

01b ACTS

We're ready now to resume our study in the introductory verses of the book of Acts. Jesus, you have a little bit of red ink there, if you have a red letter edition, speaking to the disciples, talking about the promise of the Father, which you have heard from me. And Luke sort of smoothly transitions from the third person to the first person here, being assembled together with them.

He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, and then you have he said in italics, because you begin to go into a direct quotation, which you have heard from me. And you might have a tendency to kind of blow on by the last part of verse 4 there, but it is a great thing that God does not do things without telling us. We are told ahead of time.

We have the prophetic aspect of Scripture. God identifies Himself in the Old Testament many, many places where He says, I am the God who tells you what happens before it happens. That's how you know that I am God.

And we don't have a capricious or an unpredictable God who is inscrutable and is hard to figure out over and over again. He demonstrates the fact that He lets us know. He is the God who reveals.

He is the God who tells us what's going to happen. And Jesus has told them, this was the theme of the walk to Emmaus. Look at the Old Testament Scriptures that told you that these things would be.

How many times did I tell you that I had to fall into the hands of man and be crucified and would be raised again the third day? Do you not remember? Do you not remember? Well, we want to benefit from seeing people treat that information casually and not remember it. We want to remember and see what it is God says is going to happen. There is nothing more important for you and for me than to remember what God has said about what is coming up.

Jesus tells the disciples, you need to stay here in Jerusalem until power comes on you from on high because it's going to give you the capability to fulfill God's plan. You are not yet equipped, but you will be when the Spirit comes. Well, for you and me, the Spirit has come.

We have the five-fold ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Do you remember the five ministries of the Spirit? It's part of the 24 package that happens at salvation. What are they? We have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We have the filling of the Holy Spirit. We have the sealing of the Holy Spirit. We have the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

Not only at the point of salvation, but the ongoing regeneration where He uses the Word of God to transform us by the renewing of our minds. And we have the gifting of the Holy Spirit. The gifting is one of the more interesting areas of His ministry because it is different among different ones of us.

We have some of us who are good at administration or organization. We have others who are good at studying and learning and teaching. We have others who are good at comfort.

We have those who are good at prayer. We have those who are good at educating. And it's not necessarily preaching ministry, but it's more of a teaching ministry, maybe for children or for older women who teach younger women and that sort of thing.

There is a gifting, and not all the gifts even have names, but it is a unique ability. It is an ability that God the Holy Spirit gives each one of us at the point of salvation to be a blessing to others in the body of Christ. That's the purpose of a spiritual gift.

If it doesn't bless, it's not a part of the gift. It's designed to build up and edify. It is designed to complement and supplement the whole body of Christ.

It is specifically designed to bless fellow believers. The one exception to that is the gift of evangelism. There are certain people who God makes the recruiters and makes those who go forth and are able to have rapport and trust and opportunity and ability to communicate the gospel.

We sometimes feel bad because someone who is close to us and we care a lot about, we can't seem to get through to them. It seems like our words and our witness nothing does any good. They fall in with somebody in a casual way.

The next thing you know, they are saved. The next thing you know, they are interested in the things of God. We think, well, why couldn't I have been the agent by which that came about? Well, it's kind of like saying, well, why couldn't I have been the white blood cell that went in and got that infection when I'm actually an earlobe? I have a different function.

I have a different job. We should just be grateful to God that He has detailed different aspects of blessing to different ones. Some of us wish we were gifted musically, and we're not.

Some of us wish we were gifted in a lot of different areas, and we're not. And so we just thank God for the ones who are. So don't just blow by verse 4. He says, You have heard from Me that this promise from the Father is coming.

What did Jesus say about the promise from the Father? Remember in John chapter 14 and chapter 15? He says a lot about the Holy Spirit. We don't have time to go back and

review all of it, but you can go back and look at it. The Holy Spirit does a lot of things.

He leads into all truth. He takes of the things of Christ and makes them perspicacious, makes them understandable to us. He does not speak from Himself.

The most horrifying thing I heard in the space of a month, I heard one time when somebody sang a big love song to the Holy Spirit. Oh, Holy Spirit, You're so great. Speak to me.

