

7/29/07

The Witness of The Holy Spirit
Acts 1-12

The first witness of the apostles according to Jesus was to be Jerusalem, the second being all of Judea and Samaria and finally the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

The progressive work of the Holy Spirit through the believers is carefully recorded for us in Acts.

1. Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles and those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

Acts 8:1, 4

3. Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. Acts 9:31

4. Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. Acts 11:19

* This really marks the point of the ends of the earth, outside the land of Israel, Antioch in Syria going to Asia Minor and Europe.

As we began our study of the book of Acts, we said that the book contained not so much the Acts of the Apostles but the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles.

Remember Jesus had taught His disciples the night before He was betrayed many things about the Holy Spirit.

1. He would be the comforter, the one to come alongside to help them do the work. Jn.14:16

2. He would be another of the same sort as Jesus, His representative. Jn. 14:16, 16:13-14

3. He is called the Spirit of truth. Jn. 14:17

4. He is in the believer, sent by the Father. Jn. 14:26,16:7

5. He would not glorify Himself but Christ. Jn. 16:14

So, we want to look at what is recorded about the witness of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, in order to learn the lessons He teaches us for our lives from chapter one to twelve. Acts 1-12

We want to look at eight principles that characterized the witness of the Holy Spirit in our service, in the pattern of servant-leadership.

I. The Holy Spirit empowers the disciple of Jesus.

A. Jesus commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem till they be endued with power from on high. Lk. 24:49. Acts 1:8

1. Jesus gave the promise to be endued with heavenly power, "the Promise of the Father upon them" by tarrying in the city of Jerusalem. Lk. 24:49
2. Jesus gave the explanation and commentary, as the key verse for all that would take place and be found in the book of Acts. Acts 1:8
 - a. The prophetic promise of empowerment, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you". vs. 8a
 - b. The prophetic proclamation of commission, "And you shall be witnesses to Me". vs. 8b
 - c. The prophetic plan, "In Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth". vs. 8b-d
 - 1) Jerusalem. Acts 1-7
 - * The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost marking the empowerment of the church.
 - 2) Judea and Samaria. Acts 8-12
 - * The pouring out of persecution against the Jerusalem church marked the expansion of the church.

- 3) End of the earth, Asia Minor, Europe, the world. Acts 13-28
 - * The pouring out of the gospel outside of the land of Israel marked the extension of the church.
- 4) This is the table of contents and natural division for Acts.

B. Jesus clearly distinguished the difference between the baptism of water and the Spirit. Acts 1:4-5

1. Luke gives us the words of Jesus, "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me." vs. 4
2. Jesus gives the clear distinction, "For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." vs. 5
 - a. John baptized in water for the remission of sins, a public confession of repentance in heart.
 - b. Jesus would baptize the apostles with the Holy Spirit.

C. The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit teach us that the disciples of Jesus can not be a

proper witness without being empowered by the Spirit.

1. Jesus said apart from Me, you can do nothing and the Holy Spirit only speaks of Jesus. Jn. 15:5, 16:13f
2. The Baptism is for service, to be a witness to Jesus, then for Jesus. Acts 1:8
3. The Holy Spirit is a real person, the third person of the Trinity. Acts 5:4, 9
4. The Holy Spirit occupies our body as the temple of God. 1Cor. 6:19
5. The Holy Spirit is not to be resisted by the non-believer. Acts 7:51
6. The Holy Spirit can be sinned against eternally. Matt. 12:31-32
7. The Holy Spirit can be grieved or pained by disobedience. Eph. 4:30
8. The Holy Spirit is not to be quenched, extinguish or limited what He wants to do. 1Thess. 5:19
* Peter is the best example of our need of the Spirit as we see him before and after Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit empowers the disciple of Jesus!

II. The Holy Spirit will bring to our minds the answers for peoples questions.

- A. The men at Jerusalem did not know what to make of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit

and were perplexed, mocking those who were filled with the Spirit. Acts 2:12-13

1. Their state of mind was confused, “So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” vs. 12
 2. Their decision was to make fun and explain it as a natural event, “Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.” vs. 13
- B.** The Holy Spirit brought to Peter’s mind the Scriptures to explain the event. Acts 2:14-16
1. Peter speaks as one with authority, “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.” vs. 14
 2. Peter exposes their foolish conclusion regarding the matter, “For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.” vs. 15
 3. Peter gives to the people the Biblical fulfillment of the event, “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.” vs. 16
 - a. The immediate fulfillment. vs. 17-18
 - b. The long-term fulfillment. vs. 19-20
 - c. The promise to all. vs. 21
* And Peter did not even make this distinction to the crowd!

