



Luke 24:44-49
"The Great Commission"
By Mike Clark

Luke 24:44-49

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

INTRODUCTION –

Now just to briefly review, last week, Pastor Jody preached on verses 36-43 of this final chapter in Luke's gospel, where the apostles reacted to seeing Jesus after his physical and bodily resurrection.

And Pastor Jody talked about how the resurrection of Jesus was very confusing at first to the apostles. But Jesus uses his resurrection to bring clarity, to bring understanding, and acceptance of what has happened.

And part of that clarity was the reality that Jesus fully assumed human form so he could fully save us from our sins. Jesus is God and man.

And then lastly, we learned that the resurrection promotes in the believer confidence. Jesus gave the sign of eating to the apostles to give them confidence. And the believer can be confident in his future, a new body and eternal life in heaven forever.

Now in our passage this morning, Luke moves from the evening of the resurrection and appearing to the disciples in verse 43 to the Great Commission.

This is a parallel text to Matthew 28 and Mark 16. Our text this morning could have occurred days before or days later and its possible that these commissions were repeated by Jesus at intervals over the 40-day period before his ascension.

So just so you get the chronology right, verse 43 ends on Sunday night and verse 50 is the ascension and verses 44-49 fit somewhere during those 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension.

Now it's possible that this event is the same exact event as Matthew 28. Luke just doesn't tell us when it was.



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And so, with that, let's dive right into this passage.

Point 1 – The gospel is in both the Old and New Testaments

Luke 24:44-46 - ⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

Now there is a lot that is repeated here that is already mentioned back in verses 25-27 and so I'm just going to summarize some things here since I already covered a lot of that material on the road to Emmaus.

These verses tell us that the gospel is not an interruption. It is not something new. It is the continuity of salvation that God began from the very beginning of Scripture in the OT.

We look backward then in verses 44 and 45 before we look forward to the proclamation of this message, which will go on until the end of human history.

So all those things that the OT says about Messiah must be fulfilled. And, of course, the disciples had a partial understanding of what the OT said about Messiah.

They only took ownership of the things that said Messiah would triumph, and be victorious, and set up the kingdom; and they ignored all the parts that indicated His suffering and the details of His suffering, and His death, and His rising from the dead.

And so, the Lord, in verse 45, opens their minds to get the full picture.

Verse 46 says, as it was written, that in fact, Christ did suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day, and they all know that.

So, proclaiming the gospel is to understand that the gospel is laid out for us by prophecy, both in word and in type in the OT, that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ in the NT.

Point 2 – Repentance and faith in Jesus alone is the only way to receive forgiveness of sins.



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Luke 24:47 - *And that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*

The main thrust in this passage is this verse. This is the commission, the call, the mission mandate to the followers of Jesus, that repentance for forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in His name.

The apostles and his followers have seen the risen Christ. They now know that He is alive, that He died and rose the third day, and that because of that, salvation is accomplished, and forgiveness of sins has been purchased; and they must proclaim that to the world.

This is the goal of everything in the church. We are in the church doing all that we do with a goal in mind of building up Christians, so that they can effectively evangelize the lost.

Everything we do, whether it's fellowship, teaching, worship, instruction, practical training, service of every kind and any kind, the pursuit of holiness: all of these things are for the maturing of the saints for the work of the ministry, which in the end is the building of the body of Christ through evangelism.

We have then in this passage a laying out step by step by step of the components that make up the mission mandate.

Now the objective of the gospel is the transformation that comes when someone is forgiven of their sins. So verse 47 says that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name.

The gospel message to be proclaimed is that God will forgive all your sins if you will repent and embrace the name of Jesus Christ. That is the gospel. The heart of the gospel is the forgiveness of sins.

We see this all through the book of Luke from the very beginning, chapter 1 verse 77, and the words of Zacharias, "He is coming for salvation by the forgiveness of sins."

John the Baptist then came preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus came preaching repentance and the forgiveness of sins.



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That has been the message from the beginning of Luke; and now at the end of Luke, the baton is being passed to the followers of Jesus to go out and preach the same message that has been preached from the beginning: forgiveness of sin is available to those who repent.

Now let's talk about repentance for a few minutes. What is repentance? Repentance is the foundational, biblical, spiritual act that moves the heart in the direction of salvation.

It's necessary to be saved, for one to turn from sin's presence, sin's power, sin's dominance, and even sin's consequence to righteousness.

