

Acts 1 (Part 1): 1-11 • "But you will receive power"

The Book of Acts, as I'm sure you know, continues on where the gospels leave off. It records for us the early preaching of the disciples and as they share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout all of the land. And we also see how the gospel made its way eventually into Samaria and then even to the Gentiles, those dirty, rotten Gentiles.

That was a hard thing for a lot of the Jews to deal with. Many Jews grew up believing that Gentiles were unable to be saved, there's no such thing as a saved Gentile in many Jewish minds. And when the gospel began to be received by the Gentiles, the Jews had a struggle with that. And many of them were wondering what was going on and they even had to have a meeting. And we'll get to that.

We actually talk about that in Acts, I believe it's chapter 15, but that'll be a while. But this is the second of two New Testament Books that is written by Luke, who was a physician. And we think that he wrote this somewhere between 62 and 64 A.D.

He wrote it actually to an individual, he wrote it to a man by the name of Theophilus. And although most of your Bibles say at the beginning of this Book, the Acts of the Apostles, some just say, Acts. But even though it says the Acts of the Apostles, really this Book is all about the work of the Holy Spirit among the believers. And the reason we say that is because the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the Book of Acts no fewer than 56 times.

Now you might think, well, I don't even, is that a big deal? Yeah, I'll just tell you, that's a big deal. If you take Matthew, Mark, and Luke and combine them, the number of references to the Holy Spirit comes to 34. If you take Paul's two longest letters, which is Romans and 1 Corinthians, you come up with 45 references to the Holy Spirit. So Acts having 56 references to the Holy Spirit, you can see really sets this Book apart from the others.

Here's what's really interesting about the Holy Spirit. There are 3 things that the Apostle Paul says in his letters that we as believers ought not be ignorant about. And I want to put these, in fact, up on the screen for you so you can see them together.

3 Things the Apostle Paul challenges us not to be ignorant about:

- Israel and the place of the Jews in history and prophecy (Romans 11:25)
- The Rapture of the Church and end times events (1 Thess 4:13; 16-17)
- The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12:1)

The first one is Israel and the place of the Jews in history and prophecy and that's talked about in Romans chapter 11. Paul says, I would not have you be ignorant about such things.

And then we deal with the rapture of the church. That's one of the subjects that Paul said, I would not have you be ignorant of this. Regarding the rapture of the church and the end times events.

And then lastly in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul said, I would not have you be ignorant about spiritual gifts. And so the work of the Holy Spirit in the imparting of spiritual gifts, that's one of three things that the Apostle Paul said that he would not have us be ignorant about.

You know what's interesting about these 3 topics? These dominate the questions that I get anyway from believers. These are the ones that are asked more than the others. People more often ask about the Jews and right now that's a hot topic. How should I feel about Israel, in light of what's happening with the war right now with Hamas and so on and so forth. And people have a lot of questions about the place of the Jews in history, and prophecy, and so forth.

People have a lot of questions about the catching away of the church and people have a lot of questions about the ministry of the Holy Spirit as it relates to spiritual gifts and so forth.

And we're going to talk a lot about that here in our study of the Book of Acts. And my hope is that through this study, and especially as we go through these first two chapters, which we won't obviously do today, we're going to get to like the first 11 verses of chapter 1. But as we go through these first two chapters of Acts, it is my hope that it will clear up a lot of questions in many of your minds as it relates to this particular topic of spiritual gifts and the work of the Holy Spirit.

And the reason there are questions and the reasons there are a lot of issues in people's hearts and minds about this is because many of you have a background of church where the topic of spiritual gifts really never came up. And frankly,

that was my experience. As a kid, I grew up in a rather liberal, denominational, we call them mainline church. And, in Sunday school, we did a lot of Bible stories, stuff like that. I don't even remember anyone articulating the gospel and we certainly never touched on the Holy Spirit or spiritual gifts. It just didn't happen.

Now, there's a lot of churches that are like that. And not only do they not hear about the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, but if it is mentioned in any way, spiritual gifts are mentioned from the perspective of these things no longer function in the church. The gifts of the Spirit and so forth are no longer functioning in the church.

We call that sort of a teaching, cessationism and somebody who holds to it is called, a cessationist. And as much as I don't like labels, it frankly helps to, it serves to help us understand just the teaching and what it is. That the gifts of the Spirit are no longer operational in the church, according to that teaching, and again, that's cessationism.

However, I happen to know that there are other people that attend Calvary Chapel here who come from a very different perspective. Some of you have a Pentecostal slash charismatic background and you come into this whole thing from the perspective that the gifts of the Spirit are operational today. And not only so, but you've seen it happen, you've experienced such things.

But whichever side of the fence you come into this study having been on, I want you to know a couple of things. First of all, there are excesses on both sides of that fence, okay. Let me put it a different way. There are errors on both sides of that particular doctrinal fence and I'm very hopeful that we'll be able to expose those.

