



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V28 N2 January 11, 2026

POWER AND PURPOSE

“Missional Power”

Acts 1:1-11

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Life Purpose

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in his kingdom purposes for his glory.

“But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

Acts 20:24



What is the Christian's life purpose?



Every individual has various life purposes, or purposes in life. For example, spouses have a purpose in life related to their marriage. Employees have a purpose in life related to their employment. Parents have a purpose in life related to their children—and so on. This suggests that the creed for the Central Belief Life Purpose contains a qualification that may be overlooked. This being the case, the creed could be revised as follows: “As a Christian, I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in his kingdom purposes for his glory.”

Again regarding the creed, the term “steward” implies *accountability*. Stewards should expect to be judged with regard to their stewardship. Paul forewarns believers: “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2Co 5:10 NIV). In a nutshell, stewards have something to gain and something to lose based on their performance. For the good they do, they receive a reward; for the bad—perhaps the good they don't do—they suffer the loss of reward (cf. 1Co 3:14). *The Message* wrongly connotes that in the judgment, stewards get what's coming to them, implying rewards for doing good, but *punishment* for doing bad.

The term “kingdom purposes” is intentionally general and annoyingly vague, suggesting at the very least that there are *many* kingdom purposes but without specifying any particular ones. However, what the creed doesn't do, Acts 1:8 does. It identifies an important purpose by linking Jesus' teaching regarding “the kingdom of God” (Ac 1:3, 6) to his statement, “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (v. 8)—where the future tense has an *imperative* sense. Clearly, one of the steward's “kingdom purposes” is to serve as a witness!

The term “witnesses” fits well its referents, the apostles, who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection appearances. One commentator writes: “A witness is someone who helps establish facts objec-

tively through verifiable observation. As such, a witness is more than someone with merely subjective and personal impressions. This objectivity and fact-based quality of the witness are why the direct experience of Jesus' ministry and resurrection are required of Judas' replacement in Acts 1:21-22, a passage that shows what stands behind Luke's use of this term. Thus ‘witness’ is a key term in Acts for those who experienced Jesus and saw him in a resurrection appearance (1:22). This experience means that they can testify directly to what God did through Jesus (Luke 24:48)” (Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 64).

That said, serving as witnesses is apparently not limited to the apostles. On the day of Pentecost, the promised Holy Spirit not only came upon the twelve apostles but also upon the 120 disciples, who previously gathered in the upper room and chose Matthias to replace Judas (1:15-26). They were “all gathered in one place” on the day of Pentecost (2:1). The fact that disciples other than the apostles were empowered to be witnesses, implies that serving as a witness is one of every Christian steward's “kingdom purposes.” One commentator concurs: “In Acts the apostles' main role is depicted as witnessing to the earthly ministry of Jesus, above all to his resurrection (cf. 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41). As eyewitnesses only they were in the position to be guarantors of the resurrection. But with its root meaning of *testimony*, ‘witness’ comes to have an almost legal sense of bearing one's testimony to Christ. In this way it is applied to Stephen (22:20) and to Paul (22:15; 23:11; 26:16)” (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 85). Here's the point. The apostles are to be witnesses to the truth of the resurrection in a specific sense, having seen the resurrected Christ. But others, who have not seen are to testify to the truth of the gospel in a general sense, having experienced the new birth.

It appears that as a Christian, one's *main* purpose in life is to be a witness to the truth of the gospel. And the main thing, of course, is to keep the main thing the main thing.