It's a 180-degree turn, the opposite direction. It is a desire to leave sin behind and pursue righteousness. This is true repentance.

It is not simply feeling bad about your circumstances, or feeling bad about your condition; it is not even feeling bad that consequences came from your sins.

It is feeling bad about the reality of sin - the presence of sin, the power of sin, and the ultimate effect of sin; and having a desire in your heart to leave that behind and pursue righteousness as to its presence, and its power, and its eternal blessing.

Repentance is prompted by the Holy Spirit. John 16 says the Spirit comes to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. It is granted by God Himself.

***2 Timothy 2:25** ²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

***Acts 11:18** - ¹⁸ When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."*

Now the attitude of repentance is best understood by looking at the Beatitudes in Matthew 6. It is to be bankrupt, to know that you are poor, spiritually bankrupt.

It is to hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is to mourn over your wretchedness and consequently be humbled by that condition.



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So repentance is an attitude that says, "I want to escape from the presence and the power and the ultimate effect of sin. It's having a desire and longing in my heart to follow after righteousness, and to enjoy its presence and its power and its ultimate end."

When someone repents, God promises to grant the forgiveness of sin. It can be granted now, because Christ has provided the sacrifice that pays the penalty for sin so that it can be forgiven.

Forgiveness of sin is transformational. That is, when you're forgiven, it is the most transforming act that God can do. It moves you from death to life, damnation to no condemnation.

And it moves you from hell to heaven. It moves you from being an enemy of God to becoming a friend of God. It moves you from a son of wrath to a son of God.

It moves you from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son, the kingdom of light. It moves you from being under the authority of Satan to being under the authority of God. It absolutely transforms you in every way.

And within this great act of forgiveness come all the elements of salvation, including regeneration, justification, conversion, sanctification, redemption, adoption.

All of those are elements of salvation; but salvation at its core is the forgiveness of sins, which then eliminates the penalty.

But it's not just the elimination of the penalty, it is the transformation of the person now and forever into a person that longs for what is righteous. This is the great, transforming reality.

When a person's sins are forgiven, they're a new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17, *¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

You go from being headed for hell inevitably, to being headed for heaven securely.

Everything changes. And so the message we are to preach is a message of absolute and total transformation.

Now something that I want to point out to you is that forgiveness of sins is available, but only in His name.



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It is Christological in the sense that it is in Christ that forgiveness occurs and in no one else. Apart from Christ there is no forgiveness of sins, none.

Now when it says "in His name," what is that saying? Well, that's a very, familiar term in Scripture, to use the name of God as a representation of God, or the name of Christ as a representation of Christ.

All through Scripture "the name of the Lord" is a synonym for who He is, His person. "My name is I AM THAT I AM," He said. "My name is who I am."

Now some of our names have nothing to do with who we are, but God's name has everything to do with who He is, and so does Jesus' name.

"Call Him Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. And call Him Christ, because He's the Messiah. And call Him Lord, because He has been exalted to the right hand of God, and given a name above every name."

So His names are all significant. And so when it says here that forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed, it is to be proclaimed in His name.

The only way forgiveness will ever be appropriated by anyone in the world is through the name of Jesus Christ, Amen?

Acts 20:20-21 - ²⁰ I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the name, the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in the one who is Lord. Faith in the one who is Jesus, because He's going to save us from our sins; His name means that. Faith in the one who is none other than the Messiah, the Christ.

There is no forgiveness, Paul is saying, unless you repent toward God and put your faith in Jesus Christ. And when these apostles who were gathered, who heard this and went out to proclaim the gospel, that is exactly what they proclaimed.

And Peter later said in Acts 4, verse 10: "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, you crucified; but God raised Him from the dead. He is the stone" – verse 11 – "which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone."

Peter is using an OT text from Psalm 118, verse 22, and showing how Jesus is the fulfillment of it. And then he comes to verse 12, and he says, "There is salvation in no one else. There is no other name under heaven."



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No other what? Name. "There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Only in the name of Jesus, that is in the person of Christ and all that He has accomplished can salvation come.

They got the message about forgiveness. And they went on to preach repentance and forgiveness. They also got the message about the name of Christ being the only name in which the power of God could be known.

In fact, they used the name of Jesus in healing.

