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THE CONCEPT OF POWER IN ACTS 1: 5-8 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTERS

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ABSTRACT

This essay is titled "The Concept of Power in Acts 1: 5-8 and its Implications for Nigerian Baptist Ministers. The essay among other things aimed at exegetical and expository of the passage to determine the biblical concept of power and how it can be useful to the contemporary Baptist Ministers in both life and ministry.

The objective of the writer is to inform the Baptist ministers on God's provision for an effective ministry today from the Biblical exegesis. Also the writer aim at encouraging the Baptist ministers from the biblical perspective to develop a functional relationship with the Holy Spirit so that they may be empowered for their daily living.

The study employs exegetical and expository method to achieve the above set objectives. The facts deduced were applied theologically, spiritually, morally, evangelically and eschatologically to the situations around the minister's life and ministry.

The writer discovered that the ultimate power belongs to God and also God is interested in giving the power to man to work for Him in this world. The writer also discovered that the power referred to in Acts 1: 8 was experienced by the Disciples of Christ at that time and it can also be a reality in the life and ministry of any minister of God today. The writer also find out that Christian life will be abstract without the power of God. Also the writer finds out that the agency of the power of God is the Holy Spirit.

The writer concluded that the baptism of the Holy Spirit should be an experiential event in the life of a minister of God, and then such a minister could enjoy the reality of true power in his life and ministry.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The writer concluded that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a necessary experience in the life of a minister if God will release his enablement to his life and ministry. Also, the writer concluded that the task before the Baptist ministers can only be achieved through the power of God.

This reflection will help the Baptist ministers not only to know more about the power of God but also to exploit the power which God gives through the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives and ministries. Since the Holy Spirit power is absolutely essential, then without it, the office of the minister is a mere nomenclature. The ministers are the successors of those who in olden times, were moved of God to declare his word, to testify against transgression, and to plead his cause. Unless the ministers have the power of the Holy Spirit resting upon them, the mantle which they wear is nothing but a mere garment to deceive. Ministers are spokesmen of Jesus Christ, appointed to continue his witness upon the earth. If ministers have not the power of God which Jesus promised, they cannot perform the commission which Jesus gave.

This study submits that the power of the Holy Spirit has been given to help man in every way. The power of the Holy Spirit will help the Baptist ministers to act in boldness in preaching, breaking strongholds of the enemy in churches or institutions. The power authenticates the gospel message. God does endow His people with power. Power is needed to break through with the gospel message to transform

lives for better. He is still willing to display His power to back His salvation message. If life will be transformed by the gospel it will be by the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives and ministries of Baptist ministers.

The agent of this power is the Holy Spirit. It is a function of the grace of God and, therefore, is given by God. The Spirit of God is holy and manifests His power in diverse ways but these manifestations are characterized by holiness and love. The person who would be a channel for this power of God must value his relationship with God above all other considerations. A proper understanding of the nature of this power and of God's intention for making it available reveal that nothing should be attempted in the life and ministry of a Baptist minister without dependence on God's power. Christian's life and ministry is not by human power and might, but by the power of God. The use of power requires meekness, humility, self-control, and an ability to endure for Christ.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the implications of the concept of power in Acts 1: 5-8 to the contemporary ministers of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, the writer of this essay considers it fit to put forward some suggestions.

1. The Nigerian Baptist Ministers should be faithful Disciples of Christ. In the context of this study, Jesus promise was to his disciples and they should help others to become disciples of Christ also (Luke 9: 23).
2. The Nigerian Baptist ministers should make himself available to the power of the Holy Spirit. Since the preaching task in the context of the biblical gathering presupposes the active presence of the power of God. Jesus told the disciples to wait for the promise and they were available at the upper room for the empowerment that changed their lives and ministries. The contemporary Nigerian Baptist ministers

should also teach members the act of waiting upon the Lord and living a pure life which gives free access to the Holy Spirit to release His power into people's lives.

3 The Baptist ministers should live a life of integrity. The Holy Spirit will not identify Himself with the unclean or unconsecrated life. Life of holiness and total dedication to God is very important for every one that God will empower for efficiency and effectiveness in these present days. Also, the contemporary Baptist ministers should teach others in respect to a moral standard which is godly.

4 This requires quality time alone with the word of God. The disciples gave themselves to the study of the word (Acts 6:4). This will strengthen sound biblical teaching in the church and ministry. The ministers should also encourage members to form the habit of serious study of God's word.

5 This work highly recommends that outside the theological education provided in theological and Bible colleges, the Baptist ministers should develop a habit of waiting for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. It should be noted that perspiration in preparation is inspiration in presentation (Ogunronbi, lecture note 2007).

6 In the word of Mayo, he stated that "the task of African Christians theology is to translate and make alive the message of Christ in a contemporary African cultural setting" (98). Therefore, the writer recommends that the Baptist ministers should engage in sound teaching of the complete doctrine of the power of God in the New Testament and also the word of God should be properly contextualized.

7. The concept of power in Acts 1: 5-8 was the major focus of the writer however, the concept can be given a further study in other books of the New Testament.