

Welcome to

Journey through the Bible

Book by book Bible study



Acts: The Church Continues Christ's Witness to the World		
In Jerusalem	In Judea and Samaria	To the Ends of the Earth
Church Gathered	Church Scattered	Church Extended
Acts 2-7	Acts 8-12	Acts 13-28

Christians 'scattered' by persecution
 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ... But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.
 (8:1-4)
 Diesparesan = dia- "through", speiro- "sow"
 "to sow by scattering seed abroad"

➔ Philip - Places
 "a" city in Samaria
 "a" road to Gaza
 Azotas to Caesarea

➔ People- crowds,
 -a sorcerer believes
 -Ethiopian believes,
 -traveled about,
 preaching the gospel in all towns



Biblica, p. 460

Gospel transcends cultural barriers
 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there ... when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon (the sorcerer) believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.
 (8:5-13)

The church becomes multi-cultural
 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (8:14-17)

A seeking heart finds Christ
 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official. ... This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." (8:26-29).

Conversational evangelism at work
 "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, unless someone explains it to me?" ... This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth." ... began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.
 (8:32-40)

Saul seeks to destroy the church

Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. (9:1-3)

Until confronted by the risen Christ

He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ... Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand to Damascus. (9:4-8)

Saul is God's chosen instrument!

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road ... has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (9:15-17)

Saul the persecutor becomes Paul the preacher

Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished ... (9:18-21)

Barnabas is Paul's 'bridge builder'

When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord ... So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. (9:26-28)

Church grows in numbers and area

He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the believers learned of this, they took Paul down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. (9:29-31)

Miracles mark Peter's ministry

As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. (9:32-35)

Even the dead are raised!

Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. (9:40-42)

A devout Gentile earnestly seeks God

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. (10:1-4)

God responds to the earnest seeker

"Send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." ... Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. He sent them to Joppa. About noon the following day as they were approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. (10:4-9)

The vision that opens Peter's eyes

Peter became hungry ... fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and a large sheet being let down ... it contained all kinds of animals as well as reptiles and birds." A voice told him, "Get up. Kill and eat." "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied, "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." The voice spoke, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."
(10:10-15)

Peter understands, obeys God's call

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion." (10:19-23)

Peter has learned a valuable lesson

Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ... Peter said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" (10:28-29)

Peter proclaims Christ to Gentiles

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ... They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day." ... (10:34-36)

Gentiles also receive the Holy Spirit

"He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.(10:42-44)

A 'strategic' change for the church

The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." (10:45-47)

Peter faces a backlash in Jerusalem

The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." (11:1–3)

Peter's defense, this is God's doing!

Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: ... "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ... So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" (11:4–17)

God has broken down the wall that separated Jew and Gentile!

The church grows among Gentiles

Now those who had been **scattered** by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, ... began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. (11:19–21)

Barnabus is sent to investigate

News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. (11:22–24)

Believers now called "little Christs"

So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. ...

The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judah. They did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. (11:26-30)

Persecution cannot stop the spread!

Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ... he proceeded to seize Peter also. After arresting him, he put him in prison, to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. ... Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. (12:1–5)

The gospel keeps on spreading!

The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, ... an angel of the Lord appeared the chains fell off Peter's wrists. ... Peter followed him out of the prison ... went to where many people were praying, described how the Lord had brought him out of prison.

The word of God continued to spread.
(12:6–24)

See you next week!

Acts

Paul's Missionary Journeys

