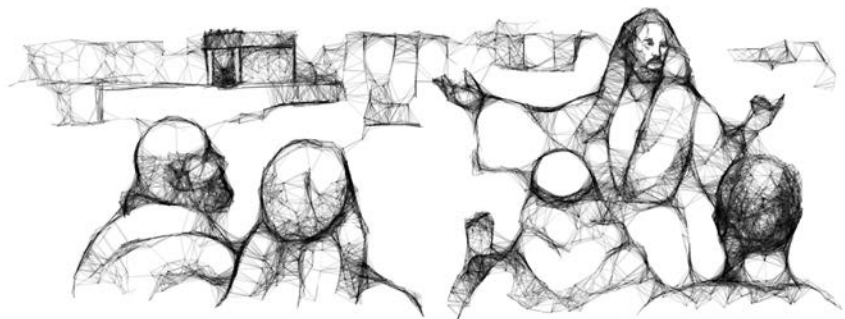


“ ‘The Holy Spirit Will Come to You’ ”



SABBATH—JUNE 30

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON: Acts 1:6–8; Luke 24:25; Luke 24:44–48; Deuteronomy 19:15; Acts 1:9–26.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world’ ” (Acts 1:8, ICB).



The Holy Spirit will help Jesus’ followers do a special work to reach people all over the earth.

IN ACTS 1, Jesus promises His followers that soon God will send to them His Holy Spirit to give them power. The Holy Spirit will help Jesus’ followers do a special work to reach people all over the earth. The Holy Spirit will do many miracles. Then people everywhere will know that this special work comes from God. Jesus cannot stay on this earth in a human body with His followers forever. His human body puts limits on the things Jesus can do for His followers. Also, Jesus needs to go to heaven so that the Holy Spirit can come to this earth and be with God’s people.

But God’s people do not clearly understand these things until after Jesus wakes up from the dead and comes back to life. Jesus’ followers give up everything to follow Him. Jesus’ followers believe He will get rid of the Romans and make Israel a powerful kingdom again. It is not easy for Jesus’ followers to think in a different way.

In Acts 1, we read about Jesus’ last lesson to His followers. Jesus promises to give them the Holy Spirit. Acts 1 also tells us Jesus goes to heaven and how the New Testament church gets ready for the Holy Spirit’s coming.

A NEW ISRAEL (Acts 1:6)

The Old Testament promises Israel that God will send them the Messiah. The Messiah is God's Chosen One. God chose the Messiah to save His people. But save them from what? Some verses in the Old Testament promise that the Messiah also is a king. This king will rule forever (Psalm 89:3, 4, 35–37). Other verses about the Messiah promise a Savior who will die for the sins of His people (Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Daniel 9:26). These different promises about the Messiah do not disagree with each other. Instead, they tell us about the different parts of the Messiah's work. First, the Messiah will suffer. Then the Messiah will become king (Luke 17:24, 25; Luke 24:25, 26).

But the problem with the Jews in Jesus' time is that they hope for a Messiah who will save them from the Romans. This false hope causes the Jews to not understand that the Messiah will come to suffer and die for our sins.

At first, Jesus' followers tell the Jews about their hope for a Messiah who will be a powerful king on the earth. They believe Jesus is this king (Matthew 16:16, 20). Sometimes Jesus' followers fight with each other about who will sit next to Jesus' throne when He becomes king (Mark 10:35–37; Luke 9:46). Jesus warns His followers about His suffering and death. But His followers do not understand what He means. So, when Jesus dies, His followers become confused. They have no hope (read Luke 24:21).

What does Acts 1:6 tell us that Jesus' followers do not understand? In Acts 1:7, how does Jesus answer?

Jesus' death destroys His followers' hope that He is the Messiah. But then they see Him alive again, and they start to hope. They now believe strongly that Jesus will become king of Israel on this earth and end Roman power.

Jesus' answer is very interesting. He says nothing about giving the kingdom back to Israel. He also says nothing about becoming Israel's king. Instead, Jesus tells His followers to remember that only God knows the time when He will do the things He promises. No human can know when.

As Luke 24:25 shows us, what is the real problem with Jesus' followers? Why is it easy to believe what we want to believe instead of looking for the truth the Bible teaches? How can we escape this trap?



Only God knows the time when He will do the things He promises.

THE SPECIAL WORK JESUS GIVES HIS FOLLOWERS TO DO (Acts 1:8)

Read Acts 1:8. As these verses show us, what does Jesus ask His followers to do?

Acts 1:8 tells us about the work Jesus gave His followers. There are four important parts to this work:

1. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always worked for God's people. But God's messengers in the Old Testament tell us about a time in the future when God will give the Holy Spirit to His people in a special way (Isaiah 44:3; Joel 2:28, 29). The Spirit already filled Jesus during His work on earth (Luke 4:18–21). But God the Father pours His Spirit on Jesus' followers after God honors Jesus in heaven (John 7:39; Acts 2:33).

