

Walking Through the Word

The Holy Spirit and the Church (Week 23)

Author: Luke (a Gentile physician). Acts is “Luke – the sequel.”

Purpose: Acts was written to give a genuine account of the beginnings of the early church.

Story: **The Holy Spirit and the start of the “church”**; (E: The Coming of the Holy Spirit, The Lame Man at the Gate Beautiful, Peter and John in Prison, Sharing in the Early Church, An Angel Opens Prison Doors, p 490-501)

Location: **Acts 1-5.**

Bios & definitions

Holy Spirit: the “gift” the Father had promised. The Holy Spirit was the third revelation of God. The power of the Holy Spirit is what gives the church and its members strength to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. With the coming of the Holy Spirit the entire trinity has been revealed – that is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. A great way to understand or explain the trinity is like water. Water has three distinct forms but each one is no more or less water than the other. The liquid form is water, the solid form is ice and the vapor is steam (much like the Holy Spirit).

Matthias: One of the believers (numbering about 120) chosen to take over the apostolic ministry left behind by Judas.

Pentecost: This was also known as the Feast of Weeks. It was held 50 days after Passover and was one of three major annual feasts (Deuteronomy 16:16). There would be people from all nations gathered for such a great feast.

Tongues of Fire: Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit came suddenly and accompanied by the sound like the bowing of a violent wind. The Holy Spirit is often compared to wind in scripture and it is still a great way to describe the Holy Spirit to people today. You cannot see the wind, but you can hear it and see its effects. The Holy Spirit came as tongues of fire for a few reasons. It fulfills John the Baptists words (Luke 3:16) regarding the Holy Spirit’s baptizing with fire. The Holy Spirit came as tongues to symbolize speech and the communication of the gospel. Fire was also known for purification in that day and still is today. The Holy Spirit does the work of purification in our lives many times through the fires we endure in this life.

Barnabas: The name given to Joseph of Cyprus by the apostles. The name means Son of Encouragement. The first example of an early Christian selling property and giving the proceeds to the apostles to help the needy.

Ananias and Sapphira: This couple were following the example of Barnabas, but greed captured their hearts. He sold a field, but the money was too great of a temptation. Ananias brought the money (the portion he did not keep back for himself) and laid it at the Apostles feet as though it were the entire amount. Due to his greed and the lie, he was struck dead. Sapphira was asked, without knowledge of her husband’s fate, whether the amount presented was the full amount and she too lied and met the same fate as her husband.

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Story: **Peter's Ministry Continued** (E: Seven are Chosen, Stephen is Stoned, Simon Tries to Buy the Holy Spirit, Philip and the Ethiopian, A Man is Healed of Palsy, Dorcas is Raised from the Dead, Peter and Cornelius, An Angel lets Peter Out of Prison, , p 501-509, 516-522)

Location: **Acts 6-12**

Bios & definitions

Philip: One of the seven chosen to look after the widow and orphans. He was only one of two mentioned by name. The other was Stephen.

Stephen: The other chosen to care for widows and orphans. Stephen was the first martyr for Christ. Stephen's stoning caused fear among the believers and caused them to flee to the surrounding countries, thus fulfilling the words of the Lord in Acts 1:8.

Simon (the sorcerer): Simon did tricks and magic that impressed the people around him. When Philip came to Samaria and did miracles in the name of the Lord, Simon was amazed. Simon became a believer but requested to buy the magic the apostles were doing.

Ethiopian: He came riding in a chariot with the book of Isaiah. This meant he was a man of wealth. Philip explained the scripture to him and he was saved and immediately baptized.

Dorcas: The woman cared for the needy, sick and poor. She became ill and died and received the best care in return for her good deeds. Peter came and pleaded to the Lord for her life and she was raised from the dead.

Cornelius: He was a captain in the Roman army that not only worshipped God, but helped the poor and the needy. Peter was given the dream of the sheets while Cornelius was on his way to meet Peter.