

Resources for Finishing Our Lord's Unfinished Work, Part 2

Acts 1:6-11

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Last week we began our study in the book of Acts and so if you have your Bible we'd like to ask you to turn to Acts, chapter 1. Acts, chapter 1, needless to say, is a basic chapter. It's a chapter that in the course of my ministry I have preached on many, many, many times because it is so very basic to an understanding of the Christian life. Since in the book of Acts, the church, for all intents and purposes is founded, it is then very important at the very beginning of Acts, to just lay down simply what it is that the church is commissioned to do and how it is to be done. So when we talk about the simple basics of the Christian life, we're talking about Acts 1. For some of you, this will be food to chew on again because you've studied this before many, many times. For some of you who are new Christians, many of you, it will be brand new. But it's very, very simple and it's very, very basic ingredients to the Christian life.

Now, from last week, I want to review because we got halfway through the message that really involves verses 1 through 11 and we'll review at some length this morning, 'cause I want to add some additional things, and then we'll go on to finish up the second part. But as we have begun our study of the book of Acts, we have become aware that it is the story of the first century of Christianity. It is the birth of the church. On the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts, chapter 2, the church is born. And from then on, through the book of Acts, the church explodes for about a 30-year period until it reaches the capital of the world, which is Rome. So you have the book of Acts, the story of the 30-years explosion of the first century church as it begins in its infancy in Jerusalem and then like divine dynamite, blazes a trail to one of the those uttermost parts of the earth, the city of Rome.

Luke wrote this book. It's really volume 2 of his writing. Volume 1 is the book of Luke, the gospel of Luke. I may I also add that it is a continuation of Luke in the sense that it is a continuation of the life of Christ. Although it begins in chapter 1 with Christ ascending into Heaven, it continues with the life of Christ...watch this one...lived in the believers through the indwelling Holy Spirit. So in the book of Acts you have this ongoing ministry of Christ, the ongoing deeds of Christ and the ongoing teaching of Christ in the believers' lives through the indwelling Holy Spirit. That's why I have chosen to call the church, body two, for it's Jesus Christ reincarnated again in the believers and continuing to do His work and continuing to teach His instruction through us as He did originally in the flesh. So Acts, then, continues the ministry of Jesus Christ and the spread of the gospel as it's accomplished in the lives of the believers in that early church. And to give you an insight into that, you'll notice it in verse 8 of chapter 1. It says, "...you shall receive power" after "the Holy Spirit has come upon you and...be witnesses," and then it says, "Jerusalem...Judea, Samaria and" the world. There is the outline of the book of Acts right there. The book of Acts follows that flow from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the uttermost part of the earth as the gospel spreads. And you'll notice verse 8 says it is all energized by the Holy Spirit. When Jesus goes back to Heaven, He sends the Holy Spirit to energize the believer to spread the gospel.

Now, to show you that we are carrying on the unfinished work of Jesus, you'll notice verse 1 says, "The former treatise"...that is, Luke's gospel..."have I written, O Theophilus"...and, again, he's writing to the same noble Roman official, perhaps who lived in Antioch...I wrote you the former one and it was "about all that Jesus"...what's the next word?..."began both to do and to teach..." This one, is implied, about what He continued to do and teach in the Spirit in the believers of the first church. So Luke is all that Jesus began both to do and teach. Acts is what He continued to do in the believers. And, today, you and I are alive, indwelt by the same Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ is still doing and teaching through us. We are still finishing His unfinished work. Now, I want to hasten to add at this point that this is not talking about the work of redemption because the work of redemption is not unfinished; it is finished. Right? On the cross Jesus accomplished salvation. He said, "It is"...what?..."finished." In John 17 He prayed to the Father the night before His death and He said, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." In terms of redemption, that is accomplished. We add nothing to that. In terms of divine revelation, the Word of God is finished. It is "that which is perfect," Paul calls it, and we do not add anything to that. But in terms of doing and teaching, that was unfinished and we are called on, as was that early church, to finish the unfinished work of Jesus Christ, that of spreading His gospel, doing deeds in His Name and teaching truth as from Him. And so it is not the redemptive work that we're finishing. That is not the unfinished work. It is the work of teaching that we carry on, the work of doing those things that magnify Christ. And may I remind you again that this is still going on in us as we continue by the power of the Spirit to finish the work that Jesus began.

Now, in order for the early church to have the ability to do this, in order for us to have it, the Lord had to give us certain provisions. In other words, He had to equip us to do the job. We can't carry on the work unless we've got the tools. Right? So in chapter 1 of Acts, Jesus Christ equips His own to do the job. Then in Acts 2 when the church is born, they move right into it, just that fast. In fact, the first day the church began, how many people entered it?...3,000 at the first invitation...3,000. They were ready when the Day of Pentecost hit to do the job. Chapter 1 equips them as it equips us. And we learn here what it is that is ours in the way of equipment to really finish the unfinished work of Jesus Christ. Now, if His work is retarded it's not because we don't have the equipment; it's a matter of commitment on our parts. It's a matter of will.

So, Jesus, recognizing that He's about to leave the earth...and He's already been gone 2,000 years, so He knows it'll be a long time...before He leaves, gives His last will and testament, which is made up of all the proper tools the Christian needs to do the job...very basic truth. And this is the countdown to the church and Christ giving us the provisions we'll need to really effectively function as His church in His plan. Jesus gives six things that are necessary provisions for finishing His unfinished work: the proper message, the proper manifestation, the proper might, the proper mystery, the proper mission and the proper motive. Now, all of these things coming together equip us to do the job. We lack nothing. As I mentioned in my prayer, the apostle Paul said in Ephesians 1, "We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places..." As we read in Colossians, Paul says, "Ye are complete in Him." Christians lack no commodity to do the job. We lack nothing to do the job and do it fully and totally. There is no missing ingredient. It is only a matter of activating the will to use the resources that you have. And we've been over that again and again in our study of Ephesians. And so here are the six basic pieces of equipment that the Lord gives us. Now, we began last week with the proper message and I'll just quickly review that.

To effectively carry on the Lord's work, which is a teaching work, we've gotta have the content.

Right? We've gotta know what it is that we're supposed to declare. And so in order for Jesus to know they knew that, notice verse 1. In the middle of the verse Luke says I wrote "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." And how long did He teach? To "until the day in which He was taken up, after He, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen." Now, we saw last week that Jesus taught those men right up until the very day that He was taken away. Why? He wanted them to have the proper message. He wanted them to know the content of what it was they were to declare. This is the basic thing. I mean, we have nothing to do if we know nothing. Right? We have nothing to announce to the world if we don't know anything. Basic to all Christian ministry is content. That's why the Bible so heavily emphasizes "study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." You need to know the Word of God. This is why we are to saturate ourselves and as Paul said, "let the Word of Christ dwell in" us "richly." This is why we're to feast on the Word of God as babes to "desire the sincere milk of the Word" that we may grow, that we have doctrine, sound doctrine to declare. We must have the right message. No one is equipped to do God's work unless he knows God's truth. And so Jesus, carefully, right up until the time He left the world, taught them and taught them and taught them so that they had the proper message. And you and I are equipped with it in a way in which they are not equipped because you and I have everything that was written after Jesus left. All the epistles, the entire New Testament, in addition to the Old Testament, is in our hands. There's no excuse for ignorance on the part of a believer today, none at all. We have the proper message. It's ours to assimilate.

Secondly, He gave them the proper manifestation. There was more to it than just fact. There had to be a kind of a living, vital excitement within them. And this came in verse 3 when it says, "To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion" ...or His suffering and death..."by many positive infallible proofs, being seen by them forty days..." We'll stop there for a minute. They not only had the proper message but they had the proper manifestation. You see, they had to have confidence that Jesus Christ was really who He claimed to be. They weren't about to go out and announce a dead Savior. You know, the critics have come along time after time and said, well, Jesus never rose from the dead; the disciples stole His body. Well, can you imagine the disorganized disciples tiptoeing past the Roman army, pushing the stone away in dead silence and stealing the body of Christ and then at least 10 out of 12 going out and dying as martyrs for a stolen dead body? Makes no sense at all. They were moved and they were generated in the fact that they believed Jesus Christ was alive from the dead. And Jesus knew how important it was that they have a living manifestation of a living Christ. I mean, I can't get too excited about announcing to the world anything about a dead man, but I can get excited about announcing to the world something about a risen Jesus Christ. And so He gave them the proper manifestation. He revealed Himself to them by many infallible proofs over a period of 40 days. They walked with Him, they talked with Him, they touched Him, they ate with Him, they carried on conversation after conversation, they were in all different locations at all different times of the day in all different sizes of groups. There were many and multiple infallible proofs that this was in fact the same Christ who had died and been crucified and was now alive again. And so this sealed their faith. This tied down, this tacked down any loose edges in their confidence in Christ. They saw Him alive. And what a tremendous truth it is to know, beloved, that you and I have the same great positive proof. If I didn't know without a shadow of a doubt that in my heart lives a living, risen, resurrected Jesus Christ, I wouldn't bother to preach the gospel. I know a resurrected Christ. I know a Christ who's alive from the dead. He's as real to me as He was to those disciples who saw Him. I see Him not with the eye of the physical body, but I see Him with the eye of faith. And you and I who are Christians have had Jesus Christ manifest to us in all of His beauty and all of His glory and all of His majesty in a personal way, have we not? And so we have that same proper manifestation.

Now, additionally, to the disciples, just to secure the fact that this was really their Christ, notice the end of verse 3 says, "and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Jesus not only showed Himself to them, but He continued to teach them the same things He'd been teaching them before. And it was easy to put two and two together. Here's the same person teaching the same things; it's gotta be the same Christ. And He taught them the "things concerning the kingdom of God." This is exactly what He'd been teaching them before. He picked up right where He left off and, thus, secured to them the truths that He had taught them before and secured to them His absolute identity.

Now, what does He mean when He says He taught them the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God"? Now, in order to be faithful to the call of God on my part and teach you the whole counsel of God, I want to digress for a moment on a tangent and I want to tell you what the teaching of the kingdom of God is all about. And this is a digression, but it's important. When it says Jesus taught them "things pertaining to the kingdom of God," it has a very direct meaning. When we see the term "kingdom of God," it basically takes one or two significant patterns. First of all, the kingdom of God refers to the universal rule of God throughout the universe. Right? God is King over everything. Everything in existence in the universe is ruled by God. You say, no, Hell isn't. Oh, yes, Hell is. God handles Hell, believe it or not. The Bible says, fear not him who is able to destroy the body, but "fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell," and that Him is God. God rules the universe and everything within the universe is in the framework of God's rule. Whether directly or permissively, God rules everything. He is sovereign. Nothing is outside the circle of God's sovereignty or if there is one thing outside, then somebody's equal to God and there isn't any such. God rules in a universal kingdom over every single thing in existence.

But, secondly, not only is God's universal kingdom called the kingdom of God, but His mediatorial kingdom. Now, don't gag. His mediatorial kingdom comes from the word mediator. Mediator means somebody who stands between two things. Now, God's mediatorial kingdom involves the little globe that we live on called the earth, this little ball whirling around in the universe. Now, God's rule is brought to earth and He rules on the earth. But He rules through various mediators, that is, somebody stands between the world and God and rules for Him here. So whenever you see the term "kingdom of God," you want to differentiate in your mind whether he's talking about God's universal kingdom as the Psalmist does repeatedly, particularly in Psalm 145, or whether he's talking about the mediated kingdom, that is, the kingdom of God on earth as it is in its reduced sense. And when it says here that Jesus was teaching concerning the kingdom of God, probably it takes into consideration both. First He was teaching about the universal kingdom so they would know that, then how that God had mediated His rule to the globe, and then I am sure He went into the details of that. And I want to show you this in as simple a way as I possibly can with the use of the overhead so that you'll get the point.

