



Part 30: Act One: Peter

Word ALIVE



The Spirit descends on Mary, Peter and the apostles



Background Notes -

PURPOSE: To present not the works of all the apostles (for only Peter and Paul are given substantial consideration), but the work of the Holy Spirit in the birth of the Church. Also to present the first deacons of the Church.

AUTHOR: Luke the Evangelist.

DATE: The first Pentecost took place about fifty days after the Resurrection.

STYLE: Luke is a physician but also a historian. The style here is the same as the Gospel that bears his name, tracking events in an organized fashion.



Opening Quotes

“Why do you stand here looking up at the skies? This Jesus who has been taken from you will return.” Ac 1:11

“It is written in the Book of Psalms, ‘May another take his office.’” Ac 1:20

“Tongues of fire appeared which parted and came to rest on each of them.” Ac 2:3

“Are not all these men Galileans? How is it that each of us hears them in his native tongue?” Ac 2:7

“He was delivered up by the set purpose and plan of God; you even used pagans to crucify and kill him.” Ac 2:23

“You must reform and be baptized...It was to you and your children that the promise was made.” Ac 2:38

“A reverent fear overtook them all, for many wonders and signs were performed by the apostles.” Ac 2:43

“Day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” Ac 2:47

“Reform your lives! Turn to God, that your sins may be wiped away!” Ac 3:19

“There is no other name in the whole world given men by which we are to be saved.” Ac 4:12

“The apostles left the Sanhedrin full of joy that they had been judged worthy of ill-treatment for the sake of the Name.” Ac 5:41

the BIG PICTURE		LAW, History, Writings, Prophets		key covenants in our Father's plan	
12 Periods	Plot	Other books related to period		stories in each period	
BC	THE BEGINNINGS	GN 1-11	Ps 8, 104	Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah's ark, Tower of Babel	
1850	THE PATRIARCHS	GN 12-50		Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Melchizedek	
1250	EXODUS FROM EGYPT	EX		Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, passover, exodus	
1200	JOURNEY TO CANAAN	NM, Jos	LV, DT	Sinai desert, 10 commandments, Levites, Law, Joshua	
1100	THE JUDGE CYCLE	Jg	Ruth	12 tribes, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel	
1030	KINGS & PROPHETS	1 & 2 S	1 Ch, Ps, Prov	Saul, David, Solomon, Jerusalem, the Temple	
1000	THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	1 Kg	2 Ch, Prov,	Israel (N), Judah (S), Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Assyrian exile	
721 587	BABYLONIAN EXILE	2 Kg	2 Ch, Tob, Hos, Am, Hab, Is, Jer, Lam, Jl, Mic, Zp, Jon, Nah, Ob, Ez, Dan, Bar	Babylonians, "major" prophets, Isaiah (to Israel), Jeremiah (to Jerusalem), Ezekiel (to the Exiles)	
538	THE RESTORATION	Ezr, Neh	Est, Judith, Hag, Zech, Mal, Job, Ecc, Songs	Cyrus, 2nd temple, 2nd Law, "minor" prophets, new writings	
163 63	THE REPURIFICATION	1 Mac	Dn, 2Mac, Sirach, Wisdom	Greeks, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean Dynasty, Romans, Jewish sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Zealots, Essenes)	
AD	JESUS CHRIST	LK	MT, MK, JN	Incarnation, Good News, New Law, Cross & Resurrection	
33 70	APOSTOLIC CHURCH	Acts	Rm, 1&2Co, Ga, Ep, Phil, Col, 1&2Th, 1&2 Tm, Ti, Phm, Hb, Ja, 1P, 2P, 1,2&3J, Jd, Rv	Pentecost, council, journeys, epistles, Body/Bride of Christ	



The Story of Part 30: Act One: Peter



For forty days, the risen Jesus appeared to the apostles before ascending to heaven, promising to send them the Holy Spirit. Still gazing up into the sky when he ascended, two men in white (reminiscent of the two men in white who asked the women at the tomb why they were seeking the living among the dead) appeared next to them and assured them that Jesus would return. The apostles, Mary, and some other women devoted themselves to constant prayer, waiting. Meanwhile, it was time to take care of some practical matters. Peter, the chief apostle, decreed that someone had to take Judas' office, so they selected Matthias.