Read Acts 1:1-11

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 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." 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." (ESV)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "first book" in v. 1.
- Circle "Theophilus" in v. 1.
- Circle "taken up" in v. 2.
- Circle "commands" in v. 2.
- Circle "apostles" in v. 2.
- Circle "many proofs" in v. 3.
- Bracket "kingdom of God" in v. 3.
- Box "but" indicating contrast in vv. 4, 5, 8.
- Bracket "staying with them" in v. 4.
- Bracket "the promise of the Father" in v. 4.
- Highlight v. 5.
- Bracket "restore the kingdom to Israel" in v. 6.
- Circle "will receive" and "will be" in v. 8.
- Circle "power" in v. 8.
- Underline "end of the earth" in v. 8.
- Circle "a cloud" in v. 9.
- Underline "this Jesus" in v. 11.
- Underline "in the same way" in v. 11.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. How do we know that the book of Acts is book 2 in a two-volume work?
 2. In verse 2, *what* commands did Jesus give, and *when* were they given?
 3. Summarize what Jesus did following his resurrection prior to his ascension (v. 3).
 4. *What* did the Father promise and *where*? (See note.)
 5. Jesus' disciples asked a question before he was "lifted up" (v. 6). Explain his answer to it.
 6. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 8.
 7. *When will* Jesus' disciples receive "power," and *what will* they do with it?
 8. "To the end of the earth" connotes more than geography. How so?
 9. "He *was lifted up* (*passive voice*) and a cloud *took him* out of their sight." What do you infer from that?
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about what "this Jesus" and "in the same way" indicates about the return of Jesus
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Commentary On The Text

The book of Acts is clearly a continuation of Luke's Gospel. In Acts 1:1, Luke refers to his *first* book also addressed to Theophilus. Furthermore, Luke's second book picks up where his first book leaves off. His Gospel ends with an account of Jesus' ascension (24:50-53), which is where Acts begins, namely, with an account of the ascension (1:9-10). In his first book, he recorded what "Jesus began to do and teach" (v. 1), implying that his second book records what Jesus *continued to do and teach*—through his apostles. On their similar openings, one commentator writes: "The first chapter of Acts fulfills the same role in Luke's second volume that the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel fulfill in his first volume. As the birth narratives are prologue to the account of Jesus' ministry (Luke 1-2), begun by his being anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power at the river Jordan (Acts 10:38), so the account of the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost is prologue to the account of Jesus' first followers being anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power for their ministry" (James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 3). One final observation, the first two chapters of the book of Acts revolve around the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers at Pentecost, fifty days after Passover. Everything in chapter 1 is related to that event.

The ESV divides Acts 1:1-11 into three paragraphs. The first (vv. 1-3) contains an introductory prologue to the book. The second (vv. 4-5) contains instructions Jesus' gave to his disciples during the forty days "while staying with them" (v. 4) and "speaking about the kingdom of God" (v. 3). And the third (vv. 6-11) contains an account of his ascension.

In the first paragraph, Luke introduces the second volume of his two-volume work. "Acts begins with a 'secondary prologue,' a device used for introducing new segments to works consisting of more than one book. Luke's, of course, was a two-volume work; and Luke 1:1-4 is the 'primary preface' for this entire work, including Acts" (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 78). In it Luke refers to his "first book," to Jesus' intermittent appearances to his disciples, confirming his resurrection, and to his teaching about the kingdom of God. All of which occurred during the forty days following his "suffering" (v. 3) and resurrection—"resurrection on the third day, appearances for forty days, approximately a week in the upper room (1:12-14) and then Pentecost, fifty days after the crucifixion (2:1)" (Polhill, 82).

In the second paragraph, Luke specifies what Jesus commanded his disciples to do on at least one of those occasions (1:4; cf. v. 2)—perhaps at a meal. The NIV translates verse 4, "On one occasion, while he was eating with them" (cf. NLT; see note). On that particular occasion, Jesus commanded them to "not depart from

Jerusalem." According to one commentator, "The Greek construction can be rendered quite literally, 'Stop departing from Jerusalem,' implying that at this point the disciples had been coming and going from the Holy City. They were to remain there and await the Father's promise" (Polhill, 83). The Father had promised the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32, Isa 32:15; 44:3), who would come to indwell and to empower the disciples. Jesus would be the one to send the promise of the Father "in a few days" (Lk 24:49; cf. Acts 1:4-5, 8).

