



Today is a special day. No, not Cinco de Mayo. It is what we call our Great Day. A day we set aside to rejoice in our salvation, pray, and give sacrificially for missions so that others would be saved. This is our Christian witness. After the message we will all have an opportunity to generously respond to our Savior. My prayer is that we will show the world that we are a generous people, a generous church, who worship a generous God!

Hudson Taylor, one of the 1st missionaries to China once said, “I look upon foreign missions as the scaffolding around a rising building. The sooner it can be dispensed with the better, or the sooner it can be transitioned to another place to serve some other use, the better.” All around the world the Lord is building His church. We have the beautiful opportunity to help set the scaffolding to build the church of our Savior!

In Christ, it is vastly more important what You Will Be than what you were.

[And You Will– Acts 1:6-11]

You Will Receive. What we read in the Holy Scriptures is a pivotal moment in all of history and a divine transition. This is the moment following the resurrection of Messiah and immediately before his ascension. It is the exact point in history when the Son of God leaves the world, leaves his disciples, leaves His church to return to the Father.

But- The Word reminds that Jesus will never leave you. If you are in Christ, you are never alone!! Because now, you experience the presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Let this sink in, if you have surrendered to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit lives in you right now! **The gift of the HS is a sign that God’s end-time restoration has begun.** The HS is a constant **promise** to you and a **prompt** to others that Jesus continues to reign.

Power. And this is not a watered down, weakened demi-God. The Holy Spirit is powerful. The word dynamis (think dynamite) is used in reference to miracles but here includes power to speak boldly. **2Tim. 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power. God’s plan for you is to live in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

I have a glove here in my hand. The glove cannot do anything by itself, but when my hand is in it, it can do many things. True, it is not the glove, but my hand in the glove

that acts. We are gloves. It is the Holy Spirit in us who is the hand, who does the job.
In Christ, you will receive Power

You will be my witnesses. Every self-respecting Israelite would have immediately recognized these words. Jesus' words were direct allusions to [Isaiah 43:10](#): “You are my witness—this is the Lord’s declaration... besides me there is no Savior.” From the beginning, those who know the true God are called to testify to the truth, witness of the way, proclaimers of the peace, and lovers of the Lord.

If you are a follower of the Messiah, this is your **Identity**: you are His witness. **Say: I am a witness**. You bear witness as those who belong to him—as authorized representatives. Whether you know it or not, you are already a witness. Your witness—good or bad—is the overflow of your life –Begg. **Embrace** your identity, **exalt** the Savior.

This new identity as a witness is intricately linked with the **power** of the Holy Spirit. This is not self seeking power or self serving power, this is supernatural mission power. This is power that will one day transform the uttermost ends of the earth. **If you look into His face and say, “Yes, Lord, whatever it costs,” at that moment He’ll flood your life with His presence and power –Alan Redpath**. Often we fail to see the power and presence of Christ in our life because we refuse our identity as witnesses. **Want to see the power of God in your life, be a witness and watch the Holy Spirit convert the hearts of the vilest offender who truly believes.**

Witness. The role of the Apostles was that of witness (**martys**). This is the same word for a person who is killed because of the belief. The effective Christian witness involves sharing the testimony of Jesus and demonstration of spiritual and moral transformation. **True witness = lips +life + power of the Holy Spirit**.

So what? The World is waiting. The ends of the earth are waiting. **7,098 unreached people groups right now in the world**.

Winners of souls must first be weepers for souls. –Spurgeon

During our time of response here is what I want you to do.

1. If you have never turned from your sin and turned to Jesus alone for your hope and salvation. The free gift of salvation is offered today. This is the witness: the sinless Savior died to take your place, give you abundant life, and empower you with the Holy Spirit.
2. Will you pray and weep for those who don't know Jesus today?
3. Will you give so that others may know about this Jesus? Will you generously be a partner in kingdom work?

Notes

The book of Acts has been aptly called the 'Acts of the Holy Spirit' for all that the church achieves is through the Spirit (Fernando, 52).

W/out the ascension the picture of Jesus is incomplete. W/out the ascension we fail to see that the head of crowns is now crowed in glory.

The ascension displays Jesus' current and future authority. Such executive power involves the distribution of salvation's benefits now and the exercise of judgment in the future (Bock, 68).

