

**Intro:** What is your dream? What do you long for in life: to live everyday like a dream or have a successful career? The first Christian disciples/apostles had a dream.

### **1. The apostles’ dream (1:1-6)**

Luke and Acts are 2 parts of one big story. The author, Luke, writes to Theophilus so he could be sure about Jesus. Jesus was with his apostles for 40 days after he rose from the dead, hearing him speak about the Kingdom of God, before he went to rule as King of his Kingdom from heaven. But they wanted (1:6) Jesus to restore and rule the physical Kingdom of Israel, with Jesus as king from Jerusalem, like God had promised in Isaiah 2:1-3, where all nations would come and enjoy the blessings of God’s rule. Simeon (Luke 2:25) and Anna (Luke 2:38) were waiting for Jesus’ rule, and Jesus had also spoken about this (Luke 22:29-30). But what Jesus meant was a bit different (Acts 1:7-8).

### **2. Jesus’ dream is about:**

**a) waiting** (1:4) for God’s timing (1:7) and trusting Jesus to keep his Word about the kingdom being restored. Jesus’ apostles would also need to be:

**b) witnesses** (1:8) about all that Jesus did and taught including his baptism, his death, resurrection, and his going into heaven (1:21-22). They chose another witness called Matthias to replace Judas (who had betrayed Jesus and died). ‘Witness’ here is a special word for just the 12 apostles. This fulfils what Isaiah spoke about (Isaiah 43:9-12). Jesus, acting like God, chooses them to represent Israel’s witness to testify to the nations that God and His Son is the one and only God or King of his Kingdom. So, we are not witnesses of Jesus. Only the apostles are. But we testify to the witness of the apostles in the Bible. Lastly Jesus’ dream involved the:

**c) world** (1:7-8). Jesus’ witnesses were to be his Spirit-filled witnesses moving out into 3 regions to take Jesus’ kingdom message to: **i)** Jerusalem – the focus God’s prophecies **ii)** Judea & Samaria - the one region of a re-unified Israel. And **iii)** the world - the ends of the earth i.e. the nations, the Gentiles or non-Jews. This 3-step plan is fulfilled throughout the book of Acts. So in summary, we see Jesus in God’s timing, establishes his rule from heaven as King over all the nations beginning with his apostles. His Kingdom will finally be restored when Jesus returns to bring in the new heavens and the new earth, called the new Jerusalem. Until then, God will establish his rule as his people testify to the witness of the apostles (to all the nations) proclaiming the gospel that Jesus is Lord because of his death and resurrection.

### **3. So what is your dream?**

As we come to the end of 2021 after almost 2 years of the pandemic, I hope you will adopt and be involved in Jesus’ dream. It’s much bigger than the latest world tragedy, or who wins sport events, or getting married or our own personal dreams. The fact that Jesus rules this world means that all these things are in his control. So, do your dreams fit with Jesus’ dreams? Do you know Jesus as your Lord? If not, please keep finding out more about Jesus by reading Luke’s Gospel and the Bible. If you know Jesus as your Lord, please live for Jesus and proclaim him to the end of the earth, beginning on your campus. Pray for friends, especially international students on campus. Pray often for those who testify to the witness of Jesus in other parts of the world – Myanmar, Slovenia, South Pacific, for those in the 10/40 window of less-reached or unreached people groups. We’re not here to build the AFES Kingdom, but to testify to God’s Kingdom in the hard but exciting activity of proclaiming Jesus Christ, beginning at your university or your work place or perhaps going to another end of the earth to present everyone mature in Jesus until he returns! With God’s gracious help, how will you make your life dreams become the dream of Jesus for his glory? It is my prayer that the rest of our NTE will help you find out as you hear God’s voice in the Bible, discuss it with other Christians, and pray to God for Jesus’ dream to become the certain reality it will be.

People will tell you that you can change the world! But in Acts 1, we see Jesus began to change the world. Luke wrote *Luke*, about what Jesus began to do and teach, and *Acts* about the continuing acts of the risen Jesus by his Spirit through his apostles as his witnesses, starting at Jerusalem, then in Judea/Samaria, to the ends of the earth about the restoration of his Kingdom over all the nations. In Acts 2 ...