Acts 3:6,16 - Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"... ¹⁶ And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus^[c] has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

They just kept repeating it and repeating it, the facts, the historic facts. They kept repeating the fact that it was connected to the OT.

They kept repeating the fact that it was repentance and forgiveness, the great transformation that was offered, and that it was always only through Christ.

They also baptized in His name. Chapter 8, chapter 10, chapter 19, chapter 22, all describe people being baptized in His name.

It was in His name, that is by His person and power, that they were saved, and then went through the baptism that symbolizes that salvation.

They also suffered for His name.

Acts 5:41 - Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

In Acts 9, Ananias tells Paul at his conversion that God spoke to him, verse 15, and said that "you're a chosen instrument of Mine to bear My name.

You're going to go and bear My name. You're going to preach Jesus; you're going to preach Christ. You're going to preach Jesus Christ as Lord before the Gentiles, and before kings, and sons of Israel."



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And he did. He preached to Gentiles, he preached to Jews in the synagogues, and he preached to royalty. At the end of the book of Acts it gives examples of this.

And, verse 16 says, "I will show him how much he must suffer for My namesake." In Acts 21:13, Paul says, "What are you doing weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

So everything they did was in His name. And then Christians became known as people who called on the name of the Lord.

Acts 9:13-14 - ¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name."

So Ananias identifies believers in verse 13 as saints, and in verse 14 as "all who call on Your name."

Christians became known as those who call on the name of the Lord. They call on the name of the Lord for salvation. They call on the name of the Lord for power.

Verse 21, it says, "All those hearing him" – that is Paul – "were amazed, and were saying, 'Is not this he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name?'"

So not only does a believer identify Christians who call on the name, but nonbelievers identify Christians as those who call on the name.

So there is no other name than the name of Jesus by which one can be saved. And one cannot be saved unless one's sins are forgiven; and they will only be forgiven through faith in His name, that is faith in His person.

Salvation is in Christ and no other. Repentance for forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed, but is only available in His name.

Apart from Christ, there is no forgiveness. Jesus had said this before. He said it to them in the upper room: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me."

Now let's go back to verse 46 for a few minutes.

Luke 24:46 - "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead."



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"Thus it is written." Where? In the OT Scriptures. – "That the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day.

It is also written in the OT that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name, that the Messiah was going to come to provide the offering for sin that would make forgiveness available."

That is written in the OT through the whole sacrificial system, and explicitly in Isaiah 53, and Zechariah 12.

But it is also explicitly written in the OT that the Christ who would suffer and rise the third day, and would provide repentance for forgiveness of sins, and have His name proclaimed, would have His name proclaimed to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Not only were all the prophecies related to the Messiah in the OT, but all the prophecies related to the provision of the Messiah in salvation and the forgiveness of sins are in the OT.

And the OT also prophecies world evangelization and world salvation, so that you have to take the phrase "to all nations beginning from Jerusalem" and connected with "thus it is written."

Our Lord is saying that all these elements of the gospel are prophesied in the OT, including its global extent.

Now remember, this is going to be a dramatic change for them, because even at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus told His followers, "Don't go to the Gentiles, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

That is changing now. "The natural branches," – in Romans 11 – "have been cut off by unbelief and rejection."

Jesus pronounced desolation on Israel in the Olivet Discourse. And He told them that they were going to be punished, that their temple was going to be torn down, and not one stone was going to be left on another.

Their religious system was going to be devastated. Siege was going to come against their city and it would be destroyed; and that this would be a long time of destruction and desolation that they would endure.

And so the natural branches have now been cut off. And while there will be some who will believe in Israel among the Jews when evangelism begins in Jerusalem –



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three thousand on the Day of Pentecost, five thousand a few days or weeks later, and more – the nation is under desolation.

And the gospel now, while starting there and capturing the remnant, is to go to the world.

It's a very new idea to even Jewish believers. Gentile salvation was never popular with them.

Testimony to that comes from Jonah, who chose to board a ship and run from the Lord rather than go and preach to Ninevites, because he didn't want them to repent and get in on the blessings that God provided Israel.

Even the early apostles seemed reluctant to buy into this global scope. They started where they were supposed to. Matthew says, "Go into all the world."

And in Luke's account, he says, "You are to be witnesses of Me in Jerusalem, Samaria, and the whole world."

But this was a hard pill for them to swallow, because they were basically anti-Gentile. And I think they were reluctant to think about this until Acts 10.