You'll notice on your left, the green line is a timeline running through history ending up in the eternal kingdom, which is the eternal Heaven and earth. Now, along this timeline throughout history into eternity, God has been ruling the world. God rules this little globe in a very direct sense. Now, below the line, written in red, you will read the agency of God's rule all the way along in these different periods. The little green line running vertically indicates a change in God's rule and the point at which the change came...at the fall, at the flood, at Babel, at Moses and so forth and we'll go through it.

Now, without me necessarily referring to it directly, I want to just talk you kind of through this little simple diagram. When God first made the world, He needed somebody to rule for Him on the earth

so He created man. His name was Adam and He gave to Adam a very key word. He gave him dominion over the earth, did He not? Now, what does that mean? That means Adam was a king. Adam was king of the earth. Adam was God's first ruler. He was God's first king to mediate God's rule on the earth so that God ruled on the earth through Adam. Whenever God wanted something done, He spoke through Adam; Adam made it happen. Adam gave out the information that God gave him. He was God's mediating king on the earth. God had a kingdom on earth mediated through Adam. But then Adam decided that he'd like to go his own way and do his own thing and maybe he'd like to rule a little differently than God did so Adam fell. And immediately, Adam lost his crown and that's why Hebrews 2:8 says...verse 7 says that man should be king, verse 8 says he's not. Because Adam lost his crown when he decided that he'd be sovereign on his own and go into competition with God, you see, that he would decide what was right and what was wrong and he'd do what he wanted to do, he lost his crown. God had nobody to rule for Him on the earth. The sin of Adam and the loss of his proper dominion set the stage then for the brutal murder in which Cain killed Abel and it also left the race without any mediator to control it and man was cut off from God. And for the whole period of time, for this whole period from the fall to the flood, that whole period in there, in all of the divine revelation that covers those years, we find only two times when God ever intervened. One time He intervened by taking Enoch into His presence. The second time He intervened was when He threw Cain out of His presence. Those are the only two times in revelation we see God intervene. And during this period of time, God's rule on earth was hindered because of the sinfulness and the self-styled will of men. And so it was called a period of lawlessness. In fact, in Genesis, chapter 6 and verse 11 it says that "the earth was filled with violence." Irresponsibility and lawlessness and Godlessness were everywhere. Now, during this time, the only agency that God had to communicate to men His rule was conscience. And conscience was easy to react against because conscience could be, first of all, disobeyed. It could be, secondly, quenched. It could be wrongly educated. You can raise your conscience the wrong way, you know, and then it won't do you any good in the crisis. It could also be seared. When it was misused long enough it became insensitive. So conscience really didn't work in a very effective way. But nevertheless, apart from conscience, God had no rule in that era. And so we call that the dispensation of conscience when God mediated His rule on earth through men's conscience.

Now, following that period...and, of course, you remember how the period of conscience ended; it got drowned, literally; the dispensation of conscience went under...God at the time of the flood then, after the water subsided and God began to reconstruct things again, decided He was gonna try another pattern of ruling on earth. And the second pattern that He decided was human government. And in this period between the flood and the Tower of Babel, God ruled by governments. In other words, God let men organize into human governments. And the basic law of human government was the law of capital punishment, which God had from the very beginning instituted as the law to deal with men who were criminals. In fact, Genesis 9:6 simply says this, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall also his blood be shed," and the reason is "for man is created in the image of God" and to take a life that is in the image of God deserves that that life be taken. That was God's basic principle of human government. You see, this law was important because God recognized that man was sinful. And He recognized that man was rebellious and He recognized that man was murderous. And He also recognized that conscience had not been enough to distract man from that, therefore, God developed human government, gave to human government the right of capital punishment to restrain man from murdering his fellow [man]. And so God established governments to mediate His rule. And it's kind of interesting that this establishment of governments has in a direct sense still maintained itself even today so that when we come to Romans 13, the Bible says, "be subject to the powers that be for they are"...what?..."ordained of God." God still is mediating in a sense through government at least in a physical sense. And so God instituted human government. But they messed that all up, too,

because God's way...and here's a political thought for you if you're trying to find yourself politically...I'm not gonna tell you which party I'm a member of (laughter) but I'm gonna tell you this...God has always ordained that the going political picture be nationalism. God has never been behind one-world governments. But men decided they ought to have a one-world government and get super powerful and so they tried it at the Tower of Babel. Remember, in Genesis 10, they decided that their cities were growing and everything commerce and the whole shot and they decided to come together for one great world effort, have one world government. And God looked down on it and said no way and scattered them all over the world and changed their language to make sure they couldn't get back together and they've never gotten back together successfully since. And now the best they can do is sit in the United Nations with all those things on their ears, trying to hear in their own language and a whole lot of people in a room somewhere talking in their language and trying to figure out who interprets what going what direction. That's the best they can do to reverse the curse that God gave them on Babel. God has never been for a one-world government. It's a simple principle. God never wanted it because as someone has well said, if political power corrupts, then absolute power corrupts absolutely. God has chosen nationalism because it's the safest form of government. For example, for the sake of competition alone, for the betterment of man from a physical standpoint, for the sake of a check system, if one-world government is corrupt and that's all there is, who checks that system? If one-world government is Godless and writes off Christianity and wipes out God, where do you go to find the truth? God has never been for a world government, that's why every effort toward a world government is inspired by Satan and when he finally succeeds, it'll be in the tribulation. It'll be the one-world government of Revelation 18 and God will destroy it in the coming of Jesus Christ. The only one-world government that'll ever work is when Jesus is on the throne. And so God has designed nationalism. And when men tried to make a one-world government, God saw that human government alone wasn't going to make it.

And so God, again, changed the pattern and brought in a third mediator. And during the time from Babel to Moses, God's rule on earth was mediated through men that are called patriarchs. Now, you remember the first of the patriarchs was named Abraham...Genesis 12. And Abraham was a king, my friends, he was a king just as much as David was a king. He was a king just as much as Saul was a king. He was a king just as much as anybody was a king for he was God's mediating ruler on earth...Abraham. He was followed by Isaac, by Jacob and right through the patriarchs. Those men were the kings of the earth. God gave them rule on the earth to mediate His kingdom. These great Hebrew men, genuine kings, regal men mediating God's rule. They were vice regents in the kingdom on earth.

Then God chose a different pattern. And as we read in the Old Testament there was another age, really from Moses to the time of Christ. And during that period, God's rule was mediated through judges, through prophets and through kings. Now, all of those, the judges that we read about, the prophets, specific men and kings who reigned for all those years starting from Saul, were all instruments of God for mediating His rule on earth. And the prophets, incidentally, were as much kings in many ways as the kings were. In fact, they were more so than some kings. The judges mediated for God and so forth. So that was God's pattern.

Then there was another great change as God decided to send the final great glorious Mediator, the great King of kings and Lord of lords who is Jesus Christ. And so at the close of the era when the judges and the prophets and the kings were mediating for God, He sent Jesus Christ, He was rejected and He went right back again. God had sent Christ, and you remember the message of Jesus when He came. He preached a simple message. He said this, "Repent, for the

kingdom...is"...what?..."at hand." He was a king. He was a king coming to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords on the earth. He was fulfilling Isaiah, wasn't He? "For unto us a child is" given "...a son is" born "and the government shall be upon"...what?..."His shoulder..." See, He was coming to rule as a king. But men refused Him as king, therefore, forfeited the kingdom. So the King returned and said, I'll come back again and bring My kingdom; did He not? So the second coming of Jesus Christ, which happens over here, is when Christ returns and brings the kingdom. And in that glorious kingdom He rules as King of kings and Lord of lords and then He rules throughout the eternal kingdom as well.

Now, that leaves one little gap in the middle here and that's what I've called the church. You say, well, Christ came to be king there and Christ comes back to be king in the future; who is king in the middle? Who's ruling today in the kingdom of God and I'll give you an exciting answer. You are and I am as believers. And I'll show you why I say that. The ruler in the world today is the Holy Spirit and where does He abide?...within the believer. That's why in the very real sense, you and I are ruling for God in this world. We are dispensing His will. Now, the Holy Spirit, in a sense, rules in the world by restraining evil. Right? God, in another sense, rules in the world by governments that exist, but in a third sense, in a magnificent sense, God, through the Holy Spirit, rules in the world through you and through me. And because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, we have been restored to the place of king. In fact, the Bible calls us "kings and priests" or a kingdom of priests.

So this is the whole sweep, then, of the kingdom of God. And in this age, the Holy Spirit rules in the believers. Now, take that whole outline...see it up there...and just crush it in the one phrase "the kingdom of God," and you've got what that phrase means. It means at any point or in total, God ruling on earth through whomever He chooses to rule.

Now, now go back to verse 3. That was a long footnote. Now, when you see in verse 3 that it says he was "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," do you have an idea what he meant? He was teaching them how it is that God rules at any given point in time. But what would be the major message? The major message would be the future, wouldn't it?...the coming kingdom. And, undoubtedly, what occupied their minds above anything else was the fact that, indeed, Jesus was a king. They had hoped He was a king, but their hopes had been dashed on the rocks on the hill of Calvary until He rose from the dead. And now they knew He was a king again. Their hopes were restored, they were saying He is a king and He was talking about the kingdom that was coming. He was gonna bring them the kingdom, which was really just typified in all the other kingdoms. He was gonna bring in the full, final glorious kingdom and they were excited about it and they believed that He was, indeed, the King because He came through the grave and out the other side. And so, you see, they had the proper manifestation. They not only saw a risen Christ, but they saw Him as King who was coming in a glorious kingdom.

Thirdly, they had the proper might and that we'll see quickly in verse 4 or 5 and just the beginning of verse 8. They had the proper might. Now, you see, you've got all this information, right, and they've got all the instruction and so forth and so on. They can't be like the man who jumped on his horse and rode off madly in all directions. There's got to be direction. There's got to be power, I should say. They can't just scatter. They've got to have the power of the Spirit of God. They can't do it on their own. Even with the right message and the right manifestation, unless you have the right power, you can't do anything. This is the ignition switch. Verse 4, "And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem..." The implication is that they were raring to go, that they were saying let's get out of here and get this thing going, man. We've got it.