### 1. The restoration of the Kingdom continues

**a) Event (2:1-13) The coming of the Spirit.** It was the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the Passover Festival. Originally it was a harvest festival (Leviticus 23), but it became a day to celebrate the giving of God's Law at Mt Sinai (Exodus 19). But (2:1-4) on this Pentecost, 3 different things happened: **i)** Jesus' followers **heard** a sound like a rushing wind from heaven where Jesus had gone; **ii)** they **saw** something like tongues of fire. This is like the pillar of cloud and fire in Exodus 13, like the event at Mt Sinai in Exodus 19 (celebrated at Pentecost), and like the Glory of God in Ezekiel 1. Wind and fire represent the presence of God; and **iii)** the apostles were 'filled with the Holy Spirit' and began to speak in the different languages that Jews from all around the world (about 15 countries are listed in 2:9-11) could understand, representing the spread of Jews after the exile (diaspora). In the song *O for a Thousand Tongues*, 1,000 tongues means 1,000 languages. Acts 2 describes a unique event with people speaking in different intelligible tongues. It doesn't mean this kind of event must be repeated until Jesus returns. Peter (the leader of the 12 apostle witnesses) explains this amazing (2:12-13) event next:

**b) Explanation (2:14-36)** In (2:17-18) Peter says this fulfils Joel's prophecy that God would pour out his Spirit all people! In the past, God's Spirit had come on certain people (prophets, priests, kings, judges, skilled temple workers) at certain times for certain tasks, but now God would pour His Spirit on all people (sons, daughters, young and old men, male and female servants) to help them to prophesy. Prophecy here is about declaring the mighty works of God (2:11). Joel also spoke about the 'Day of the Lord' (2:19-21), when God would judge all his enemies, and save his people, who call on the name of the Lord. But who is this Lord? In Joel 2:31, it is the LORD God, Yahweh. But in Acts 2:22-24, the Lord who saves you from God's judgment is Jesus. Jesus did mighty works, but evil men killed him. Yet he rose from the dead, according to God's promised plan (e.g. Psalm 16, Psalm 110). When Jesus died, it seemed his enemies had won, but by rising again, he proved that he was the Christ, with authority over every person and power (2:32-33). These events were all about the appointing of Jesus to the right hand of his Father as world king or Christ, fulfilling prophecy. Jesus gives his apostle witnesses power by his Spirit to proclaim the mighty works of God about himself in the many languages that people could understand. In Genesis 11, at the Tower of Babel, people spoke the one language and sinfully united to invade heaven and make a name for themselves. But God scattered them in judgment and divided them with different languages. Acts 2 is the reverse of Babel, where different languages are given to the apostles by God (not to divide them, but) to unite them to testify to the mighty works of God about Jesus. The images Joel uses, like 'the sun turning to darkness' (Acts 2:20), point to what happened when Jesus died on the Cross, *before* the day of the Lord. Because Jesus rose from the dead and has gone to his Father's right hand, he is now both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). Christ is not his surname (like Smith). It is a title (like President, King). So Jesus now rules the world with all authority over everyone/everything, including you and me, whether we like it or not. Next we see the effect on Peter's listeners:

**c) Effect (2:37-38) Their worldview changed.** They were cut to the heart (2:37)! Their consciences knew they were resisting the rule of Jesus. Are you are resisting the rule of King Jesus? Does your life/identity revolve around him and his values? Is Jesus your Christ? If not, you will face his just anger on the coming Day of the Lord, and you need to repent, change your mind, ask Jesus to forgive you, and live with him as your Lord. Jesus calls upon us to turn back to him to live for his purposes. Jesus' mighty works save us and are what really change the world.

### 2. Change the world

Muslims say the Qur'an can only really be understood *rightly* in Arabic. But because of what Jesus has done in Acts 2, now the Bible can be understood *rightly* in any language: Arabic, Burmese, English, Fijian, Indonesian, Mandarin etc. Today, the New Testament is in 1,333 languages and whole Bibles in 553 languages. If you speak another language help international students at FOCUS. Pray for missionaries to learn new languages. Every time we faithfully proclaim Jesus in another language, it changes the world through the Spirit's powerful proclamation. In Acts 2:41, 3,000 people changed to trust in Jesus. We now live in the [overlap of the ages](#) between Jesus 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. It's the time to pray, asking for boldness to proclaim and take the gospel to the ends of the earth, that God may save many.