

ACTS 1 (NLT)

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

¹ In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. ³ During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God. ⁴ Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. ⁵ John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

The Ascension

⁶ So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" ⁷ He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. ¹⁰ As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

Judas' Successor Chosen

¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of half a mile. ¹³ When they arrived, they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying. Here are the names of those who were present: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of

Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot), and Judas (son of James). ¹⁴ They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.

¹⁵ During this time, when about 120 believers were together in one place, Peter stood up and addressed them. ¹⁶ "Brothers," he said, "the Scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus. This was predicted long ago by the Holy Spirit, speaking through King David. ¹⁷ Judas was one of us and shared in the ministry with us." ¹⁸ (Judas had bought a field with the money he received for his treachery. Falling headfirst there, his body split open, spilling out all his intestines. ¹⁹ The news of his death spread to all the people of Jerusalem, and they gave the place the Aramaic name which means "Field of Blood.") ²⁰ Peter continued, "This was written in the book of Psalms, where it says, 'Let his home become desolate, with no one living in it.' It also says, 'Let someone else take his position.'" ²¹ "So now we must choose a replacement for Judas from among the men who were with us the entire time we were traveling with the Lord Jesus- ²² from the time he was baptized by John until the day he was taken from us. Whoever is chosen will join us as a witness of Jesus' resurrection." ²³ So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they all prayed, "O Lord, you know every heart. Show us which of these men you have chosen ²⁵ as an apostle to replace Judas in this ministry, for he has deserted us and gone where he belongs." ²⁶ Then they cast lots, and Matthias was selected to become an apostle with the other eleven.

ACTS 2 (NLT)

The Holy Spirit Comes

2 On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. **2** Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. **3** Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. **4** And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. **6** When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

7 They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, **8** and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! **9** Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, **10** Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome **11** (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” **12** They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other.

13 But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, “They’re just drunk, that’s all!”

Peter Preaches to the Crowd

14 Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. **15** These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o’clock in the morning is much too early for that. **16** No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

17 ‘In the last days,’ God says,

‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Your young men will see visions,
and your old men will dream dreams.

18 In those days I will pour out my Spirit
even on my servants—men and women alike—
and they will prophesy.

36 “So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”

37 Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

38 Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” **40** Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”

41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

The Believers Form a Community

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.

43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. **44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. **45** They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. **46** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— **47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Acts 3

Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar

1 Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. **2** As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. **3** When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.

4 Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" **5** The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. **6** But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"

7 Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. **8** He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them.

9 All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God. **10** When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded! **11** They all rushed out in amazement to Solomon's Colonnade, where the man was holding tightly to Peter and John.

Acts 4

Peter and John before the Council

1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. **2** These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. **3** They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. **4** But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.

5 The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. **6** Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. **7** They brought in the two disciples and demanded, “By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?”

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, **9** are we being questioned today because we’ve done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? **10** Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. **11** For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says,

‘The stone that you builders rejected

has now become the cornerstone.’

12 There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”

13 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. **14** But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. **15** So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber[[c](#)] and conferred among themselves.

16 “What should we do with these men?” they asked each other. “We can’t deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. **17** But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus’ name again.” **18** So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?”

20 We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.”

21 The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn’t know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God **22** for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years.

Acts 5 (NLT)

Ananias and Sapphira

1 But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. **2** He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest.

3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. **4** The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!"

5 As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified. **6** Then some young men got up, wrapped him in a sheet, and took him out and buried him.

7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** Peter asked her, "Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?"

"Yes," she replied, "that was the price."

9 And Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will carry you out, too."

10 Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. **11** Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened.

The Apostles Heal Many

12 The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. **13** But no one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high regard for them. **14** Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. **15** As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall

across some of them as he went by. **16** Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed.

The Apostles Meet Opposition

17 The high priest and his officials, who were Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. **18** They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. **19** But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, **20** “Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!”

