

LESSON 28
“We Are Witnesses”
Acts 1-5

OVERVIEW:

The Book of Acts is Luke’s account of important events in the Church during the 30 years or so following Jesus Christ’s mortal life. Acts shows how the early church taught the gospel first to the Jews, then the Samaritans, then to the Gentiles. Luke did not call the book the Acts of the Apostles, but simply Acts.

Day of Pentecost, Miracles testify of Christ, the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Luke is the author of Acts. Luke uses as a theme in his writings temple and house. Luke 1:5-23 starts with Zacharias in the temple seeing and talking with an angel. Luke 24:52-53 ends with the apostles worshipping in the temple. Acts 1:12-13 opens with the apostles returning to the upper room after the ascension, and ends with Acts 28:30-31 with Paul ministering out of his house. For Luke, the Temple represents the ritual of worship where the house represents the heart of worship. The genuineness of one’s commitment to the gospel is truly found in how one lives the gospel in the home. Carefully examining Luke’s writings will reveal numbers of stories taking place within the Temple or house or where both Temple and house (either in name or implied) are found in juxtaposition to each other. (Bruce Satterfield, Lesson 28)

The Book of Acts tells how the Church and kingdom of God on earth operates when Jesus the King is not personally resident on planet earth. DNTC, 2:19. It is probable that during this 40 day period the church was organized into quorums and various offices. The four gospels contain no reference to a complex church organization during Jesus’ mortal ministry and tell only of a quorum of Twelve and the seventy. A similar situation is seen with the church in this dispensation, in which the offices of bishop, seventy, patriarch, Quorum of the Twelve, and First Presidency were added years after the original organization. Studies in Scriptures, 6:26.

SCRIPTURES:

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES
CHAPTER 1

Jesus ministers for forty days after his resurrection—Kingdom to be restored to Israel at a later time—The Twelve to bear witness in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth—Jesus ascends into heaven—Matthias chosen to fill the vacancy in the Twelve.

1 THE former treatise have ^aI made, O ^bTheophilus, (May have been a distinguished citizen of Rome. He was a gentile, like Luke.) of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given ^acommandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 To whom also he ^ashew^ed himself alive after his ^bpassion (sufferings) by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things ^cpertaining to the kingdom of God: (“We know that certain esoteric, secret, and important things happened to the disciples of Jesus in Jerusalem as a part of the forty day ministry. It was here, we believe, that they received an endowment. Luke 24 talks about them being told to stay in Jerusalem until they are endowed with power from on high. Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and others commented that Jesus himself gave the disciples during this period basically the equivalent of our temple endowment. Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, p. 127. In the four gospels, the only church officers mentioned are apostles and seventies. It may be,

therefore, that the Savior provided the more complex church organization (similar to what we know in the latter-day church) during his forty-day ministry. Robert Millet, Studies in Scriptures, 6:2)

4 And, being assembled together with them (when they were assembled together), commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the ^apromise of the Father (This promise was twofold: 1. They would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; and 2. They would receive a holy and sacred endowment, one reserved for the faithful, and of such a nature as to prepare them in all things to work out their salvation. DNTC, 2:22), which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be ^abaptized 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 ^arestore again the kingdom to Israel?

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

8 But ye shall receive ^apower, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be ^bwitnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, (the Jews) and in ^cSamaria (Samaritans), and unto the uttermost part of the earth (the Gentiles).

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was ^ataken ^bup; and a cloud received him out of their sight. (Why didn't He just vanish as he did with the two disciples at Emmaus? In his ascension, as in all else, our Lord chose to dramatize and teach a gospel truth in such a way that it could not be misunderstood. Here he is teaching the literal nature of his Second Coming. He stands on the Mount of Olivet and ascends visibly; angels attend; they reveal that his going establishes the pattern for his return. Thus that Jesus whom the apostles knew intimately, whose immortal body they had felt and handled, that same resurrected personage who had eaten fish and an honeycomb before them now ascends personally, literally as they behold. And so shall he come again, on the Mount of Olivet, literally, personally, in the flesh as a glorified Man, as a personage of tabernacle. DNTC, 2:28)

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee (All eleven of the Apostles were from Galilee.), why stand ye gazing up into ^aheaven? this same Jesus, which is ^btaken up from you into heaven, shall so ^ccome in like ^dmanner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (In other words, there's work to be done, get to work. We must not spend our time worrying about his return – looking steadfastly into heaven for his return – but in preparing the world for the time of his return.)