2. Witness. A witness is someone who sees something happen with his or her own eyes. Jesus' followers are His witnesses (Acts 1:21, 22; Acts 4:20; also read 1 John 1:1–3). Now Jesus commands His followers to share with everyone on Planet Earth their special experience with Him.

3. The Plan for the Special Work. Jesus orders His followers to witness in Jerusalem first. Then they must witness in Judea and Samaria next. Finally, Jesus tells His followers to take the Good News to everyone. Jerusalem is the center of Jewish religious life. But Jesus dies on the cross outside the city gate. Jesus also works outside the city in Judea and Samaria. So, Jesus' followers must work in other places too. They must go everywhere on the earth.

4. The Audience for the Special Work. In Old Testament times, God planned for the people and countries around Israel to come to Him. God did not plan for Israel to go out to the different nations and preach about Him. (God's special messenger Jonah is an example of someone who takes God's message to other people. That does not happen very often.) But in the New Testament, things change. Yes, Jerusalem is the center of religion for Jesus' believers. But they must not stay there. That is why God sends the believers to share the Good News with everyone on the earth.



Jesus dies on the cross outside Jerusalem's gate. So, Jesus' followers must work outside Jerusalem in other places too.

Read Luke 24:44–48. As these verses show us, what message does Jesus give to His followers to preach?

Jesus spends 40 days with His followers after He comes back to life (Acts 1:3). He explains many Bible truths to them. Now His followers understand the truth more clearly.

HE WILL COME AGAIN (Acts 1:9–11)

Read Acts 1:9–11. How does Luke, in Acts 1:9–11, describe Jesus' going up to heaven? After Jesus goes to heaven, two angels meet with Jesus' followers. What special meaning does this meeting have? (Read Deuteronomy 19:15.)

We must understand that Luke describes in human words what happens here. The only way Luke can describe Jesus' leaving the earth is by saying Jesus goes up in the air.

Jesus' going to heaven is a miracle from God. Luke uses the verb “*eperthe*” to show us that Jesus' leaving is a miracle. “*Eperthe*” shows us that Jesus does not lift Himself up into heaven. Instead, Someone is lifting Jesus: “he was lifted up into the sky” (Acts 1:9, ERV). The only time we find “*eperthe*” in the New Testament is in this verse. But we find “*eperthe*” several times in the Greek Old Testament. The Greek Old Testament uses “*eperthe*” to mean the actions of God. So, when we understand the meaning of “*eperthe*” in the Greek Old Testament, we understand what this word means in the New Testament. “*Eperthe*” helps us see that God Himself takes Jesus up to heaven. “*Eperthe*” also shows us that God is the One who wakes Jesus up from the dead (Acts 2:24, 32; Romans 6:4). But in John 10:18, Jesus says He has the power to get back His own life after He dies: “‘My Father has given Me this right [something Jesus can do because the power is already His] and power’ ” (NLV). At the same time, this verse also shows us that Jesus' power to get His life back again comes from God too.

A cloud hides Jesus as He goes up. Then Luke tells us about the two angels standing next to Jesus' followers. Luke is the only Bible writer to tell us about the angels. They wear shining white clothes. In other parts of the Bible, we read about angels wearing bright clothes (Acts 10:30; John 20:12). The angels tell Jesus' followers that Jesus will come back the same way He goes up. He goes up to heaven “while [His followers] were watching” (Acts 1:9, ERV).

The way Jesus' followers see Him go up to heaven in a cloud is a promise that Jesus will come back to the earth in the clouds. Yes, Jesus' Second Coming will happen in the clouds “with power and much greatness” (Luke 21:27, NLV). “‘Everyone will see him’ ” (Revelation 1:7, ERV). Jesus will not be alone (Luke 9:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7). The power and glory of the Second Coming will be far more than the power and glory that Jesus' followers saw when He went up to heaven after waking up from the dead.



The angels tell Jesus' followers that Jesus will come back the same way He goes up.

JESUS' FOLLOWERS GET READY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO COME (Acts 1:12–14)

In Acts 1:7, 8, Jesus answers His followers' question about when He will come back. Jesus does not say when that will be. But we see in Jesus' words a hint that He will come back after the Spirit comes and His followers finish their work (read Matthew 24:14). The angels' words to Jesus' followers do not answer the question about when Jesus' kingdom will come. But the angels' words hint that Jesus' kingdom will come soon. This idea explains why Jesus' followers go "back to Jerusalem very happy" (Luke 24:52, ERV). They believe the end will happen soon.

Read Acts 1:12–14. As we learn from these verses, who is there in the upstairs room? How do the people in the upstairs room get ready for the Holy Spirit's coming?

Jesus' followers come back from the Mount of Olives. Then they gather together in the guest room upstairs in a house in Jerusalem. Some women followers of Jesus also are there (Luke 8:1–3; Acts 23:49; Acts 24:1–12). Jesus' mother and brothers are there, too, with Jesus' followers.

