

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# DEVO

AUGUST 11 - 15, 2025





Read **John 1:1; Acts 1:3-13**

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The entire Bible was inspired by God. The Holy Spirit inspired its authors Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Matthew, Mark, John, Luke, Peter, James and others to write down the events they witnessed and the instruction they received from God. But while all Scripture is considered divinely inspired, many Christians view the words of Jesus as having unique significance. John even describes Jesus as “*the Word*” (John 1:1) and because Jesus was God incarnate, His words are often considered the clearest revelation of God’s ways, will, wisdom, and instruction.

The pericope of this week’s study includes the last words the resurrected Jesus spoke before He was taken up into the clouds. Surely, these are among the most significant of all His instructions. The passage is Acts 1:6-8: “*Then they gathered around Him and asked Him, ‘Lord, are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’*”

He spoke these words to His eleven remaining apostles who are identified as: Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James, son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James (Acts 1:12 & 13). Since it was

Jesus’ last day on earth, it would have been forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3) and ten days before the fulfillment of His prophesy concerning the arrival of the Holy Spirit.

After witnessing Jesus’ Ascension, the apostles returned to Jerusalem. They are described as living together in what must have been a large, communal upstairs room. The passage in Acts goes on to put the total number of believers prior to the Pentecost at about one-hundred-twenty.

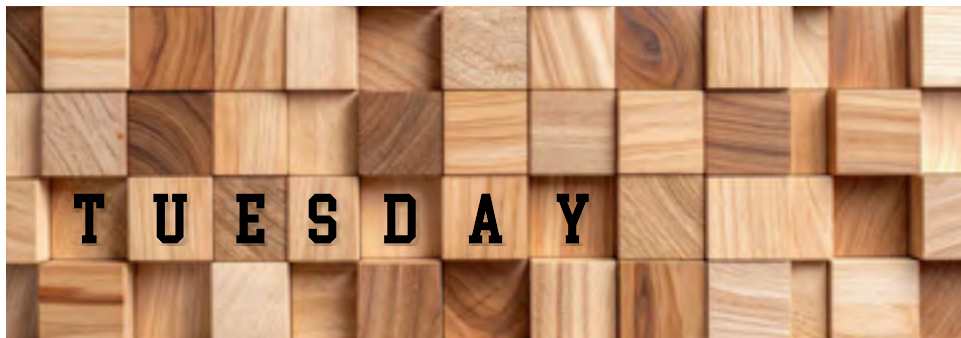
## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Do the teachings of Jesus have more authority than the teachings of the patriarchs, the prophets or the apostles? How long was the gap between Jesus’ Ascension and Pentecost?

## PRAYERS

### Ethnos Asia

Ethnos Asia is an organization founded by Asian missionaries to serve churches in the restricted-access countries of Southeast Asia. Christians in these countries are often seriously restricted by governmental policies and persecuted. Pray that the Ethnos Asia leaders will have God’s vision and wisdom for doing His work.



Read **Acts 1:14; Luke 4:18-19; Matthew 14:14**

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One can't help but wonder about the apostles' state of mind upon seeing Jesus disappear into the clouds. They would have realized they were on their own. Their leader, the Man they had loved and depended on, might not return anytime soon. What would come next for them? What were they supposed to do? What did they do when they got back to Jerusalem? They did what Jesus taught them—they prayed.

They knew their mission was to evangelize Judea, Samaria, and the world. The only model for them to follow was that of Jesus, the itinerant preacher who was dependent on the generosity of His followers for life's necessities and who was crucified for His efforts. Is that what they were supposed to do? Would that also be their fate?

These were most probably what our modern society would call uneducated men. They would have been taught the Jewish laws and how to read from the Torah (written in Hebrew) as young adults, but otherwise their only education would probably have been related to their respective trades: fishing, carpentry, tax-collecting, etc. In truth, they were just a bunch of regular guys with one big exception: the time they spent with, their love for, and their knowledge of Jesus.

But these men had one more vital commonality. They had shared one exceptional reality that produced a trait unique to them and few others. For over three years they had watched as Jesus taught the crowds and performed miracles. They heard Him proclaim that He was the Messiah. They had witnessed His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, His arrest, His trial, and His execution. They had laid His body in the tomb and sealed it. Then they had witnessed the risen, physical Jesus and saw Him ascend into the sky.

Consequently, unlike His other followers, they did not merely *believe* Jesus was God—they *knew* it. They knew it with the certainty of  $2+2=4$ . They knew it with the certainty of the law of gravity. They knew it with the certainty of the sun rising tomorrow.