But some of you who come from a cessationist background, you're probably going to raise a few eyebrows, maybe even a little offending going on. Some of you who have a Pentecostal charismatic background, we're probably going to offend you a little bit.

I just want you to know, I'm an equal opportunity offender and we're just going to do it right down the line here. And hopefully though, even if that happens, you're going to be able to look at the scripture with me and be able to say, that's what the Word of God says. And that's our hope, that's my goal and I want you to know that.

Anyway, let's begin with prayer and we'll get into the study of the Book of Acts.

Father, we thank you, we praise you for the opportunity to gather together in this place and in your name and we just open our hearts to what you want to say to us through the scripture.

We give you this time, we pray that you would guide us and we ask it in Jesus name, amen. Amen.

Verse 1, "*In the first book, O Theophilus, (he's referring to the first book as the Gospel of Luke, this is Luke writing. He says) 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." " (ESV)

I want you to pause there for just a moment. The reason that Luke begins the Book of Acts with Jesus instructing the disciples about the baptism of the Holy Spirit is because that is the power. He starts off defining the power that these men and women are going to receive in order to go out and do the work that He's called them to do.

You see, this is where the Book of Acts has to begin. It has to begin with the empowering through the Holy Spirit. This is what we're going to read about in the coming pages. We're going to read about supernatural, miraculous works done by the disciples of Jesus as they took the gospel out.

They were also confronted by spiritual powers and realities that they had absolutely no ability to deal with apart from the Holy Spirit. So they needed the power of the Holy Spirit to go forth and that is why Luke begins with this particular section.

Now you'll notice in verse 4, once again, that it says, "*while staying with them*" first of all, "*he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem.*" In other words, don't start yet.

He spent these 40 days, post resurrection, with the disciples, but He said to them, guys, we're not going yet. I want you to wait, stay here in Jerusalem because something is going to happen. Jesus referred to it there in verse 4 as,

“the promise of the Father.” And He then said in verse 5, *“John baptized with water”* and that of course was a baptism of repentance. But He said, *“but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*

I want you to remember Christians, the word baptized simply means immersed. He reminds them, you are immersed or John preached an immersion of repentance, a baptism of repentance. But in just a few days, you are going to be immersed with the Holy Spirit.

Now, He hasn't told them yet what this is all about. He simply says, it's coming and I want you to wait for it. Well, I'm sure they were wondering, wait for what? Well, let's keep reading.

Verse 6, *“So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?””* They're kind of changing the subject. Jesus wants to talk about the empowering work of the Spirit and yet they're thinking ahead to glory. They're already moving into the Millennial Kingdom.

You see, because the Jews had received many prophecies in their Hebrew Bible about the Millennial Kingdom. And the Millennial Kingdom is that period of time after the Great Tribulation when Jesus returns to the earth and establishes His rule upon the earth for a period of 1,000 years.

The Jews were very, very well aware of the teaching of the Millennial Kingdom, they knew that it meant the glorification of Israel. And you guys do know that's coming, right?

Israel is going to receive a special place during the Millennial Kingdom and they are saying, or asking Jesus at this time in verse 6, so is now the time? Is this the time when the kingdom will be restored to Israel and the glory will be given to Israel at this time? I want you to notice Jesus' response, He has to bring them back to topic.

Verse 7, *“He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.”* In other words, guys, that's not where we are right now, you're skipping ahead. You're going on into the Millennial Kingdom and all the things that are going to be happening related to Israel. That's not where we are, there's work to be done first, and you need to be prepared for that work. And that's why He says what He says in verse 8. Now get out your pencil.

He says in verse 8, *“But you will receive power (circle the word, power in your Bible or write it down) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, (circle the word, upon) and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

Now I had you circle a couple of words and obviously the first one is a very important one and that is, power. Jesus told them the reason for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said, John baptized with water, in a few days, you will be baptized or immersed with the Holy Spirit. Why? You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And He said, you will then be my witnesses and they were. And that's what we're going to be reading about here through the Book of Acts. How they took this life changing power that came through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and shared the gospel, declared the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus, and literally turned the world upside down.

But all of that starts with the supernatural empowering of the Spirit from on high and that is what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is all about. And unfortunately, this isn't taught very much in churches anymore. They don't talk about it because I think most people think we don't really kind of need this anymore. The church is established, we've got the Word of God written, codified, here it is, we don't really need the power of the Holy Spirit.

Well, I disagree. In fact, what I see going on in the world today is a rise of spiritual enemies. I see a rise of darkness in the world and I think you do too. And if we are going to make an impact in whatever days we have left upon this earth before Christ returns, we need the power of the Holy Spirit to do it.