Tell me what You know. Oh, Holy Spirit. He was going on and on, and it just made the hair stand up on the back of my neck because it went right against what Scripture says.

God the Holy Spirit, the last thing He wants, it's like a good pastor or a good teacher. He does not want to draw attention to Himself. Think about this.

If you're at a museum and you get in this painting, it's a beautiful mural by Da Vinci or Michelangelo or some great person. They bring it in, and you're going to have an opening day. There's huge throngs of people who have come to see this magnificent piece of artwork.

You've got a beautiful purple velvet drapery with gold fringe spread across it. Everybody's assembled, and the great moment has come, and they dim the house lights and they turn on the spotlights. And you're up there, and you are the one that's going to grab the purple cord and pull the sash, and away will come this drapery, and here will be revealed this beautiful, beautiful work of art.

And so you reach up and you grab the thing and you pull it across, and then you stand in front of the work of art and say, how about that? I mean, that is not the way it works. You get out of the way and let people see this beautiful work of art. That's how it's supposed to work.

You don't stand there and say, did you notice my tux? I rented it just for this occasion. And look at this watch chain. That belonged to my granddad.

And make an issue out of oneself. That's the way a good pastor is, a good teacher of the Word of God, will pull the curtain back and then get out of the way and let you look at it and think about it and benefit from it and grow in it. That's how it's supposed to work.

God the Holy Spirit is at work to bless us through the Word of God and through the things that the Word of God does in each of our souls. And that is something you can't buy. It's something you can't can, you can't bottle it, you can't package it, you can't freeze-dry it and save it for later.

It is a dynamic, it is a dunamis, it is an ability and capability that comes from the active, fruitful ministry of God's Spirit in the soul of a believer. That's what Jesus is talking about

here. He says John did this symbolic thing.

Go down to the Jordan and get wet. This is not that. And this is the distinction really between the Old Testament and the New.

The Old Testament served a wonderful purpose. Those believers will be blessed. Those who were faithful who looked for a city whose founder and builder is God, Hebrews chapter 11 and all the rest.

Taking nothing away from them, their age and their ministry and their covenants were shadows and symbols and types and illustrations of the reality. Now the Lord Jesus has come and has pulled aside the veil and we look with unveiled faces right into the Holy of Holies and we see these things that God is revealing. And God the Holy Spirit makes them understandable and makes them real to us.

That's what it means, this five-fold ministry of the Spirit that we enjoy. Baptism of the Holy Spirit. We are entered into the Holy of Holies.

We are entered into the name of the Father and the name of the Son and the name of the Spirit Himself. So they want to know in verse 6, what about the restoration of the kingdom? For them, they're still kind of thinking, well, are we going to have a political change? Are we going to run these Romans out of town and these dirty birds that did the cross and are continuing to oppress and to hinder the progress of the preaching of the plan of God? Jesus said, it is not for you to know times or seasons. There are certain things that it is not for us to know.

Generally speaking, we do not know the day of our death. God knows. God could tell us.

There could be a little digital counter that runs down to zero somewhere in our physiology. There could be a, I saw a thing, a little science fiction show where they were saying, oh, we have this machine that is a quantum chronometer and you point it at something and it tells you how old it is. Well, here's this alien spacecraft and see this part here was made four years ago and this part here was made ten years ago and this part here was made fourteen years ago.

Then he pointed at one little part and he says, now this, looky here, the quantum chronometer says negative numbers. It's come from the future and it's not supposed to be here. They've contaminated it.

It's come from the future. And it's got a negative reading on the quantum chronometer. Well, see, God could have given us some kind of a thing.

You look and say, hey, did you know you've got fourteen and a half days to live? I mean, it would kind of warp your ability to enjoy that last couple of weeks because you just, it's like the end of leave when you're in the service. People come up and say, well, when do

you have to go back? I just hate that question. Why are you making me think about the end of my, why don't we just pretend like it's not going to end? Let me think about that on the last day.

Don't ask me my third day into a week of leave and say, well, when do you have to go back? Well, see, God does not reveal some things to us. We don't need to know when we die. We don't need to know the day of the rapture.