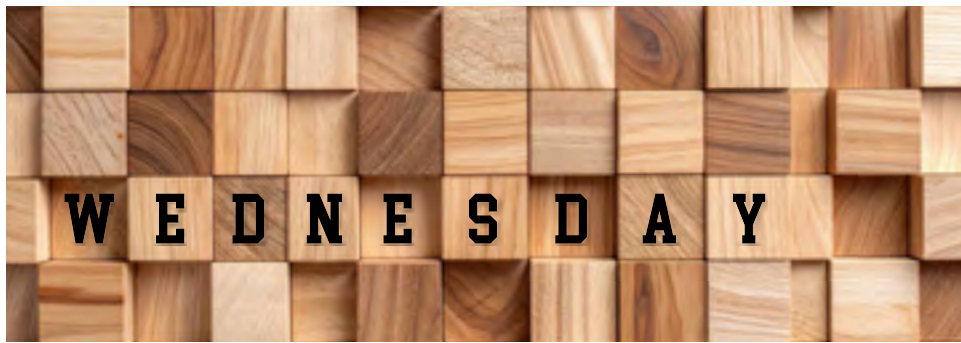
## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

What did the apostles do when they arrived back in Jerusalem seeking direction? What unique knowledge did the eleven apostles share?

## PRAYERS

### Ethnos Asia

Ethnos Asia sponsors a Bible school for pastors who are unable to attend Bible schools in their home countries because of governmental restrictions. Students from Laos are able to enter Thailand where the school can meet openly. Pray that students will be able to overcome any barriers preventing their attendance.



**Read Acts 1:6-7; Isaiah 49:6; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 28:16-20**

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However knowledgeable and dedicated Jesus' apostles were, the question they posed to Jesus in Acts 1:6 exposes their misunderstanding of the Messiah's mission and God's Grand Plan for the salvation of humankind. Jesus' response (Acts 1:7) clarifies that the time for the restoration of Israel had not yet come and that the timing would not be disclosed. What the apostles undoubtedly failed to recognize was the enlarged scope established by the new covenant. Jesus didn't come to save just the Jews; He came to become the sacrificial atonement for all of humankind (Isaiah 49:6; Jeremiah 31:31-34). Jesus' Kingdom was intended to include all the inhabitants of the earth.

In hind sight it becomes clear: for people from all nations to be included in Jesus' heavenly kingdom would take a long period of time—two thousand years and counting thus far. If Jesus had returned when Martin Luther proposed, no one from the Americas would be included. If Jesus had returned when the apostles wanted, all the souls from Africa, Asia, and Australia, as well as North and South America would be excluded!

So, Jesus redirected the disciples' focus away from speculating about the timing of God's plans to trusting in God's sovereignty.

He emphasized that certain things, like the exact timing of the kingdom's full restoration, are within God's authority alone.

Theologians dispute whether the occasion recorded in Acts 1 was a different version of the same event described in Matthew 28:16-20. Both were post-resurrection meetings among a gathering of Jesus' apostles on a mountain outside of Jerusalem. Both included instruction regarding the evangelism of the entire earth. It seems odd that Jesus would need to reiterate this instruction, but there are differences between the two accountings. The event in Matthew is specifically in Galilee while the gathering in Acts is nearer to Jerusalem. The meeting in Acts recounts Jesus' very last moment on earth, but that's not mentioned in Matthew. If they were the same occasion, it seems very likely Matthew would have mentioned Jesus' Ascension.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

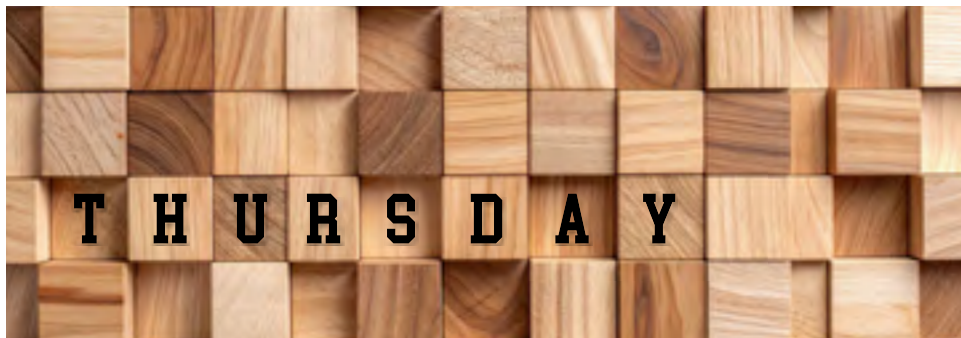
How important is knowing the timing of Jesus' return? Was there a limitation regarding who should receive the news of salvation? Does Acts 1 describe the same event as Matthew 28:16-20?