We've got the message down pat. You're the risen King, we've seen You, let us out of this place, open that door, you know. It's like the famous speech about the football coach who for 25 minutes fired his team up and they all raced to the door and it was locked (laughter). You know, this is the same kind of a thing. And they almost killed each other, you know. And here were the disciples ready to go. And the Lord says, now, you just wait a minute. You stay here. Don't you leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard from Me. Don't go anywhere yet. You don't have the power to do the job, see. Well, that's good advice. Now, it wasn't until 10 days, at least until about 10 days after Jesus had ascended that the Spirit of God came. They had to wait in Jerusalem. Now, you'll notice that the promise of the Spirit in verse 4 is defined in verse 5. People say, what's the promise of the Father, I mean. The promise of the Father is defined in verse 5. What is the promise of the Father? Here it is. "...John truly baptized with water...you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." That's the promise of the Father. Did not Jesus say repeatedly in the gospel of John that I will pray the Father and He will send unto you...whom?...the Holy Spirit. The promise of the Father was that if Jesus accomplished His work, He would send the Spirit. If Jesus did His work, came to glory, He would send the Spirit. That's the promise of the Father. And so Jesus says stay in Jerusalem until the Spirit of God comes from the Father and baptizes you. And they were to go nowhere until that happened. They weren't to buzz out and start their ministry on their own until they had the power to do it. And so it introduces to us the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And we'll be talking about this at great length so I'm going to go into the whole picture of the baptism of the Spirit. We'll go into it in detail in chapter 2. But for this point, let me just say a couple of things that jump out of this verse. Now, this is not a command...now, watch this one...this is not a command to be baptized with the Spirit. He is not saying, now, you be baptized with the Spirit. He's saying you go and sit down in Jerusalem and stay there, that's all, until the promise of the Father comes on you. Now, this is not an opportunity for the believers, this is not a privilege for the believers, this is not a responsibility for the believers, this is not a challenge for the believers; this is a promise from God. It has nothing to do with them in terms of their own seeking it. And you hear all the time today about you must tarry for the Spirit, you must find the Holy Spirit, you must seek for the baptism. No! He didn't say wait for the baptism; he said you just stay in Jerusalem because that's where it's gonna happen. And He didn't say pray for it. They could've been praying or weeding their garden or walking down the street or sleeping or anything. That didn't matter. It was not their own self-effort that was gonna generate it; it was the promise of the Father. You see, the baptism of the Spirit, my friends, is a positional truth. It has nothing to do with you or me in terms of our activities. In I Corinthians, chapter 12, the apostle Paul says very simply, when you receive Jesus Christ, at that point you're baptized into the body by the Holy Spirit. That happens when you're saved. Every believer, at the point of salvation, receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You say, what is it? It's simply the act by which the Holy Spirit places you in the body of Christ. That's all it is. It's not a super emotional thing, it's not any kind of an ecstatic experience, although in Acts it had a very definite miraculous content...and we'll go into that when we get there...but the baptism of the Spirit is a gift from God. It has nothing to do with the individual stirring it up or generating it or seeking for it. He simply says, you wait there and it will happen. And the issue wasn't tarrying for the Spirit; it was just being sure you were in Jerusalem. And if you want to take this passage literally, if you're gonna tarry for the Holy Spirit, you better go to Jerusalem. That's the whole point. The whole thing will start in Jerusalem when God gets ready to send His Spirit. It's the promise of the Father. It comes through grace not through self-effort. And any time you ever see "promise" in the Bible, the classic opposite of promise is classically self-effort. So the promise has nothing to do with them, it has nothing to do with self-effort. They can't pray for it, they can't seek for it, they can't do anything but just wait in Jerusalem and it's gonna happen unconditionally. In fact, the verb used in verse 5, "you shall be baptized" is a passive verb. It's not even active on their parts. It's God's activity. So we see then that He says the Spirit of God will come upon you and you'll be baptized by the Holy Spirit. And indeed they were in

chapter 2 and it was attended by a miracle, a very practical miracle because there were all kinds of people in Jerusalem at that time at Passover who couldn't speak the language that they spoke so God gave them the ability to give them the gospel in their own language. But the point is He said, wait there and God will send the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's the promise of the Father not something you generate. And this is interesting, too, just to remind you of the fact that people assume, therefore, that if you have to seek the baptism of the Spirit at some point after your salvation, that means that you didn't have the Holy Spirit. There's no such thing as a Christian who doesn't have the Holy Spirit. If that's true then God asks you to live the Christian life and doesn't give you the power to do it. If it's true that somebody doesn't have the Holy Spirit, then He's a liar because the Bible says in I Corinthians 12 that all of us have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and it uses the word "all" repeatedly. And in Romans 8:9 it says simply this: if any man have not the Spirit, he is not even Christ's. Every believer has the Spirit, every believer. Jesus said to the disciples, He is with you; He shall be...where?...in you. And so it is, then, that He says wait in Jerusalem until the power gets there. And this is a historical event. From this time on, it happened at the moment of salvation after we get past the book of Acts and its transitional nature. Now, notice verse 8 which gives us a little more insight into this. "But ye shall receive power"...dunamis...we've talked about all this, still reviewing..."ye shall receive" dynamite "after the Holy Spirit is come upon you..." The word "upon" is very interesting. The Hebrew equivalent word, 'al, means down from above. The Holy Spirit, you don't generate from up from underneath, from inside yourself, from the group around you; God gives it as a gracious gift. And so what is it saying? You'll receive power when the Spirit comes and baptizes you and you wait till that happens. Now, the implication is this, friends, that you can't do anything apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. That's the point. Self-effort doesn't cut it. Now, we've been into this in detail. We'll leave it at that. The proper might is the energy of the Holy Spirit. Christian, you possess it. There's no question about it. You possess it. It's only a matter of releasing it as Ephesians 5:17 and 18 indicates, by resigning your own will and yielding to the Spirit of God, which is already in you.

All right, so what do we have then? We have the proper message, the proper manifestation and we have the proper might. Now, let's go to number four. This is the end of our review and here we'll begin the sermon (laughter). The proper mystery. This is really interesting, very interesting, the proper mystery. Now, I told you that He'd been teaching about the kingdom. Now, they got excited. I can't get too excited about the kingdom back in Genesis. I can't get too excited about human government _____. Human government, wasn't that wonderful? Human government! No, I can't. But you talk to me about the coming kingdom, I can get excited, right. When Jesus comes to reign as King, I can get excited about that kingdom, that aspect of God's mediated kingdom. Well, you know that that's what turned the disciples on. Every Jew, all through his life, was waiting for Messiah to come and set up the kingdom and here was the Messiah, resurrected, living. They were with Him and He was talking about a kingdom and He was saying He was the King and they were excited about it. It was only natural. And it was natural for them to think that it wouldn't be very long away because, you see, in their minds, they had seen the end of everything. And in all of the Old Testament, the church age was never indicated. There's no indication that there'd be 2000 years of church in the middle between the first coming and the second coming of Messiah. They never saw two comings of Messiah in the Old Testament. It isn't there, only by implication. There was no teaching of the church. So once Messiah had come, died and risen again, they were just waiting for the kingdom any second, you see. Besides that, they knew that Ezekiel 36 and in Joel 2 the prophecies both said that when the kingdom comes, the Spirit will be poured out. And so here's Jesus promising them the Holy Spirit. And so they're thinking, boy, the kingdom is gonna be here. And, in fact, if you look at verse 5 it says that the Holy Spirit would come "not many"...what?..."not many days from now." They were ready. They were figuring this week's the kingdom, guys, this

week. They saw no intervening church age. Set the kingdom up. We're waiting. You've died, you've accomplished the atonement, now you're alive; let's go. And so with that in mind look at verse 6. "When they, therefore, were come together, they asked of Him saying, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'" Is it here, Lord? See? This has gotta be it. Right? Verse 7, "He said unto them"...and this is putting the damper on their fire, but it needed to be done..."it is not for you to know the times of the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." Now, this is the proper mystery. You know, it's good that God told us some things; it's also good that He didn't tell us others. Can you imagine if we all knew exactly the moment when Jesus would come, how that would restrict our faithfulness? I mean, for generation after generation people could slough it off figuring the Lord wasn't coming for a long time. And the generation that got close to it could wind up in a state of frenzy. And so the Lord says that's not the issue, people. That's not what you need to know. But I want to give you a footnote here. Isn't it interesting that the only thing about the kingdom they didn't know was the time it was coming? That's how complete Jesus taught them. They had complete knowledge of the kingdom. The only missing ingredient was the time when it was gonna happen. Now, there are some people today under the title of covenant theology who believe there is no kingdom for Israel. It was interesting, when I was at the conference on prophecy in the city of Jerusalem, to hear these men speak, denying that there ever will be a kingdom for Israel. Now, if ever there was a classic opportunity for Jesus to say there wouldn't be a kingdom, it was here. They said, when will the kingdom be restored? Jesus, if He'd been an amillennialist, could have said, I'm sorry, fellows, there is no kingdom. But He didn't say that. Why? Because there is one. There is a kingdom for Israel. There must be the fulfillment of God's kingdom through His Son, Jesus Christ, mediated on earth. So they had grabbed the "not many days hence" and they wanted to know when it was gonna come. And it was understandable. Everything else had ended. Why not the kingdom beginning? What could possibly be in the middle? And since there was no church prophesied in the Old Testament they couldn't see what fit in there. And so they asked Jesus when is it gonna happen. But He didn't tell them. Oh, He had told them there'd be a kingdom in Matthew 25. He had told them in Mark 13 that the time the kingdom was coming was unrevealed. He'd already told them that they weren't gonna know that. In fact, He said it might be a long time or it might be a short time. You just watch and you be ready all the time. And they're troubled because they want to know. Well, later on they got the message, you know, and Jesus had said He'll come in a hour you think not and Peter said He'll come like a thief in the night and John said He'll come suddenly and they got the message. And even today we don't know when He's coming. And, you know, we have a lot of things going on prophetically today and we read about prophecy everywhere and we hear about it and we preach on it. We get all excited about the coming of Jesus Christ, you know, and there's a great emphasis on it. But that's not the time to get your pajamas on and get up on the roof. That's not...(laughter)...it's not over, you know. That's not the issue. I know a man who had a lot of money and he thought Jesus was coming January 1 of a particular year and so he sold everything he had, liquidated everything and bought Bibles, sent 20,000 Good News for Modern Man to Vietnam and bought little praying hands that glow in the dark and passed them around on the street. I don't know why he bought those. And he bought strange little things and key chains with Jesus written on them. And he liquidated a couple hundred thousand dollars. Jesus was coming January 1. Jesus didn't come. Now, he's just wandering South L.A. just with nothing trying to figure out what went wrong. The Lord does not want us to do that. The Lord says simply in Luke 19:13 "occupy till I come." Do you get that statement? That means stay at it till I get there. It doesn't say lie around for the night comes when nobody can work. It says work. "It's not for you to know the times or the seasons...the Father has put in His own power." Let God do what God wants to do. Deuteronomy 29, "The secret things belong to the Lord..." And aren't you glad the Lord didn't tell us because He wanted every generation to live as if Jesus was coming in the next moment. And I'll show you why if we get to the end this morning. The Thessalonians had this problem. You know, the church in Thessalonica, they were all hassled about

the second coming, the rapture and the whole thing. And Paul wrote I Thessalonians to kind of help them out. And in I Thessalonians 5:1 he says, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night." You know that. ...in an hour that you think not. You start setting a date and that's the just the time He won't come. Just live every moment as if He's coming in the next. So the Lord says don't speculate, don't jangle over dates. Concentrate on this, number 5, the proper mission. Don't concentrate on when I'm coming; you concentrate on doing the job till I get there.

