

Acts 1: 4-26

“The Power, The Purpose, and The Pattern”

The book of Acts is the continuing saga of the work of Jesus Christ upon the earth. Serving as a sequel to the gospel accounts and a background to the epistles. But as to where Jesus *had* been at work *physically, bodily*, after His ascension the work would continue through His body *spiritually*, otherwise known as the church. Last week we discovered that all that Jesus done, all His wonderful works, every *thing* He *taught*, every *life* He *touched* was only the beginning, the spearhead (if you will) of what He was to do throughout the ages. The works and witness of Jesus Christ upon the earth was in no way *complete* when He ascended, it had only *commenced*, now certainly when it came to His sacrifice for the sin of the world; that was finished. The purchase price for the penalty of our sin had been paid in full upon the cross, Jesus fulfilled His *ministry* of redemption, but now He would work through His body (the church) to propel the *message* of redemption to a hurt and dying world. He did the *work*, and calls us to be the *witness* of that work. and So He *commanded* the apostles whom He had *commissioned* to *carry on* that which He had *commenced* after He (according to vs 3) presented Himself alive to them after His suffering in a manner that was *concrete*.

For 40 days He presented Himself alive to them, demonstrating to them that it was Him in the flesh, He was physical, tangible, touchable. and He spoke to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, equipping them for the work to which they'd been called. and That's one thing we've noted over and over again as we've traveled through the scriptures, that whenever Jesus enlists you, He will enable you, if He employs you, He'll empower you, if He calls you He'll equip you, if He sends you He will sanction you with all that you need in order that you might follow through and fulfill that to which He has committed to your trust. He had been training them and teaching them for 3-3 ½ straight years, He'd spent 40 more days after the resurrection recapping, doing some follow up, opening their understanding (According to Luke 24:45) to those scriptures that pertained to Him, speaking to them things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. and As if that weren't enough, as the infomercials would so properly put it, “But wait, there's more.” Notice with me in vs 4-5

Vs4-5

You see having information is one thing, but having the power to implement, and execute that information is quite another. So that I know that when I leave this place and turn out on to the highway my speedometer is to stay at 55 mph or below. The information is there, but having the fortitude to follow through with that information seems to be quite another. I have a tendency to want to go 58 (you get the idea). I know that when someone pulls out in front of me and decides to go 48 mph that I really shouldn't get angry with them, they are free to exercise that right as a United States citizen, I have that information in my being. But keeping my cool and maintaining control can some times be another thing.

Well, Jesus has given to them all the information that they need, but the power to implement and begin to place into practice that information is still lacking in their lives. Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, he'd confessed it with his own mouth, Jesus acknowledged his divine revelation there. Yet the fortitude to follow through on that commitment to Him was lacking, when it came time to put up or shut up, Peter found himself caving in and collapsing under the pressure to remain committed to Christ though he knew concretely whom He was. So Jesus is telling them here, "There's a purpose, and a plan that I have for your lives, but don't get the cart before the horse, wait for Me to enable you for that to which I have enlisted you."

This is a point that we so often fall short in, God gives us a glimpse into His purpose for us, His plan for us, and we just start running when in reality we need to be waiting upon Him to equip us accordingly for His call. Now that doesn't mean that we're to sit idle, these guys would pray, and seek the Lord, they would contemplate and meditate upon His word and avail themselves *to* Him in anyway that He would see fit to move *through* them while waiting *upon* Him to bring to pass that which He'd promised. and If God is calling you to step outside of your comfort zone than you need to acknowledge that and respond accordingly trusting in Him that He's equipped you for the work that He's called you to.

But the point I want you to see here is that the specific instruction was not to get out ahead *of* Him, but rather to wait for the Promise of the Father to be sent *upon* them. Which He goes ahead and elaborates on as being the person of the Holy Spirit, and it would seem most probable that the passage Jesus is in reference to is the one there in the book of Joel. Because we've noted in the gospel of John how that Jesus promised that after His physical departure He would pray to the Father who would send us another Helper in His name, the Spirit of truth whom the world could not receive. and He would always credit the Father with the act of sending the Holy Spirit but where did the Father say that He would send the Holy Spirit? (Which by the way each of those passages as well as the one before us demonstrates to us the reality of the Trinity, 1 God represented in 3 distinct persons, Jesus here, speaking of the Promise, in regards to the Spirit, of the Father. So all 3 seen there.) But we read in Joel Ch 2 where God says, "*And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.*" Joel 2:28-29 and It goes on to speak of wonders that will be done in the heavens and on the earth, and that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, for in Mt Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said. and There the Father gave the assurance of the out pouring of His Spirit, not just upon the few that He had ordained into a special office, but upon all flesh, as many as would call upon His name. and This is the Promise of the Father that Jesus refers to that they've heard from Him.