Luke opens his third paragraph with a question. As one commentator observes: "Premature hopes appeared among Jesus' followers in Luke, and Jesus had to correct the false view that God's reign would appear immediately upon Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem (Luke 19:11). These premature hopes have been revived by Jesus' resurrection, his discussion of the reign of God, and his announcement of the coming Spirit" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:15). Jesus doesn't rebuke the questioners for their question. Instead, he tells them that the timing of restoration of the kingdom to Israel is the Father's concern. In other words, the kingdom will be restored to Israel, but only the Father knows when. "Jesus' answer to the question about restoring the reign to Israel denies that Jesus' followers can know the time and probably corrects their supposition that the restoration may come immediately, but it does not deny the legitimacy of their concern with the restoration of the national life of the Jewish people" (Tannehill, 2:15).

By way of contrast, they are to concern themselves with being Jesus' witnesses "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (v. 8). "The disciples' calling, concern, and mission are not to focus on the timing of the end. Rather they are to receive the enablement that God will give in the Spirit. They will be Jesus's witness from Jerusalem to the end of the earth" (Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, BECNT, 63). Commentators often observe that Acts 1:8 provides a rough outline for the book: Jerusalem (1-7), Judea and Samaria (8-12), the end of the earth (13-28).

The third paragraph concludes with an account of Jesus' ascension into heaven (vv. 9-11). As his disciples were looking on, he was "lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight" (v. 9), a likely reference to him being received into his Father's presence (see note). Still gazing into the sky, two angels assured them that "this Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (v. 11). Jesus himself will return from heaven visibly and in his resurrection body.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *first book* “Luke’s **first book** is the Gospel of Luke, which gives an account of what Jesus **began to do and teach**. This suggests that the book of Acts is going to be about what Jesus *continued* ‘to do and teach’ in the world” (*The ESV Study Bible*, note on Ac 1:1). “The idea that Jesus ‘began’ (*ērxato*) such activity may well suggest that he is still at work as Lukes writes his story of the church in volume 2” (Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, BECNT, 52).

v. 1 *Theophilus* Cf. Lk 1:3. “Both Luke (1:3) and Acts (1:1) are addressed to ‘Theophilus,’ and there is no reason to deny that he was a real person, although attempts to identify him have been unsuccessful . . . Theophilus was probably a man of wealth and social standing” (*The ESV Study Bible*, “Introduction to Luke,” 1936). “Though Luke surely intended his work for the whole Christian Community, Theophilus may have received the special dedication for being a patron who helped defray some of the costs of Luke’s writing” (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 79).

v. 2 *taken up* Cf. v. 11. “The account in Luke proceeds to the ascension, an event that Luke alone details in the NT. The ascension stands as a key divine act vindicating Jesus and placing him in authority at the right hand of God (Ps110:1); Acts 2:32-35). The ‘taking up’ of Jesus is where Luke 24 ended (see Luke 24:51)” (Bock, 53).

v. 2 *apostles* I.e., the Eleven prior to the selection of Matthias to replace Judas (1:15-26).

v. 3 *many proofs* “The word for ‘proofs’ (*tekmēriōis*) is a technical term from logic, meaning ‘demonstrative proof, evidence’ (Polhill, 81); “that which causes something to be known in a convincing and decisive manner, proof” (BDAG, 994).

v. 3 *kingdom of God* “Jesus taught his followers about the kingdom, which also was the central theme of his earthly ministry (Bock 2002a: 565-93). ‘God’s Kingdom’ (*tēs basileias tou theou*) refers to God’s promised rule that comes with Jesus’s messianic program and activity” (Bock, 55).

v. 4 *staying with them* Lit., “share salt,” i.e., “eat with” (cf. NIV). The verb has several other possible meanings: “gather together with” and “lodge with” (ESV). “As Jesus stays with the apostles and engages them in table fellowship (see additional note on Acts 1:4), he commands them not to depart from Jerusalem but to begin the mission from there, waiting for the ‘promise of the Father’ (*tēn epangelian tou patros*) to come” (Bock, 56). His presence with them was likely *continual* rather than *continuous*. The post-resurrection appearances are typically brief encounters.

