

Welcome to

Journey through the Bible

Book by book Bible study



Acts

The Birth of the Church

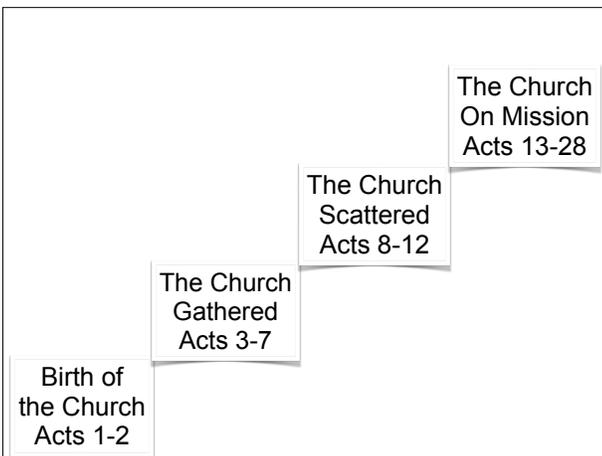


Theme and Structure:
Central Idea: Acts 1:8.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you: and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Purpose of Acts

1. Explain the birth & nature of the church
2. Document the spread of Christianity
3. Demonstrate the centrality of Christ
4. Explain the ministry of the Holy Spirit
5. Validate mission/methods of the church
6. Authenticate Paul's apostleship



Commission Jesus gave them (us)

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After Jesus said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. (1:7-9)

This is the purpose and plan of Acts

Good news! Jesus will return!

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (1:10-12)

We eagerly await His return, meanwhile, there is work to do!

The advent of the Holy Spirit

The apostles returned to Jerusalem ... to the room where they were staying ... They all joined together constantly in prayer.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (1:12-2:1-4)

This marks the birth of the Church!

The Holy Spirit is 'poured out' four times in the book of Acts

Acts 2: Peter Jews = Church	Acts 10: Peter Gentiles = Church
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Acts 8: Peter Samaritans = Church	Acts 19: Paul Gentiles = Church
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These are unique occurrences, they mark the extension of the church to new people groups

Acts: The Church Continues Christ's Witness to the World

In Jerusalem	In Judea and Samaria	To the Ends of the Earth
Church Established	Church Scattered	Church Extended
Acts 2-7	Acts 8-12	Acts 13-28

The first proclamation of the Gospel

Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ... let me explain this to you; ... this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. ... on my servants, both men and women, ... Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

(2:14-21)

The timely and timeless Gospel

"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." ... "Brothers, what shall we do?" ... "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

(2:36-39)

The Gospel permeates Jerusalem

Witness prospers & persists in Jerusalem amid growing opposition from outside and problems within the church 3-7



From outside the church	3-4
From inside the church	5:1-11
From outside the church	5:12-42
From inside the church	6:1-7
From outside the church	6:8-7:60

Witness extends to Judea and Samaria due to effective witness in Jerusalem

Life inside the early church

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... All the believers were together and had everything in common. ... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (2:42-47)

Witness Grows Amid Opposition, 3-7

1. Healing of the crippled beggar, 3:1-10
2. Peter's sermon explaining miracle, 3:11-26
3. Arrest and trial before Sanhedrin, 4:1-22
4. Prayer and praise of the believers, 4:23-37
5. Purifying the believers from within, 5:1-16
6. Persecution by religious leaders, 5:17-42
7. Believers organize for ministry, 6:1-7
8. Witness of Stephen, first martyr, 6:8-7:60

Healing of a crippled beggar

Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." ... instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. ... When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ... they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (3:6-10)

Peter's explanation of the miracle

The God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, ... You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. (3:13–15)

The apostles' invitation to salvation

I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.

(3:17–20)

Arrest and trial of the witnesses

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees ... were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John ... they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

(4:1–4)

Peter's defense and explanation

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ... It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ... Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." (4:7–12)

The attempt to suppress the witness

"To stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

They commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

(4:17–20)

But the believer's fellowship persists

All the believers were one in heart and mind. ... they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. (4:32–35)

Purifying believers within the church

Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property ... kept back part of the money for himself ... Peter said, "How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? ... You have not lied just to human beings but to God." (5:3–4).

The godly church keeps growing

The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

(5:12–14)

Apostle's defense before authorities

"We must obey God rather than men! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (5:29–32)

Wise insight from Gamaliel an outsider

"Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. (5:38–40)

Wise action solves a major problem

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." (6:2–4)

The church continued to grow!

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; ... They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. (6:5-7)

Even as the opposition intensified!

Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose from members of the Synagogue ... who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. ... They stirred up the people ... seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, ... (6:8-14)

Stephen's Spirit empowered defense!

"You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it." (7:51–53)

Stephen, becomes the first martyr!

They covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. ... Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit. ... do not hold this sin against them." ... Saul was there, giving approval to his death. (7:57-8:1)

See you next week!

Acts 8-12

Spreading the Good News