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. (Six furlongs, or 3/4ths of a mile.)

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room (Probably the same room as the last supper, in the home of Mary the mother of John Mark), where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

14 These all continued with ^aone accord in prayer and ^bsupplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his ^cbrethren. (During the mortal life of Jesus, his brethren, Mary's other sons, apparently did not believe in his divine Sonship. Now, forty days later, they are numbered with the disciples. Paul tells us that James, one of his brothers, subsequently became an apostle. Gal 1:19. DNTC, 2:29. James may have also been the first bishop of Jerusalem and later an apostle and a member of the First Presidency. This is the last mention of Mary in the Bible.)

15 ¶ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (Peter as senior apostle presided), and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David ^aspake before concerning ^bJudas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he ^aburst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their ^aproper (own) tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be ^adesolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his ^bbishoprick (office) let another take.

(They are considering the qualifications of the next apostle:)

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one ^abe (become a witness) ordained to be a ^bwitness with us of his ^cresurrection.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

24 And they ^aprayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which ^bknowest the hearts of all men, shew ^cwhether (which one) of these two thou hast ^dchosen. (They asked the Father in the name of Christ to tell which of the two he had chosen. This pattern for working out a problem to the best of one's mortal capacity and, then, asking God if the solution is correct, and also asking him to give such other direction as may be needed, is the standard, revealed procedure for solving problems and gaining direction from on high. It is the way, for instance, that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon. DNTC, 2:31)

25 That he may take part of this ministry and ^aapostleship, from which Judas by transgression ^bfell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots (sustaining votes); and the lot fell upon ^aMatthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (If they cast lots, it was an instance in which the Lord chose the result. More probably, however, they gave forth their votes, presumably sustaining votes to uphold him who God had chosen to serve in the holy apostleship. DNTC, 2:32. D&C 20:65 No person is to be ^aordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the ^bvote of that church; 66 But the presiding elders, traveling bishops, high councilors, high priests, and elders, may have the privilege of ordaining, where there is no branch of the church that a vote may be called. 67 Every president of the high priesthood (or presiding elder), ^abishop, high councilor, and ^bhigh priest, is to be ordained by the direction of a ^chigh council or general conference. D&C 124: 127-8, 144: 127 I give unto you my servant ^aBrigham Young to be a president over the Twelve traveling council; 128 Which ^aTwelve hold the keys to open up the authority of my kingdom upon the four corners of the earth, and after that to send my word to every ^bcreature. 144 And a commandment I give unto you, that you should fill all these offices and ^aapprove of those names which I have mentioned, or else disapprove of them at my general conference;)

CHAPTER 2

Spirit poured out on day of Pentecost—Peter testifies of Jesus' resurrection—He tells how to gain salvation and speaks of the gift of the Holy Ghost—Many believe and are baptized.

(“Pentecostal outpourings of the spirit have occurred many times in many dispensations. One of these great latter-day Pentecostal periods was in connection with the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. For a period of weeks, the visions of eternity were opened to many, angels visited in the congregations of the saints, the Lord himself was seen by many, and tongues and prophecy were multiplied. HC, 2:379-436. On Sunday March 27, 1836, in the dedicatory service itself, an almost exact repetition of the events of the New Testament day of Pentecost took place. Brother George A. Smith arose and began to prophesy, the Prophet recorded, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power, many

began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place.” HC, 2:428)

