

Acts 1 (Part 2) :12-26 • Choosing a replacement the old way

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We just started the Book of Acts last Sunday. If you're kind of new jumping in here with us, you can catch up very easily just by going to ccontario.com and you can catch up on last week's study.

And I want to remind you that in those first 11 verses of Acts chapter 1, Jesus told His disciples to stay put and not to leave Jerusalem. Because the promise of the Father, He said, was going to be coming. He was referring to the Holy Spirit sent from heaven to empower them for service.

And you'll remember that we latched onto one particular verse in that study that was very key to understanding what Jesus was talking about regarding the coming of the Spirit and it was verse 8. We'll put it up on the screen so we can see it all together. In Acts 1:8 it says,

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses..."

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And Jesus very specifically outlined the purpose of this ministry of the Spirit for which they were waiting. He did not say you will receive salvation. They had already been saved through the indwelling Spirit, which He breathed on them resurrection evening and they became born again at that point.

Now He's telling them that there is the necessity of this work of the Spirit, that they might be empowered to go forth in power, through the Spirit, and minister, and that sort of thing. And He referred to it as, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That's not a term that we made up, it's one Jesus gave us.

He said, John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:5) And it is through this baptism of the Holy Spirit that the empowering work of the Spirit takes place and that's where spiritual gifts

begin to operate. When we talk about the empowering of the Spirit, we're talking about the manifestation of supernatural gifts that begin to operate in the life of the believer. And Paul outlines them in 1 Corinthians. I'll put it up on the screen so you can see it together. He writes,

1 Corinthians 12:1,7-10 (ESV)

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, (that means languages) to another the interpretation of (those languages, or as they refer to them as) tongues.

And we're not going to get in here this morning to the explanation of all of these gifts of the Spirit, but these are just some of the gifts that God gives through His Spirit for the functioning of the church body that are all part of the empowering work.

And because believers are now not only indwelt, but also empowered by the Spirit, that's a huge game changer. I mean, this is a different sort of a scenario that we're dealing with now because we've studied through the Old Testament and we know how they operated. We know the way they made decisions. We know the kind of things they did to determine the will of God and to operate as God told them to operate.

But now we are seeing a change in all of that with this promise of the coming of the Spirit to empower. It is a new moving, a new working of the Spirit to illuminate and empower the believer. Now, you're probably saying, pastor Paul, when are you going to get into the verses we're covering here today? Well, I am

right now, but let me just tell you where we don't see this empowered working of the Spirit is in these following verses. You're not going to see it here.

You're not going to actually see the Spirit coming upon them until we get to Acts chapter 2, which is the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost. And it is during that time that God chose to bring the power of the Holy Spirit upon the assembled believers. But that's not yet.

I want you to remember that we learned in our first 11 verses that Jesus appeared to His disciples over a period of 40 days. But Pentecost comes 50 days after Passover. We know that there was about a week and a half; about 10 days, that they had to wait. Jesus said, wait, stay here in Jerusalem, because the baptism of the Spirit is coming so, they've got 10 days to wait. What are they doing during those 10 days?

Well, let's read about it here, beginning in verse 12 of chapter 1. This is right after the ascension of Jesus. It says, *"Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶ "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry."

¹⁸ (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. (I'm not sure why we needed to know that) ¹⁹ And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, (which) that is, Field of Blood.)

²⁰ "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, " 'May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'; and " 'Let another take his office.' ²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John

until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”

²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” (ESV)

Stop there, let's pray.

Father, we thank you. We thank you for your presence here today. We thank you for your Word. We thank you for the illumination of your Holy Spirit by which we lay hold of the scriptures.

And we pray, Father God, that today we would be open to all that you desire to say to us, to minister grace and insight from the Scripture into our hearts.

We look to you, Lord, to fill us, to nourish us, to equip us. We ask all of these things in the name of Jesus our Savior, amen. Amen.

