

ANTICIPATING OUR LORD'S RETURN (vv. 9-11)

VERSES 9-11 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

1. How should the fact that Jesus is currently sitting at the right hand of the Father encourage us in our mission in the world?
2. How should the fact that Jesus will one day return and renew all things encourage us in our mission in the world?

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360 DISCUSSION GUIDE



Luke begins the book of Acts, with one of the most exciting lines in Scripture, "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach..." The New Testament could have begun in similar fashion, maybe with a line something like, "The Law and the Prophets record all that God began to do and teach..."

In the same way, the book of Acts is a continuation of Jesus' story, and Jesus' story is a continuation of God's story. The whole of Scripture is a seamless story of God's redemptive love for creation and the promise that he will one day make all things new.

The story that starts in the garden inevitably leads us to the cross, and while the cross is the climax of the story, it is not the end of the story. The cross does, however, mark the beginning of the end.

There have been some exciting chapters in the story so far—"The Creation of All Things," "Humanities Fatal Rejection of God," "God's Judgment and the Promise of Redemption," "The Initiation of God's Redemptive Plan in the Call of Abraham," "The Rise and Fall of Israel," and "The Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah."

The Book of Acts marks the next chapter in the story, "The Birth of the Church and the Fulfillment of Her Mission in the World." This is our chapter. This is our calling. This is where we live and breathe. The book of Acts records how the early church fulfilled the mission of Christ in their generation and calls on us to do the same in ours.

MANY CONVINCING PROOFS (vv. 1-3)

VERSES 1-3 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.

LUKE 24:44-49 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

1. Why do you think Luke emphasizes that Jesus instructs his disciples "through the Holy Spirit?"
2. What are some of the convincing proofs that Jesus offered the disciples?
3. The Gospel of Luke gives us a fuller picture of what Jesus taught the disciples during this forty day period. With these verses as a backdrop how would you describe what he taught them about the Kingdom of God?
4. If the Gospel of Luke only tells us about "all that Jesus began to do and teach" how will the book of Acts continue the story?
5. How do we continue the story?

EMPOWERED FOR MISSION (vv. 4-8)

VERSES 4-8 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 Then they gathered around him and 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."

1. Why is it essential that the disciples wait for the gift of the Spirit before engaging their world with the message of Christ?
2. What are the disciples preoccupied with?
3. What does Jesus want them to be preoccupied with?
4. What are some of the things we are preoccupied with?
5. What does Jesus want us to be preoccupied with?
6. Jesus associates the coming of the Holy Spirit with "receiving power."
 - a. What specifically will the Spirit empower them to do?
 - b. What are some other powerful ways that the Spirit works in our lives?
7. What are some of the things we do to minimize the work of the Spirit in our lives?
8. What are some things we can do to insure that the Spirit is powerfully at work in our lives?