It's interesting that when John was baptizing with water he spoke of Jesus' baptizing men with the Holy Spirit, and when Jesus is preparing them for the baptizing of the Holy Spirit He references back to John's baptism with water. John had said, "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*" Matt 3:11 and Here's Jesus speaking of baptizing them with the Holy Spirit and He points them back to John's baptism with water. and The idea there is that John's baptism was that of full immersion, whereby the water would consume you and actually overflow you. and Jesus is saying that even as John's water baptism was that of full submersion, overflowing waters pouring forth around you, overflowing you, fully saturating you. Even so the baptism with the Holy Spirit will be like that, He will be poured out upon you till He's overflowing from you, and fully saturating you. Remember there in John's gospel we read that, "*On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*" But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39 You see its one thing to have the Spirit *fill* you, and that's a great thing, but its another thing altogether to have the Holy Spirit overflowing out *from* you. Just spilling out, and gushing forth from you into the hearts and lives of others, and that's what Jesus is referencing here with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Vs6

As opposed to Rome, and we have a tendency to want to chide these guys for seeming to only have their mind in one place with this. But the Lord didn't chide them here, because *there are* several scriptures that *closely* associate the restoration of the kingdom of Israel with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus frequently spoke of the kingdom of God, the last 40 days He's been sharing with them things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and so when He speaks to them of the soon outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to them it seems to be a natural crescendo to at that time restore the kingdom to Israel along with it, kind of a simultaneous spiritual and political rebirth for the nation.

Vs7-8

So Jesus doesn't *rebuke* them, He simply *refocuses* them. It's like, "The times and seasons of the restoration of the kingdom isn't your *concern*, *this commission* is." and You might underline there in vs 7 where it says, "It is not for you to know." We have a tendency to want to know everything about anything, and there are certain things that we just don't need to know and it's ok that we don't know them. You might say we're on a "need to know" basis and there are things we just have no need to know. The bible says, "*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever,*" Deut 29:29 But people are always trying to unlock the mysteries, the times and the seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

I remember the buzz that swept through when I was in high school, and I wasn't walking with the Lord but it was "88 reasons why the Lord will return in 88" the next year it was "89 reasons He'll return in 89" at one point it seems like they even narrowed it down to the month of October or something. The exact timing of His coming isn't our concern, we're to concern ourselves with His commission.

This is the "more" we were speaking about earlier; our commission is to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. But before employs us to give out the information concerning Him, He promises to empower and enable us to implement and execute that information in a manner that reflects Him properly. You see the way God desires to use your life falls in line with Zech 4:6, "*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, ' Says the LORD of hosts.*" He doesn't want to *use* you based on anything that's *in* you or about you, those are the things we're to crucify, its not your strength He wants to harness, He wants us to walk in the power of His Spirit, not in the fortitude of our own self will. Because believe me, when push comes to shove that won't get you too far, ask Peter. He wants to empower you personally, and so He says here in vs 8 that you shall *receive* that power when the Holy Spirit has come *upon* you (which correlates directly with what He said in vs 5 regarding being baptized with the Holy Spirit). Being baptized with the Holy Spirit, or having the Holy Spirit come upon you is simply 2 different ways of saying the same thing. A lot of groups get caught up in the semantics of it, but if you want to call it "filled," or "baptized," or "the upon" experience or whatever it really doesn't matter to me what you *call* it, what matters to me is that you *have* it. Because with out it your ability to be the witness that Jesus has called you to be is null and void. That's not to say that you won't be a witness at all, we're all witnesses whether you want to be or not, its what type of witness you are that's in question. Be it an accurate reflection of the person of Jesus Christ or a carnal Christian who just can't seem to stop sinning and caving in under the pressures of the world. So we want to note (quickly) 3 things about vs 8 here that Jesus speaks about. If you take notes they are, #1 The Power, #2 The Purpose, and #3 The Pattern.

1st of All the Power that God has for your life as a believer is that of the person of the Holy Spirit. "You shall receive power *when* the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Which means that if the Holy Spirit has not come upon you, you're not walking in power, that is, dunamis. That word from which we get our word "dynamite, " that dynamic, explosive, power of the Holy Spirit that works in you the witness of Jesus Christ to the world around you.