You see, the problem they had with going to the Gentiles was they were convinced that their religion, if they were faithful to it, isolated them from Gentiles. They couldn't go to a Gentile house. They couldn't eat with a Gentile. They couldn't go into a Gentile country without being impure. So they had created this idea of holiness that isolated them.

So how were they going to do this and get across what they believed to be things that honored God?

It was God, wasn't it, who gave them all the dietary laws. It was God who gave them all the restrictions that isolated them from the nations around them for their own preservation and protection.

But God never intended it to cause them to be so isolated that they wouldn't take the truth of Him as the one true God to those nations. But they didn't do that.

And they're still confused because God has to come to Peter. God shows Peter a sheet full of all kinds of animals clean and unclean, and says, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." So Peter says, "Never Lord. I've never touched anything unclean."



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And this whole thing is a metaphor for how are you going to evangelize the Gentiles. You've got to get pass this.

So they're very reluctant. And God has to go into very dramatic means to get Peter to do what He wants him to do, and that is, "Go, give the gospel to a Gentile centurion named Cornelius." That's a big hurdle.

But Peter does it. Turn to Acts 10.

This is the first occasion, really, where they get past Samaria. They go to Samaria, with Philip in chapter 8. The gospel is moving through Jerusalem in the early chapters, and it gets scattered.

And how does God do that? Did they do it on their own? No, they don't do it on their own.

Chapter 8 begins with a great persecution brought against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered into Judea and Samaria.

God had to scatter them, because it was so hard for them to go. They even despised Samaritans.

They despised them for what they thought was abandoning the truth of God and coming up with a false religious system, which they carried out on Mount Gerizim. And they had a hard time going there; that's why no Jew ever walked through Samaria.

When Jesus did that and met the woman at the well, He was declaring, "This is going to go in a direction you can't understand at this point."

Jesus reveals His messiahship to a Samaritan woman, and grants her salvation. That's some indication of where this is going.

But they're struggling with it. So the Lord has to allow a persecution to happen to get them out of town.

And they flee the town, because they're all going to get thrown in jail if they don't; and so they go. And they go into Judea, and they go into Samaria.

And then in chapter 10, you have the first opportunity to go to a Gentile.



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Acts 10:34-35 – ³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

It took a while, didn't it? I think this is when he gets it finally, that God is not one to show partiality.

Acts 10:36-37 – ³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷ you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed.

So Peter's off and running. He now knows; he gets it.

Acts 10:42-43 - ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

There's a whole new understanding of that word "everyone." It's not just Jews, it's everyone.

And then in chapter 11, Peter reports back in Jerusalem, and he goes and tells them what happened with Cornelius and that God had granted to the Gentiles repentance that leads to life.

It took a while, because it was a huge hurdle because of the animosity that they had for these Gentiles.

And then there was the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 which was the official meeting of the leaders of the church that were trying to figure out how to go about dealing with Gentiles, since they're obviously included now.

The council gets together and James, the half brother of Jesus, is presiding over the Council.

Acts 15:13-14 - ¹³ After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.

Hey, can't stand in the way; God did it. They received the same Holy Spirit. How did they know they received the Holy Spirit?



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Because they spoke in languages the same way they did on the day of Pentecost. So there was a sign that was the exact same sign as it was when the Jews received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 15:15 - ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree!

So when we read in Luke 24:47, "Thus it is written that repentance and the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed to all nations," The prophets agree, and he quotes Amos 9.

Acts 15:16-17 - "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, ¹⁷ that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things ¹⁸ known from of old.

Gentile salvation from the very beginning was part of the plan of God. They had a little trouble getting to the global aspect of the gospel.

They could have read Genesis 22:18, "In your seed" (Abraham) "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." And in Galatians it says not seeds, but "seed." That is Christ."

1 Kings 8:43; do you remember Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple? He prayed that "all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, and hear You as do your people Israel."

The OT is just full of prophecies of Gentile salvation.

Isaiah 2:1-3 - *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, ³ and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

Isaiah 45:22, another wonderful portion of Scripture that looks ahead to Gentile salvation. "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other."

Isaiah 49:6 - *"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*



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Now you can understand that their reluctance to preach to the Gentiles again shows how partial their understanding of the OT was.

But isn't it amazing how consistent the Scripture is!

