

## THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

Her Power To Function Effectively

*Act 1:4-9 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father; which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

*5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

*6 When they therefore were come together; they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

*7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

*8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

*9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

*Act 2:1-4 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

*2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

*3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

*4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

At the beginning of this message, it should be noted that Jesus Christ has made several appearances to the disciples. Luke records him appearing to the disciples in Jerusalem.

*Luk 24:28-36 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.*

*29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.*

*30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.*

*31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.*

*32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

*33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,*

*34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.*

*35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

*36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

The apostle Paul also records several appearances of Jesus Christ.

*1Co 15:3-8 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

*4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

*5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:*

*6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.*

*7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.*

*8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

The apostle John records an appearance of Jesus Christ to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee)

*Joh 21:1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.*

Finally, our text verses here in Acts 1 reveals that the disciples have returned to Jerusalem and it is here in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ makes his last earthly appearance to his disciples and gives them his parting instructions just before he ascends to heaven. It can now be clearly understood that the first church has moved from Capernaum to Jerusalem. Jerusalem now becomes the churches headquarters and it is from here that the first church of Jesus Christ launches out to the entire world. The movement of the church from Capernaum to Jerusalem illustrates the great truth that the church does not consist of a building or a certain location, but rather is made up of a certain group of saved people with Jesus Christ as her head.

Although the church is made up of us human instruments, the church is not a mere human organization. We are a living divine organism. We were started by a divine person, God the Father, and with a divine person, Jesus Christ.

*Isa 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

We were given a divine mission, which was, and is, to evangelize the entire world. We are not expected to do a divine task in mere human energy. That is why the first church that Jesus Christ established was instructed by him to not depart from Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father.

*Joh 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

*17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

We also, two thousand years later, need to realize that we cannot do the work of God in mere human energy.

**FIRST** The impotence of man in and of himself for God's spiritual work is absolute

*Joh 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

*Mat 26:31-35 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.*

*32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*

*33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.*

*34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me*

thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.*

*Mat 26:69-75 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.*

70 *But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.*

71 *And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.*

72 *And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.*

73 *And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.*

74 *Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.*

75 *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.*

*Act 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

This truth was demonstrated by the apostles, and Peter in particular. In all good faith he affirmed that he would not fail the Lord. But, when the time of testing came, he coweredly denied Jesus Christ while he sat at the enemy's fire. The outcome was that he wept bitterly because of his failure. But this all changed on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the church in great force. He, along with the others, stood and preached a very simple message about Jesus Christ and as a result, about three thousand souls were saved.

*Act 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

I want to note here that the church did not come into existence on that day of Pentecost. The church was established by Jesus Christ himself during his first advent personal ministry. On that day of Pentecost the church was empowered to do the work that Jesus Christ had already commanded them to do. We notice that *Acts 2:41* quoted above states that these three thousand souls were added unto them. For them to be added unto proves that they were already in existence as a church.

**SECOND** The message is too important//

It is the soul saving and life changing message of Jesus Christ. It is foolishness to the world and spiritual power is needed to convict men of their sin.

*1Co 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

*Joh 16:7-11 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

9 *Of sin, because they believe not on me;*

10 *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*

11 *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

**THIRD** The scope of the task is impossible

*Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, uttermost part of the earth. Yes, the entire world! The scope in that time was so great to a people that were in large part on foot, or on slow animals, or in slow sailing vessels. The scope is still great today, even with all our modern resources. Without the power of the Holy Spirit we would fail.

**FOURTH** The spiritual darkness that needed to be penetrated was too great//

*Luk 1:78-79 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,  
79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

*Act 26:16-18 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;*

*17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,*

*18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

*2Co 4:3-6 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*

*4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

*5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

*6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

Several years ago, I went into a deep mountain cavern with a tour group. While we were in the cavern, they turned off the lights so we could experience what real darkness is like. The darkness was absolute and very frightening. That is what spiritual darkness is like. Spiritual darkness can only be penetrated with the spiritual message of Jesus Christ delivered by a person under Holy Spirit control.

**FIFTH** We are far from Jerusalem (uttermost part of the earth) but God's power is still resident in us and with us today

*Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

*19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

*20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you*

*always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

We are either indwelt by God the Holy Spirit or we don't belong to God at all. But, we do belong to him therefore we are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. Great grace is available to us today the same as it was to the first church.

*1Co 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

*Act 4:31-33 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.  
32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.  
33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*

It truly is by the grace of God that we are what we are. In the *Acts 4:33* passage cited above notice the terms "great power". (megas 3173 Strong's, dunamis 1411 Strong's) The greek word "dunamis" is from among the group of words from which we get our word "dynamite". In the world of destructive forces, we measure the atom bomb by megatons. One megaton is the equivalent force of one million tons of dynamite. The two words used together in *Acts 4:33* give us some idea of the Holy Spirit power that indwells us. Holy Spirit power is a life changing and life creating power. We have mega grace to enable us. We need to yield ourselves to the powerful grace that indwells us.

*Rom 6:18-19 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.  
19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

*Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

*Gal 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

May God help each one of us to surrender ourselves to him for his use by his own enabling power.