Jesus never called us to go forth in the power of the flesh, He never called us to go forth in the power that is only ours as human beings. He wants us to be empowered. Now there's a common error that goes along with this idea of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, because this is going to happen in Acts chapter 2, which we'll get to later.

And what's going to happen is we're going to read in Acts chapter 2 how the Holy Spirit falls upon the assembled believers, and so forth. But there are many people today who believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit that we read about and which occurs the first time in Acts chapter 2, is the very first time the Holy Spirit comes to the assembled believers. But we know that's not the case. In other words, what people believe is, when the Spirit fell in Acts chapter 2, that's

when the believers were first born again and when the Spirit came to empower them, even though we don't talk much about power anymore.

We know that Jesus said, first of all, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. He didn't say you will be saved or you will be born again when the Holy Spirit falls on you. The Holy Spirit has already come.

We just finished the Book of John. We know that just two weeks ago, we studied this in John chapter 20, when the Holy Spirit came to the believers that they might be born again. Let me put it up on the screen to remind you, it's in John chapter 20. It says,

John 20:19-22 (ESV)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them...Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

On the evening of that day, (and that day is resurrection day, by the way) the first day of the week, (that's Sunday) the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them...Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

This is when the Holy Spirit first came to believers for the purpose of salvation. That we might be born again, that regeneration might take place, right? Jesus tells us in Acts chapter 1, that we're studying today, when the baptism of the Spirit takes place, you will receive power to be my witnesses. So it's a completely different function of the Holy Spirit in our lives and this messes with some people.

They'll say, well, pastor, are you telling me that if I'm saved, I have the Holy Spirit living within me, but if I haven't been baptized, then I have less of the Holy Spirit than somebody who has. No, that's not what I'm saying at all. We think in terms of more and less and so forth, you can't apply those things to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit and if He's in your life, He's in your life. However, there are different works of the Holy Spirit, there are different functions of the Holy Spirit. And in fact, there are different relationships of the

Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and we can see those different relationships by the different prepositions that are used, right? Regarding the Holy Spirit and the believer. Let me show them to you. Well, we've already on the screen, I'll show you. Here's the one we've already read today in our study.

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come **UPON** you, and you will be my witnesses...”*

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come **UPON** you, and you will be my witnesses...”*

Now, what is the preposition? Well, that's easy, I highlighted it for you. It's the word, upon. Remember your prepositions in school, by the way, your grammar lessons? This is a particular relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer. The Holy Spirit comes upon and these are the words of Jesus, these are not mine, alright?

But there are other relationships that people can potentially have to the Holy Spirit. Let me show you what Jesus said in John 14. He said,

John 14:17 (ESV)

*“...the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells **WITH** you and will be **IN** you.”*

*“...the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells **WITH** you and will be **IN** you.”*

Two more prepositions: with and in. Now, Jesus is speaking these words prior to breathing on them, this is prior even to His crucifixion. He's telling the believers before the Spirit came to indwell them, the Spirit is now with you. And I frankly believe that this is what's going on in somebody's life who is open to receiving and listening to the gospel message.

Maybe they're even coming to church, but they haven't yet really accepted Jesus as their Savior. They haven't yet been born again, but the Holy Spirit is with them, and He is moving them. He's drawing them and so forth. But when we come to faith in Christ, in other words, when we confess our sins and we

receive Him as our Savior, the Holy Spirit changes from being with me, to now in me.

And that's why Paul says, do you not know that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, and he uses that same preposition, all right. (1 Corinthians 6:19) So you can see these 3 prepositions, but they express different functions of the same Holy Spirit, all right.

What we're dealing with here when we talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a work of the Spirit that happens repeatedly in the life of a believer and that's what sets it apart from the indwelling of the Spirit. Please understand, Christians, that when you receive Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit comes in to indwell. He comes to live within you and that happens once, it doesn't happen twice, three times, ten times or whatever. It's a one-time thing and He does not depart.

Now the baptism of the Spirit comes multiple times according to our need, because it's not for salvation, it's for empowering. It's to give you the ability, the strength, the power to do. And that's why we know this coming upon is different from the coming in, because it happens repeatedly to the same people.

In fact, it happens 3 times in the first 4 chapters to Peter alone. The Spirit comes upon him 3 times in the first 4 chapters, on just one single individual. But let me prepare you for something. The way Luke describes the coming of the Spirit to baptize or if you will, to empower, he refers to it as, being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And that might tweak you a little bit because you might think, well, being filled, that kind of goes more with the in preposition rather than the upon preposition. I get that and it's just the way the Bible is. When the Spirit comes upon, it is referred to as being filled with the Holy Spirit and it happens over and over. Let me show you some examples on the screen. First from Acts 2:4, this is what we're going to get to next week on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:4 (ESV)

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...

Peter is among them. Then in Acts chapter 4, it says,

Acts 4:8 (ESV)

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, (and the Greek means, filled right now) said to them...