Number 5, the proper mission. And it's so simple. Look at verse 8 in the middle. "...and ye shall be"...what?...what's that word?...say it..."witnesses." Witnesses, not theologians. Isn't that wonderful? You don't have to get up and give a diatribe on the difference between sublapsarianism, infralapsarianism and a Labrador retriever. (Laughter) You don't have to do that. You don't have to go into the doctrine of the omuzio and the kenosis and...see. Those are all theological terms except Labrador retriever (laughter). I just threw that in. And you don't have to be a great, you know, world-shattering brain or a great master theologian to be able to communicate. All you need to do is be a witness. You say, what's a witness?...somebody who saw something and tells about it. I've only been a witness one time in my life and that was to an attempted murder. And in that particular attempted murder...I've shared it with you before...this particular thing that happened was there were two guys beating up a guy. And they were great big guys about 260, 255. They had attacked this guy in the street that they'd never seen. They were trying to kill him. He was lying on the ground. They were kicking him, then they broke all of his ribs, kicked his face in beyond recognition. And I happened to come...I was at the church at that time where my dad was pastor and I was dressed up in my ministerial attire, all my dignity. I came out the door and I heard all this commotion. I came out the door and there I was; I knew I had to do something, you know, because there were people on the sidewalk looking, not doing anything, just gasping, you know, and watching. And so I went out and it was interesting. I thought, well, I'll just tell them to break it up. I thought it was a fight. So I said, "Break it up" and nothing happened. I thought, well, they must not have seen me (laughter) so I proceeded out there and I got out there and I heard them say "kill him, kill him" and I looked down and I realized that it was murder and that they were trying to kill the guy. And so I really didn't know what to do. So to make a long story short, we got into a little hassle and they hit me and so forth. And finally I got real tough and had the secretary call the police (laughter). I hollered in "call the police" and well, it was a long story but I had to go to court and they asked me three things. And when they asked me these three things I really got excited. You know, they said, "Tell us Mr. MacArthur, what you saw, what you heard and what you felt." And you know something, I thought that's I John 1:1 (laughter). You know, I had no idea they knew that (laughter), you know. I John 1:1 says "That...which we have heard...and seen...and looked upon and our hands have handled concerning the Word of Life...that...we declare unto you," you see. That's all a witness is. They're not interested in great theological dissertations. You just tell me if you know Jesus and you tell me how I can know Him, see. That's a witness. It's so simple to be a witness for Jesus Christ. It's interesting. The word witness here is marturev. "Witnesses unto me" is mou marturev...my martyrs...my martyrs. For some of you maybe it'll be that. So many Christians died that the word witness finally came to mean martyr. So many of them died. Are you willing? It's sad. Not only are we not willing to die for Jesus; most of us aren't even willing to live for Him. We haven't even learned not only what it is to be a dead sacrifice, but we haven't learned what it is to be a living sacrifice. Do you know what it is to be a living sacrifice? I think, maybe, Hosea knew a little bit about it when he said I'll offer God the calves of my lips, in other words, the real me. I think Abraham knew what it was about when he went to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac would have been a dead sacrifice; Abraham would have been a living one. He was sacrificing all of his dreams and promises and everything God had ever given him when he slew that son. But he was willing to do it for God's sake. And that's what a living witness is all about. That's

what a martyr is all about. God doesn't necessarily want you to die for Him but He wants you to live for Him as if you couldn't care less about anything, sacrificing everything you have for His glory, a living witness, a living martyr, a living sacrifice. Oh, a witness is someone who just talks about Jesus. Peter knew. II Peter, isn't it, 1:16, where Peter says, but "we were eyewitnesses of His majesty." If you've been to witness Jesus Christ, do you know what your mission is, the proper mission? Be a witness, just that simple. Let me add another thought. You don't choose whether you'll be a witness or not. You are one. The only question is whether you're any good. If you're a Christian, you've witnessed Jesus Christ. The question is whether you're a reputable witness or not. It's so simple. And then he says when you're, witnesses start in Jerusalem. He says you start in Jerusalem and you be witnesses there. He didn't say get organized and do this and do that. Just be witnesses. Just open your mouth and tell about Jesus and then when you're done there, go to Judea and then when you're done there, go to Samaria, then get out to the uttermost part of the earth. And in 30 years they did it. And they weren't organized; they just did it. That's our mission. All of us are witnesses. The man, this week at the Biola Missionary Conference, the guys were telling me that he gave an interesting parable and I thought I'd relate it to you. He was speaking out there and he said this is called the parable of the shepherd. He said there was a shepherd who counted his sheep and he felt that there were many sheep missing. Very concerned about his missing sheep so he began to worry about it. And he sent a dog out and tried to find the sheep but the dog came back and only had a tired dog and no sheep. So he thought, well, maybe I'll check with some other shepherds. Maybe some other shepherds have the same problem I do so he got a shepherds' council together. First there was old business (laughter) then new business then a discussion of how to find sheep. Well, they appointed a sub-committee to research the problem of lost sheep. And the sub-committee came up with the following ideas. One great idea was neon signs blinking "Come, come, sheep, 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Sundays." Another good idea was vans with loud speakers traveling everywhere with someone inside saying "Here sheep. Here sheep." (Laughter) Another one was to give a handful of tracts to nomads who, in wandering through the desert, might stumble upon sheep...who, incidentally, couldn't read. One man came up with a brilliant idea. Perhaps we need an ex-shepherd to come in and call the sheep and we'll have a special meeting. A third said, no, we probably could use a visiting music group with music geared just for lost sheep. They got it all done and they still didn't have any sheep. Pretty good parable. It's pretty obvious what the Lord's plan was, isn't it? Forget all of the paraphernalia and be what you are...a witness. So simple. Just that simple. The early church did it right. They did it from the Day of Pentecost for 30 years and you can follow the church by the blaze of their witness. Super-charged with divine power, witnessing fearlessly to the world, they turned the currents of civilization, they changed the face of the ages for God. And they had no more equipment than you have, none at all.

There it is, the proper message, manifestation, might, mystery and mission. Then there was a last thing...the proper motive. You know, you've got to be motivated. You know that, don't you. You've got to be motivated. Motivation is what drives you. The Little Rascals on T.V. one time had a cart they built and they had a goat in front of it and the goat wouldn't pull the cart, which was very frustrating. One guy got a brainstorm, put a bamboo rod over the goat's head, hung a carrot six inches away, the goat pulled the cart all day trying to get the carrot (laughter). That's motivation. Whenever you go to the market and you go to the deodorant section, all of a sudden you think of T.V. commercials. You remember the gummy roll-on or the five-day pads, whatever it is. Your mind is subject to motivation. You buy groceries, you keep in mind what you...you don't, almost subliminally, but you recall how you've been pressured into purchasing certain things. We are creatures of motivation. We do what we do because of reasons, you see. And Jesus is about to give us a reason to get at it. Are you ready for this motivation? This is powerful stuff. Verse 9, "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up"...what a fabulous thing that must have been. No skyhook, no

elevator, no escalator, no rocket, no nothing. "...He was taken up, and a cloud"...maybe the Shekinah, the regal chariot, you know, that God rides on...the "cloud received Him out of their sight." There goes Jesus right off that mountain straight up into Heaven. Now, there should have been a verse in between 9 and 10 to tell us what happened when He got there, from my viewpoint. That's another mystery God didn't let me in on but, oh, I'd love to have seen the scene in Heaven. Wouldn't you? I can imagine the angels all crowding around Jesus, you know, in His glorified body and all of the stuff that was going on up there, the glorious reunion. And now they could all, you know, be confident there were no more cruelties for Him to bear, no more injustices, no more misunderstandings, no more beatings, no more being spit on, no more being mocked, no more sweat, no more blood, no more tears. Gethsemane was over, Calvary was over, the tomb was empty, the Son was home. What a glorious thing must have been going on in Heaven. But, meanwhile, back on earth watch what happens. Verse 10, "And while they looked steadfastly"...and the Greek word means they stared, fixed with their gaze..."toward Heaven as He went up..." Now, this is terrific. They're staring and they're just in shock 'cause He's going up there and also looking longingly as if they're losing Him. "...two men stood by them in white apparel." Here come two angels. And they said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?" which at first sounds like a ridiculous question. You might think they'd answer, well, what do you mean, why? Look at the traffic. I mean, one's going up; two are coming down (laughter). They've never seen anything like that, you know. Where else would we be looking, right? (Laughter) But the implication of the questions that they ask is this. Why are you looking longingly as if you're losing Him? Now, watch this one. "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall"...what are the next two words?..."so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven." What's our motive to serve Jesus? What is it? He's coming back, isn't He?...coming back. And I want to pull a couple of thoughts out of that verse 11. "This same Jesus..." Do you like that? Oh, I like that. It won't be a different one. It'll be the same one. Do you know that 2000 years haven't changed Jesus one bit? Do you know that when He returns it'll be in the same glorified body that those disciples touched, the same one that stood with them by the Sea of Galilee and ate breakfast, the same glorified body that Thomas saw and said, "My Lord and my God." Jesus hasn't changed. And right now He's sitting at the right hand of the Father in a glorified body like He had on earth. No wonder He can feel what we feel. When He comes back He'll be the same Jesus, not a different one. There've been a lot of false Christs coming around haven't there? I'll never forget my dad telling me when he was in seminary he was kind of young and rash. In Philadelphia there was a guy named Father Divine who claimed to be the Son of God. He was a black man who wore mink robes and it was a strange thing. But, anyway, it was in Philadelphia and so one night my dad went there and he sat in the back and when this guy finished announcing to everybody that he was God...incidentally, footnote, when he died, he passed his deity onto his wife (laughter)...but anyway, that night he had finished declaring to everybody that he was God and he stood to leave. And my dad stood up in the back and put his arms across the door and said, "Before anybody leaves I'd like to ask a question." And he said, "If you're God, would you show me the prints of the nails in your hand if you're the Son of God?" And he said it got very quiet and then they threw him out (laughter). That's not the same Jesus. That's not my Jesus Christ. When He comes back, I'll know Him. And you watch this. It says in verse 11, not only the same Jesus but He'll "come in like"...what?... "in like manner as you have seen Him go..." Did they see Him when He left? So will we when He comes. It's gonna be the same Jesus. I'll tell you, I can get excited about that. Can't you? Jesus is coming. You say, is that motive? You better believe it's motive. We serve Jesus Christ, Paul says, because "we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him" who is coming. And "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" to "receive the things done in the body...whether it be good or bad." John said, "Behold, I come quickly," recording the words of Jesus, "and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be." Jesus is coming with His rewards. Don't you want to receive a reward? Listen, one of

the greatest motives to serve Jesus Christ is that He's coming with His rewards. People have always said to me, you know, when I've talked about this, oh, you're kind of crass, MacArthur. I mean, all this crown routine and all these Christians storing up crowns like the Imperial margarine thing, you know, just stashing them away everywhere. And, you know, you want to get all these crowns. But that's not crass. That's not materialistic. If a man loves a woman and he goes to this woman and he says I love you and then he says I'd like to marry you, she doesn't say, oh, materialistic crass. It's not enough to love me; you've got to have me. No, no, no. No, because don't you see that marriage is the natural reward of love, right. If a general goes out and wins a battle, we don't say, oh, selfish (laughter). That's obvious. If a guy runs a race and he runs for half of the race and walks off and sits down, he's no hero. If you're gonna run, run to do...what?...to win. If I'm gonna serve Jesus Christ I'm not gonna serve him half-baked. I'm not gonna fight "as one who beats the air." If I'm in this battle for the Lord, I'm gonna run so that I may obtain the prize. Should I do less for my Lord than that? Jesus is coming and He's coming with His rewards to give to those who are His own. When He comes, what will you have to show? My grandfather had a poem written in his Bible and I memorized it and it goes like this: "When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ and He shows me His plan for me; The plan of my life, as it might have been, and I see how I blocked Him here and checked Him there and would not yield my will. Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes, grief though He loves me still? He would have me rich, but I stand there poor, stripped of all but His grace while memory runs like a haunted thing down a path I can't retrace. Then my desolate heart will well nigh break with tears I cannot shed. I'll cover my face with my empty hands, I'll bow my uncrowned head"...then this prayer..."Oh, Lord of the years that are left to me, I give them to Thy hand. Take me, break me, mold me to the pattern that Thou hast planned."

I don't know how much time we have, but I know whatever you do for Christ needs to be done today because Jesus is coming. Christian, do you see it? Chapter 1, verse 1 to 11...you've got it all, you've got it all. It's only a question of your will.