On the day of Pentecost, when they were all gathered, the Holy Spirit descended upon them like a strong wind with tongues of fire. Going outside, they began to proclaim what the Spirit told them in foreign languages that all of the visitors from far away were able to understand! Having gotten everyone's attention this way, Peter stood up and spoke to the Jewish crowd. "Jesus, whom you crucified, was delivered by God's plan. He is now freed from death and has been raised up." Then, quoting some David (which they could relate to), he told them that this Jesus was and is the Messiah. "What must we do?" The crowds asked him. "Repent and be baptized, for the promise is for you and your children." He then told them to turn to God so that their sins could be wiped away! Now was the time to reform. Quoting the prophet Joel, he even alluded to the fact that in a way, the end was at hand, for the door to heaven had finally been opened by Christ. All were invited who would reform their lives and follow him, beginning with baptism. Before Christ ascended he had commissioned them to baptize all the nations, and Peter was just beginning to fulfill the teaching. Peter said of Jesus that there was no other name in the whole world given to men by which we are to be saved. Thousands were added to the Church on that day, the birthday of the Church.

The Resurrection is the single most important event in our history, but it must persevere, and so, as a divine institution, the Church had to enable it to be lived each year. It began with the followers living a communal life, sharing everything, following the apostles' instructions, breaking the bread, and saying the prayers. Although there were no Churches yet (for they were just a Jewish sect being persecuted), these first assemblies took place in people's homes, and already we can see the breaking of the bread and the reciting of prayers that we have today in our Eucharistic celebration, the Mass.

Since the Church was still in its infancy, God had to allow Jesus himself to continue working miracles, and he

did this through the apostles. At one point the portico of the Temple must have looked like the place of assembly near the grotto at Lourdes, with stretcher-bearers, ailing people, multitudes praying aloud, and amid them, the apostles curing people. Even the shadow of Peter (or later a touch of Paul's handkerchief) would effect miracles! When Peter's touch resulted in a miracle (like allowing a lame man to walk, or a dead girl to rise), he never took credit, but made sure they knew it was Jesus working through him.

Needless to say, the threat that the Jewish leaders felt by Christ was now handed down to the apostles! The high priest confronted Peter and told him to stop preaching and teaching this way, to not even mention the name of Jesus! "Better for us to obey God than man!" was Peter's response. This landed him smack in front of the Sanhedrin, the same council that handed Jesus over to the Romans. The Sanhedrin ordered the apostles to stop speaking in Jesus' name, and dismissed them. Remembering the sermon on the mount, where Christ called those blessed who were persecuted for his name's sake, the apostles left the meeting with the Sanhedrin that day beaming with gladness!

A practical issue then confronted this baby Church: there were Greek-speaking widows in the Jewish community who didn't seem to be given the same share of help as the Hebrew-speaking widows. It thus became apparent that there were practical matters that could hinder the rapid spread of the Gospel. In order to free the apostles from some of the more mundane tasks of running the Church, they appointed worthy men to take care of these issues. These were the first deacons of the Church. (It is a little known fact that there were deacons before there were priests in the Church, since the apostles had not died and left successors yet!)

One of the first chosen Greek-speaking deacons was Stephen, a man filled with the Holy Spirit. Stephen would follow Peter's lead and boldly proclaim in the name of Jesus. This would also land him an audience with the Sanhedrin, and he would become the Church's first martyr.