So we are dealing here with this waiting period and for the most part this 10 days or so that the apostles waited for this coming of the Spirit, which Jesus referred to. They were quite productive. We're told in verse 14, they spent their time together in prayer. And that's always a good thing.

We're told that they were together, that Mary, the mother of Jesus was with them and that by this time, even the brothers of Jesus. That would have been James and Jude, were also numbered among them as well. And it would have probably been better if they had just stuck to praying during this time.

But Peter ended up standing up at one point among the assembled believers and he suggested that they replace Judas Iscariot; the one who had betrayed Jesus. And after giving his little speech and quoting a couple of the Psalms along with it, Peter laid out some qualifications for the replacement of this twelfth apostle.

In verse 21, you'll notice here in your Bible, he said that *“one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,”* and then he even said, it must begin with the baptism of John. And he must have been with us the whole time, all the way up to the point of witnessing the resurrection. And those are the qualifications he laid out.

Then Luke tells us in verse 23 that they put forward two men. One man named Joseph who also went by the name of Barsabbas and Justus and another man by the name of Matthias. And after offering up a prayer, we're told in verse 26 that they did something that was common in the Old Testament for determining the will of God.

It says in verse 26, *“And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”* This was the kind of a thing that we read about in the Old Testament. It was very similar to casting or rolling the dice and saying, okay Joseph, he's number 4 and Matthias is number 7, let's see which one comes up here. All right. I mean, it's kind of similar to that, but it's called the casting of dice.

It was used even in the distribution of the land when they first came in under the leadership of Joshua. Let me show you a passage on the screen from Joshua chapter 18. This is Joshua speaking here, he says,

Joshua 18:6 (ESV)

“And you shall describe the land in seven divisions and bring the description here to me. And I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God.”

“And you shall describe the land in seven divisions and bring the description here to me. And I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God.”

And so you can see that this is one of the several mentions that we have in the Old Testament of the casting of lots for the determining of the will of God. But I want to reiterate that this, what we are reading here in Acts, chapter 1, takes place in this interim period between the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit to empower for spiritual gifts. And it's important that we understand that.

And the reason is, you never, ever hear of casting of lots after this point. After the coming of the Spirit, they never once cast lots again. And the reason is, they will be empowered through the Holy Spirit to do things in a completely different manner.

The whole paradigm of how they are to determine the will of God changes from that point onward; from Acts chapter 2 onward. What we see them doing here in Acts 1, is choosing a leader, they're choosing an apostle. And by the way, I'll just tell you, I believe this was a mistake. I don't think that this was something that they'd been directed by the Spirit to do. I think this was an idea that Peter

had, hey, let's fill Judas's spot. And so they pick these two guys that we never hear from again.

Matthias, who is chosen to be the 12th apostle is never heard from again. And my personal opinion, and that's all it is, and I'll tell you that right now, it's nothing but an opinion so don't go telling people this is..., right. This is the way it is.

My opinion is that Paul was the 12th, he was the one chosen. But they didn't wait, they decided to kind of move ahead. All right, that's fine, that can be forgiven, it's not a major issue. But they didn't wait and they should have waited. Because had they waited, they would have realized that God was about to bring a totally new way of picking leaders.

Now, in actually the calling of Paul, we see this new way and we actually see it later on in the Book of Acts. Let me show you on the screen. It's in Acts chapter 13. It says,

Acts 13:-3 (ESV)

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (of course that's the apostle Paul before he was referred to that way, and) While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, (look at what it says) the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

What do you see here? You see the new way, the new Spirit led way of determining and selecting leaders. And Luke is very careful in that passage of chapter 13 to tell us that there were not only teachers in the church at Antioch, but there were also people who operated in the prophetic. And it was through one of those individuals who ministered prophetically that the Holy Spirit spoke and said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." This is this new way, using spiritually gifted individuals to confirm the calling of a leader and this is what we see in the Word.