v. 4 *the promise . . .* Cf. Lk 24:49. “Acts 1:5 will allude to teaching that parallels Luke 3:15-17 and the words of John the Baptist, which Jesus apparently reinforced, since Acts 1:4-5 makes the point that Jesus taught them this. The promise’s OT sources are Joel 2:28-32, Isa. 44:3, and especially 32:15” (Bock, 56).

v. 6 *restore the kingdom* “When the disciples ask Jesus, ‘Lord, is it at this time that You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?’ they show that they expected Him to fulfill the political and national role predicted for the son of David. They could hardly have misunderstood His teaching since they asked their question after receiving forty days of instruction by the resurrected Jesus on ‘the things concerning the kingdom of God’ (Acts 1:3, 6). His answer, ‘It is not for you to know the times of the epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority’ (v. 7), assures their expectation while warning that the time is unrevealed” (Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 180).

v. 8 *will receive, will be* “Is this a command, or is it a simple statement of fact? Grammatically the words may be taken either way, but because of 10:42 (cf. 4:20) it is clearly an imperative in the future tense” (Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 354).

v. 8 *power* “The power they were to receive was divine power; the word is *dynamis*, the same word used of Jesus’ miracles in the Gospels. It is the Spirit’s power (2:1-21)” (Polhill, 85).

v. 8 *end of the earth* “Isaiah is the source of the phrase in Acts [cf. 1:8; 13:47], as is clear from the fact that the second reference there is a direct quotation of Isa. 49:6. This quotation also shows that, for the narrator of Acts, ‘to the end of the earth’ is a key expression from Isaiah’s testimony that God intends salvation for all peoples. The point of the phrase is to eliminate any stopping point (whether Rome or elsewhere) before the whole of the inhabited world has been covered” (Tannehill, 2:17). “The disciples probably originally thought of Jews everywhere. To Luke, it probably anticipates the offer of the gospel to all people” (Bock, 66).

v. 9 *a cloud* “The ‘cloud’ seems clearly to be a reference to the shekinah, a visible symbol of the glorious presence of God (cf. Exod. 40:34; Matt. 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7). Thus what the disciples saw was the symbol of God’s presence, a real cloud, receiving and enveloping Jesus into heaven. This connoted God’s approval of Jesus and Jesus’ entrance into the glorious presence of God” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Acts,” 2025 ed., 30, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

Believers have been commanded by Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit to take the gospel to the end of the earth even as they wait for his return from heaven.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

The first time I walked into Central (then Pantego) Bible Church, we were in a series covering the Trinity and specifically the Holy Spirit. As a new believer I felt like I slammed into a brick wall. My brain exploded and I could only take in a tiny fraction of the sermon. Nearly 30 years later, I feel like I have a slightly better grasp on the Holy Spirit, partly because of the CORPS class I took a few years ago, and partly because I have to teach elementary kids all about who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. (By the way, teaching is a great way to learn. If you want to learn the Bible, come teach kids with us!) During most of 2026, our church will study Acts through our series *Power and Purpose*. We'll unpack God's power available to believers through the Holy Spirit as we live out our purpose of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. As a church that practices integrated biblical teaching, kids and students will learn alongside adults. Now is the perfect time to study together. If you're a parent reading this, it's likely your kids are doing *The Scrolls*. If not, let's start this week. At first, you'll want to do it together. Chances are your kids won't want to or they'll practice hanging off the chair in a weird contortion. That's ok. Read the passage to them and ask one question. What a great start! Do the same tomorrow. You're teaching your kids how to study God's Word, and this will never return empty but will only accomplish His purposes (Isa 55:11). We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Acts 1:1-11.

1. What command did Jesus give the apostles?
2. What question did the apostles ask Jesus and what was His response?
3. What will the Holy Spirit give and what will the apostles told to do?

What Do You Think?

What do you think it was like for Jesus to ascend into heaven?

What Do You Do?

Draw a picture of the apostles with Jesus ascending. Email a copy to kids@wearecentral.org for an extra KidPix token.

CORE COMPETENCY: Life Purpose

I believe God wants me to glorify Him in all I say and do.

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 11:36

"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen ."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.