21 So at daybreak the apostles entered the Temple, as they were told, and immediately began teaching.

When the high priest and his officials arrived, they convened the high council—the full assembly of the elders of Israel. Then they sent for the apostles to be brought from the jail for trial. **22** But when the Temple guards went to the jail, the men were gone. So they returned to the council and reported, **23** “The jail was securely locked, with the guards standing outside, but when we opened the gates, no one was there!”

24 When the captain of the Temple guard and the leading priests heard this, they were perplexed, wondering where it would all end. **25** Then someone arrived with startling news: “The men you put in jail are standing in the Temple, teaching the people!”

26 The captain went with his Temple guards and arrested the apostles, but without violence, for they were afraid the people would stone them. **27** Then they brought the apostles before the high council, where the high priest confronted them. **28** “We gave you strict orders never again to teach in this man’s name!” he said. “Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!”

29 But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than any human authority. **30** The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him by hanging him on a cross. **31** Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior. He did this so the people of Israel would repent of their sins and be forgiven. **32** We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him.”

Acts 6 (NLT)

Seven Men Chosen to Serve

1 But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.

2 So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. **3** And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. **4** Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.”

5 Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. **6** These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.

7 So God’s message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.

Stephen Is Arrested

8 Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed amazing miracles and signs among the people. **9** But one day some men from the Synagogue of Freed Slaves, as it was called, started to debate with him. They were Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and the province of Asia. **10** None of them could stand against the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke.

11 So they persuaded some men to lie about Stephen, saying, “We heard him blaspheme Moses, and even God.” **12** This roused the people, the elders, and the teachers of religious law. So they arrested Stephen and brought him before the high council.

13 The lying witnesses said, “This man is always speaking against the holy Temple and against the law of Moses. **14** We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the Temple and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”

15 At this point everyone in the high council stared at Stephen, because his face became as bright as an angel’s.

Acts 7 (NLT)

Stephen Addresses the Council

1 Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these accusations true?”

2 This was Stephen’s reply...

51 “You stubborn people! You are heathen^u at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That’s what your ancestors did, and so do you! **52** Name one prophet your ancestors didn’t persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered. **53** You deliberately disobeyed God’s law, even though you received it from the hands of angels.”

54 The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen’s accusation, and they shook their fists at him in rage. **55** But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand. **56** And he told them, “Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand!”

57 Then they put their hands over their ears and began shouting. They rushed at him **58** and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” **60** He fell to his knees, shouting, “Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!” And with that, he died.

Acts 8 (NLT)

1 Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen.

Persecution Scatters the Believers

A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. **2** (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.) **3** But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.

Philip Preaches in Samaria

4 But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. **5** Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah. **6** Crowds listened intently to Philip because they were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did. **7** Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. **8** So there was great joy in that city.

9 A man named Simon had been a sorcerer there for many years, amazing the people of Samaria and claiming to be someone great. **10** Everyone, from the least to the greatest, often spoke of him as “the Great One—the Power of God.” **11** They listened closely to him because for a long time he had astounded them with his magic.

12 But now the people believed Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. **13** Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the signs and great miracles Philip performed.

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John there. **15** As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. **16** The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **17** Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given when the apostles laid their hands on people, he offered them money to buy this power. **19** “Let me have this power, too,” he exclaimed, “so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!”

20 But Peter replied, “May your money be destroyed with you for thinking God’s gift can be bought! **21** You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right with God. **22** Repent of

your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, **23** for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.”

24 “Pray to the Lord for me,” Simon exclaimed, “that these terrible things you’ve said won’t happen to me!”

25 After testifying and preaching the word of the Lord in Samaria, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem. And they stopped in many Samaritan villages along the way to preach the Good News.

Philip and the Ethiopian Man

26 As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, “Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.” **27** So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a man of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, **28** and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.”

30 Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

31 The man replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.

32 The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.

33 He was humiliated and received no justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.”

34 The man asked Philip, “Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?”

35 So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.

36 As they rode along, they came to some water, and the man said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptized?” **38** He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. **40** Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way until he came to Caesarea.