

### *Jesus' Last Words to His Apostles*

1. Describe a time when someone you loved had to leave you. How did you feel?

***Bow in Prayer:*** Our Father, we thank You for the beautiful promise that You “will never leave us or forsake us.” In the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ we ask that You will bless us with Your *presence* as we open Your Word this week.

In the first verse of Acts, Luke points to a link in the prologue of his Gospel. Compare Luke 1:1-4 with Acts 1:1.

2. What is Luke's stated purpose for writing his two volume work (Luke 1:4)?

What else do we know about Theophilus? The title “most excellent” given to him in Luke 1:3 indicates he may have been an official in the Roman government. He seems to have been a man who had been receptive to the Gospel. His name means, “*one who loves God.*” It appears that he had questions about the activity of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the apostles.

3.
  - a. What are the implications of Luke's words in Acts 1:1: “I wrote about all that Jesus *began* to do and teach?”
  - b. In light of the fact that all other religious founders considered their work as having been completed in their lifetime, how does this statement set Christianity apart from other religions?

***Read*** Acts 1:1-5.

Luke begins his account in Acts by recalling a series of incredible events immediately following Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:3). In the final chapter of his Gospel, Luke records some of these appearances. Thoughtfully ***read*** Luke 24:13-49 and respond to the question below.

4. In what ways did *Jesus open your mind afresh* through these miraculous encounters?

5. Why was it important for Jesus' apostles to be convinced that His resurrection was true and real?
  
6. From Acts 1:1-5 list the ways in which Jesus had prepared and equipped His apostles to continue His ministry and life on earth.
  
7. **Define** the following terms using a Bible dictionary if necessary.  
*Apostle* –

*Disciple* –

*During His earthly life Jesus appointed twelve of His disciples to be His apostles (Luke 6:12-16). To these twelve Jesus gave the most intensive training and intimate friendship.*

**Read** and ponder Acts 1:6-11.

8. What evidence do you find in verse 6 that the apostles failed to understand the nature of the kingdom Jesus was establishing?

In His reply Jesus does not deny the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, but in the meantime the apostles have another calling to pursue.

9. How does Jesus define their mission in Acts 1:8? *This is the last recorded statement of Jesus Christ on earth. State your answer using your own words.*

10. In common usage, what is a witness?

11. How does Jesus' great commission in Acts 1:8 extend to us? What are some attitudes, priorities or specific actions that this verse suggests?

*“When Jesus had said these words He was lifted up before their eyes till a cloud hid Him from their sight. While they were still gazing up into the sky as He went, suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them and said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? This very Jesus who has been taken up from you into Heaven will come back in the same way you have seen Him go.” (Acts 1:9-11 Phillips) (Also read the account from Luke 24:50-52.)*

12. a. Why was it essential for the apostles to see Jesus make this transition? What details would it confirm for them?
- b. How would you explain the apostles' mood of *joy* found in Luke's account?
- c. The sight of Jesus' ascension and the sound of Jesus' last words were surely replayed over and over in their minds. What promises would sustain the apostles as they fulfilled their mission while Jesus was physically absent (Acts 1:11 and John 16:5-16)?

Acts 1:9 tells us a cloud received Him out of their sight. Though we are not told so, this may have been like the cloud which descended on the tabernacle in the wilderness and filled Solomon's temple. Many believe it was the Shekinah cloud, a symbol of the glory of God (Exodus 13:20-22). In other words, it was a supernatural cloud, a sign of the glorification of the Son of God. Jesus was resuming His preincarnate glory—the glory He had before the incarnation. –J. Hampton Keathley

13. Have you sufficiently reflected upon the meaning of the ascension of Jesus for us? What strength and motivation to endure difficulties and opposition can you draw from this extraordinary occasion?

**Stop and Think:** What an exhausting and exhilarating six weeks Jesus' apostles had been through! They had witnessed the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of their Master, then His powerful and undeniable resurrection, and finally His awesome ascension into heaven. Surely they were reeling from all that they had seen, heard, and felt.

**Read** Acts 1:12-26. Ask God to show you the important truths in this section.

14. **Review** Acts 1:12-14. After beholding the great sight of Jesus' ascending into heaven, what is the first picture Luke gives us of the apostles (1:14)? What is significant about this scene?

15. Who was present at this particular meeting? How many apostles were present?

During this waiting period, the meetings in the upper room were apparently regular and growing in size. One day when about 120 disciples were present Peter, who had taken a prominent role among the disciples throughout the Gospels, continued in that leadership role.

16. How do the words of King David affect their confidence, as well as give them direction? (See Acts 1:15-20 and Psalm 109:8.)

17. Describe the *qualifications* and the *chief function* of the person who would replace Judas (Acts 1:21-22).

The main reason for this process was to make sure that there were twelve apostolic witnesses and twelve apostles sitting on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Luke 22:28-30). Matthias would join the eleven after the lot fell to him (Acts 1:26). As far as we know, the practice of casting lots did not continue after Pentecost because the Holy Spirit became the guide for believers.
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18. As you look back through this chapter, reflect on the pattern of *obedience*, *expectancy* and *prayer* that characterized these early believers. Which quality/qualities do you need to incorporate more fully into your life? What practical steps is God leading you to take? *Pray together, asking God to give you a growing faith.*