Peter had made it clear that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior, to all of Israel. But what about the rest of the world? To initiate this push God would choose the least likely of all men, a thirteenth apostle, born practically out of time – a Jewish leader who approved of the killing of the first martyr. It was this Apostle to the Gentiles that we will turn our focus on next time.





Defending the Faith: Apostolic Succession

"We believe in the priesthood of all believers, not the hierarchical Roman church. Christ told us not to call any man on earth father."

Today when Catholics are asked "what church do you go to?" they don't say "The Roman Catholic Church." They name a Catholic parish they go to. But when you ask a Protestant the same question, the answer does not assume a local church in union with a global Church, but a Church with beliefs and practices different from Catholicism.

Most Christians can cite biblical passages that show traits of their own Churches, but only one claims as its main pastor the apostolic successor to the chief apostle Peter: the Roman Catholic Church. When the Greek Orthodox and Anglican Churches (also of apostolic origin) denied the primacy of the popes, they, and all Protestant and non-denominational Churches after them, severed their ties with the Petrine succession and have been dividing amongst themselves ever since. The question is not whose fault it was (Catechism, 817), but rather, which Church is truly apostolic?

The Bible provides us with a blueprint of the early apostolic Church. Some of the first churches were not started by one of the twelve apostles at all. Philip (Ac 9:5 ff), and Paul started churches themselves, but were later confirmed by the original twelve by the laying on of hands, and so were in communion with, and were sanctioned by, the twelve (Ac 9:17, Gal 1:18, 2:1-2). Paul, for instance, was sent out by the Church at Antioch (Ac 13:1-4), which was in contact with the Church at Jerusalem (Ac 11:19-27), and would later report back to them (Ac 14:26-28). He describes the Church as being founded on the apostles and the prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone (Eph 2:20). From the beginning, the particular, local churches were one with a universally recognized apostolic Church.

This is why the Apostles' Creed describes the Church as one, holy, catholic (Greek for "universal"), and *apostolic*. Some may change the word "catholic" to "Christian," (since "catholic" has come to mean the Catholic Church), but to a Catholic there is no distinction. To be a Christian means to belong to the one universal ("catholic") apostolic Church.

Non-Catholics often profess a common priesthood (1P 2:5, 9), denying any hierarchical priesthood, at times criticizing the Catholic hierarchy by citing that Jesus said to call no one on earth "father" (Mt 23:9). But he also said to call no one "teacher", or even "good", which non-Catholics do all the time. Why the double standard? What did Christ *mean*? And what about the common priesthood?

Paul says that he himself became a "father" in Christ (1 Cor 4:15). He was not disobeying Christ, but understood that Jesus taught that all fatherhood (biological, adopted, or priestly), is but a reflection of God's fatherhood. Just as when Jesus says, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone," he is not saying that no one is good, including himself, but that he is good because he is God, and that all goodness, like all fatherhood, comes from God. And so we call our priests fathers *in Christ*.

We do all share a common *baptismal* priesthood (Catechism, 941). But amongst the baptized there is the *ministerial* priesthood, men called by God for the service of the whole mystical Body of Christ (Catechism, 1120). Nevertheless, Churches not in full communion with the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church may still be considered Christian, as discussed next time.



Expressing the Faith: Pescador de Hombres

They left their nets and followed him...

*Tu has venido a la orilla,
no has buscado ni a sabios ni a ricos;
tan solo quieres que yo te siga.*

***Señor, me has mirado a los ojos,
Sonriendo has dicho mi nombre
En la arena he dejado mi barca
Junto a Ti buscare otro mar.***

*Tu sabes bien lo que tengo
En mi barca no hay oro ni espadas
Tan solo redes y mi trabajo*

(chorus)

*Tu necesitas mis manos
Mi cansancio que a otros descanse
Amor que quiera seguir amando*

(chorus)

*Tu, pescador de otros lagos
Ansia eterna de almas que esperan
Amigo bueno, que asi me llamas.*

(chorus)

↪ **Next time: "Act 2: Paul"** ↩