

The Church – Part 2 The Book of Acts

Today, I'd like to start with our subject about the church. Last time, we talked about the promise and some of the promises that God was going to give, and I want to continue that thought even right now.

We looked at the Holy Spirit. He was the promise that the Lord had promised would come to this Earth. He promised the disciples in the book of John that the Holy Spirit would come when He went back to Heaven. There was a waiting period. In Acts 1:5, it says, *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* This is Jesus speaking. He said, "You're going to be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

Many times, we need to wait for God's promises to come to pass. We find ourselves jumping ahead of God. And these people who lived back during this time that we're studying right now about the early church, they were people just like us, and they got excited and they wanted things to happen right away, but just as they had to wait, we need to wait upon God. We need to trust God to take care of things in our lives, and these people had to wait. Many times, we need to wait for God's promises to come to pass.

In Acts 1:4, the disciples were told to wait for the promises of the Father. The promise of the Father was the coming of the Holy Spirit. The promise of the Father was the power that would come by the Holy Spirit. They were to sit still and wait. We read in Luke 24:49 that they were told the same thing. The word "tarry" there also means to wait, and before the Lord Jesus returned to Heaven, He told the disciples that they would have to wait for a person and

this would be the Holy Spirit and that this waiting period would not be many days, according to Acts 1:5.

We see the coming of the Holy Spirit, and that's a promise, and then we see something else. Mighty power comes from God... the Holy Spirit. And once again, in Luke 24:49, the disciples were told to wait, to tarry, until they were endued with power from on high.

The Holy Spirit is God, and he is almighty. He possesses the mighty power of God. As we look at Acts 1:8, it says, *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...* after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall receive power to be witnesses. He could promise this because the Holy Spirit is God.

Without the Holy Spirit, there would be no power to live for Jesus and to be His witnesses, and that's the same today. Trying to do the work of God without the Holy Spirit is like trying to drive a car without gas or trying to run a battery-operated toy or game without the batteries. It's impossible. It just will not work. You must have the energy and power or you will go nowhere and accomplish nothing. Jesus said, "Without me, you can do nothing," John 15:5. Without God's enabling power, we can do nothing.

Now, if you have been saved, if you've trusted Jesus as your Savior, you have the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit living within you. The Bible tells us that if you have not the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, then you are none of His. When we get saved, we have that Holy Spirit of promise who comes to live with us and in us, giving us

the power that we need in order to carry out the things that God has for us as part of His local church, as part of His church.

There used to be a cartoon program about Popeye, the sailor, and whenever he would eat spinach, he would become very strong and powerful and he would do amazing things, but without the spinach, he was very weak. He got his power and strength from the spinach. Well, believers receive power only from God. Believers are very powerful with the Holy Spirit working in them. Without the Spirit's working, they can do nothing.

Next, notice that there was another great promise given in Acts 1:11. Jesus had just ascended. He had gone back up. He'd gone up into Heaven, and as His disciples were looking up into Heaven, two angels spoke to them and gave them a wonderful promise. They said the same Jesus who went up was going to come again. And I see that promise as I read Acts 1:10-11, the promise of Christ's coming. It says there, ¹⁰*And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

In other words, get busy. He's left you but He's coming again. Just as you've seen Him go, He's going to come again, and I believe they were saying, "Now you need to get busy until He comes back again. The same way He went up, He will come down again."

And as we think of this, in I Peter 1:8, it says, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* We don't see Jesus right now but through the

power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, we do see Jesus with our spiritual eye that's given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:10 talks about righteousness. It says, *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.*

In Acts 1:9 it says: *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

Now, I want you to notice in Revelation 1:7, some people use this to refer to the rapture. They think this is speaking of the rapture, but it's not. Revelation 1:7 says, *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.* This is not the rapture of the church. This is not Jesus coming back for His church. This is not Jesus Christ saying, "Come up hither." When He says, "Come up hither," every eye is not going to behold Him; everybody is not going to see Him that's on this Earth; it's only those people who are saved, who are on their way to Heaven, who are part of His church, the called-out assembly. When He says, "Come up hither," only those people who have trusted Him as Savior will see Him. You read about this in I Thessalonians 4:16-17. We may read that in just a few moments. I'm not sure yet.

But the Day of Pentecost came and God promised that there would come a day when He would send His Holy Spirit, and this great event happened on the Day of Pentecost. The Jewish people... when we look at their feast days... for the Jewish people, there were three great feasts held every year – the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, and Pentecost. And there were other feasts, too, but these were the

most important ones. Pentecost was one of these great feast days, and Jews from all over the Roman Empire would gather to the City of Jerusalem to celebrate this important feast. You can read Acts 2:5 and see about this.

This important day is described in Leviticus 23:15-22. It was a special day in Old Testament times, but as we read in Acts 2 we see that this day became even more special. Fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead and ten days after Jesus went back to Heaven, God did something wonderful. He sent the Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of believers and to form something brand new to carry on the work that Jesus had started on this Earth, while He walked this Earth, to carry on that section of Scripture that says the gates of Hell would not prevail against something, and that "something" is the church. The Holy Spirit came to live in believers.

And I want you to notice something unusual. There are four unusual happenings that took place on the Day of Pentecost. God wanted to make it very clear that this was an extra special day. God was doing something wonderful and He wanted people to know about it. There were three extra special things... actually four... on the Day of Pentecost that we read about. First, in Acts 2:2 we see a noise like a wind. It says, *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

Something was happening and it filled all the house. Something was going on. This was extra special. This was not normal. And as the believers... and we read about this... were together on the Day of Pentecost, suddenly there came a sound or a noise from Heaven which was like a mighty rushing wind. It wasn't something real light like a breeze. It was something that was a rushing mighty wind. And this noise did not come from a hurricane

or a storm. It came from Heaven. God wanted everyone to know that He was doing something very special, very unique.

As we read in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is compared to the wind. In John 3:8, it says, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

A human being can't explain exactly what God does and what the Holy Spirit is doing. We can't see Him but we certainly know He's there because, first of all, the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, through Jesus Christ, tells us that the Holy Spirit is going to live in and through us as believers as part of the church. He's going to give us power.

Now, the wind is invisible. We can't see it, but the invisible wind is able to do amazing things. It pushes a sailboat across the lake, it keeps a kite high in the air, turns a windmill and does many other things, and we cannot see the wind but we can see what the wind does. The Holy Spirit is invisible. We cannot see the Holy Spirit. When God sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, He caused a great noise to be heard like the wind. He wanted the disciples to know that something very special was happening. If God had not done this, the disciples might have said, "I wonder if the Holy Spirit really came. We don't see anything and we didn't hear anything. Did something really happen?" Well, God made it very clear that on the day, that on this day, the Day of Pentecost, something special was really happening.

Next time, we're going to look at two more things that took place, unusual happenings that took place on the Day of Pentecost, and I wonder today, have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior? That would be unusual for you today if you would do that because you've

never done that before. You've never said, "Lord, come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior. I want to go to Heaven." If you want something unusual to happen to you, you need to trust Jesus Christ today and then you'll see how glad you are that Jesus Christ came to live with you. The Holy Spirit came to indwell you and that now you're on your way to Heaven.

And if you are saved, you need to be serving Him today through the power of the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit indwells you.

Father, I pray for those listening, for that person today who does not know you, may that person receive Jesus right now. For that person who is saved, may that person serve You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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