Now, I'm not surprised that the disciples in this interim period used the old way here in Acts chapter 1 of casting lots. I'm really not surprised because God had not yet opened up the way for them to understand the new spiritual dynamic that was about to come into play in the body of Christ. This new Spirit led ministry.

And even if Jesus had told them, listen, just chill, don't do anything, don't even pick any leaders, okay. Because there's something that's going to be happening here on the day during the Feast of Pentecost and God's going to send His Spirit in a new work to empower you spiritually to do things in a completely different way than you've ever known before.

Even if He had done that, they still wouldn't have been able to relate to how it was going to take place because you can't relate to something you haven't experienced. You know what I mean? As an example, I have watched my wife give birth 4 times and I was in the room. And it's really interesting and I can explain some of what happens, but I can't relate to it because I've never given birth. Thank the Lord. And I never will experience that particular situation. I can explain some of it, but I can't relate to it.

I use that as kind of a crude example of understanding spiritual gifts. Do you know spiritual gifts are an enigma to people who have never experienced them. They're a mystery. I get questions a lot from people who want to know what spiritual gifts are all about. And particularly mysterious to people is the gift of speaking in tongues. That one is absolutely just, it flabbergasts people.

And they're like, I don't get this, what's this speaking of tongues thing all about? What's it for? How does it happen? And why in the world would God gift somebody to speak in a language they've never learned before and that they don't even understand while they're speaking it? Because that's really a fairly accurate description. It's like trying to explain to a man what it feels like to have a baby, it really is.

You need to experience these dynamics, these works of the Spirit in order to truly understand them. And even when you have experienced spiritual gifts, there are constantly things you have to keep aligned with the Word of God related to those spiritual gifts. Some of you seated here today I'm sure, have spent some time in maybe a Pentecostal or charismatic church in your past and you've seen things done inappropriately. You've seen things done in an unbiblical fashion and so have I.

When Sue and I first got serious about walking with the Lord, when we'd been married for 5 years, the Lord led us to a charismatic church in Montana. And it

wasn't a small church, it was a pretty good sized fellowship. And they were pretty animated, worship was fairly animated. You heard people speaking in tongues and prophecies, and words of knowledge, words of wisdom.

There was a lot of that stuff that was going on and we experienced a great deal of it. And after I spent time there and I not only spent time in that church, I went on staff at that church. I became the youth leader, youth pastor, and then an assistant pastor, and then they sent me off to go to college.

And the more I spent time in the Word, the more I realized a lot of what I had experienced at that church, although I appreciated it greatly, I realized a lot of it was unbiblical and out of order. And I appreciate the heart that those people had, and I still feel that way about modern day Pentecostals and Charismatics, because their heart is to experience the full dynamic of what God has to offer, but they often get off base. Particularly in the way they operate in spiritual gifts when the church body comes together. And we will talk about those things later.

There is a great deal of potential. When you open yourself up to spiritual gifts, there is a great deal of potential for operating in error if you don't stick to the Word. And that's the important part.

In fact, a lot of people over the years have kind of thought, well, they've seen this potential for getting off base with spiritual gifts. And so they kind of say, well, it's dangerous so we're not even going to go there. We're not even going to, we're going to steer clear of the whole thing.

And they don't teach about it, they don't talk about it, and they certainly don't operate in it because of the potential for error. And so they stay on the safe side. A lot of churches stay on the safe side.

But they also miss out on a wonderful dynamic of what it is to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit. And these churches that are attempting to stay on the safe side, it's really not safe. If we walk in the Spirit, but we walk according to the Word. In other words, we follow the scripture, that's the safe side.

It is safe when we keep to the Word of God. It is safe when we follow the scripture. And let me tell you something about the Holy Spirit, He's always safe. It's when we humans get mixed up in it and we veer off from the Word, that's when it becomes unsafe.

Guys, the Holy Spirit is not one to be feared, He is one to be adored. And He is perfectly full of order and peace. And when we operate in the gifts of the Spirit,

according to the Scripture, there is order and there is peace and it is a wonderful thing to experience.