Now this of course works into the 3-fold relationship that humanity might experience as it relates to one's relationship with the Holy Spirit. and We've spoken of this recently back in John's gospel. Now matter how you slice it Jesus used 3 distinctly different prepositions in describing one's relationship with the Holy Spirit. #1 Para, #2 En, and #3 Epi.

The “Para” is the coming alongside, as the Holy Spirit comes alongside of us, convicting us of sin and our need for a Savior. You begin to grow a conscience as to where before you had none, and you experience a certain amount of remorse over your sin, unbeknownst to you the Holy Spirit has come alongside of you and is beginning to deal with you.

The “En” is exactly the same meaning as our word “In” only spelled different, once you respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and ask Christ into your heart, the Holy Spirit literally comes “En” you to indwell and live in you. At this point you’re saved, sealed and headed for Heaven. This is where the disciples are at currently, remember there in John 20 Jesus said to His disciples, “*“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’*” John 20:21-22 and At that point they entered into that born again “En” experience of the new covenant.

Here Jesus speaks of the power to be a witness imparted to you once the Holy Spirit has come “Epi” or upon you. So that in John 14 we seen Jesus say in regards to the Holy Spirit, “... *for He dwells ‘para’ you and will be ‘en’ you.*” John 14:17 No matter how you look at it He used 2 different words there to describe our relationship with the Holy Spirit and then we’re seeing the 3rd one here, “*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come ‘epi’ you;*” Acts 1:8 Now the question comes up, how does one receive this power? Exactly the same way you received Christ initially, you ask and believe and receive by faith, God wants to do it, Jesus said, “*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*” Luke 11:13

I realize that there’s much confusion here because so many seem to purport or project that the purpose of having the Holy Spirit working in this capacity in your life is so that we might get the Holy Ghost goose bumps on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings. That you might have emotional highs and warm fuzzies that put all your problems in proper perspective, but the fact is that the purpose of the Holy Spirit coming upon a persons life is to empower them to witness the reality of a risen Savior. The steam of a locomotive isn’t given to blow the whistle, its purpose is to power the engine and push the train down the tracks and so to with the power of the Holy Spirit in your life, which leads us (or actually finds us) in the center of #2, The Purpose. The Power of our lives is the Holy Spirit, Jesus said don’t move out with out it, in John’s gospel He put it like this, “...*without Me you can do nothing.*” John 15:5 The purpose is to be a witness, and the word there is “Martyr.” Death isn’t what makes a martyr, death only validates the fact that the individual already was a martyr. It’s like sinning doesn’t make us sinners, we were already sinners, that’s why we sin, our sin only proves that we were already sinners or else we wouldn’t have sinned. But a martyr is one who is so true to what he believes that he’ll testify of those facts if necessary to the death.

Remember when Paul was in Caesarea headed for Jerusalem and everywhere he went people were telling him by the Holy Spirit that trouble was awaiting him there. and They were

begging him not to go, and we read, *“Then Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’”* Acts 21:13

This is what Jesus is referring to, and all the apostles (outside of John) would be called to do just that, give their lives for the sake of the gospel. and They were willing to because the Holy Spirit had made them witnesses to Jesus Christ and God wants to work this same depth of conviction into your heart and mine, odds are God won’t call you to lay down your life physically for the gospel, though its not out of the question. But He has asked that you die to self, are you willing to do that? Are you willing to decrease, that He might increase in your life, that you might be His witness, that’s His purpose for empowering you. and 3^{rdly} we see the pattern, “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth.” It’s like a rock thrown in the heart of a pond that ripples out to every side. It begins right where you’re at, in your own heart, your Jerusalem, into Judea, your own home, your family perhaps your friends, Samaria, neighbors/city, those you don’t know personally or haven’t befriended individually. and Then on out wherever God may send you to whatever place upon the face of the earth. Where He sends you you’ll go, where He plants you you’ll grow type thing. He may not send you to the other side of the world, but He wants you to reach the outer extremes of your world, your sphere of influence, those whom you’re around in the office or work place or at school or wherever.