Luke's gospel closes with Jesus' ascension to heaven. Where Luke ends, the book of Acts begins. The narrative has made one thing clear: God has vindicated Jesus and has taken him to share in the promised rule of the kingdom with its accompanying promise of salvation through forgiveness that comes in response to repentance and the gifting of the indwelling, enabling Spirit, who gives life. Theophilus can be assured that Jesus is who he claimed to be and is what eh church proclaims about him (Bock, 79).

Luke is the only NT author to describe the ascension (Bock, 204).

The ascension stands as a key divine act vindicating Jesus and placing him in authority at the right hand of God.

What the early church said and did was rooted in and connected to activity in which the risen Jesus was involved. Without Jesus and his work, one cannot make sense of the church's existence and activity (Bock, 53).

1 Tim 3:16 And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

1 Pet. 3:21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

For Luke, the death and resurrection of Jesus are important, but more important is his reign, both presently and in the age to come. For Luke, Jesus is not passively sitting in heaven awaiting his return. He lives, administers the benefits of salvation, and rules in anticipation of a more visible rule to come (Bock, 205).

Acts 1:1 I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach

Theophilus- “dear to God.” Some have suggested that he was no particular individual, but is used here to designate the “Christian reader.” The use of the honorific title “most excellent” makes this improbable.

Another suggestion is that the name Theophilus masks the identity of some well-known person, such as Titus Flavius Clemens, cousin of the Emperor Domitian (Bruce, 29). This is unlikely as Theophilus was a perfectly ordinary personal name, attested from the 3rd BC onward.

This much is certain, that Theophilus had already learned something about the rise and progress of Christianity, and Luke’s aim was to put him in possession of more accurate information than he already had (Bruce, 29).

Though Luke surely intended his work for the whole Christian community, Theophilus may have received the special dedication for being a patron who helped defray some of the costs of Luke’s writing (Polhill, 79).

2 until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. **3** After he had suffered, he also presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Formerly they had experienced the Spirit through the presence of Jesus. After Pentecost, they would experience Jesus through the presence of the Spirit (Polhill, 81).

Luke had already given vivid examples of these proofs in his Gospel: the Emmaus road (24:13-32) to Peter (24:34), and to the disciples (24:36-43). The appearances to the apostles are absolutely essential for their primary role in Acts of being witnesses to his resurrection (Polhill, 81).

The picture is that of a continual coming and going of the risen Lord rather than of one extended stay (Polhill, 81).

The mention of the Spirit reinforces the role of this key figure in Acts for the church's mission. Jesus and the Spirit operate in concert on behalf of God (Bock, 54).

Proof- Tekmerion

Refers to 'that which causes something to be known in a convincing and decisive manner, proof' (Bock, 54).

Kistemaker lists 10 appearances of Jesus: to the women at the tomb, Mary Magdalene, the Emmaus disciples, Peter in Jerusalem, 10 disciples, 11 disciples, 7 disciples fishing in Galilee, 11 disciples in Galilee, the 500, and James the Lord's brother (Bock, 56).

Teaching then revival. Historian J. Edwin Orr has said that a theological awaking must precede a revival of religion. Dr. John Mackay, "First the enlightened mind, then the burning heart. First a revival of theological insights, and then the revival we need (Fernando, 53)."

A spiritual awakening always sours on the wings of the Word. No matter how long people neglect the truth of God, one day it will surface and accomplish its wonder work (Fernando, 63).

Kingdom

God's promised rule that comes with Jesus's messianic program and activity. It appears 32 times in Luke and 6 times in Acts. Jesus' resurrection allows the kingdom to be preached (Bock, 56).

According to the Gospels, the kingdom of God came with the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and it finds its consummation in the return of Christ as Judge and King (Fernando, 51).

The verb, the noun, and the adverb of their sentence all betray doctrinal confusion about the kingdom. The verb restore shows that they were expecting a political and territorial kingdom; the noun Israel that they were expecting a national kingdom, and the adverbial clause at this time that they were expecting its immediate establishment (Stott).

Acts 1:4 While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "Which," he said, "you have heard me speak about; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days."

The time was now drawing near when the words of John would be fulfilled. According to OT prophecy, the days of fulfillment would be marked by a widespread outpouring of the Spirit of God. John's water baptism not only prepared his repentant hearers for the coming judgment but also pointed them on to that spiritual baptism of which the prophets had spoken (Bruce, 35).