1 AND when the day of ^aPentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (Fifty days (Lev. 23: 16) after the Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost was kept. During those 50 days the harvest of corn was being gathered in. It is called (Ex. 23: 16) “the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours” and (Deut. 16: 10) “the feast of weeks.” The feast lasted a single day, which was a day of holy convocation (Lev. 23: 21); and the characteristic rite was the new meal offering, that is, two loaves of leavened bread made of fine flour of new wheat. Special animal sacrifices were also made (Lev. 23: 18) and freewill offerings (Deut. 16: 10). The festival was prolonged in later times, and huge numbers of Jews attended it. Of this the narrative in Acts 2 is sufficient proof. It had the same evil reputation as the Feast of the Passover for tumults and massacres. We have no record of the celebration of this feast in the Old Testament. Bible Dictionary, Feasts, p. 673)

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

3 And there appeared unto them ^acloven tongues like as of fire, (This same visible appearance of heaven-sent fire has been manifest to the Lord’s saints on other special occasions. After the baptism of the Nephite Twelve, “the Holy Ghost did fall upon them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And behold, they were encircled about as if it were by fire; and it came down from heaven, and the multitude did witness it, and did bear record; and angels did come down out of heaven and did minister unto them. 3 Ne. 19:13-14; Hela. 5:22-24) and it sat (rested) upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the ^aHoly Ghost, and began to speak with other ^btongues, as the ^cSpirit gave them utterance. (Joseph F. Smith taught, “Not one of the disciples possessed sufficient light, knowledge nor wisdom, at the time of the crucifixion, for either exaltation or condemnation; for it was afterward that their minds were opened to understand the scriptures, and that they were endowed with power from on high; without which they were only children in knowledge, in comparison to what they afterwards become under the influence of the Spirit. Gospel Doctrine, p. 433. In our own dispensation, the dedication of the Kirtland Temple parallels the events at the day of Pentecost: Probably more Latter-day Saints beheld visions and witnessed other unusual spiritual manifestations than during any other era in the history of the Church. There were reports of Saints beholding heavenly beings at ten different meetings held during that time. At eight of these meetings, many reported seeing angels... While the Saints were thus communing with heavenly hosts, many prophesied, some spoke in tongues, and others received the gift interpretation of tongues. Backman, Heavens Resound, 285, Verse by Verse, Acts to Revelation, p. 35.)

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. (The people were from 16 surrounding provinces and countries.)

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own ^alanguage.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and ^aproselytes, (Proselytes were Gentiles converted to the Jewish religion.)

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our ^atongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others ^amocking said, These men are full of new wine.

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:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet ^aJoel; (In Peter's day, it was a partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. The fullness would be seen in the latter days.)

17 And it shall come to pass in the ^alast days, saith God, I will ^bpour out of my ^cSpirit (The Spirit to be poured out in abundant measure upon all flesh in the last days is not the Holy Ghost but the Light of Christ. The gift of the Holy Ghost is reserved for the saints; he is the Spirit whom the world cannot receive. (John 14:17) The Light of Christ is the Spirit that proceeds forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space. (D&C 88:7-13) This Spirit has been shed forth in greater measure in modern times than ever before in earth's history. Doctrines of Salvation, 1:174-183. Visions and revelation come, however, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and the Light of Christ, the all pervading, universally present Spirit, is the vehicle used by the Holy Ghost to operate and function to all the world. That is, the Holy Ghost uses the Light of Christ to manifest his power and make available his gifts to all men everywhere at one and the same time. President Joseph F. Smith said: "The Holy Ghost as a personage of Spirit can no more be omnipresent in person than can the Father or the Son, but by his intelligence, his knowledge, his power and influence, over and through the laws of nature, he is and can be omnipresent throughout all the works of God. Thus when it becomes necessary to speak to us, he is able to do so by acting through the other Spirit, that is, through the Light of Christ. Doctrines of Salvation, 1:40. DNTC, 2:36) upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall ^dprophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall ^edream dreams:

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall ^aprophesy:

19 And I will shew ^awonders in heaven above, and ^bsigns in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

20 The sun shall be turned into ^adarkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and ^bnotable (glorious) ^cday of the Lord come:

21 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be ^asaved.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man ^aapproved of God among you by ^bmiracles and wonders and signs, which ^cGod did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 Him, being delivered by the ^adeterminate (appointed plan, purpose) counsel and ^bforeknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have ^ccrucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath ^araised up, having loosed the ^bpains of ^cdeath: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the ^aLord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in ^ahell (prison), neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see ^bcorruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the ^apatriarch David, that he is both dead and ^bburied, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. (Peter here is saying that David's bones are still with us, he was not resurrected at the Lord's resurrection. He did not receive a celestial resurrection. The saints, those who had lived a celestial law from Adam to Christ, were with the Lord in his resurrection. DNTC, 2:39)

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an ^aoath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up ^bChrist to sit on his throne;

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 This Jesus hath God ^araised up, whereof we all are ^bwitnesses.