And that's one of the reasons I don't want to play it safe like some of those other churches do. I want to be safe in the will of God. I want to be safe in the Word of God but I want to experience the fullness of the dynamic of what God intended us to experience through His Holy Spirit. And I think it's so incredibly important.

And one of the things you're going to see if you stick with this entire study of the Book of Acts, you're going to see this dynamic of the Spirit playing out through this book over, and over, and over again. This new life of the Spirit, this new leading of the Spirit, this new empowering with the Spirit.

I want to show you just a quick snapshot of the Book of Acts, all right. On the screen, beginning in Acts chapter 8.

Acts 8:28

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

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Acts 10:19-20

While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him...

While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him...

Acts 11:12

"And the Spirit told me to go with them..."

"And the Spirit told me to go with them..."

Acts 13:2

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said...

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said...

Acts 13:4

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit...

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit...

Acts 15:28

“...it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements...”

“...it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements...”

Acts 16:6

...they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

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Acts 19:21

Now, after these events Paul resolved in the spirit to pass through Macedonia...

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Acts 20:22

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit...

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That's just a little sort of a view that you're getting here of the Book of Acts, where over and over again, this Spirit led dynamic is given to us where people are directed by the Holy Spirit, empowered by the Holy Spirit, led by the Holy Spirit. And guys, that's what I want.

Where charismatic Pentecostal churches have erred is they thought that all this should be going on in the meeting. Do you know what we see in the Book of Acts? We see it happening out there in the marketplace. We see Spirit led witnessing happening when people are sitting side by side, strangers on an airplane.

We see it happening in the marketplace, while we're at work, somebody comes into work and they're bummed out and you, through the leading of the Spirit, go

and pray for them. We see the moving of the Spirit when we're praying for the sick in hospitals.

This is where the moving of the Spirit was meant to take place, not just confined to the church where we come together and we just kind of get weird because we're doing it among ourselves, but we're not taking that dynamic out into the day to day workplace.

That's where the ministry and grace of the Spirit ought to be seen. But even then, it's not going to be brash, it's not going to be careless, it's not going to be disorderly, and it's not going to be chaotic. It's going to be beautiful, it's going to be orderly, it's going to be peaceful. Peaceful when the Holy Spirit moves, that's what we should expect, not chaos and disorder.

This next week, when we get into Acts chapter 2, we're going to start talking about this coming of the baptism of the Spirit. And we're going to talk about the gift of tongues because we're going to see the believers begin to speak in tongues.

And we're going to talk biblically about what it is, and we're going to talk about what it isn't. And hopefully we're going to deal with this in a way that we can put to rest some misunderstandings and fears, and even bring some correction to those who have in the past operated in it, but not biblically. So that's where we're heading. So stay tuned, buckle up.

Let's stand together, we're going to close in prayer. If you need prayer this morning for any reason, we're going to have some folks up here, standing up front, and they will be available to pray with you about whatever is on your heart. So let's pray.

Lord, we thank you so much for your Word that keeps us in line. Illuminates our hearts and nourishes our souls. Lord, we need your Word every day.

And Father God I believe that I share a desire with the people here at Life Bible Ministry that we want to experience the fullness of what it is to follow Jesus.

We want to know this power of the Holy Spirit that you speak of. We want to know what it is to be empowered. We want to know what it is to walk in this dynamic of the Spirit that goes beyond man's carnal capabilities and moves into the realm of the Spirit for which we must be equipped, especially Lord, in these last days.

And we thank you, Father, that this work of the Spirit is still happening among us, but we want to be your people who walk in the Spirit according to the Word.

And so we pray that you would give us all of the direction that we seek, that we might walk in it through the peace, order, and grace that you give. Thank you, Father.

Thank you for all those who are here today. May your blessing rest on each one. We thank you, we praise you, we worship you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, and all God's people said together, amen.

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