If we needed to know, God would tell us, wouldn't he? Oh, by the way, it's going to be April the 13th, 2024, just right around the day of Pentecost. Pick up with the Israel clock right when the church clock stops. 2024, nice round number, good date.

That's when it's going to happen. So just organize your life around that. God does not tell us.

It is not for you to know the kairos and the kranos, not the punctiliar episodes of changes of venue, changes of geographical location, births and deaths and things like that. You don't need to know that, God says. You don't need to know all of the processes that are at work.

You don't need to know how long your country is going to last or how long the different members of your family are going to last or circumstances, your job or whatever is going to last. It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has set, it says put in the New King James, but it means set. He has established them in His own authority.

Now that word authority, what do you think that is in Greek? All of you who are up on Greek, that's going to be exousia. It's another one of the words for power that comes in the five-fold descriptions of power you find in Greek. This is exousia.

But here's what you do need to know. You're going to get a capability and you're going to accomplish a mission. Now, what is emphasized here? Go back and look at verse 2. Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to whom? To the church, to all believers, to those who would not see Him face to face.

Who gets these commandments during the 40 days? The Twelve, the Apostles whom He had chosen. The Apostles whom He had chosen. He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the Apostles whom He had chosen during these 40 days.

What commandments would those include? How about Matthew 28, 19? How about Acts 1, 8? Otherwise, every believer would need to go to Jerusalem and wait there until they received a baptism. Every believer would need to go into all the world, make disciples. Every believer would need to teach them to observe all things that Jesus commanded the disciples.

You get the idea here? They are eyewitnesses. They are uniquely qualified. Jesus says, You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

Now, we want to focus on Acts 1, 8 tonight because next time Jesus is going to ascend and we're going to be picking Him up and laying Him down in chapter 1 of Acts. But we need to stop and take a look at this because I will tell you that there is a conspiracy of silence about Acts 1, 8. It is amazing. My best Greek references, I've got two books that go verse by verse and have excellent commentary from the Greek, just grammatical notes and here's a unique thing about a preposition or an aorist tense, you know, technical stuff.

And when you get to Acts 1, 8, they just clam up. They ignore it. They don't even mention it.

And this is a conspiracy of silence. You can't believe. Try to find a commentary that will tell you what I'm about to tell you.

They won't tell you. And it is as plain, a first-year Greek student could tell you this, but they won't. Just like they won't tell you about the ending of Mark and they won't tell you about some other things.

Acts 1, 8, let me give you this in Greek because I know you'll enjoy it. Now, ala means but. A-L-L-A, that's the first word.

This is a second-person plural future middle indicative from Lombano. Lombano means to receive. This is a future, will receive, second-person plural, you all will receive.

We're good to go so far, right? Dunamon, we already talked about that. So, but, you all will receive, capability. Ep Elphontos.

Now, this is an aorist active participle. One of the first things any Greek student learns is the action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. What is the main verb? You will receive.

Ep Elphontos is an aorist participle, so this action precedes the action of the main verb. So, something, and this is from Ep Erchemi, which means to come upon something. Erchemi, to come.

Epi, upon. To come upon. See, Greek is easy.

So, Ep Erchemi, this is an aorist active participle. It is a singular neuter. So, some single thing is going to come upon.

Well, the Holy Spirit is typically addressed in the neuter gender. So, you have Ep Elphontos to Hagiu Numatos. Well, you can figure that out.

Numatos is the spirit. Hagiū is holy. So, the Holy Spirit, having come upon you, you will receive capability.

Spirit has to come first. You don't get the ability and then the spirit comes. Aorist participle tells you that.

The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, having come upon you, you will receive power. Having come upon you. Epi Humas.

Chi, and. First half of the verse is finished. We're coming up on the second half.

And. Esses they. This is from Amy, the Greek word that means to be.

This, once again, is a future. It's a second person. Future you will be.

You will be. Who's the you? It's the 11 he's talking to. You will be.

Then we have Mu, M-O-U. That's of me. You will be of me.

Martu race. You becomes a Y when it comes over in English. You will be.

