the second volume written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke. Like the Gospel of Luke, Acts was written to Theophilus (Acts 1:1). The first 12 chapters are predominantly about Peter and the church. In chapters 13–28, the predominant character is Paul. If you run with the title of the book as the “Acts of the Holy Spirit”, as John MacArthur said, “It was the Spirit’s directing, controlling, and empowering ministry that strengthened the church and caused it to grow in numbers, spiritual power, and influence.”<sup>1</sup> Luke, the author, is described three times in Scripture. In Colossians 4:13, Luke was described as “the dearly loved physician.” In 2 Timothy 4:11, Luke was with Paul while Paul was in prison. Luke was always where he needed to be to document the acts of the apostles. In Philemon 1:24, Paul again mentioned Luke was one of his coworkers. Because Luke was a doctor, he was probably very detail-oriented. He was one of Paul’s close friends, traveling companions, and personal physician. In Luke 1:1–4, Luke was described as a very careful researcher. Luke interviewed Peter, John, and others who were part of the Jerusalem church. While Paul was imprisoned for two years, Luke interviewed Phillip and his daughters.<sup>2</sup> Throughout Acts, there are several “we” sections where Luke wrote about being part of this or part of that. So not only did Luke interview people, but there were seasons when Luke was involved as well.

Acts was probably written before the end of Paul’s first Roman imprisonment from AD 60 to AD 62 because Luke didn’t write about the martyrdom of James, the head of the Jerusalem church. Luke wrote to give Theophilus a narrative of the things Jesus did here on earth. In this process, Luke described Jesus’ ascension, Pentecost, and the launch and growth of the church. Luke witnessed the most unique revival of all time. Whenever we see growth of the church in Acts, we’ll also see opposition. What Luke recorded in the book of Acts was the initial response to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). Because of 12 guys not worrying about their life, but rather living out their commission, we get to hear about Jesus and then walk out the authority He gives us. The book of Acts emphasizes that Jesus was Israel’s long-awaited Messiah. Jesus truly became the hope of Israel in the book of Acts. The book of Acts quotes extensively from the Old Testament. Luke tied his account back to Joel, back to Psalms, and back to Isaiah. For example: Acts 2:35 was taken from Psalm 110:1. It doesn’t mean Jesus wiped out the Old Testament just because we’re now studying the New Testament and the new covenant. Instead, Jesus said He had come to fulfill—not abolish or destroy—the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), p. 1429

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, p. 1429.

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, pp. 1429–30.



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## TEACHING

Acts 1:1–3: Luke recapped what he covered in his first writing (the Gospel of Luke). As he began this writing, Luke emphasized that Jesus suffered, died, came back to life, and then appeared to the disciples for four days. Jesus provided “many convincing proofs” He was alive, and He talked to the disciples about the kingdom of God. This is the message we should be about today. We need to become more about the kingdom of God than about ourselves or our denominations.

Acts 1:4–5: While Jesus was with the disciples these 40 days, He told them not to leave Jerusalem. They probably questioned that command since Jerusalem was where Jesus was killed, but Jesus said they had to wait for what the Father promised. Jesus had told them about God’s promise that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. In Luke 11:13, Jesus explained that God would give them the Holy Spirit. In Luke 24:49, after His resurrection from the dead, Jesus said, “I am sending you what My Father promised.” The disciples heard the consistent message that they were supposed to wait in Jerusalem until they were given what Jesus and His Father had promised to give them.

Acts 1:6–8: The disciples wanted to know if Jesus intended to restore the kingdom of Israel. They were ready to see the state of Israel reinstated with Jesus ruling as king. The disciples knew Ezekiel 36 and Joel 2 connected the coming of the kingdom with the outpouring of the Spirit.<sup>4</sup> Jesus said that it wasn’t for them to know and then redirected them to what He had called them to do. When the Holy Spirit was given to them, they would be “[His] witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (v. 8). The word “witness” is from a Greek word that means “one who dies for his faith.”<sup>5</sup> Jesus was saying that when we actually believe His promise that the Spirit has come to give us power and authority, then we’ll actually die for Him. For some reason, we think taking the good news is a business or an assignment through a Sunday school class. In reality, if we’re followers of Christ, then we’re being asked if we’re willing to be a witness who will die for our faith in Christ, wherever we are. We’ve been given authority and power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, to walk as ambassadors for the living King; yet, we decide if we want to or not. We’re afraid to walk out the authority that we’ve been given.

Acts 1:9–14: The disciples watched as Jesus was taken up in a cloud out of their sight. We are to be witnesses who release the gospel and the kingdom of God into this atmosphere, into this earth. We have the opportunity to walk out the *Authority* of Christ, and we have an incredible model that shows us how to do it. Then two men in white clothes asked why they (the disciples) were standing there looking up into heaven (v. 11a). The two white-clothed men explained Jesus would come again in the same way the disciples saw Him going into heaven. As the disciples returned to Jerusalem—no more than a half mile away, as that was the farthest they could have walked on the Sabbath (v. 12)—can you imagine their conversation? As directed, the disciples waited in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:15–26: As they gathered in the upper room, the disciples cast lots to choose Matthias to replace Judas so that they once again had 12 disciples.

## CLOSING

At the end of Acts 1, the disciples were waiting for the Spirit of God to come so they could be His witnesses.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, p. 1432.

<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, p. 1433.



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Reading Guide Questions

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1. In Acts 1:3, Luke recorded that Jesus “presented Himself alive to them by many convincing proofs.” Can you list a couple of these proofs?
  2. Jesus told the apostles to wait for what the Father had promised and had revealed to them. Look back at the Gospels. When and what had Jesus told them about what the Father had promised?
  3. What would the disciples be empowered to do, according to Acts 1:8? Do we have the same calling? Support your answer with Scripture.
  4. What did the believers do while waiting in Jerusalem (Acts 1:13–14)? How long did they continue this pattern?
  5. What did the Holy Spirit highlight to you in Acts 1 through the reading or the teaching?

