

WAITING FOR POWER

By John Richardson

SCRIPTURE

Acts 1:1–5

[1] In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, [2] until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. [3] He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. [4] And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; [5] for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

OBSERVATION

Jesus’ resurrection changed everything. One thing that is clear after the death and resurrection of Jesus is the inauguration of the church. Prior to Jesus’ death the Temple was the dwelling place of God on earth, where man could commune with God. After the death of Jesus, the Holy Spirit would descend and dwell in the hearts of those who believe. Luke took the time to record the events of the Holy Spirit descending and development of the church.

- The books of Luke and Acts form a two-volume set of recorded facts about the life and work of God through Christ. Luke gives understanding of the life of Christ, and then Acts unfolds the work of the Holy Spirit through the church. Both of these works are given to Theophilus [Thee-Ahu-Fuh-Lis] who was probably a high-ranking magistrate, given the opening response of Luke. He could have been the financier behind the collection of Luke’s work or possibly just an interested recipient with much influence who could publish Luke’s work (vv. 1-2).
- The commands given to the apostles are found in Luke 24:44-49, where Jesus gave understanding of God’s Word in light of His death. When we read God’s Word, we are not looking for tips to live a better life; we are learning more about God, how to become more like Christ, and how to share His love with the world. Verse three retells how Jesus appeared to the apostles by proofs for 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Jesus wanted them to understand the kingdom of God; He desired that they have kingdom-centered lives (vv. 2-3).
- During the 40 days while Jesus walked the earth after His resurrection, He gave them a command to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. The promise was the Holy Spirit. When was the Holy Spirit promised to people on the earth? Joel 2:28-29. Waiting on Jesus was the first act of obedience for the

apostles. It would have been easy to rush to proclamation or race to social justice, but the apostles were commanded to wait for the presence of the Holy Spirit. Without His presence, the effort would never produce the church that Christ was building (v. 4).

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit had to be contrasted with baptism by water. The baptism of John the Baptist marked the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry as a forerunner to the events that were about to take place. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was the beginning of Jesus' heavenly ministry. Jesus promised to give a Helper when He left, thus the presence of the Holy Spirit is a reality that Jesus is with the Father (v. 5).

OBEDIENCE

As Jesus dwells with God the Father and the Holy Spirit dwells in the lives of those who trust Christ as Lord and Savior, the kingdom of God has to be central. Are you building your kingdom or waiting for God to unfold His kingdom? Are you relying on the "Helper" or moving forward in your own exertion?

- The resurrection of Jesus delivers the Holy Spirit to transform lives of followers. How has God transformed your life this past month? Reflection on the Spirit's work in your life will create dependence on Him in the future.
- Are you reading God's Word looking for "a word" or admiring God? A man does not truly love a woman whom he uses to improve his own life alone. Love is a bond between two people sacrificing for one another and knowing each other daily. Believers know how much Christ has sacrificed for us; how much have you sacrificed for Him? When you love Him, do you seek self-interest?
- Luke recorded these events for Theophilus to record the work of Jesus in the church. With whom are we sharing the works of our triune God?

PRAYER

Plead with God for a better understanding of who He is and what He is doing, then seek it in the Word. Ask God to give you a heart that is moving toward His sacrificial kingdom. Finally, praise God for loving us enough to give us the great gift of His Spirit.