Joel 2:28 After this I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. **29** I will even pour out my Spirit on the male and female slaves in those days.

Baptized. The reference is to the unique, unrepeatable event at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples in a visible form like fire (Polhill, 83).

Throughout Acts new converts experience repentance, Baptism, and the gift of the Spirit (Polhill, 83). All three are essential elements of the conversion experience. Although the Spirit cannot be tied to a mechanistic pattern, these patterns show that repentance and the gift of the Spirit are essential to the conversion experience.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The traditional evangelical explanation is that, while in Acts there were unique experiences of this baptism with the Holy Spirit, for us today such a baptism takes place at conversion, and the term baptism is used for initiation into the body of Christ and the resultant experience of the Spirit.

Some see this baptism as a second definite work of grace, distinct from conversion, one that usually takes place some time after conversion. Wesleyan holiness emphasize holiness of heart and life. Charismatics and Pentecostals: power for witness and sign gifts. D.L. Moody and Torrey" emphasized power for service. Lloyd-Jones: seems to use this expression to refer to revival, when the power of God comes on groups of people through the outpouring of the HS (Fernando, 54).

One of the strongest arguments for the conversion-initiation position is the apparent use of this expression for every in 1 Cor. 12:13

1Cor. 12:12 For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. **13** For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink. **14** Indeed, the body is not one part but many.

The danger with the conversion-initiation interpretation is that it can take away a yearning for God's fullness and create a class of half-baked Christians who are not experiencing everything that God wishes them to enjoy (Fernando, 63).

An emphasis on mission can neglect the great command for holiness. The Wesleyan position can give rise to an unhealthy perfectionism, with unbiblical measures (Fernando, 63).

2nd century: Spirit was the agent of apostolicity

16th century: Spirit witness to interpret the Word

20th century: because of a renewed study of Luke-Acts: missionary character.

The early church showed that being filled with the Spirit was mandatory for Christians by making it a basic qualification for those who were to administer the distribution of food (Acts 6:3).

Whatever one may call it and however one may enter it all Christians must experience the fullness of God's Spirit and power in witness.

Spirit

Effective ministry of requires God's direction and enablement. The mission command provides the direction for the church, and the Spirit gives the enablement (Bock, 56).

Acts 1:6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?"

The coming of the Spirit does not mean the completion of the kingdom promise. Acts 2-3 will make this quite clear (Bock, 61).

Verses 6-8 are closely linked together. In v. 6 the disciples asked Jesus about the time of the kingdom. In v.7 Jesus rejected speculation about 'times' altogether and in v.8 replaced this with the relevant subject—the Christian task in the interim period before the kingdom's coming (Polhill, 84).

Jesus corrected the disciples by directing them away from the question about 'times or dates' (v.7).

Acts 1:7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

This knowledge I reserved to the Father alone (Mark 13:32).

Jesus makes no commitment at all as to when the end comes; He simply points out that there are things to do in the meantime (Bock, 62).

Set- the verb in the middle active voice means fix or establish something.

8 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 end of the earth."

Strong allusions to Isaiah

43:10 "You are my witnesses" this is the LORD's declaration— "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. No god was formed before me, and there will be none after me. **11** I— I am the LORD. Besides me, there is no Savior **12** I alone declared, saved, and proclaimed— and not some foreign god among you. So you are my witnesses"— this is the LORD's declaration—"and I am God.

49:6 he says, "It is not enough for you to be my servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you a light for the nations, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth."

In light of v.5, this coming of the Spirit upon the apostles must be equivalent to being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The word dynamis is used were reference to miracles (2:22, 3:13, 4:7, 8:13) but here includes power to speak boldly (Peterson, 110).

The gift of the HS is a sign that God's end-time restoration has begun (Peterson, 111).

The Holy Spirit is specifically given for the worldwide mission envisaged in v.8 (Peterson, 111).

What vv 6-8, which should be read closely together, indicate is not merely the delay in the restoration of Israel but also that in the interim there are important things to be accomplished. V.8 should be seen as briefly announcing the tasks that need to be completed before the 'restoration' namely witnessing in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, "and to the ends of the earth." It is programmatic in the sense that it alludes to a worldwide mission (BW3, 111).