And then Acts 4:31.

Acts 4:31 (ESV)

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...

And when they had prayed, (and by the way, Peter was there) the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all (this is present tense) filled with the Holy Spirit...

It goes on, Acts 13:9

Acts 13:9 (ESV)

But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit...

But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit...

Da, da, da, went on and did this. And then in Acts 13:52,

Acts 13:52 (ESV)

And the disciples were filled with...the Holy Spirit...

And the disciples were filled with...the Holy Spirit...

It goes over and over again. Guys, this isn't people getting saved over and over again. We get saved once when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, we get filled with the Holy Spirit repeatedly, according to our need.

Guys, I pray that God would fill me with His Holy Spirit every Sunday morning and every Wednesday night before I get up to teach. I know that I can't do this on my own, this has to be a work of the Holy Spirit. And so I just pray very gently, very simply, Lord, just fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit. Empower me, Lord, to teach your Word because this is your Word and I want it to have an

impact in people's lives. And that impact comes through the ministry of the Spirit, not the ministry of Paul, okay? So, this baptism is incredibly important.

Now, we're going to keep reading and we're only going to do about another 3 verses. But, we're going to deal here with the ascension of Jesus. *“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.”* Take note of that.

“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.””

Well, this is one of the many Bible passages that tells us Jesus is coming back. That's what the angels said. They're standing there, Jesus is taken up in a cloud, and eventually He's hidden from their sight. And suddenly there's these two men standing among them, these angels in white garments. And they say, men of Israel, why are you standing here staring up into heaven? This same *“Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven will come”* again, will come back in the same way.

Now, that's interesting, isn't it? When the angels say, He's going to come in the same way. Well, what does that mean? Well, we were told in the Bible, He's going to be coming in the clouds, right? But do you know that we also know where He's going to come back? We actually know where He ascended from, all we have to do is read the next verse. We'll cover this next week.

But look at verse 12 in your Bible, it says, *“Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem.”* Guys, that's the Mount of Olives. We know that Jesus ascended to the Father for the last time from the Mount of Olives.

Did you know that just as the angel said, this same Jesus who was taken up from you will return in the same way. That means He's even going to come back to the same place. And we know that because one of the most powerful Old Testament prophetic passages that speaks of the coming of Messiah tells us this very thing.

Let me put it on the screen, it's from Zechariah, chapter 14. It says,

Zechariah 14:4 (ESV)

On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.

On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.

The coming of the Lord when He returns physically to this earth is not going to be some just very gentle quiet event. It's going to be a loud trumpet and then there's going to be an earthquake. I mean big time, where the Mount of Olives is literally going to be split in two, it's going to be an incredible time.

Now remember, Jesus returns first for His bride, that's the rapture that we read about in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4. That's the catching away of the church. But in that return, Jesus doesn't come to the earth. Paul makes it very clear in 1 Thessalonians that we will meet the Lord in the air.

And then we will be with the Lord during the Great Tribulation and then Jesus returns at the end of the great tribulation to the earth in what we call the second coming. So the rapture and the second coming are two different events. The rapture is for the church, the second coming is really for Israel and the world.

But the point of all of this is Jesus is coming back, He's coming again. I even like to say it, Jesus is coming again, come Lord Jesus, right?

I mean, don't you just... boy, the older you get. When I started hearing about this when I was in my 20s, it was cool! Coming again! Sweet! Now I'm in my 60s, it's like, come Lord Jesus, come now. Today would be good. The Vikings have a bye this week, don't worry, you can just come, it's alright (laughter). I want to end this morning with the very last two verses of the entire Bible, from Revelation chapter 22.

Revelation 22:20-21 (ESV)

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. (John writes) Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Amen. Let's stand together. If you need prayer this morning for any reason, we'd love to pray with you. Be free to come up here after we're done and we'd like to pray with you. So we'll close right now.

Father, thank you so much for the time that we get to spend together. Lord, how wonderful it is just to worship you as a body, to lift up our voices in song, to declare your praises and our adoration.

Lord, how wonderful it is to observe communion together as a body and remember the body and blood of our Lord and Savior.

And thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to dig into the scriptures, to be reminded of the wonderful truths that, Lord, you haven't left us alone. You've given us power through the Holy Spirit, and you have promised your return to this earth. And Lord we desire to be busy and fruitful until you come again.

It is our desire, that as long as there's breath in our lungs, that we would serve the Lord with a whole heart. And we thank you, Lord, for your Holy Spirit who desires to empower and enliven our hearts and lives to do what we would otherwise not be able to do.

And so we invite you, Lord, to baptize us afresh in the power and presence of your Holy Spirit to empower us to do your will.

Thank you, Father, for your incredible goodness through Jesus Christ, our Savior and all God's people said, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.