Of me. Martyrs. Witnesses.

In. This is E-N. In.

Te. Yerusalem. And remember I told you up in the beginning when I said both to do and to teach.

And it was Te Chi. Well, now we have Te Chi again. Te, T-E, means both.

How many things do you have when somebody says both? We've got a family of four. I have a wife and two daughters. Somebody's talking to me and Patty and they say, Well, we'd like both of you to come by.

How many people would show up? Me and Patty. We wouldn't bring the girls along because they said both. Both does not mean three or four or five.

Both means two, right? Te means both. I just want to clarify that. Because it says Te, Jerusalem.

Both Jerusalem. Chi, Pase Te, Judea. Which is all of Judea.

Both Jerusalem and all Judea. And Samaria. And Heos, Eschatou, Teiskēs.

Don't panic. I'm almost at the end of the... See there? People are dropping their books. Don't panic.

So we have, you will be witnesses of me, both. And then we have Jerusalem. And this is

in the dative, which means to Jerusalem.

It doesn't have a preposition, but the dative case tells you it's to Jerusalem. And to all Judea and Samaria. And then we have a preposition.

Heos, H-E-O-S. This is the important word in the verse. This is the word no one will tell you about.

If I was going to say unto the ends of the earth, I would say es, into or unto, direction, location. Heos, H-E-O-S, is an adverb of time. Heos means until.

This is an improper preposition. It's used as an adverb. It's heos.

Look up heos in any Greek lexicon and it will tell you until. It means until. Let me give you some of the places where this word is used.

It is used in Matthew chapter 2 and verse 9. After hearing the king, the wise men went their way. The star which they had seen in the east went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the child was. Makes sense.

It's time, right? Matthew 24, 39. They did not understand, talking about the people in Noah's day, until the flood came and took them all away. So will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Pretty standard one-to-one correspondence between heos and until. Acts chapter 19 and verse 10. This took place for two years so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord.

This took place for two years until all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, heos. Word of time. Why is that important in our verse here? Well, the next word after heos is esketu or esketos.

We get the word esketology from this, which is the study of last things, prophecy. Esketos means last. It means the final or the termination, the end.

So this says until the end. And then we have taste, ges. Well, if you've ever gotten in with these New Age people and talk about ge, the earth, Mother Earth, and Mother Gay and this kind of thing, if you haven't, you're better off.

But it's ge or ges in this case, which is the genitive, is the earth. It's the word for the earth. This says until the end of the world.

It doesn't say unto the ends of the earth. This is end singular, esketu, esketa. This is a singular, it's a neuter singular genitive.

He says you will be witnesses both in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Jerusalem, Judea.

Where is Jerusalem located? In Judea.

The both means Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. That's the both. That's the two things.

Jerusalem slash Judea. Those two always go together. Jerusalem and its environs.

Jerusalem and its region. Judea and Samaria. Jesus actually tells the eleven, you will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and Judea until the end of the world.

That's what it literally says. Have you ever heard anybody translate that? Will you ever hear it again? No. Because our entire modern world is evangelical and they believe that the gospel commission requires all believers to evangelize unto the ends of the earth.

And they change this very simple Greek phrase to say something it does not say. It doesn't say ace. It doesn't say epi.

It doesn't use any other preposition. Unto, upon, through, over. It says until.

It is a word of time. Every other place you find this word in the Bible is a word of time. Every other place.

I could give you countless references for this. It is used in Matthew 10.23. When they persecute you in one city, flee to the next. Truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

That's the way it's used every place. So, what does this mean now? Were they not supposed to go to the ends of the earth? Well, what do we always do? We let Scripture interpret Scripture. We let Scripture say what it says and we just take what it says and we believe it.

Who is Jesus talking to here? Who's the audience? That's always a good question to ask. He's talking to the twelve, minus Judas, the eleven. Who are these gentlemen going to be apostles to? They are all apostles to the first generation of the church who are all Jewish.

Who is going to be the apostle to the ends of the earth? To the Gentiles. The apostle Paul. Is he present at this moment? He is not.