1701

Last week we began our study in the book of Acts and so if you have your Bible we'd like to ask you to turn to Acts, chapter 1. Acts, chapter 1, needless to say, is a basic chapter. It's a chapter that in the course of my ministry I have preached on many, many, many times because it is so very basic to an understanding of the Christian life. Since in the book of Acts, the church, for all intents and purposes is founded, it is then very important at the very beginning of Acts, to just lay down simply what it is that the church is commissioned to do and how it is to be done. So when we talk about the simple basics of the Christian life, we're talking about Acts 1. For some of you, this will be food to chew on again because you've studied this before many, many times. For some of you who are new Christians, many of you, it will be brand new. But it's very, very simple and it's very, very basic ingredients to the Christian life.

Now, from last week, I want to review because we got halfway through the message that really involves verses 1 through 11 and we'll review at some length this morning, cause I want to add some additional things, and then we'll go on to finish up the second part. But as we have begun our study of the book of Acts, we have become aware that it is the story of the first century of Christianity. It is the birth of the church. On the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts, chapter 2, the church is born. And from then on, through the book of Acts, the church explodes for about a 30-year period until it reaches the capital of the world, which is Rome. So you have the book of Acts, the story of the 30-years explosion of the first century church as it begins in its infancy in Jerusalem and then like divine

dynamite, blazes a trail to one of the those uttermost parts of the earth, the city of Rome.

Luke wrote this book. It's really volume 2 of his writing. Volume 1 is the book of Luke, the gospel of Luke. I may I also add that it is a continuation of Luke in the sense that it is a continuation of the life of Christ. Although it begins in chapter 1 with Christ ascending into Heaven, it continues with the life of Christ...watch this one...lived in the believers through the indwelling Holy Spirit. So in the book of Acts you have this ongoing ministry of Christ, the ongoing deeds of Christ and the ongoing teaching of Christ in the believers' lives through the indwelling Holy Spirit. That's why I have chosen to call the church, body two, for it's Jesus Christ reincarnated again in the believers and continuing to do His work and continuing to teach His instruction through us as He did originally in the flesh. So Acts, then, continues the ministry of Jesus Christ and the spread of the gospel as it's accomplished in the lives of the believers in that early church. And to give you an insight into that, you'll notice it in verse 8 of chapter 1. It says, "...you shall receive power" after "the Holy Spirit has come upon you and...be witnesses," and then it says, "Jerusalem...Judea, Samaria and" the world. There is the outline of the book of Acts right there. The book of Acts follows that flow from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the uttermost part of the earth as the gospel spreads. And you'll notice verse 8 says it is all energized by the Holy Spirit. When Jesus goes back to Heaven, He sends the Holy Spirit to energize the believer to spread the gospel.

Now, to show you that we are carrying on the unfinished work of Jesus, you'll notice verse 1 says, "The former treatise"...that is, Luke's gospel..."have I written, O Theophilus"...and, again, he's writing to the same noble Roman official, perhaps who lived in Antioch...I wrote you the former one and it was "about all that Jesus"...what's the next word?..."began both to do and to teach..." This one, is implied, about what He continued to do and teach in the Spirit in the believers of the first church. So Luke is all that Jesus began both to do and teach. Acts is what He continued to do in the believers. And, today, you and I are alive, indwelt by the same Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ is still doing and teaching through us. We are still finishing His unfinished work. Now, I want to hasten to add at this point that this is not talking about the work of redemption because the work of redemption is not unfinished; it is finished. Right? On the cross Jesus accomplished salvation. He said, "It is"...what?..."finished." In John 17 He prayed to the Father the night before His death and He said, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." In terms of redemption, that is accomplished. We add nothing to that. In terms of divine revelation, the Word of God is finished. It is "that which is perfect," Paul calls it, and we do not add anything to that. But in terms of doing and teaching, that was unfinished and we are called on, as was that early church, to finish the unfinished work of Jesus Christ, that of spreading His gospel, doing deeds in His Name and teaching truth as from Him. And so it is not the redemptive work that we're finishing. That is not the unfinished work. It is the work of teaching that we carry on, the work of doing those things that magnify Christ. And may I remind you again that this is still going on in us as we continue by the power of the Spirit to finish the work that Jesus began.

Now, in order for the early church to have the ability to do this, in order for us to have it, the Lord had to give us certain provisions. In other words, He had to equip us to do the job. We can't carry on the work unless we've got the tools. Right? So in chapter 1 of Acts, Jesus Christ equips His own to do the job. Then in Acts 2 when the church is born, they move right into it, just that fast. In fact, the first day the church began, how many people entered it?...3,000 at the first invitation...3,000. They were ready when the Day of Pentecost hit to do the job. Chapter 1 equips them as it equips us. And we learn here what it is that is ours in the way of equipment to really finish the unfinished work of Jesus Christ. Now, if His work is retarded it's not because we don't have the equipment; it's a matter of

commitment on our parts. It's a matter of will.

So, Jesus, recognizing that He's about to leave the earth...and He's already been gone 2,000 years, so He knows it'll be a long time...before He leaves, gives His last will and testament, which is made up of all the proper tools the Christian needs to do the job...very basic truth. And this is the countdown to the church and Christ giving us the provisions we'll need to really effectively function as His church in His plan. Jesus gives six things that are necessary provisions for finishing His unfinished work: the proper message, the proper manifestation, the proper might, the proper mystery, the proper mission and the proper motive. Now, all of these things coming together equip us to do the job. We lack nothing. As I mentioned in my prayer, the apostle Paul said in Ephesians 1, "We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places..." As we read in Colossians, Paul says, "Ye are complete in Him." Christians lack no commodity to do the job. We lack nothing to do the job and do it fully and totally. There is no missing ingredient. It is only a matter of activating the will to use the resources that you have. And we've been over that again and again in our study of Ephesians. And so here are the six basic pieces of equipment that the Lord gives us. Now, we began last week with the proper message and I'll just quickly review that.

To effectively carry on the Lord's work, which is a teaching work, we've gotta have the content. Right? We've gotta know what it is that we're supposed to declare. And so in order for Jesus to know they knew that, notice verse 1. In the middle of the verse Luke says I wrote "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." And how long did He teach? To "until the day in which He was taken up, after He, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen." Now, we saw last week that Jesus taught those men right up until the very day that He was taken away. Why? He wanted them to have the proper message. He wanted them to know the content of what it was they were to declare. This is the basic thing. I mean, we have nothing to do if we know nothing. Right? We have nothing to announce to the world if we don't know anything. Basic to all Christian ministry is content. That's why the Bible so heavily emphasizes "study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." You need to know the Word of God. This is why we are to saturate ourselves and as Paul said, "let the Word of Christ dwell in" us "richly." This is why we're to feast on the Word of God as babes to "desire the sincere milk of the Word" that we may grow, that we have doctrine, sound doctrine to declare. We must have the right message. No one is equipped to do God's work unless he knows God's truth. And so Jesus, carefully, right up until the time He left the world, taught them and taught them and taught them so that they had the proper message. And you and I are equipped with it in a way in which they are not equipped because you and I have everything that was written after Jesus left. All the epistles, the entire New Testament, in addition to the Old Testament, is in our hands. There's no excuse for ignorance on the part of a believer today, none at all. We have the proper message. It's ours to assimilate.

Secondly, He gave them the proper manifestation. There was more to it than just fact. There had to be a kind of a living, vital excitement within them. And this came in verse 3 when it says, "To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion"...or His suffering and death..."by many positive infallible proofs, being seen by them forty days..." We'll stop there for a minute. They not only had the proper message but they had the proper manifestation. You see, they had to have confidence that Jesus Christ was really who He claimed to be. They weren't about to go out and announce a dead Savior. You know, the critics have come along time after time and said, well, Jesus never rose from the dead; the disciples stole His body. Well, can you imagine the disorganized disciples tiptoeing past the Roman army, pushing the stone away in dead silence and stealing the body of Christ and

then at least 10 out of 12 going out and dying as martyrs for a stolen dead body? Makes no sense at all. They were moved and they were generated in the fact that they believed Jesus Christ was alive from the dead. And Jesus knew how important it was that they have a living manifestation of a living Christ. I mean, I can't get too excited about announcing to the world anything about a dead man, but I can get excited about announcing to the world something about a risen Jesus Christ. And so He gave them the proper manifestation. He revealed Himself to them by many infallible proofs over a period of 40 days. They walked with Him, they talked with Him, they touched Him, they ate with Him, they carried on conversation after conversation, they were in all different locations at all different times of the day in all different sizes of groups. There were many and multiple infallible proofs that this was in fact the same Christ who had died and been crucified and was now alive again. And so this sealed their faith. This tied down, this tacked down any loose edges in their confidence in Christ. They saw Him alive. And what a tremendous truth it is to know, beloved, that you and I have the same great positive proof. If I didn't know without a shadow of a doubt that in my heart lives a living, risen, resurrected Jesus Christ, I wouldn't bother to preach the gospel. I know a resurrected Christ. I know a Christ who's alive from the dead. He's as real to me as He was to those disciples who saw Him. I see Him not with the eye of the physical body, but I see Him with the eye of faith. And you and I who are Christians have had Jesus Christ manifest to us in all of His beauty and all of His glory and all of His majesty in a personal way, have we not? And so we have that same proper manifestation.

Now, additionally, to the disciples, just to secure the fact that this was really their Christ, notice the end of verse 3 says, "and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Jesus not only showed Himself to them, but He continued to teach them the same things He'd been teaching them before. And it was easy to put two and two together. Here's the same person teaching the same things; it's gotta be the same Christ. And He taught them the "things concerning the kingdom of God." This is exactly what He'd been teaching them before. He picked up right where He left off and, thus, secured to them the truths that He had taught them before and secured to them His absolute identity.

Now, what does He mean when He says He taught them the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God"? Now, in order to be faithful to the call of God on my part and teach you the whole counsel of God, I want to digress for a moment on a tangent and I want to tell you what the teaching of the kingdom of God is all about. And this is a digression, but it's important. When it says Jesus taught them "things pertaining to the kingdom of God," it has a very direct meaning. When we see the term "kingdom of God," it basically takes one or two significant patterns. First of all, the kingdom of God refers to the universal rule of God throughout the universe. Right? God is King over everything. Everything in existence in the universe is ruled by God. You say, no, Hell isn't. Oh, yes, Hell is. God handles Hell, believe it or not. The Bible says, fear not him who is able to destroy the body, but "fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell," and that Him is God. God rules the universe and everything within the universe is in the framework of God's rule. Whether directly or permissively, God rules everything. He is sovereign. Nothing is outside the circle of God's sovereignty or if there is one thing outside, then somebody's equal to God and there isn't any such. God rules in a universal kingdom over every single thing in existence.

But, secondly, not only is God's universal kingdom called the kingdom of God, but His mediatorial kingdom. Now, don't gag. His mediatorial kingdom comes from the word mediator. Mediator means somebody who stands between two things. Now, God's mediatorial kingdom involves the little globe that we live on called the earth, this little ball whirling around in the universe. Now, God's rule is brought to earth and He rules on the earth. But He rules through various mediators, that is,

somebody stands between the world and God and rules for Him here. So whenever you see the term "kingdom of God," you want to differentiate in your mind whether he's talking about God's universal kingdom as the Psalmist does repeatedly, particularly in Psalm 145, or whether he's talking about the mediated kingdom, that is, the kingdom of God on earth as it is in its reduced sense. And when it says here that Jesus was teaching concerning the kingdom of God, probably it takes into consideration both. First He was teaching about the universal kingdom so they would know that, then how that God had mediated His rule to the globe, and then I am sure He went into the details of that. And I want to show you this in as simple a way as I possibly can with the use of the overhead so that you'll get the point.