Who are Jesus' brothers (Mark 6:3)? The Bible gives us good reasons to believe that Jesus' brothers were the older sons of Joseph from his first marriage. We know that Mary could not be their mother because Jesus was Mary's firstborn son (Matthew 1:18–23; Luke 1:34, 35). Ellen G. White agrees. She says that Jesus' brothers were "older than Jesus."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 87, adapted. Anyway, the fact that Jesus' brothers join Jesus' followers there in the upstairs room is a big surprise. Jesus' brothers always doubted Jesus was God's Chosen One (Mark 3:21; John 7:5). But Jesus' coming back to life from the dead seems to change them. Also, Jesus makes a special appearance to his brother James (1 Corinthians 15:7). Later, James takes Peter's place as the leader of the Christian community (Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13; Acts 21:18; Galatians 2:9, 12).

The people in the upstairs room pray a lot (Acts 1:14). They also go to the temple to praise God (Luke 24:53). It is clear that Jesus' followers confess their sins to God and change their behavior. They get ready for God to give His Spirit to them.

What can we do every day to get ready for the Holy Spirit to do His work in our lives?



Jesus' followers gather together in the guest room upstairs in a house in Jerusalem. There they pray and wait for the Holy Spirit.

JESUS' TWELFTH FOLLOWER (Acts 1:21, 22)

The first thing that the new Christian church does is choose someone to take Judas's place. At that time, the Christian church was a group of 120 believers (Acts 1:15).

Read Acts 1:21, 22. As these verses show us, what experience does the person taking Judas's place need to have? Why is this experience so important?

The person taking Judas's place needs to be someone who saw Jesus after He woke up from the dead (read Acts 4:33). This experience is very important because Jesus' coming back to life proves that the Christian faith is true. It also proves that Jesus is the Messiah. The Messiah is the Savior that God chose to free His people from sin.

Jesus' followers decide to choose someone who also was with them during the time that Jesus worked on earth. This person will become the new apostle. The apostles were the twelve followers of Jesus that later became the leaders and teachers of the church after Jesus woke up from the dead and went to heaven. Paul is an interesting example because he is the only apostle who did not follow Jesus during the time that He worked on earth. But Paul says that he is Jesus' apostle in the same way that the twelve apostles are. Why does Paul say that? Because Paul meets Jesus on the road to Damascus. This meeting gives Paul the power to witness to other people about the truth that Jesus woke up from the dead (1 Corinthians 9:1). Paul does not see himself as less experienced or less skilled than Jesus' other apostles (1 Corinthians 9:2; Galatians 2:6–9). Paul and the Twelve men Jesus chose were apostles (Acts 1:25, 26). The most basic meaning of the word "apostle" is messenger. The word sometimes is used in the Bible for a few other workers who tell other people the Good News (2 Corinthians 8:23; Philipians 2:25).

As we learn in Acts 1:23–26, how do the church leaders choose Matthias?

The believers pray to God to know His plan. "Then they drew names and the name of Matthias was chosen" (Acts 1:26, NLV).

How can you know God's plan for your life?



The believers "drew names and the name of Matthias was chosen" (Acts 1:26, NLV). Matthias took Judas's place.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “God gives His Holy Spirit to the first believers after Jesus goes back to heaven. From that time until the Second Coming, God asks believers to do a worldwide work. This work is sharing the Good News about Jesus. The Holy Spirit will give the church the power to share the Good News. After Jesus goes back to heaven, His followers announce the things that Jesus did at His first coming. Jesus’ followers also invite people to turn away from sin and get ready for Jesus’ Second Coming. Jesus asks His followers to do these things after He goes back to heaven. Jesus’ followers are His witnesses “from one end of the earth to the other” (Acts 1:8, NIV) until the end of time. As Christians today, we must not stop until all the people on the earth have learned the Good News.”—John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & [and] the World [all the people on the earth]* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), page 44, adapted.

“Jesus’ command to His followers includes all the believers. It includes all who believe in Jesus to the end of time. We must not make the mistake of thinking that the work of saving souls belongs only to pastors. God asks every believer to share the Good News with other people. Everyone who gets a new life from Jesus will be led by God’s Spirit to help God save souls. This work is the reason that God started the church on earth. Everyone who joins the church is a partner with Jesus. Together, Jesus and His believers work to save souls.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 822, adapted.



Everyone who joins the church is a partner with Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① In Acts 1:7 Jesus says to His followers, “ ‘The Father is the only One who has the authority [power] to decide dates and times. These things are not for you to know’ ” (ICB). Ellen G. White says: “God’s people are not allowed to know the exact time when the Holy Spirit will be poured out or when Jesus will come back again.”—*Selected Messages*, volume 1, page 188, adapted. She also says: “Any person who begins to announce the hour, day, or year that Jesus will come back is announcing a message that does not come from God.”—*The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 12, 1893, adapted. What do these words from Ellen G. White and the Bible tell us today?

② How important is prayer in the early church?