Hosea 2:23, "I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people! And they will say, 'You are my God!'"

And Joel 2:32, "It'll come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Paul quotes that in Romans 10. "For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape as the Lord has said, even among the survivors whom the Lord calls."

Micah 4:1-2: "It will come about in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains. It'll be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream into it. Many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways, that we may walk in His paths. For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,'" a parallel to the Isaiah passage.

The OT ends in the book of Malachi chapter 1, and it says this in verse 11: "From the rising of the sun to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations," says the Lord of hosts.

And the apostles finally got it, as we showed in chapter 10.

In chapter 9, Paul is converted, and he becomes God's very special tool to begin this massive enterprise of taking the glorious gospel to the Gentile world;

And he launches his ministry in the thirteenth chapter of Acts. Paul understood Gentile salvation.

It was explained to him at his conversion. Chapter 9: "You're going to be a light to the nations." He understood the responsibility that he had to go to the world.

Turn to Romans 15 for a minute.



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Romans 15:8-9 - *⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written. "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."*

Isn't it amazing how the apostles and the preachers do exactly what Jesus says?

They go back and show from the OT these truths. And Paul here quotes in verse 9 from 2 Samuel and the Psalms.

Then Paul quotes from Deuteronomy in verse 10.

Romans 15:10 - *¹⁰ And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."*

Then verse 11 from Psalm 117.

Romans 15:11 - *¹¹ And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him."*

And the last verse comes from Isaiah chapter 11.

Romans 15:12 – ¹² And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."

And if you want a glimpse of heaven, listen to –

Revelation 7:9-10 - *⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

What a wonderful picture where all nations are represented!

Well, they got it; and they preached to the whole world, at least as far as they could go. And then it extends far beyond them to us.

Point 3 – Christians are witnesses to the truthfulness of who Jesus is and what he has done.

Luke 24:48 - *⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.*



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This is the language of Acts 1:8 - ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

By the way, the word “witness,” martyr in the Greek is used all through the book of Acts. “You are My witnesses.

You are the ones I’m going to depend on to proclaim this. You, the first generation apostles and disciples – “you are the ones who know Me personally.”

Like John as he begins his first epistle: “The Word which we have handled, touched, seen, heard, we declare unto you. We are witnesses who pass on the original eyewitness account recorded in Scripture.”

It was their testimony that spread the gospel, one, by one, by one, by one.

It was mouth, to mouth, person, to person, standing in the marketplace, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, doing it wherever you could – meeting somebody on a road and giving him the gospel. “Wherever, whenever, you are My witnesses.”

And they were the foundational ones. John 14, John 15, John 16 says, “The Holy Spirit’s going to come upon you.

He’s going to lead you unto all truth. He’s going to bring all things to your remembrance.”

This is a special blessing on them so they can record the New Testament, so they can write the gospel account – the ones who were apostles and associates of apostles. They laid down their witness in written form.

What he’s saying is “this entire world proclamation is going to go forth through you.” And that is really what the book of Acts is about. It’s about all the personal proclamation of the gospel that goes on in that early church.

Peter’s first sermon, he says in Acts 2:32, “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.” Chapter 3, verse 15: “You put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.” They were eyewitnesses and there were hundreds of them.

Chapter 5:31-32 “He is the one to whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior to grant repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins; and we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit,” he says.



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Chapter 10 of Acts, verse 39-42, the same emphasis on personal witness: "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in and of the Jews in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, we are witnesses.

We are witnesses, that God raised Him up on the third day. And He became visible not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand, who ate and drank with Him. We are witnesses."

Chapter 13, verse 31; chapter 22, verses 15 and 20; chapter 26:16; they're all saying, "We're witnesses. We're witnesses. We're witnesses."

And they wrote down the eyewitness account in Scripture; and we are witnesses to the accuracy and inspiration of the eyewitness account; and God still advances His kingdom through personal witness.

It's the most powerful tool for evangelism, because it's undergirded by the credibility of a transformed life. This is God's plan, God's agency: human witness.

Point 4 – Christians are clothed with the power of God to witness of Jesus.

Luke 24:49 - ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

The gospel of the King and the kingdom does not advance by human power, human creativity, human ingenuity, human cleverness. It doesn't even advance by human zeal.

Remember now, they're fired up here because they would have had the burning heart that the people on the road to Emmaus had.

