

SESSION NINE

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

What gives a Christian the courage and strength to press on and accomplish the work of God, and what does the visible evidence of that power within the person look like?

**DVD Teaching Notes (17 minutes)**

The Southern Stairs on Pentecost (Shavuot)

After Jesus' ascension, the disciples wait

The promised gift of God comes

What did it all mean?

**Opening Thoughts (4 minutes)**

*The Very Words of God*

*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.*

Acts 1:8

**Think About It**

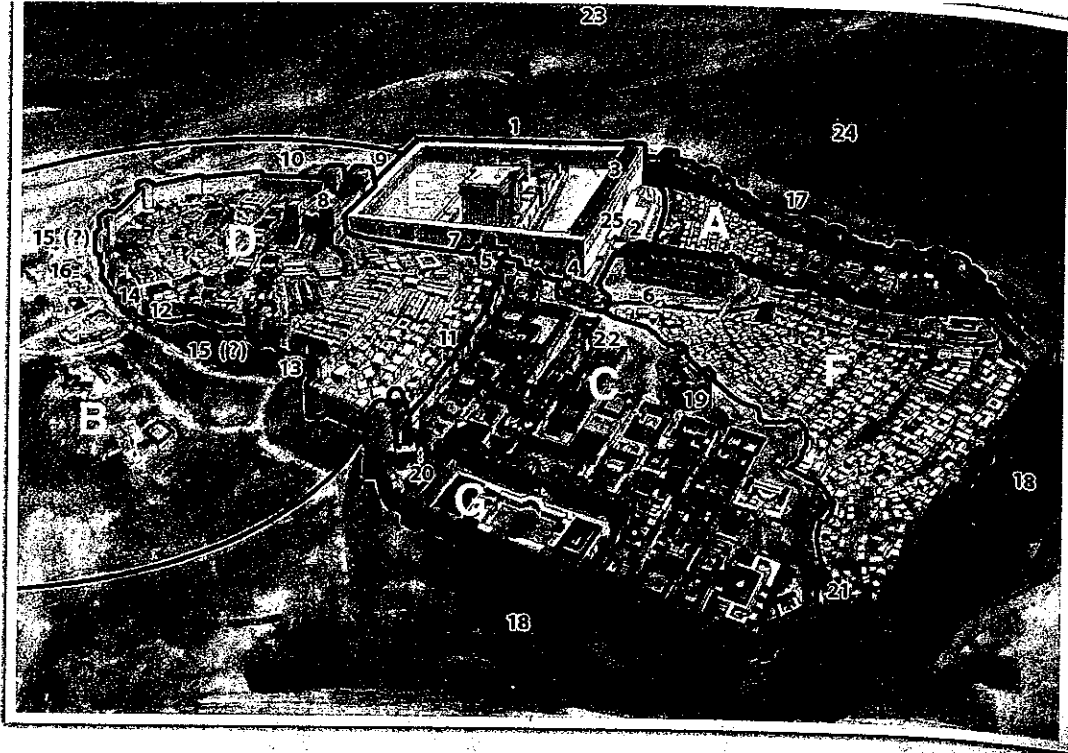
When we face what seem to be insurmountable challenges, we all count on something or someone to encourage and/or strengthen us to do what lies ahead.

### DVD Discussion (7 minutes)

1. On the map of Jerusalem's Districts (page 259), locate the temple and the Southern Stairs. Also note the Mount of Olives east of the temple, from which Jesus ascended to heaven, and the Royal Stoa adjacent to the temple courts where Jesus and the early Christians were known to gather and teach. Imagine bustling crowds of people filling the whole city and thousands upon thousands of worshipers entering the temple on Pentecost morning to celebrate a festival they had celebrated for more than 1,200 years!
  - a. How is your understanding of God's work at Pentecost impacted by the possibility that the "house" the disciples gathered in that morning was in fact the temple?
  - b. Why do you think the Southern Stairs are, or are not, a reasonable place for the disciples to have been on Pentecost morning?
2. How do you think the disciples felt when they found themselves filled with the Holy Spirit and realized that God's power — the power they had seen Jesus demonstrate time and again, the power he had promised to send — was within them?

B New City  
 C Upper City  
 D Business District  
 E Temple Mount  
 F Lower City  
 G Herod's Palace

1 Eastern Gate  
 2 Southern Gate  
 3 Royal Stoa  
 4 Robinson's Arch  
 5 Wilson's Arch  
 6 Tyropoeon Street  
 7 Warren's Gate  
 8 Antonia  
 9 Tadi Gate  
 10 Pool of Bethesda  
 11 First Wall  
 12 Second Wall  
 13 Garden Gate  
 14 Towers (Damascus) Gate  
 15 Golgotha (?)  
 16 Garden Tomb  
 17 Spring of Gihon  
 18 Hinnom Valley  
 19 Theatre  
 20 Citadel and Herod's palace  
 21 Essence Quarter  
 22 Mansions  
 23 Mount of Olives  
 24 Kidron Valley  
 25 Huldah Gates



JERUSALEM'S DISTRICTS

3. What were the signs that the disciples truly had received the Holy Spirit?

### Small Group Bible Discovery and Discussion (20 minutes)

#### When the Church Was Born

After his resurrection, Jesus continued to teach his disciples and prepare them to carry on the work of sharing the news of the kingdom of God. Before he ascended to heaven, Jesus told them that they would become his witnesses beginning in Jerusalem and then to the farthest ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The prospect of taking his news into the whole world, far beyond Jerusalem and far beyond the realm of those who believed in the God of the Jews, was a daunting task. How could they do it?

1. Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, what did he tell the disciples to do? (See Luke 24:44 - 53.)

What did they immediately do, and what was their attitude?

To what extent do you think they knew what they were waiting for and understood what "receiving power from on high" would entail?

#### Session Nine: Power to the People

2. There was nothing secretive or subtle about the way in which the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' disciples! (See Acts 2:1 - 12.)
  - a. What were the signs that God's power had come upon the disciples? (See Acts 2:1 - 4.)
  - b. What caused the loud sound in "the house," and of what did it remind the people who heard it? (See Ezekiel 37:9 - 14; John 3:5 - 8.)
  - c. Why were the Jews who had come from many lands bewildered by these events? (See Acts 2:5 - 12.)
3. *Shavuot* celebrated the firstfruits of the grain harvest. Consider the ways the events of Pentecost fulfilled *Shavuot*.
  - a. What harvest had Jesus sent his disciples out to gather? (See Matthew 9:37 - 38; Luke 10:1 - 3; John 4:34 - 38.)
  - b. What "firstfruits" of the harvest that Jesus had sent his disciples to reap were evident as a result of Peter's preaching? (See Acts 2:14 - 16, 36 - 41.)

4. Why was it important in God's plan that Jews from every nation, who knew their Scriptures and the ways of God, become followers of Jesus the Messiah, the firstfruits of the church?

**Memorize**

*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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

Acts 2:38 - 39