Note quickly the places that He speaks of, Jerusalem which crucified Him, Judea which rejected Him, Samaria was counted as a wasteland full of impure half breeds ($\frac{1}{2}$ Jew $\frac{1}{2}$ Gentile) and the end of the earth, Gentile country, Gentiles were considered by devout Jews in that day as nothing more than fuel for the fires of hell. Yet God desired His witness to go into these places, the book of Hebrews in speaking of the unchangeable priesthood of Jesus Christ says, *“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”* Heb 7:25 There is no one beyond the grip of the saving grace of Jesus Christ

Vs9-11

So He refocuses, and reassures them of the power that’s to come, the purpose thereof and the pattern they’re to follow and then He ascends right in front of them until a cloud receives Him out of their sight. and We shouldn’t think this is a cumulonimbus or whatever, this is the shekinah glory of God, this is that which we see in Ex 16:10 the cloud that enveloped Peter, James and John there on the Mt of Transfiguration in Luke 9:34, and they’re standing there just blown out. and Jesus left them this way rather than simply disappearing as He’d done over the last 40 days so that they’d know that this wasn’t like the other times, He was leaving them physically for good, so that the Promise of the Father might be sent. and As they’re standing there just staring in awe, 2 men, presumably angels say, “What are you guys doing staring up into the sky?” (read last $\frac{1}{2}$ vs 11)

Translation, Jesus is coming again, and He's coming bodily, personally, visibly, and gloriously. Rev 1:7 *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen."* Now I don't when that is, but what's imperative is that *when* He comes you and I be found faithful. What did Jesus say? In speaking of what needs to be our priorities He said, *"Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately."* (No last second trying to get things in order, they're prepared) *Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."* Luke 12:35-38 He goes on to say, *"Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."* Luke 12:42-46 Jesus is coming again, be found faithful when He does.
Vs12-14

Couple of things quickly #1 The center of their fellowship was the risen Christ. and They were there in that place to worship, wait upon and magnify Him, a good example to follow. When we come together we want to be of one accord, of like mind, with one primary priority, to worship, wait up, and magnify Jesus Christ Contemplate and meditate on His Word, yeah they could've argued over position as they were accustomed, Jesus' family could've vied for special privileges. There was all sorts of opportunity for division and discord here in the natural. But the reality of the resurrected Christ in their hearts superceded any natural contention they may have with one another. So to with you and me, the power of the resurrection in your life, and in mine is a much more powerful force for uniting than any of those other things may be for dividing. We're not talking about coddling sin here, we're speaking about holding past failures against one another, or personality quirks rubbing on one another. Our past isn't what binds us, our compatibility personality wise isn't what brings us together, Jesus Christ and the power of the resurrection is our common bond.

Its what made believers out of Jesus' brothers (1/2 brothers I should say). The gospels tell us that on the pre-side of the cross they didn't believe in Jesus, but the resurrection made believers out of them. and People seeing the resurrected Jesus in your life will make believers out of them as well. Oh, there will be those who reject, but its not you that's going to save them, it's the love of Jesus Christ in you that will draw them to repentance. (and By the way we note that Mary was in no special place here simply acknowledged as among them and then we'll never see or hear from her again in the pages of scripture.)

Vs15-20

It doesn't really surprise us to see the impulsive nature of Peter stand up and seek to deal with a situation here. and This is the 1st time we see him quoting scripture and it's awesome the working knowledge and insight he seemed to have even then. Now Jesus had been teaching them for the last 40 days and perhaps as He was teaching them the scriptures that demonstrated how the Christ ought to have suffered and died, and resurrect the 3rd day this was a couple of the scriptures He pointed out. But underline that there in vs 16, "This Scripture had to be fulfilled." The written Word of God is a certainty, God is not a man that He should lie, Heaven and earth will pass away His Word will by no means pass away, it had to happen, the Scripture must be fulfilled. Which is good news by the way, it means His Word regarding everlasting life and His coming again to receive you unto Himself has to be fulfilled as well. and Notice that though it came from David's mouth it was spoke by the Holy Spirit, all scripture is inspired by God or literally, "God breathed" the scripture may've been penned by man, but it was written by God.

Vs21-26

You never hear *from* him or *of* him again. and There are great people on both sides of this, personally I believe that Peter erred here, this was before the sending of the Holy Spirit. Jesus didn't tell them to appoint another but to wait, I believe God's choice was Paul. But again that's for you to decide either way it won't interfere with your relationship with God. As for casting lots you won't see it again after the coming of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who leads us and guides us into all truth. I would just leave you with that comment there in vs 24, "You, O Lord, know the hearts of all men." How's your heart this morning? God knows if you're seeking to draw near to Him or drift away from Him. If you're ready to receive Him or willing to reject Him. Let me encourage you, draw near to Him with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. Ask Him to empower you with His Holy Spirit, that you might be enabled, to be His witness to your world. That you yourself would be right with Him in your own heart, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth.