

This weekend the church celebrates Pentecost, the birthday of the church, as it receives the gift and power of the Holy Spirit, so we are dwelling in Acts, recorded by Luke, Greek medical doctor.

### Empowered to be my witnesses

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning<sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.<sup>3</sup> After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup> While staying/eating with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; <sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with/by the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

<sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” <sup>9</sup> When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. <sup>11</sup> They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

1. What is the Spirit lifting up to you?

2. What are Jesus’ instructions to his disciples/church?

“Witnesses” (Gk *martyres*) can mean: ones who testify; give evidence; be, bear, give witness; have good (honest) report, be well reported of. This word appears 79 times in the New Testament.

3. Why does Jesus say we need the Holy Spirit?

4. Implications for you, a church, this presbytery?

Resources: Video of *Acts*, word for word, by Visual Bible; Movie, *Paul the Apostle*, 2018 in theaters