The two on the road to Emmaus, once they got it straight – and they had their OT theology fixed, and they knew Jesus was alive – couldn't restrain themselves and they jumped up from the table and ran back into Jerusalem seven miles to make an announcement, because they were so fired up by this great truth.

So now the disciples have everything going for them. They have the right interpretation of the OT locked down. Verse 45: "He had opened their minds to understand it."

They made the necessary connections between the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the OT texts that support that.



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They know what they're to preach: repentance for the forgiveness of sins. They've experienced it, so they know what it is, and they're thrilled to be able to proclaim it to others.

They know they're supposed to take it to everyone who believes, starting in Jerusalem and going from there.

The beginning of verse 49 says "And behold," – it's a surprise what he says, that's why "behold" is there, it's a surprise: there's something you're missing – "I'm sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you're to stay in the city until you're clothed with power from on high."

"With all of that you have going for you, correct theology of the Messiah, the correct historical understanding of the Messiah, eyewitnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus, with all that you know about the responsibility you have, proclaim the forgiveness of sin in the name of Christ, don't go anywhere until you're powered from on high. You still lack one thing.

"I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you," epangelian. This is the only time this word is used, by the way, in the four Gospels. "I'm sending forth the promise." It's all over the book of Acts and the Epistles as the promise begins to unfold.

What is the promise? The promise of the Holy Spirit. That's the promise. And did you know that promise was also given in the OT?

Listen to Joel 2:28-29, "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."

And on the Day of Pentecost, you remember when the Spirit was first poured out, Peter stood up and said, "What you've just seen is the fulfillment in part." Maybe a pre-fulfillment of the words of Joel; and he recites the words of Joel.

But it isn't just that passage. There are other passages that promise the coming of the Holy Spirit connected with salvation.

You remember the promise in Ezekiel 36:27 "I will put My Spirit within you, cause you to talk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. I will put My Spirit within you.



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That's a prophecy connected to the New Covenant. Ezekiel 37:14, "I'll put My Spirit within you and you'll come to life." Even in chapter 39:29, "I will not hide My face from them any longer. I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel."

The OT promises then the coming of the Holy Spirit. And so our Lord says, "Don't go anywhere until that prophecy is also fulfilled."

You remember that in the New Testament in that last night in the upper room, John 14, Jesus said, "The Spirit has been with you. He shall be in you. You've had power; you've been given authority and power. You've had power; you will now have full power."

John 20:22 says that on resurrection Sunday Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." During the forty-days, He repeats that: "I'm sending forth the promise." And the Spirit actually came on the Day of Pentecost, ten days after the ascension of Jesus.

The gospel mandate, beloved, cannot be fulfilled without the power of the Holy Spirit. I have good news for you: you don't have to wait. You don't have to wait ten days; you don't have to wait at all.

If you're a Christian, you're the temple of the Holy Spirit. So, you are clothed with power from on high.

That is Acts 1 -

Again, this is Luke overlapping and interconnecting these.

Acts 1:4,8 - ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me.⁸ "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses."

The text then says "Stay in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed." That imagery means "covered," which is a familiar analogy – "to show completeness," and is used so often by Paul all through his epistles.

He's always talking about putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, clothing yourself. And in this case, you are completely clothed and completely covered, as they were in ancient times, from the neck to the bottom of the feet, with power from on high.



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What does that mean? Power from God. Power over all opposition. You go out and you take that message and you know you have power.

This connects beautifully, beautifully with Matthew 28. "And Jesus said this," verse 18 – 'All authority' – or all power – 'has been given to Me in heaven and earth.'"

That is the greatest statement of sovereignty Jesus ever made.

"All power, all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Don't be afraid to go forth.

He ends the commission in Matthew, "I am with you always, and I have all power."

How is He with us? In the indwelling Holy Spirit who is one with Christ. And ten days later, the Holy Spirit came, and the power flowed immediately: three thousand saved, five thousand saved, and the rest is history.

So that leads to a question. How faithful are you as a witness? You have all these components laid out and you have the power of the Holy Spirit.

Are you sharing your faith with the lost? Are you witnessing to unbelievers and telling people of their need to repent and put their trust in the only name that can save them from the wrath of God, the name of Jesus?

I pray you are and if you aren't and you struggle with this, confess this to the Lord and then ask him to help you and give you courage and boldness to share your faith.

Prayer