33 Therefore being ^aby (to, at) the ^bright hand of God ^cexalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath ^dshed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

34 For ^aDavid is not ^bascended into the heavens: (David has fallen from his exaltation. D&C 132:39. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: Peter had the keys of eternal judgment. And he saw David in Hell and knew for what reason, and that David would have to remain there until the resurrection at the coming of Christ. Even David must wait for those times of refreshing before he can come forth and his sins be blotted out. For Peter speaking of him says, David hath not yet ascended into heaven, for his sepulcher is with us to this day. His remains were then in the tomb. Now we read that many bodies of the Saints arose at Christ's resurrection, probably all the Saints. But it seems that David did not. Why? Because he had been a murderer. Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible, p. 144) but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my ^cLord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye (Peter lays the blame for Jesus' crucifixion on the Jews as a nation – not on Pilate who passed the sentence, not on the Roman soldiers who drove the nails – but on Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, the priests, and the Jewish mob which chanted, "Crucify him, crucify him. DNTC, 2:39-40) have ^acrucified, both ^bLord and Christ.

37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were ^apricked in their ^bheart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, ^cwhat shall we do?

38 Then Peter ^asaid unto them, ^bRepent, and be ^cbaptized every one of you in the ^dname of Jesus Christ for the ^eremission of sins, and ye shall receive the ^fgift of the ^gHoly Ghost.

39 For the ^apromise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are ^bafar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. (If the callings of God extend unto us, we come within the purview of Peter's promise. Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible, p. 145)

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, ^aSave yourselves from this ^buntoward (crooked) generation. (Peter is teaching the first principles and ordinances of the gospel; faith in Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end. DNTC, 2:41)

41 ¶ Then they that gladly ^areceived his ^bword were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about ^cthree thousand souls. (Besides the Twelve and the Seventy, there could have been many priesthood bearers available to perform these three thousand baptisms. DNTC, 2:43)

42 And they continued ^astedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and ^bfellowship, and in breaking of ^cbread, and in prayers.

43 And ^afear came upon every soul: and many wonders and ^bsigns were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things ^acommon;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had ^aneed. (The early Saints attempt to live a form of the law of consecration. All things common did not mean that everyone pooled all the resources and shared everything in common, all having equal amounts. It meant that every person and family had an equality according to their needs. Verse by Verse, Acts to Revelation, p. 37)

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the ^atemple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and ^bsingleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord ^aadded to the ^bchurch daily such as should be saved.

CHAPTER 3

Peter and John heal a man lame from birth—Peter preaches repentance—He also speaks of the age of restoration preceding the Second Coming—He names Christ as the prophet of whom Moses spoke.

1 NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being the ninth hour* (at the ninth hour, for prayer.)

2 And a certain man ^alame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; (If this man was laid daily at the temple gate, then Jesus would have seen him. Why didn't He heal him? He let his apostles do it at the right time.)

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an ^aalms.

4 And Peter (and John), fastening his (their) eyes upon him ~~with John~~, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have ^agive I thee: In the ^bname of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. (Peter did not ask the Lord to heal the cripple; he did not pray to God to pour out his grace and healing virtue upon the lame man. Instead – acting in the Lord's name and by virtue of a delegation of priestly authority already received – he himself commanded the miracle to occur. Peter was the Lord's servant, his representative and agent; he stood in the place and stead of Christ, doing what the Master would have done if personally present. The illustration here seen of the relationship of Master and servant, or Principal and agent, of the Lord and his representative, is the same as is involved in the ordinance of administration to the sick. James 3:12-20. DNTC, 2:46)

7 And he took him by the right hand, and ^alifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people ^asaw him walking and praising God:

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the ^aporch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12 ¶ And when Peter saw it (this), he answered (and said) unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our ^aown power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath ^aglorified his Son Jesus; whom ye ^bdelivered up, and ^cdenied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a ^amurderer to be granted unto you; (Barabbas)

15 And killed the ^aPrince of life, whom God hath ^braised from the dead; whereof we are ^cwitnesses.

16 And his ^aname (this man) through faith in his name hath (been) made ~~this man~~ strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the ^bfaith which is by (in) him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 And now, brethren, ^aI ^bwot (know) that through ^cignorance ye ~~did it~~ (have done this), as ~~did~~ also your rulers.

18 But those things, which God before had ^ashewed by the mouth of all his ^bprophets, that Christ should ^csuffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19 ¶ ^aRepent ye therefore, and be ^bconverted, that your sins may be ^cblotted out, (Not to be forgiven and be heirs of salvation, as are those whose sins are washed away by baptism; but after they have paid the utmost farthing they shall rise to some degree of reward in one of the lesser mansions. DNTC, 2:48)

when the times of refreshing (This earth was created in a new or paradisiacal state; then, incident to Adam's transgression, it fell to its present telestial state. At the Second Coming of our Lord, it will be renewed, regenerated, refreshed, transfigured, become again a new earth, a paradisiacal earth. Its millennial status will be a return to its pristine state of beauty and glory, the state that existed before the fall. MD, p. 795-6) shall come from the ^dpresence of the Lord; (Joseph Smith says that Peter is here addressing the murderers who crucified Christ and that this is the reason Peter did not invite them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, but rather counseled them to repent and be converted in the hope their sins would be blotted out at the Second Coming. "They could not be baptized for the remission of sins," the Prophet said, "for they had shed innocent blood." TPJS, p. 339. Speaking of this verse, Joseph Smith also said: "Remission of sins by baptism was not to be preached to murderers... There is no forgiveness for murderers; they will have to wait until the times of redemption shall come, and that in hell." DNTC, 2:48.)

20 And he shall send ^aJesus Christ, which before was preached unto ^byou (whom ye have crucified):
21 Whom the heaven must receive (Christ must and shall retain heaven as his dwelling place until the time appointed for him to return and reign personally on earth. In the providences of the Father, the Second Coming cannot be until the times of restitution. DNTC, 2:49) until the times of ^arestitution of all things, (The age or era of restoration. It is that period in the earth's history known as the dispensation of the fullness of times, for in that era all things are to be restored. DNTC, 2:49) which God hath ^bspoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (It should be noted that Peter does not say that all things must be restored before Christ comes, but that the age, era, period, or times in the earth's history in which restoration is to take place must itself commence. That era did begin in the spring of 1820, but all things will not be revealed until after Christ comes. MD, p. 796.)

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A ^aprophet (Jesus Christ, see Joseph Smith History 1:40) shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be ^adestroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise ^aforetold of these days.

25 Ye are the ^achildren of the prophets, and of the ^bcovenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be ^cblessed.

26 Unto you first God, having raised up his ^aSon Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. (Jesus told the Nephite kinsmen of these Jews almost the same thing spoken here by Peter. To these American Hebrews the resurrected Lord said: 3 Nephi 20: 25 And behold, ye are the ^achildren of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the ^bcovenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And ^cin thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. 26 The Father having raised me up unto you first, and sent me to ^abless you in ^bturning away every one of you from his iniquities; and this because ye are the children of the covenant— 27 And after that ye were blessed then fulfilleth the Father the covenant which he made with Abraham, saying: ^aIn thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed—unto the pouring out of the Holy Ghost through me upon the Gentiles, which ^bblessing upon the ^cGentiles shall make them mighty above all, unto the ^dscattering of my people, O house of Israel. Who then are the children of the covenant? According to the terms of the covenant which God made with Abraham, all of the literal seed of that great prophet are entitled to receive the gospel, the priesthood, and all of the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. (Abr 2:9-11 & D&C 86:8-11) When any of those descendants do receive all of these things, "They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God. (D&C 84:34) They are then children of the covenant, that is, they are inheritors of the fullness of the blessings appertaining to the new and everlasting covenant which is the gospel. Ye are the children of the covenant (3 Ne. 20:24-27) our Lord told the Nephites among whom he ministered, a distinction

which the faithful saints of this dispensation also enjoy. Rebellious descendants of Abraham are not his children in the special sense that is intended by the designation children of the covenant. MD, p. 126, DNTC, 2:50-51.)

CHAPTER 4

Peter and John are arrested and brought before the council—Peter testifies that salvation comes because of Christ—Sadducees strive to silence them—Saints glory in the testimony of Jesus—They practice a united order.

- 1 AND as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,
- 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the ^aresurrection from the dead.
- 3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.
- 4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about ^afive thousand.
- 5 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and ^ascribes,
- 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high ^apriest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.
- 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what ^apower, or by what ^bname, have ye done this?
- 8 Then Peter, filled with the ^aHoly Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,
- 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;
- 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the ^aname of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.
- 11 This is the ^astone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.
- 12 Neither is there ^asalvation in any other: for there is none other ^bname under heaven given among men, whereby we must be ^csaved.
- 13 ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were ^aunlearned and ^bignorant (ordinary, plain) men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. (The Lord describes his emissaries as weak, unlearned, and despised. But he promises that through their efforts, He will thrash the nations by the power of His Spirit (D&C 35:13) Elder Aldin Porter, Ensign, Nov., p. 9)
- 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.
- 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,
- 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable ^amiracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*.
- 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.
- 18 And they called them, and ^acommanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.
- 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to ^ahearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.
- 20 For we cannot but ^aspeak the things which we have ^bseen and heard.
- 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for ~~all men~~ (many) glorified God for that which was done. (They could not

be persuaded to not preach of Jesus Christ.)

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

23 ¶ And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and ^aearth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The ^akings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast ^aanointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

31 ¶ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were ^aassembled together; and they were all filled with the ^bHoly Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of ^aone heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ^bbought (any) of the things which he ^cpossessed was his own; but they had all things ^dcommon.

33 And with great power gave the apostles ^awitness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great ^bgrace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses ^asold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and ^adistribution was made unto every man according as he had ^bneed.

36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed ^aBarnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,

37 Having land, sold it, and brought the ^amoney, and laid it at the apostles' feet. (In the early part of both this and the meridian dispensations, the saints attempted to live the full law of consecration. That is, they consecrated their temporal means and spiritual abilities to the Lord's work. All of their talents, strength, time, properties, and monies were made available for use in the establishment of the Lord's earthly Church and kingdom. In this dispensation the organizational arrangement whereunder the principles of consecration operated was the United Order. The New Testament contains only passing allusions of how the system operated in that day. (Cor 8:1-24; 9:1-15, 1 Tim. 5:1-18) As practiced in this dispensation, the saints conveyed to the Lord's agent all of the property. "They were then given stewardships to use for their own maintenance, with all surpluses reverting back to the Lord's storehouses. Because of greed, avarice, and the worldly circumstances in which they found themselves, the saints did not achieve great success in the practice of this law, and in due course the Lord withdrew from them the privilege of so conducting their temporal affairs." MD, p. 158. Either the Lord withdrew from the primitive saints whatever United Order they had or the practice was lost as the dark era of universal apostasy fell upon the earth. DNTC, 2:57)

CHAPTER 5

Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Lord and lose their lives—Apostles continue the miracles of Jesus—Peter and John are arrested; an angel delivers them from prison; they testify of Christ—Gamaliel counsels moderation.

1 BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, ^asold a possession,

2 And ^akept back ^bpart of the price, (Elder Neal A Maxwell said: Ananias and Sapphira...kept back a portion instead of consecrating their all. Some would never sell Jesus for thirty pieces, but they would not give Him their all either! ... We tend to think of consecration only in terms of property and money. But there are so many ways of keeping back part. One might be giving of money and time and yet hold back a significant portion of himself. One might share talents publicly yet privately retain a particular pride. One might hold back from kneeling before God's throne and yet bow to a particular gallery of peers. One might accept a Church calling but have his heart more set on maintaining a certain role in the world. CR, Oct. 1992, p. 90) his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain ^cpart, and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Their offense was much greater than simply lying. They broke their covenants.)

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to ^alie to the Holy Ghost, and to ^bkeep back part of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not ^alied unto men, but unto ^bGod.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and ^agave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to ^atempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down ^astraightway (immediately) at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. (Why did the Lord slay Ananias and Sapphira? Their crime was lying; they conspired together to deceive their church leaders, and the Lord made them an example of how serious the offense, how severe the penalty – for lying. In ancient Israel Achan was similarly punished for stealing. (Josh 7) DNTC, 2:58)

12 ¶ And by the hands of the apostles were many ^asigns and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the ^arest (rulers) durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

14 And believers were the more ^aadded to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the ^ashadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were ^ahealed every one.

17 ¶ Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with ^aindignation, (envy, malice)

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 But the ^aangel of the Lord by night opened the ^bprison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the ^awords of this life.

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we straitly ^acommand you that ye should not teach in this ^bname? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's ^cblood upon us.

29 ¶ Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to ^aobey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and ^ahanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted ^awith (at) his right hand to be a ^bPrince and a ^cSaviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and ^dforgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his ^awitnesses of these things; and *so is* also the ^bHoly Ghost, whom God hath ^cgiven to them that obey him.

33 ¶ When they heard *that*, they were ^acut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named ^aGamaliel, (St. Paul's teacher (Acts 22:3), grandson of Hillel and son of Rabbi Simeon, was by far the most influential rabbi of the time. He was the first of seven teachers who received the title Rabban (higher than Rab or Rabbi). Gamaliel's moderation on this occasion is to be explained, (1) by his hostility to the Sadducees, whom he would not allow to win a decisive triumph over a sect which had much in common with the Pharisees; (2) by the favorable impression which the Apostles' preaching and miracles had made upon him. He was not a convert, but thought that something was to be said for the new teaching. Subsequent developments, particularly the preaching of Stephen, probably alienated him, as it did the other Pharisees. DNTC, 2:64, Dummelow, p. 825) a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. (Persecution is the tool of Satan to harass, hinder, and destroy, if possible, the cause of righteousness. The spiritually weak, the lukewarm disciples, those who have not given themselves wholly to the Cause of Christ are purged from the Church by persecution. DNTC, 2:63)

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as ^aobeyed (were persuaded by, believed him) him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, ^aRefrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of ^bmen, it will come to nought:

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; (be careful, therefore,) ^alest haply ye be found even to ^bfight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. (Gamaliel attempted to persuade the Jewish leaders from their intent to persecute and kill Peter and the apostles. In a speech before the Sanhedrin he referred to a man called Theudas who had gained four hundred followers, only to fail in his attempts to acquire additional adherents. In fact, Theudas was killed and his followers were scattered. In effect, Gamaliel's approach was, "Let nature take its course. If the work be of men, it will fail as did Theudas. If it is of God, it will triumph to your injury. In giving a reason why the Sanhedrin should let the apostles go, Gamaliel cited the case of Judas of Galilee as an example of how a movement would come to naught if the Lord was not with it. Though Gamaliel's advice carried with the council, his evaluation of Judas and his followers proved to be quite inadequate. In about AD 6 or 7, Quirinius, the Roman governor of Syria, undertook a census of Palestine. Judas, a fanatically loyal Galilean, said that the Jews should be free of any foreign domination and therefore opposed the census. He gathered a

band of followers who resisted the order with open violence. They were, for the most part, captured, tortured, and killed, including Judas, so in that sense, at least, Gamaliel was correct. But from that brief insurrection was born the movement known as the Zealots which in AD 66, led another revolt against Rome. It was this Zealot inspired revolt which led to the destruction of the temple and the scattering of the Jews from Palestine in AD 70-72. The Life and Teachings of Jesus and his Apostles, p. 245)

41 ¶ And they departed from the presence of the council, ^arejoicing that they were counted worthy to ^bsuffer ^cshame for his ^dname.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and ^apreach Jesus Christ.