C. The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit teach us we have the responsibility to respond to the questions of non-believers.

1. Peter tells us, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” 1Pet. 3:15
2. Peter also tells us how we are to do it, “Having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.” 1Pet. 3:16
3. There are many questions that need to be answered to the non-believer and religious people to reveal the truth and expose the lie they are embracing.
 - a. The fact that God created everything and man in His image and likeness, instead of believing the religion of humanistic evolution of random chance, going from disorder to complexity of order. Gen. 1-3
 - b. The fact that there is a God that loves them and He died on the cross for them, many do not know that today in America! Jn. 3:16
 - c. The fact that all men will die and then have to give an account of their life and be judge. Heb. 9:27

* Paul is good example as he gave an answer to the Hebrews at Jerusalem and to Herod about his hope in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Acts 22, 26

The Holy Spirit will bring to our minds the answers for peoples questions!

III. The Holy Spirit will lead us to the open doors that God is opening.

- A. The lame man at the temple had no idea what was about to happen nor did the apostles, but they were being led of the Holy Spirit. Acts 3:1-7
 1. Peter and John went up together as usual to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour, three P.M. vs. 1
 2. The lame man from his mother’s womb had been carried there to beg as usual, at the gate called Beautiful, vs. 2
 3. The lame man seeing Peter and John about to enter the temple, asked for alms, as usual. vs. 3
 4. The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter to do the unusual or super-natural by giving him a word of knowledge, wisdom, faith, to manifest a miracle in the healing of the lame man. vs. 4-7

- B.** The Apostles were also unaware that they were going to be used to preach to all the people in the Temple. Acts. 3:11-12, 26
1. The crowd began to identify the miracle with Peter and John, “Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed.” vs. 11
 2. The apostles corrected their error, “So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” vs. 12
 3. The apostles preached Jesus to the crowd, the promised Messiah which they crucified. vs. 13-22
- C.** The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit teach us the importance of walking in the Spirit to be sensitive to the doors and opportunities God will open to us unexpectedly.
1. The Holy Spirit will open doors in the most ordinary situations.
 - a. At the supper-market, the bank or in an elevator.
 - b. At times when I am in a hurry and at times when I am not.

- c. At church, we can be so busy listening to people, that we forget to listen to the Holy Spirit of God!
2. The believer is told to walk in the Spirit, to be led of the Spirit, to live in the Spirit and be continuously filled with the Spirit. Gal. 5:16,18, 25, Eph. 5:18
* Ananias is a good example of being led by the Spirit to Paul, by the Lord. Acts 9:11-12

The Holy Spirit will lead us to the open doors that God is opening!

IV. The Holy Spirit will give us boldness and courage to obey God before man.

- A.** The Apostles were threatened and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus but they were compelled by the Spirit to do the right thing. Acts 4:18-20
1. The leaders of the Sanhedrin called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. vs. 18
 2. The apostle’s response was without hesitation, “But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.” vs. 19

3. The reason was very clear, “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” vs. 20
- B.** The Apostles decided to prayed for greater boldness rather than to be gripped by fear. Acts. 4:29-31
1. They called out to God for renewed empowerment of the Holy Spirit, “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word.” vs. 29
 2. They called out to God to perform the miraculous in Jesus name, “By stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” vs. 30
 4. They were renewed in their empowerment, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. vs. 31
- C.** The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit teach us to trust in God for our boldness not ourselves.
1. Proverbs tell us, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways

- acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.” Prov. 3:5-7
2. The Psalmist says, “And those who know Your name will put their **trust** in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.” Ps. 9:10
 3. Paul tells the Corinthians, “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of **power**, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the **power** of God.” 1Cor. 2:4-5
 4. Paul again says, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” 2Cor. 4:7
* Stephen was empowered by the Spirit and they could not resist the wisdom the Holy Spirit. Acts 6:10, 7:51, 55

The Holy Spirit will give us boldness and courage to obey God before man!

V. The Holy Spirit will discipline us by death and deliver from death.

- A.** Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and they were both struck dead. Acts 5:5,9-10
1. Peter was probably surprise as everyone else, as it happened as he was speaking to Ananias, “Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.” vs. 5
 2. Peter definitely knew Sapphira would be struck dead by declaring it, “Then Peer said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” vs. 9
 3. Peter did not do this but God by His Spirit, “Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband.” vs. 10
- B.** The apostle Paul warns us about the extreme measures of God’s discipline. 1Cor. 11:27-30, 1Jn. 5:16-17
1. The Corinthians were partaking of the Lord’s Supper dishonorably. 1Cor. 11:27-30
 - a. Treating it as a common meal, “Therefore whoever eats this bread or

- drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” vs. 27
- b. The protection, “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.” vs. 28
 - c. The individual responsibility, “For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” vs. 29
 - d. The possible consequences, “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.” vs. 30
2. The apostle John mentions a sin unto death in contrast to a sin that is not to death. 1Jn. 5:16-17
- a. Many believe John is referring to the same thing Paul did in Corinthians.
 - b. But John is talking about spiritual death, not physical discipline.
 - c. Nowhere in the letter does John mention physical death, all are spiritual death, including this last one.
- C.** The Apostles were delivered from death. Acts 5:29, 33-41
1. The apostle were a constant irritant to the religious leaders but their trust was in God, declaring they ought to obey God rather than man. Acts 5:29

2. God used Gamaliel to deliver the apostles from death. Acts 5:33-39
3. They were beaten and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus. Acts 5:40
4. The apostles departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. Acts 5:41

D. The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit teach us that God is in control of a believer's life.

1. People attempt to stay young, with plastic surgery will die right on time.
2. Those who exercise and eat right may live a little longer but will die one day.
3. The believer is to commend his life to Jesus every day, he won't be late to his or her own funeral!
 - a. Herod was consumed with worms because he didn't give glory to God. Acts 12:23
 - b. Paul did not think himself a victim but ready to be taken home and crowned by Jesus. 2Tim. 4:6-8

The Holy Spirit will discipline us by death and deliver from death!

VI. The Holy Spirit will enable people for ministry.

A. The Apostles were not able to do all that was required by themselves. Acts. 6:1-2

1. The growth of the church brought about cultural envy and jealousy between the Hebrews and the Hellenist widows. vs. 1
2. The twelve apostles refused to abandon prayer and the study of God's word. vs. 2

B. The Apostles trusted the Holy Spirit to raise up men. Acts 6:3-7

1. They were to seek out seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." vs. 3
2. The apostles continued in prayer and the ministry of the word. vs. 4
3. The people were pleased and seven were picked, they laid hands to confirm their service. vs. 5-6
4. The result was that the word of God spread, disciples multiplied in Jerusalem and many priests were saved. vs. 7
 - * The people were taught that God can and will use normal people, like them!

C. The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit tell us that we make the choice to be used by God.

1. We make the choice to be a vessel of honor or dishonor. 2Tim. 2:20-21

2. We are to use only the word of God as our teaching. 2Tim. 3:16-17, 2Pet. 1:20-21
3. We are us minister within the gifts allotted to us. Rom. 12, 1Cor. 12-14, 1Pet. 4:10
4. We are be filled with the Holy Spirit! Eph. 5:18
5. We are to give all the glory to God. Rom. 11:36
* “For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be **glory** forever. Amen.”

The Holy Spirit will enable people for ministry!

VII. The Holy Spirit will be faithful to prepare us for death.

- A. Stephen was young yet enabled by God for that time to be an example of Christ. Acts 7:55-56, 59-60
 1. Stephen was very confident by the Holy Spirit, “But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” vs. 55
 2. Stephen was conscious of the presence of Jesus in his life, “And said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” vs. 56

3. Stephen was depending on Jesus, “And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” vs. 59
 4. Stephen was being like Jesus, “Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” vs. 60
- B. Peter was delivered from prison by an angel.** Acts 12:1-11
- 1) Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church and killed James the brother of John with the sword and arrested Peter and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. vs. 1-4
* The question is, who really got delivered?
 - 2) Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison and an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, “Arise quickly!” And his chains fell off his hands. vs. 5-7

- 3) The angel said to Peter, “Gird yourself and tie on your sandals”; and so he did. And he said to him, “Put on your garment and follow me.” So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.” vs. 8-9
- 4) Passing the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.” vs. 10-11

C. The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit tell us that our lives are not our own but they belong to God.

1. We are to realize that we don’t know what will happen tomorrow and our lives are brief.
- * “Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a **vapor** that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” Ja. 4:14

2. We are to pray to God that we value every day.
- * “So teach us to **number** our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Ps. 90:12
3. We are not to fear man but God when it comes to death.
- * Jesus modeled what He taught, “And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! Lk.12:4-5

The Holy Spirit will be faithful to prepare us for death!

VIII. The Holy Spirit will speak to us very specific and clear guiding us a step at a time.

- A. Philip was in the midst of a revival at Samaria and he was called by Jesus to leave it. Acts 8:26-40
1. An angel of the Lord told Philip to arise and go towards the south along the road going down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which was desert. vs. 26
- * It makes no logical sense, from the human perspective!

