

Come Follow Me  
Elo Viz production  
Week 28  
Acts 1-5

Elder Holland Enlarges the title to the books of Acts by more appropriately calling it: “The Acts of the Resurrected Christ Working through the Holy Spirit in the Lives and Ministries of His Ordained Apostles.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2003/01/teaching-preaching-healing?lang=eng>

This title more accurately tells us the purpose of this record. We know that the book of Acts was written by Luke. We know this because the beginning of Luke and the beginning of Acts are very close in their introductions, both are addressed to a man by the name of Theophilus. Some believe that this is more of the type of people he is addressing because the Name Theophilus in Greek means “Friend of God”. However, most scholars believe that Theophilus was a man, most likely Luke’s master. Doctors in that day were not like doctors today. They were actually slaves or servants and it is most likely that this man he is addressing is his master that allowed him to travel away from his home, to see if the rumors were true of this “healer” from Galilee. What is fascinating about this is; during Luke’s writing in the book of Luke he uses the pronouns “them, or they” when referring to the apostles. But in the book of Acts he now talks about this same group, but transitions to using the pronouns “We, and Us”. Which leads us to believe that he now considers himself to be among those who have dedicated their lives to the service of the resurrected Lord.

And we do see a dramatic change in some of these apostles as they take the reigns of leading this new little church. The big question is “Why?” Why are they so different from when Jesus was leading them in His mortal ministry?

For example:

- They spoke in Tongues
- Peter who denied Christ 3 times is very bold and speaks with great power to the same men who delivered Christ to be crucified.
- they heal a man that was crippled from birth and he stood forth as a witness of the miracle.
- a faithless couple are struck dead after lying to the apostles.
- in one day they convert 3000 people. Then a little while later convert 5000 people
- They walked out of a prison after being incarcerated.

”And **fear** came upon every soul: and many wonders and **signs** were done by the apostles.” (Acts 2:43)

The list is actually very long if we were to reference all the miracles performed by the apostles. But these were the same men that couldn't cast out a devil and Jesus had to step in to heal him. These are the same men that would argue relentlessly about which of them is greatest in the kingdom of God. Why are they so different now? It is the very same thing that can change us if we let it. And it is the power by which we shall come to know Jesus if we understand it.

It starts in John 14. This is when Jesus is with His disciples in the upper room and is teaching them about the Holy spirit, He says:

**16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may **abide** with you for ever;

**17** *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

Now, Please notice a couple important things here. First He says that at this time they have the Holy Spirit to be with them. The Greek word is “Para” which means near or around. But then Jesus uses a future tense word. After He tells them that the spirit is with them He says: And shall be in you. Right now the Spirit is with them but soon it will be in them. How soon? Well they didn't know it, but it was a few days later. In John 20, But this is after Jesus has risen from the dead. He has been resurrected and while the door is shut and they are all together Jesus appears in the midst of them, and this is what He does:

**21** Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* **Father** hath **sent** me, even so **send** I you.

**22** And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:” (John 20:21-22)

This may sound very familiar to you. First before baptism we learn about the Holy Spirit and then after we are baptized these same words are used “Receive the Holy Ghost” as priesthood hands are laid upon our heads. And we think: Well, that's it. We have the Holy Spirit to be with us always now. Because this is what Jesus meant by the spirit shall be in you. But look at this: This process isn't over. The Apostles did not go out immediately and start healing people and calling down miracles from heaven. And just as it is not over for them it is not over for us. There is more that we need in order to have the POWER of the Holy spirit.

Acts Chapter 1 Jesus comes to them again and:

“he **shewed** himself alive after his **passion** by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things **pertaining** to the kingdom of God:

**4** And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the **promise** of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be **baptized** with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

8 But ye shall receive **power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be **witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in **Samaria**, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:3-5,8)

Now, wait wait wait. Didn't they already receive the Holy Ghost back in John 20, why is Jesus now saying that they will receive it not many days hence?