## PRAYERS

### Ethnos Asia

Students from Thailand, Laos, Pakistan, and other countries are attending the Ethnos Asia Bible School this year. Pray that they will come with hungry hearts for the Word, eager to integrate the Word into their daily lives, and able to train new believers to teach others.





Read **Leviticus 23:15-16; Deuteronomy 16:10-12**

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The apostles of Jesus were probably filled with trepidation after Jesus instructed them to be His witness “to the ends of the earth.” Judea they knew. Samaria they knew. Those were arguably “their people.” The peoples and places beyond that—not so much.

The cities and cultures of Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Carthage, and Athens would have been foreign to them—those cities dwarfed Jerusalem. However, none equaled the metropolis that was Rome. Today we might think of Jerusalem and Rome being similar in stature, but they were two vastly different places in the first century. Rome was the largest city in the world having over ten times the population of Jerusalem—perhaps a million people. The apostles were called to witness about Jesus to the Romans—the people who had conquered the entire civilized world and murdered the Messiah. (And you thought sharing the Gospel with your neighbor was a challenge!)

God knew that the apostles were not yet fully equipped for this mission and He was in the process of preparing them for the challenge. One issue they would have probably been troubled over was “communication”—vis-à-vis language. Since they were mostly uneducated, they would likely only be fluent in Aramaic at the time of Jesus’ resurrection. Their Roman overlords would know Greek, the *lingua franca* of the eastern Roman Empire, as well as their

native Latin. The neighboring countries spoke a myriad of other languages. How were they going to witness about Jesus to foreigners speaking other languages—languages they didn’t speak?

The festival of Pentecost was a few days away after the apostles returned from the last visitation with Jesus. This Jewish festival brought thousands of pilgrims to Jerusalem from numerous other countries. The timing of the opportunity to spread the Gospel couldn’t be any better, but the question of how to tell those foreigners about Jesus was a real problem. Little did the apostles know the language barrier was about to come down, at least for a while.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

When we share the Gospel with nonbelievers, do we become responsible for their salvation? Which language(s) did the apostles speak?

## PRAYERS

### Ethnos Asia

Pray for the Bible school teachers. David Woo from Glenkirk and his son will be among the teaching staff for one term.

Pray that those teachers who come from Western countries will be able to sensitively relate the Scriptures to students from an Asian cultural background.



Read **Exodus 19 & 20; Acts 2:9**

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Pentecost originally celebrated the Israelite farmer's spring harvest and was so-named due to its occurrence fifty days after the Passover. However, By the second Temple period (the time of Jesus), Pentecost had evolved to commemorate the covenant between God and Israel, the moment when its people became His chosen nation and were given His commandments (Exodus 19-20). According to Jewish tradition, the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments from God fifty days after their Exodus from Egypt.

When the day of Pentecost arrived for the apostles, the power of the Holy Spirit filled them one by one and they spoke *"the wonders of God"* (Acts 2:11) in the various languages of the pilgrims. Acts 2:9-11 reports that they spoke in the languages of the *"Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, and visitors from Romans ... Cretans and Arabs."*

A very large crowd of *"amazed and perplexed"* (v. 12a) pilgrims swarmed around the apostles asking, *"What does this mean?"* (v. 12b). Peter rose up and told them about Jesus, boldly proclaiming, *"God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of it. ... God*

*has made this Jesus ... Lord and Messiah"* (Acts 2:32, 36). Since Jesus' crucifixion some fifty days previously, word of His trial and death had undoubtedly been the subject of much gossip and speculation in the streets of Jerusalem. They asked Peter and the other apostles, *"Brothers, what shall we do?"* (v. 34b). And Peter replied, *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (v. 38). Three thousand people responded to Peter's call by accepting Jesus that day.

It isn't known which language(s) those multinational converts to Christianity heard Peter speaking that day. In the natural world, he couldn't have been speaking in every one of their native tongues simultaneously. Nevertheless, they understood. And they believed.

Likewise, we are called to bear witness of our faith in Jesus. And just like the apostles, we must trust the outcome to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

What did Pentecost celebrate in Moses' day? What did Pentecost celebrate in Jesus' day? How many languages did the crowds at Pentecost hear the apostles speaking?

## PRAYERS

### Ethnos Asia

The Ethnos Asia Bible School provides training for pastors and laity, training not available in their home countries. Many of these leaders have received no formal Bible training; they have been mentored only by their previous pastors. Pray that the school will be effective in strengthening the leadership of the churches.



*These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at [KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org](mailto:KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org). If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.*

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