You'll notice on your left, the green line is a timeline running through history ending up in the eternal kingdom, which is the eternal Heaven and earth. Now, along this timeline throughout history into eternity, God has been ruling the world. God rules this little globe in a very direct sense. Now, below the line, written in red, you will read the agency of God's rule all the way along in these different periods. The little green line running vertically indicates a change in God's rule and the point at which the change came...at the fall, at the flood, at Babel, at Moses and so forth and we'll go through it.

Now, without me necessarily referring to it directly, I want to just talk you kind of through this little simple diagram. When God first made the world, He needed somebody to rule for Him on the earth so He created man. His name was Adam and He gave to Adam a very key word. He gave him dominion over the earth, did He not? Now, what does that mean? That means Adam was a king. Adam was king of the earth. Adam was God's first ruler. He was God's first king to mediate God's rule on the earth so that God ruled on the earth through Adam. Whenever God wanted something done, He spoke through Adam; Adam made it happen. Adam gave out the information that God gave him. He was God's mediating king on the earth. God had a kingdom on earth mediated through Adam. But then Adam decided that he'd like to go his own way and do his own thing and maybe he'd like to rule a little differently than God did so Adam fell. And immediately, Adam lost his crown and that's why Hebrews 2:8 says...verse 7 says that man should be king, verse 8 says he's not. Because Adam lost his crown when he decided that he'd be sovereign on his own and go into competition with God, you see, that he would decide what was right and what was wrong and he'd do what he wanted to do, he lost his crown. God had nobody to rule for Him on the earth. The sin of Adam and the loss of his proper dominion set the stage then for the brutal murder in which Cain killed Abel and it also left the race without any mediator to control it and man was cut off from God. And for the whole period of time, for this whole period from the fall to the flood, that whole period in there, in all of the divine revelation that covers those years, we find only two times when God ever intervened. One time He intervened by taking Enoch into His presence. The second time He intervened was when He threw Cain out of His presence. Those are the only two times in revelation we see God intervene. And during this period of time, God's rule on earth was hindered because of the sinfulness and the self-styled will of men. And so it was called a period of lawlessness. In fact, in Genesis, chapter 6 and verse 11 it says that "the earth was filled with violence." Irresponsibility and lawlessness and Godlessness were everywhere. Now, during this time, the only agency that God had to communicate to men His rule was conscience. And conscience was easy to react against because conscience could be, first of all, disobeyed. It could be, secondly, quenched. It could be wrongly educated. You can raise your conscience the wrong way, you know, and then it won't do you any good in the crisis. It could also be seared. When it was misused long enough it became insensitive. So conscience really didn't work in a very effective way. But nevertheless, apart from conscience, God had no rule in that era. And so we call that the dispensation of conscience when God mediated His rule on earth through men's conscience.

Now, following that period...and, of course, you remember how the period of conscience ended; it got drowned, literally; the dispensation of conscience went under...God at the time of the flood then, after the water subsided and God began to reconstruct things again, decided He was gonna try another pattern of ruling on earth. And the second pattern that He decided was human government. And in this period between the flood and the Tower of Babel, God ruled by governments. In other words, God let men organize into human governments. And the basic law of human government was the law of capital punishment, which God had from the very beginning instituted as the law to deal with men who were criminals. In fact, Genesis 9:6 simply says this, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall also his blood be shed," and the reason is "for man is created in the image of God" and to take a life that is in the image of God deserves that that life be taken. That was God's basic principle of human government. You see, this law was important because God recognized that man was sinful. And He recognized that man was rebellious and He recognized that man was murderous. And He also recognized that conscience had not been enough to distract man from that, therefore, God developed human government, gave to human government the right of capital punishment to restrain man from murdering his fellow [man]. And so God established governments to mediate His rule. And it's kind of interesting that this establishment of governments has in a direct sense still maintained itself even today so that when we come to Romans 13, the Bible says, "be subject to the powers that be for they are"...what?..."ordained of God." God still is mediating in a sense through government at least in a physical sense. And so God instituted human government. But they messed that all up, too, because God's way...and here's a political thought for you if you're trying to find yourself politically...I'm not gonna tell you which party I'm a member of (laughter) but I'm gonna tell you this...God has always ordained that the going political picture be nationalism. God has never been behind one-world governments. But men decided they ought to have a one-world government and get super powerful and so they tried it at the Tower of Babel. Remember, in Genesis 10, they decided that their cities were growing and everything commerce and the whole shot and they decided to come together for one great world effort, have one world government. And God looked down on it and said no way and scattered them all over the world and changed their language to make sure they couldn't get back together and they've never gotten back together successfully since. And now the best they can do is sit in the United Nations with all those things on their ears, trying to hear in their own language and a whole lot of people in a room somewhere talking in their language and trying to figure out who interprets what going what direction. That's the best they can do to reverse the curse that God gave them on Babel. God has never been for a one-world government. It's a simple principle. God never wanted it because as someone has well said, if political power corrupts, then absolute power corrupts absolutely. God has chosen nationalism because it's the safest form of government. For example, for the sake of competition alone, for the betterment of man from a physical standpoint, for the sake of a check system, if one-world government is corrupt and that's all there is, who checks that system? If one-world government is Godless and writes off Christianity and wipes out God, where do you go to find the truth? God has never been for a world government, that's why every effort toward a world government is inspired by Satan and when he finally succeeds, it'll be in the tribulation. It'll be the one-world government of Revelation 18 and God will destroy it in the coming of Jesus Christ. The only one-world government that'll ever work is when Jesus is on the throne. And so God has designed nationalism. And when men tried to make a one-world government, God saw that human government alone wasn't going to make it.

And so God, again, changed the pattern and brought in a third mediator. And during the time from Babel to Moses, God's rule on earth was mediated through men that are called patriarchs. Now, you remember the first of the patriarchs was named Abraham...Genesis 12. And Abraham was a king, my friends, he was a king just as much as David was a king. He was a king just as much as Saul

was a king. He was a king just as much as anybody was a king for he was God's mediating ruler on earth...Abraham. He was followed by Isaac, by Jacob and right through the patriarchs. Those men were the kings of the earth. God gave them rule on the earth to mediate His kingdom. These great Hebrew men, genuine kings, regal men mediating God's rule. They were vice regents in the kingdom on earth.

Then God chose a different pattern. And as we read in the Old Testament there was another age, really from Moses to the time of Christ. And during that period, God's rule was mediated through judges, through prophets and through kings. Now, all of those, the judges that we read about, the prophets, specific men and kings who reigned for all those years starting from Saul, were all instruments of God for mediating His rule on earth. And the prophets, incidentally, were as much kings in many ways as the kings were. In fact, they were more so than some kings. The judges mediated for God and so forth. So that was God's pattern.

Then there was another great change as God decided to send the final great glorious Mediator, the great King of Kings and Lord of Lords who is Jesus Christ. And so at the close of the era when the judges and the prophets and the kings were mediating for God, He sent Jesus Christ, He was rejected and He went right back again. God had sent Christ, and you remember the message of Jesus when He came. He preached a simple message. He said this, "Repent, for the kingdom...is"...what?..."at hand." He was a king. He was a king coming to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords on the earth. He was fulfilling Isaiah, wasn't He? "For unto us a child is" given "...a son is" born "and the government shall be upon"...what?..."His shoulder..." See, He was coming to rule as a king. But men refused Him as king, therefore, forfeited the kingdom. So the King returned and said, I'll come back again and bring My kingdom; did He not? So the second coming of Jesus Christ, which happens over here, is when Christ returns and brings the kingdom. And in that glorious kingdom He rules as King of Kings and Lord and Lords and then He rules throughout the eternal kingdom as well.

Now, that leaves one little gap in the middle here and that's what I've called the church. You say, well, Christ came to be king there and Christ comes back to be king in the future; who is king in the middle? Who's ruling today in the kingdom of God and I'll give you an exciting answer. You are and I am as believers. And I'll show you why I say that. The ruler in the world today is the Holy Spirit and where does He abide?...within the believer. That's why in the very real sense, you and I are ruling for God in this world. We are dispensing His will. Now, the Holy Spirit, in a sense, rules in the world by restraining evil. Right? God, in another sense, rules in the world by governments that exist, but in a third sense, in a magnificent sense, God, through the Holy Spirit, rules in the world through you and through me. And because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, we have been restored to the place of king. In fact, the Bible calls us "kings and priests" or a kingdom of priests.

So this is the whole sweep, then, of the kingdom of God. And in this age, the Holy Spirit rules in the believers. Now, take that whole outline...see it up there...and just crush it in the one phrase "the kingdom of God," and you've got what that phrase means. It means at any point or in total, God ruling on earth through whomever He chooses to rule.

Now, now go back to verse 3. That was a long footnote. Now, when you see in verse 3 that it says he was "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," do you have an idea what he meant? He was teaching them how it is that God rules at any given point in time. But what would be the major message? The major message would be the future, wouldn't it?...the coming kingdom. And,

undoubtedly, what occupied their minds above anything else was the fact that, indeed, Jesus was a king. They had hoped He was a king, but their hopes had been dashed on the rocks on the hill of Calvary until He rose from the dead. And now they knew He was a king again. Their hopes were restored, they were saying He is a king and He was talking about the kingdom that was coming. He was gonna bring them the kingdom, which was really just typified in all the other kingdoms. He was gonna bring in the full, final glorious kingdom and they were excited about it and they believed that He was, indeed, the King because He came through the grave and out the other side. And so, you see, they had the proper manifestation. They not only saw a risen Christ, but they saw Him as King who was coming in a glorious kingdom.

Thirdly, they had the proper might and that we'll see quickly in verse 4 or 5 and just the beginning of verse 8. They had the proper might. Now, you see, you've got all this information, right, and they've got all the instruction and so forth and so on. They can't be like the man who jumped on his horse and rode off madly in all directions. There's got to be direction. There's got to be power, I should say. They can't just scatter. They've got to have the power of the Spirit of God. They can't do it on their own. Even with the right message and the right manifestation, unless you have the right power, you can't do anything. This is the ignition switch. Verse 4, "And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem..." The implication is that they were raring to go, that they were saying let's get out of here and get this thing going, man. We've got it. We've got the message down pat. You're the risen King, we've seen You, let us out of this place, open that door, you know. It's like the famous speech about the football coach who for 25 minutes fired his team up and they all raced to the door and it was locked (laughter). You know, this is the same kind of a thing. And they almost killed each other, you know. And here were the disciples ready to go. And the Lord says, now, you just wait a minute. You stay here. Don't you leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard from Me. Don't go anywhere yet. You don't have the power to do the job, see. Well, that's good advice. Now, it wasn't until 10 days, at least until about 10 days after Jesus had ascended that the Spirit of God came. They had to wait in Jerusalem. Now, you'll notice that the promise of the Spirit in verse 4 is defined in verse 5. People say, what's the promise of the Father, I mean. The promise of the Father is defined in verse 5. What is the promise of the Father? Here it is. "...John truly baptized with water...you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." That's the promise of the Father. Did not Jesus say repeatedly in the gospel of John that I will pray the Father and He will send unto you...whom?...the Holy Spirit. The promise of the Father was that if Jesus accomplished His work, He would send the Spirit. If Jesus did His work, came to glory, He would send the Spirit. That's the promise of the Father. And so Jesus says stay in Jerusalem until the Spirit of God comes from the Father and baptizes you. And they were to go nowhere until that happened. They weren't to buzz out and start their ministry on their own until they had the power to do it. And so it introduces to us the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And we'll be talking about this at great length so I'm going to go into the whole picture of the baptism of the Spirit. We'll go into it in detail in chapter 2. But for this point, let me just say a couple of things that jump out of this verse. Now, this is not a command...now, watch this one...this is not a command to be baptized with the Spirit. He is not saying, now, you be baptized with the Spirit. He's saying you go and sit down in Jerusalem and stay there, that's all, until the promise of the Father comes on you. Now, this is not an opportunity for the believers, this is not a privilege for the believers, this is not a responsibility for the believers, this is not a challenge for the believers; this is a promise from God. It has nothing to do with them in terms of their own seeking it. And you hear all the time today about you must tarry for the Spirit, you must find the Holy Spirit, you must seek for the baptism. No! He didn't say wait for the baptism; he said you just stay in Jerusalem because that's where it's gonna happen. And He didn't say pray for it. They could've been praying or weeding their garden or walking down the street or sleeping or anything. That didn't matter. It was not their own self-effort that was