These two passages can be confusing if we don't understand what it is that Jesus is talking about. There is a difference between the Gift of the Holy Ghost, or receiving the Holy Ghost after we are baptized with water. And the Power of the Holy Ghost or what we can also refer to as the Baptism of Fire. In the upper room in John 20 the disciples received the Holy Ghost, but now in Acts 1 they are receiving the Power of the Holy Ghost.

And it took them 40 days.... Consistence? I think not.

During those 40 days they were shown "many infallible proofs". One of them being the resurrected Jesus Christ. And hearing things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Until they received the "promise of the Father".

What promise?

The Promise of exalting faith.

Let me pause for a second and address something. What we are speaking about here may be new to you. You might be saying that this is not what I grew up in the church being taught. Well there comes a time when tradition has to give way to the doctrine contained in the scriptures. If you still have doubts and your faith still sometimes waivers when the winds of the world blow then you have not had this baptism of fire or the promise of the father spoken of by Jesus. When you feel in your heart of hearts that you can stand before the world and declare with unwavering faith your love and conviction for the Lord Jesus Christ without any thought of your own life, then and only then have you been endowed with this power of the Holy Spirit.

Here are some examples of what this power looks like:

In Acts 4 the people were under heavy persecution. Horrendous things were done to these early believers. They come together to pray and this is what they say:

"Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and **earth**, and the sea, and all that in them is. Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word. By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

31 ¶ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” (Acts 4:24-32)

Consider the words of their prayer and how our prayers compare. You know, sometimes I think we look to God and say: God, this is a big thing I am asking, I'm not sure if you are capable or even that you care about it. Maybe you don't have time to help me. Or it's possible that I'm not that important to you. So maybe I shouldn't ask for anything. Are you kidding me?

This is proof of a lack of faith in our true and living God. Lord, Thou art God, they said. God, you created everything and everyone, you can do anything. Behold their threatenings. How simple and powerful are those words. How full of faith.

We see another example in the prophet Nephi, still as a young man:

”For it came to pass after I had desired to know the things that my father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat pondering in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high mountain, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot. And the Spirit said unto me: Behold, what desirest thou?” (1 Nephi 11:1)

That's power in the Holy Spirit. His Father saw a vision and without any doubt Nephi knew the Lord could and would show him if he asked in faith. Remember what he said to his faithless brothers after his vision was over? After he had just witnessed his people being destroyed. He came up on his brothers arguing about what their father had told them.

“5 And it came to pass that I was overcome because of my afflictions, for I considered that mine afflictions were great above all, because of the destruction of my people, for I had beheld their fall.

6 And it came to pass that after I had received strength I spake unto my brethren, desiring to know of them the cause of their disputations.

7 And they said: Behold, we cannot understand the words which our father hath spoken concerning the natural branches of the olive tree, and also concerning the Gentiles.

8 And I said unto them: Have ye inquired of the Lord?” (1 Nephi 15:5-8)

Have you asked God? If you want to know something all you have to do is ask in faith. It seemed so easy for him. Maybe it was. And maybe it can be for you as well.

Jesus said:

“If ye then, **being evil**, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”  
(Matt 7:11)

I think sometimes we get stuck in the mode of “what can I do to get God to bless me?” Or “God will bless me when He is good and ready”

Neither of these mindsets will open the windows of Heaven and bless us with the Power of the Spirit. We do have to ask, and it does have to be God’s will and in His time frame. But, He is more liberal in His views and boundless in His mercy than we can ever conceive. Perhaps the one thing that is holding us back in our faith and belief in His limitless abilities.

A major take away from this week's study could be that 40 days of shutting out the world and a singular focus on God and His gospel could bring incredible Power of the Spirit, if that is what you seek.

God does care about you and your problems. God does want to bless you and see you happy. God does want to give you strength in your persecutions. And He wants to give you the Power of the Spirit to do His work! I testify that this is God's truth.

In His holy name, even Jesus Christ, Amen.