So, Jesus is being very specific. These men have a mission of evangelizing, if you will, Jerusalem, Judea, slash Samaria. And we're going to see that take place in these first eight chapters or so of the book of Acts.

It will be the apostle Paul, the apostle born out of time. And when we get to that passage, you can go ahead and look and see the commission when he's talking to Cornelius and one thing and another and you get on to the point where you have Paul and he's blinded on the road to Damascus. And then he says, I will show him what his

mission is going to be.

He will stand before kings. Well, kings, there's no kings in Israel. He's got to be in Gentile countries to stand before kings.

So, he's the one that's going to go beyond the borders of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. So, Scripture is accurate to the finest detail, right down to the participles, right down to the tenses, right down to the prepositions. And these eleven have as their function and their commission to be witnesses to Jesus because they are eyewitnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, that region that comprises the original nation of Israel, the northern and southern kingdoms.

That's their area of operation. And certainly, the gospel is going to spread beyond. But this is their commission.

This is what the Holy Spirit is going to empower them to do. And it will be the Apostle Paul who will be the steward of the mysteries and take them to the Gentiles. Very interesting, but you'll never hear that because it undermines the, quote, great commission idea of the church.

Because if it doesn't say we should take the gospel to the ends of the earth, then where do we have that said in Scripture? Well, shock of shocks, we don't. It is not the primary fundamental mission of the church to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. God the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

It is, by the way, there are many other commands of Scripture, add them up, add up the imperatives for living a holy life, add up the imperatives for prayer, add up the imperatives for refraining from mental attitude sins, add up the imperatives for encouraging and loving one another. Look at 1 Corinthians 13 and the description of love and the things that the New Testament does emphasize. Why have all of those been sidelined and given secondary importance and Matthew 28, 19, and Acts 1, 8 have been elevated to be the mission and the raison d'etre for the whole church? It is because people do not accurately translate and accurately communicate what Jesus said.

And what he said here is this will take place until the end of the world. Do you know when the end of the world was for these 11 and for their audience? 70 A.D. The Israelite world ends in 70 A.D. And so will their personal witness. Do you know what year Peter was crucified? 68 A.D. This is world in the sense of days.

I can show you places where it is used of the land. It is the land of Israel. It is the nation of Israel.

These men are going to carry forward the momentum that began with John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, even through and beyond Pentecost. Same message, kingdom of God. It is the same message the Apostle Paul will preach at the end of Acts.

But it is fascinating to see that there is a specific time and a specific place for each one of us to function. God has an assigned mission for you and an assigned mission for me. And we need to understand what it is and not overblow it, not swell it to legendary proportions, not assume someone else's mission, not look over the fence and say well that looks like fun or that looks like it has impact.

Let me see if I can do that. But to find what God the Holy Spirit gives us the capability to do, we have to be in the right place. Jesus said remain in Jerusalem until you receive capability.

There is an assigned place for us to be. It may be in our home. It may be in our job.

It may be in particular social or family relationships. Wherever it is, that is our assigned place. And then we have opportunities and responsibilities in that.

God the Holy Spirit shows us in the Word of God, through the Word of God, and we focus on that and we concentrate on that. It is every day, all day long. It isn't some great mission trip.

It is not a junket to Mexico or Belize. It is amazing to me that a lot of the mission trips that go on go to these really exotic places that people bring back trinkets and postcards and boy did we have a great time. They don't go to the really crummy places where there is just slums and disease and really decrepit people.

People always come back and they've got a whole suitcase load full of pictures and postcards and boy didn't we have a great time. Well, I don't mean to knock that, but the idea is our mission field is in front of us every single day just as these disciples. They are in their mission field.

They are in Jerusalem. You and I are in our Jerusalem and our Judea right now and we have been given capability from on high. It is a matter of being aware of that and seizing that opportunity day by day as we see throughout the Word of God.

Well, we have I think a very fascinating start to the book of Acts here. We are going to stop here with Acts 1.8 and we will pick up in verse 9 next time. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your Word together. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths in our hearts, give us insight and understanding so that we can live in a way that pleases you and glorifies our Savior. We pray it in His name.

Amen.