gonna generate it; it was the promise of the Father. You see, the baptism of the Spirit, my friends, is a positional truth. It has nothing to do with you or me in terms of our activities. In I Corinthians, chapter 12, the apostle Paul says very simply, when you receive Jesus Christ, at that point you're baptized into the body by the Holy Spirit. That happens when you're saved. Every believer, at the point of salvation, receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You say, what is it? It's simply the act by which the Holy Spirit places you in the body of Christ. That's all it is. It's not a super emotional thing, it's not any kind of an ecstatic experience, although in Acts it had a very definite miraculous content...and we'll go into that when we get there...but the baptism of the Spirit is a gift from God. It has nothing to do with the individual stirring it up or generating it or seeking for it. He simply says, you wait there and it will happen. And the issue wasn't tarrying for the Spirit; it was just being sure you were in Jerusalem. And if you want to take this passage literally, if you're gonna tarry for the Holy Spirit, you better go to Jerusalem. That's the whole point. The whole thing will start in Jerusalem when God gets ready to send His Spirit. It's the promise of the Father. It comes through grace not through self-effort. And any time you ever see "promise" in the Bible, the classic opposite of promise is classically self-effort. So the promise has nothing to do with them, it has nothing to do with self-effort. They can't pray for it, they can't seek for it, they can't do anything but just wait in Jerusalem and it's gonna happen unconditionally. In fact, the verb used in verse 5, "you shall be baptized" is a passive verb. It's not even active on their parts. It's God's activity. So we see then that He says the Spirit of God will come upon you and you'll be baptized by the Holy Spirit. And indeed they were in chapter 2 and it was attended by a miracle, a very practical miracle because there were all kinds of people in Jerusalem at that time at Passover who couldn't speak the language that they spoke so God gave them the ability to give them the gospel in their own language. But the point is He said, wait there and God will send the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's the promise of the Father not something you generate. And this is interesting, too, just to remind you of the fact that people assume, therefore, that if you have to seek the baptism of the Spirit at some point after your salvation, that means that you didn't have the Holy Spirit. There's no such thing as a Christian who doesn't have the Holy Spirit. If that's true then God asks you to live the Christian life and doesn't give you the power to do it. If it's true that somebody doesn't have the Holy Spirit, then He's a liar because the Bible says in I Corinthians 12 that all of us have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and it uses the word "all" repeatedly. And in Romans 8:9 it says simply this: if any man have not the Spirit, he is not even Christ's. Every believer has the Spirit, every believer. Jesus said to the disciples, He is with you; He shall be...where?...in you. And so it is, then, that He says wait in Jerusalem until the power gets there. And this is a historical event. From this time on, it happened at the moment of salvation after we get past the book of Acts and its transitional nature. Now, notice verse 8 which gives us a little more insight into this. "But ye shall receive power"...dunamis...we've talked about all this, still reviewing..."ye shall receive" dynamite "after the Holy Spirit is come upon you..." The word "upon" is very interesting. The Hebrew equivalent word, 'al, means down from above. The Holy Spirit, you don't generate from up from underneath, from inside yourself, from the group around you; God gives it as a gracious gift. And so what is it saying? You'll receive power when the Spirit comes and baptizes you and you wait till that happens. Now, the implication is this, friends, that you can't do anything apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. That's the point. Self-effort doesn't cut it. Now, we've been into this in detail. We'll leave it at that. The proper might is the energy of the Holy Spirit. Christian, you possess it. There's no question about it. You possess it. It's only a matter of releasing it as Ephesians 5:17 and 18 indicates, by resigning your own will and yielding to the Spirit of God, which is already in you.

All right, so what do we have then? We have the proper message, the proper manifestation and we have the proper might. Now, let's go to number four. This is the end of our review and here we'll begin the sermon (laughter). The proper mystery. This is really interesting, very interesting, the

proper mystery. Now, I told you that He'd been teaching about the kingdom. Now, they got excited. I can't get too excited about the kingdom back in Genesis. I can't get too excited about human government _____. Human government, wasn't that wonderful? Human government! No, I can't. But you talk to me about the coming kingdom, I can get excited, right. When Jesus comes to reign as King, I can get excited about that kingdom, that aspect of God's mediated kingdom. Well, you know that that's what turned the disciples on. Every Jew, all through his life, was waiting for Messiah to come and set up the kingdom and here was the Messiah, resurrected, living. They were with Him and He was talking about a kingdom and He was saying He was the King and they were excited about it. It was only natural. And it was natural for them to think that it wouldn't be very long away because, you see, in their minds, they had seen the end of everything. And in all of the Old Testament, the church age was never indicated. There's no indication that there'd be 2000 years of church in the middle between the first coming and the second coming of Messiah. They never saw two comings of Messiah in the Old Testament. It isn't there, only by implication. There was no teaching of the church. So once Messiah had come, died and risen again, they were just waiting for the kingdom any second, you see. Besides that, they knew that Ezekiel 36 and in Joel 2 the prophecies both said that when the kingdom comes, the Spirit will be poured out. And so here's Jesus promising them the Holy Spirit. And so they're thinking, boy, the kingdom is gonna be here. And, in fact, if you look at verse 5 it says that the Holy Spirit would come "not many" ...what?... "not many days from now." They were ready. They were figuring this week's the kingdom, guys, this week. They saw no intervening church age. Set the kingdom up. We're waiting. You've died, you've accomplished the atonement, now you're alive; let's go. And so with that in mind look at verse 6. "When they, therefore, were come together, they asked of Him saying, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'" Is it here, Lord? See? This has gotta be it. Right? Verse 7, "He said unto them"...and this is putting the damper on their fire, but it needed to be done..."it is not for you to know the times of the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." Now, this is the proper mystery. You know, it's good that God told us some things; it's also good that He didn't tell us others. Can you imagine if we all knew exactly the moment when Jesus would come, how that would restrict our faithfulness? I mean, for generation after generation people could slough it off figuring the Lord wasn't coming for a long time. And the generation that got close to it could wind up in a state of frenzy. And so the Lord says that's not the issue, people. That's not what you need to know. But I want to give you a footnote here. Isn't it interesting that the only thing about the kingdom they didn't know was the time it was coming? That's how complete Jesus taught them. They had complete knowledge of the kingdom. The only missing ingredient was the time when it was gonna happen. Now, there are some people today under the title of covenant theology who believe there is no kingdom for Israel. It was interesting, when I was at the conference on prophecy in the city of Jerusalem, to hear these men speak, denying that there ever will be a kingdom for Israel. Now, if ever there was a classic opportunity for Jesus to say there wouldn't be a kingdom, it was here. They said, when will the kingdom be restored? Jesus, if He'd been an amillennialist, could have said, I'm sorry, fellows, there is no kingdom. But He didn't say that. Why? Because there is one. There is a kingdom for Israel. There must be the fulfillment of God's kingdom through His Son, Jesus Christ, mediated on earth. So they had grabbed the "not many days hence" and they wanted to know when it was gonna come. And it was understandable. Everything else had ended. Why not the kingdom beginning? What could possibly be in the middle? And since there was no church prophesied in the Old Testament they couldn't see what fit in there. And so they asked Jesus when is it gonna happen. But He didn't tell them. Oh, He had told them there'd be a kingdom in Matthew 25. He had told them in Mark 13 that the time the kingdom was coming was unrevealed. He'd already told them that they weren't gonna know that. In fact, He said it might be a long time or it might be a short time. You just watch and you be ready all the time. And they're troubled because they want to know. Well, later on they got the message, you know, and Jesus had said He'll come in a hour you think not and Peter

said He'll come like a thief in the night and John said He'll come suddenly and they got the message. And even today we don't know when He's coming. And, you know, we have a lot of things going on prophetically today and we read about prophecy everywhere and we hear about it and we preach on it. We get all excited about the coming of Jesus Christ, you know, and there's a great emphasis on it. But that's not the time to get your pajamas on and get up on the roof. That's not...(laughter)...it's not over, you know. That's not the issue. I know a man who had a lot of money and he thought Jesus was coming January 1 of a particular year and so he sold everything he had, liquidated everything and bought Bibles, sent 20,000 Good News for Modern Man to Vietnam and bought little praying hands that glow in the dark and passed them around on the street. I don't know why he bought those. And he bought strange little things and key chains with Jesus written on them. And he liquidated a couple hundred thousand dollars. Jesus was coming January 1. Jesus didn't come. Now, he's just wandering South L.A. just with nothing trying to figure out what went wrong. The Lord does not want us to do that. The Lord says simply in Luke 19:13 "occupy till I come." Do you get that statement? That means stay at it till I get there. It doesn't say lie around for the night comes when nobody can work. It says work. "It's not for you to know the times or the seasons...the Father has put in His own power." Let God do what God wants to do. Deuteronomy 29, "The secret things belong to the Lord..." And aren't you glad the Lord didn't tell us because He wanted every generation to live as if Jesus was coming in the next moment. And I'll show you why if we get to the end this morning. The Thessalonians had this problem. You know, the church in Thessalonica, they were all hassled about the second coming, the rapture and the whole thing. And Paul wrote I Thessalonians to kind of help them out. And in I Thessalonians 5:1 he says, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night." You know that. ...in an hour that you think not. You start setting a date and that's the just the time He won't come. Just live every moment as if He's coming in the next. So the Lord says don't speculate, don't jangle over dates. Concentrate on this, number 5, the proper mission. Don't concentrate on when I'm coming; you concentrate on doing the job till I get there.