2. He arose and to his surprise he saw an Ethiopian eunuch, who was returning from worshipping in Jerusalem and he was sitting on his chariot reading the prophet Isaiah. vs. 27-28
* Philip was obedient and was given the next step, God brought him to a man!
3. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to Philip, “Go near and overtake his chariot”, doing so, he asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading. vs. 29-30
* The Holy Spirit was preparing the heart of the eunuch and guiding Philip at the same time!
4. The eunuch responded, “How can I, unless someone guides me?”, therefore he asked Philip to come and sit with him, as he read Isaiah 53:7-8 and asked him, if the prophet was speaking of himself or someone else? vs. 31-34
* The Holy Spirit will always use the word of God to convict of sin and save a person through repentance!
5. Philip began at that scripture to preach Jesus to him and the Ethiopian got save and baptized. vs. 35-40
* The Holy Spirit uses people not angels to preach the gospel for salvation!

- B. Saul was saved on the Damascus road but God needed to confirm certain things to Saul by Ananias. Acts 9:8-18
 1. Saul had been told by Jesus to go to the Damascus, so he was led by the hand and remained without food or drink for three days. vs. 8-9
* Saul was such a dangerous person, Jesus saved him all on His own!
 2. The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision to go to the street called Straight, inquire at the house Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus and he would find him praying. vs. 10-11
* Ananias was sensitive to the Lord’s voice through the Holy Spirit!
 3. The Lord also told Ananias that Saul had seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” vs. 12
* God had already spoken to Saul, now He was speaking to Ananias, He always works on both ends to tie them together!
 4. Ananias began to object by informing Jesus about Saul’s evil and mission to bounty-hunt Christians. vs. 13-14
* This should not shock us or look down on Ananias, his fear was natural!
 5. The Lord told him to go, for Saul was chosen vessel of His, to bear My name

before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel and He was about to show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake. vs. 15-16

* God's calling and purposes for a person will only be confirmed through other, not first time information by others!

6. Ananias obeyed, entering the house he laid his hands on Saul declaring, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." vs. 17

* The Holy Spirit was directing and guiding the entire encounter, even though at times we may read the Lord, for He is the agent of Jesus!

7. Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. vs. 18

* Ananias was privileged to be used by God!

C. Peter directed by the Holy Spirit to open the doors to the Gentiles. Acts 10:1-48

1. God gave Cornelius a vision of an angel to tell him God was aware of his devout life and he was to call for Peter, who was

a Simon the tanners house in Joppa, so he sent two servants and a soldier. vs. 1-8

* God will reveal Himself to those who respond to the measure of light possessed!

2. Meanwhile God is dealing with Peter up on a roof-top in a trance of clean and unclean animals three times showing him the Gentiles were not unclean and could be saved. Objecting, Jesus told him that what God had cleansed, you must not call common." vs. 9-16

* God desires to see if we are going to be open to His will or our opinions and traditions!

3. As Peter pondered the vision, the three men arrived and asked for Peter and related the appearance of the angel and his orders to send for him and the Holy Spirit told him they were seeking him, to go, doubting nothing. vs. 17-23; 11:12

* Once again God works on both ends to confirm His word and work!

4. Two day after Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius and was amazed at the number of people present to hear the gospel and as he was preaching and declared, "whoever believed in Jesus would receive the remission of sins", the Holy Spirit fell on them all and the spoke

n tongues and they were baptized. vs. 24-48

* We are to limit the gospel to no one!

5. The rest of the book of Acts is no different, regarding the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas for the mission field. Acts 13:2
 - b. The Holy Spirit was the leading advisor at the first church council at Jerusalem. Acts 15:28
 - c. The Holy Spirit forbade Paul to preach at Asia and Bithynia. Acts 16:6-7
 - d. The Holy Spirit testified to Paul of suffering that awaited him in every city and he went bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem. Acts 20:22-23
 - e. The Holy Spirit spoke through Agabus about Paul's imprisonment. Acts 21:11

D. The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit teach us that God speaks and we should tune our ear to Him, one step at a time!

* Seven times it is stated, "He who has an ear, let him **hear** what the Spirit says to the churches." Rev, 2-3

Conclusion

These are eight principles that characterized the witness of the Holy Spirit in our service, in the pattern of servant-leadership, the Holy Spirit;

- I.** Will empowers the disciple of Jesus!
- II.** Will bring to our minds the answers to peoples questions!
- III.** Will leads us to the open doors that God is opening!
- IV.** Will give us boldness and courage to obey God before man!
- V.** Will discipline us through death and deliver us from death!
- VI.** Enable people for ministry!
- VII.** Will be faithful to prepare us for death!
- VIII.** Will speak to us very specific and clear but guiding us a step at a time!

The Holy Spirit will speak to us very specific and clear guiding us a step at a time!