This progression, going as far as Rome, is what Acts will cover (with Jerusalem and Syria Antioch as hubs).

As Jesus had been anointed at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and power, so his followers were anointed and enable to carry on his work (Bruce, 36). This work would be a work of witness-bearing.

The promised the disciples two things: power and witness (Polhill, 85).

The role of the apostles is that of 'witness' (martyrs).

The Spirit is tied to power which refers here to being empowered to speak boldly by testifying to the message of God's work through Jesus (Bock, 63).

Witness:

They will bear witness as those who belong to him—as authorized representatives (Peterson, 111).

In the final analysis, Luke indicates that effective Christian witness involves both sharing of the apostolic testimony to Jesus and a demonstration of spiritual and moral transformation arising from personal commitment to the risen Lord (Peterson, 112).

Readers are left with an implied challenge to continue the work of worldwide testimony to Jesus (Pillar, 113).

The geographical scope of Acts 1:8 provides a rough outline of the entire book: Jerusalem (1-7), Judea Samaria (8-12), the ends of the earth (13-28).

Acts 1:9 After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

It is Luke's mention of this period of 40 days that is responsible for the arrangement in the Christian calendar by which Ascension Day falls on the fortieth day after Easter (Bruce, 37).

One should not get the picture that the ascended Christ is was no longer active among believers. He continued to reveal himself to such as Stephen (7:56) and Paul (9:5).

Cloud

The transfiguration (Luke 9:34-6), the ascension, and the Parousia (Mark 13:26) are three successive manifestations of Jesus' divine glory. The cloud in each case is to be understood as the cloud which envelops the glory of God (The shekhinah) that cloud which, resting above the Mosaic tabernacle and filling Solomon's temple, was the visible token to Israel that the divine glory had taken up residence there (Bruce, 38).

The cloud is not merely a vehicle for their ascension but probably is also a sign of God's heavenly glory or the divine presence (Bock, 67).

10 While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them.

Luke intends his readers to understand these men to be angelic messengers, like the two men who appeared to the women at the empty tomb of Jesus in dazzling apparel (Luke 24:4). Two was the minimum number for credible witness bearing (Bruce, 38).

11 They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven."

Jesus was taken up in the clouds; two angels declare he will return in the same manner as he departed. Luke alone narrates this ascension and its picture of being the reverse of the return.

Christ is ascended, but his abiding presence and energy fill the whole book of Acts, and the whole succeeding story of his people on earth (Bruce, 39).

A mild rebuke is expressed in the question "why do you stand looking into heaven?" His departure means that they now have work to do.

The angels do not the disciples' question of when, but it assures the that a return will complete the messianic task.

In sum there is one central application for the unit: the church is called to engage in mission to the world, knowing that Jesus' return is assured.

Illustrations

History of Religion in Alabama (encyclopedia of Alabama)

Life on the early Alabama frontier was disorderly, chaotic, and (if early itinerant ministers can be believed) incredibly wicked.

Someone (J.D. Grear) has said that many of us think that the Holy Spirit is like our pituitary gland. You know it's there, you're glad you've got it, and you don't want to lose it, but you're not exactly sure what it does. Well, the Holy Spirit does a lot. For our purposes here, the Holy Spirit is our teacher, reminder, and enabler.

A number of years ago I suffered from a hip problem. For over a year I walked with a cane.

I have a glove here in my hand. The glove cannot do anything by itself, but when my hand is in it, it can do many things. True, it is not the glove, but my hand in the glove that acts. We are gloves. It is the Holy Spirit in us who is the hand, who does the job. We have to make room for the hand so that every finger is filled.

I look upon foreign missionaries as the scaffolding around a rising building. The sooner it can be dispensed with, the better; or rather, the sooner it can be transferred to other places, to serve the same temporary use, the better.

"My grandfather was lame. Once they asked him to tell a story about his teacher, and he related how his master used to hop and dance while he prayed. My Grandfather rose as he spoke and was so swept away by his story that he himself began to hop and dance to show how the master had done. From that hour he was cured of his lameness."

When we tell the story of our Master, we too experience his power.

Application

The ascension is a visual reminder that Jesus has entrusted His kingdom on earth to the church to proclaim the true reign of the Messiah.