Number 5, the proper mission. And it's so simple. Look at verse 8 in the middle. "...and ye shall be"...what?...what's that word?...say it..."witnesses." Witnesses, not theologians. Isn't that wonderful? You don't have to get up and give a diatribe on the difference between sublapsarianism, infranlapsarianism and a Labrador retriever. (Laughter) You don't have to do that. You don't have to go into the doctrine of the omuzio and the kenosis and...see. Those are all theological terms except Labrador retriever (laughter). I just threw that in. And you don't have to be a great, you know, world-shattering brain or a great master theologian to be able to communicate. All you need to do is be a witness. You say, what's a witness?...somebody who saw something and tells about it. I've only been a witness one time in my life and that was to an attempted murder. And in that particular attempted murder...I've shared it with you before...this particular thing that happened was there were two guys beating up a guy. And they were great big guys about 260, 255. They had attacked this guy in the street that they'd never seen. They were trying to kill him. He was lying on the ground. They were kicking him, then they broke all of his ribs, kicked his face in beyond recognition. And I happened to come...I was at the church at that time where my dad was pastor and I was dressed up in my ministerial attire, all my dignity. I came out the door and I heard all this commotion. I came out the door and there I was; I knew I had to do something, you know, because there were people on the sidewalk looking, not doing anything, just gasping, you know, and watching. And so I went out and it was interesting. I thought, well, I'll just tell them to break it up. I thought it was a fight. So I said, "Break it up" and nothing happened. I thought, well, they must not have seen me (laughter) so I proceeded out there and I got out there and I heard them say "kill him, kill him" and I looked down and I realized that it was murder and that they were trying to kill the guy. And so I really didn't know what to do. So to make a long story short, we got into a little hassle and they hit me and so forth. And

finally I got real tough and had the secretary call the police (laughter). I hollered in "call the police" and well, it was a long story but I had to go to court and they asked me three things. And when they asked me these three things I really got excited. You know, they said, "Tell us Mr. MacArthur, what you saw, what you heard and what you felt." And you know something, I thought that's I John 1:1 (laughter). You know, I had no idea they knew that (laughter), you know. I John 1:1 says "That...which we have heard...and seen...and looked upon and our hands have handled concerning the Word of Life...that...we declare unto you," you see. That's all a witness is. They're not interested in great theological dissertations. You just tell me if you know Jesus and you tell me how I can know Him, see. That's a witness. It's so simple to be a witness for Jesus Christ. It's interesting. The word witness here is *marturev*. "Witnesses unto me" is *mou marturev*...my martyrs...my martyrs. For some of you maybe it'll be that. So many Christians died that the word witness finally came to mean martyr. So many of them died. Are you willing? It's sad. Not only are we not willing to die for Jesus; most of us aren't even willing to live for Him. We haven't even learned not only what it is to be a dead sacrifice, but we haven't learned what it is to be a living sacrifice. Do you know what it is to be a living sacrifice? I think, maybe, Hosea knew a little bit about it when he said I'll offer God the calves of my lips, in other words, the real me. I think Abraham knew what it was about when he went to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac would have been a dead sacrifice; Abraham would have been a living one. He was sacrificing all of his dreams and promises and everything God had ever given him when he slew that son. But he was willing to do it for God's sake. And that's what a living witness is all about. That's what a martyr is all about. God doesn't necessarily want you to die for Him but He wants you to live for Him as if you couldn't care less about anything, sacrificing everything you have for His glory, a living witness, a living martyr, a living sacrifice. Oh, a witness is someone who just talks about Jesus. Peter knew. II Peter, isn't it, 1:16, where Peter says, but "we were eyewitnesses of His majesty." If you've been to witness Jesus Christ, do you know what your mission is, the proper mission? Be a witness, just that simple. Let me add another thought. You don't choose whether you'll be a witness or not. You are one. The only question is whether you're any good. If you're a Christian, you've witness Jesus Christ. The question is whether you're a reputable witness or not. It's so simple. And then he says when you're, witnesses start in Jerusalem. He says you start in Jerusalem and you be witnesses there. He didn't say get organized and do this and do that. Just be witnesses. Just open your mouth and tell about Jesus and then when you're done there, go to Judea and then when you're done there, go to Samaria, then get out to the uttermost part of the earth. And in 30 years they did it. And they weren't organized; they just did it. That's our mission. All of us are witnesses. The man, this week at the Biola Missionary Conference, the guys were telling me that he gave an interesting parable and I thought I'd relate it to you. He was speaking out there and he said this is called the parable of the shepherd. He said there was a shepherd who counted his sheep and he felt that there were many sheep missing. Very concerned about his missing sheep so he began to worry about it. And he sent a dog out and tried to find the sheep but the dog came back and only had a tired dog and no sheep. So he thought, well, maybe I'll check with some other shepherds. Maybe some other shepherds have the same problem I do so he got a shepherds' council together. First there was old business (laughter) then new business then a discussion of how to find sheep. Well, they appointed a sub-committee to research the problem of lost sheep. And the sub-committee came up with the following ideas. One great idea was neon signs blinking "Come, come, sheep, 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Sundays." Another good idea was vans with loud speakers traveling everywhere with someone inside saying "Here sheep. Here sheep." (Laughter) Another one was to give a handful of tracts to nomads who, in wandering through the desert, might stumble upon sheep...who, incidentally, couldn't read. One man came up with a brilliant idea. Perhaps we need an ex-shepherd to come in and call the sheep and we'll have a special meeting. A third said, no, we probably could use a visiting music group with music geared just for lost sheep. They got it all done and they still didn't have any sheep. Pretty good parable. It's pretty obvious what the Lord's plan was, isn't it? Forget all of the

paraphernalia and be what you are...a witness. So simple. Just that simple. The early church did it right. They did it from the Day of Pentecost for 30 years and you can follow the church by the blaze of their witness. Super-charged with divine power, witnessing fearlessly to the world, they turned the currents of civilization, they changed the face of the ages for God. And they had no more equipment than you have, none at all.

There it is, the proper message, manifestation, might, mystery and mission. Then there was a last thing...the proper motive. You know, you've got to be motivated. You know that, don't you. You've got to be motivated. Motivation is what drives you. The Little Rascals on T.V. one time had a cart they built and they had a goat in front of it and the goat wouldn't pull the cart, which was very frustrating. One guy got a brainstorm, put a bamboo rod over the goat's head, hung a carrot six inches away, the goat pulled the cart all day trying to get the carrot (laughter). That's motivation. Whenever you go to the market and you go to the deodorant section, all the sudden you think of T.V. commercials. You remember the gummy roll-on or the five-day pads, whatever it is. Your mind is subject to motivation. You buy groceries, you keep in mind what you...you don't, almost subliminally, but you recall how you've been pressured into purchasing certain things. We are creatures of motivation. We do what we do because of reasons, you see. And Jesus is about to give us a reason to get at it. Are you ready for this motivation? This is powerful stuff. Verse 9, "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up" ...what a fabulous thing that must have been. No skyhook, no elevator, no escalator, no rocket, no nothing. "...He was taken up, and a cloud"...maybe the Shekinah, the regal chariot, you know, that God rides on...the "cloud received Him out of their sight." There goes Jesus right off that mountain straight up into Heaven. Now, there should have been a verse in between 9 and 10 to tell us what happened when He got there, from my viewpoint. That's another mystery God didn't let me in on but, oh, I'd love to have seen the scene in Heaven. Wouldn't you? I can imagine the angels all crowding around Jesus, you know, in His glorified body and all of the stuff that was going on up there, the glorious reunion. And now they could all, you know, be confident there were no more cruelties for Him to bear, no more injustices, no more misunderstandings, no more beatings, no more being spit on, no more being mocked, no more sweat, no more blood, no more tears. Gethsemane was over, Calvary was over, the tomb was empty, the Son was home. What a glorious thing must have been going on in Heaven. But, meanwhile, back on earth watch what happens. Verse 10, "And while they looked steadfastly"...and the Greek word means they stared, fixed with their gaze..."toward Heaven as He went up..." Now, this is terrific. They're staring and they're just in shock cause He's going up there and also looking longingly as if they're losing Him. "...two men stood by them in white apparel." Here come two angels. And they said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?" which at first sounds like a ridiculous question. You might think they'd answer, well, what do you mean, why? Look at the traffic. I mean, one's going up; two are coming down (laughter). They've never seen anything like that, you know. Where else would we be looking, right? (Laughter) But the implication of the questions that they ask is this. Why are you looking longingly as if you're losing Him? Now, watch this one. "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall"...what are the next two words?..."so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven." What's our motive to serve Jesus? What is it? He's coming back, isn't He?...coming back. And I want to pull a couple of thoughts out of that verse 11. "This same Jesus..." Do you like that? Oh, I like that. It won't be a different one. It'll be the same one. Do you know that 2000 years haven't changed Jesus one bit? Do you know that when He returns it'll be in the same glorified body that those disciples touched, the same one that stood with them by the Sea of Galilee and ate breakfast, the same glorified body that Thomas saw and said, "My Lord and my God." Jesus hasn't changed. And right now He's sitting at the right hand of the Father in a glorified body like He had on earth. No wonder He can feel what we feel. When He comes back He'll be the same Jesus, not a different one. There've been a lot of false

Christs coming around haven't there? I'll never forget my dad telling me when he was in seminary he was kind of young and rash. In Philadelphia there was a guy named Father Divine who claimed to be the Son of God. He was a black man who wore mink robes and it was a strange thing. But, anyway, it was in Philadelphia and so one night my dad went there and he sat in the back and when this guy finished announcing to everybody that he was God...incidentally, footnote, when he died, he passed his deity onto his wife (laughter)...but anyway, that night he had finished declaring to everybody that he was God and he stood to leave. And my dad stood up in the back and put his arms across the door and said, "Before anybody leaves I'd like to ask a question." And he said, "If you're God, would you show me the prints of the nails in your hand if you're the Son of God?" And he said it got very quiet and then they threw him out (laughter). That's not the same Jesus. That's not my Jesus Christ. When He comes back, I'll know Him. And you watch this. It says in verse 11, not only the same Jesus but He'll "come in like"...what?... "in like manner as you have seen Him go..." Did they see Him when He left? So will we when He comes. It's gonna be the same Jesus. I'll tell you, I can get excited about that. Can't you? Jesus is coming. You say, is that motive? You better believe it's motive. We serve Jesus Christ, Paul says, because "we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him" who is coming. And "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" to "receive the things done in the body...whether it be good or bad." John said, "Behold, I come quickly," recording the words of Jesus, "and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be." Jesus is coming with His rewards. Don't you want to receive a reward? Listen, one of the greatest motives to serve Jesus Christ is that He's coming with His rewards. People have always said to me, you know, when I've talked about this, oh, you're kind of crass, MacArthur. I mean, all this crown routine and all these Christians storing up crowns like the Imperial margarine thing, you know, just stashing them away everywhere. And, you know, you want to get all these crowns. But that's not crass. That's not materialistic. If a man loves a woman and he goes to this woman and he says I love you and then he says I'd like to marry you, she doesn't say, oh, materialistic crass. It's not enough to love me; you've got to have me. No, no, no. No, because don't you see that marriage is the natural reward of love, right. If a general goes out and wins a battle, we don't say, oh, selfish (laughter). That's obvious. If a guy runs a race and he runs for half of the race and walks off and sits down, he's no hero. If you're gonna run, run to do...what?...to win. If I'm gonna serve Jesus Christ I'm not gonna serve him half-baked. I'm not gonna fight "as one who beats the air." If I'm in this battle for the Lord, I'm gonna run so that I may obtain the prize. Should I do less for my Lord than that? Jesus is coming and He's coming with His rewards to give to those who are His own. When He comes, what will you have to show? My grandfather had a poem written in his Bible and I memorized it and it goes like this: "When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ and He shows me His plan for me; The plan of my life, as it might have been, and I see how I blocked Him here and checked Him there and would not yield my will. Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes, grief though He loves me still? He would have me rich, but I stand there poor, stripped of all but His grace while memory runs like a haunted thing down a path I can't retrace. Then my desolate heart will well nigh break with tears I cannot shed. I'll cover my face with my empty hands, I'll bow my uncrowned head"...then this prayer..."Oh, Lord of the years that are left to me, I give them to Thy hand. Take me, break me, mold me to the pattern that Thou hast planned."

I don't know how much time we have, but I know whatever you do for Christ needs to be done today because Jesus is coming. Christian, do you see it? Chapter 1, verse 1 to 11...you've got it all, you've got it all. It's only a question of your will.

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