

ACTS: PRACTICING CHRISTIANITY

THE BIRTH, DEVELOPMENT & EXPANSION OF CHRIST'S CHURCH

A BIG PICTURE OUTLINE OF ACTS

PART ONE: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRIST'S CHURCH (Chapters 1-12)

- I. FINAL KINGDOM PREPARATIONS (1) A.D. 30
- II. THE DAY OF PENTECOST-KINGDOM COME! (2) A.D. 30
- III. THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM (2-7) A.D. 30-35?
- IV. PERSECUTION & PROLIFERATION (8-12) A.D. 35-45?

PART TWO: THE EXPANSION OF CHRIST'S CHURCH (Chapters 13-28)

- V. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY TRIP (13-14) A.D. 48-49
- VI. THE LEADERS' CONFERENCE IN JERUSALEM (15) A.D. 49
- VII. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY TRIP (16:1-18:23a) A.D. 49-52
- VIII. PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY TRIP (18:23b-21:16) A.D. 53-57
- IX. PAUL'S DEFENSE IN JERUSALEM (21:17-23:35) A.D. 57
- X. PAUL'S DEFENSE IN CAESAREA (24:1-26:32) A.D. 57-59
- XI. PAUL TAKEN TO ROME, IN CUSTODY (27-28) A.D. 60-62

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FOUR: BREAKING NEW GROUND!

SECTION LEAD-IN: Like a wise chess master who executes a series of moves to set up for a checkmate, the Lord Jesus was getting His pieces in place to make a big move. What "big move?" To propel Christianity deep and wide into the Roman Empire, and beyond! His surprising first move was to "move" the believers out of Jerusalem ...

SECTION BREAKDOWN: (See BIG PICTURE Outline)

IV. PERSECUTION & PROLIFERATION (8-12) A.D. 35-45?

- A. (8:1-3) Saul _____ an all-out persecution in Jerusalem!
- B. (8:4-13) Philip ministers in Samaria, with _____!
- C. (8:14-25) Peter and John come to Samaria to dispense _____!
- D. (8:26-40) Philip continues ministering, _____ the _____ to Caesarea!
- E. (9:1-19) Saul the _____ is converted to Christ!
- F. (9:20-30) Saul's early travels: From Damascus to _____ to Caesarea to _____!
- G. (9:31) A "_____ report" on the Lord's church! (see 1:8)
- H. (9:32-43) Peter follows up on _____ work in the coastal towns of Judea!
- I. (10:1-48) Peter preaches to and _____ a Gentile family in Caesarea!
- J. (11:1-18) Peter _____ preaching the Gospel to Gentiles!
- K. (11:19-30) Barnabas and Saul _____ together in Syrian Antioch!
- L. (12:1-19) _____ is beheaded, Peter is imprisoned, but _____ by an angel!
- M. (12:20-25) King Herod Agrippa I _____ by an angel!

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SUPPLEMENT "C" – THE MIRACULOUS APOSTOLIC GIFTS

1. Jesus' promises to His apostles

📖 John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-14; 17:20; Luke 24:48-53; Acts 1:4-8

The Holy Spirit would deliver the New Covenant message to and through the apostles

2. The early Christians were converted by and devoted to the apostles' teaching"

📖 Acts 2:42; 6:1-7

3. The Letter to the Ephesians addresses their "foundational" role:

📖 Eph 2:19-22 (especially v. 20) Notice WHAT WE ARE & WHERE WE ARE BUILT

📖 Eph 4:7-12 (especially v. 11) the five basic church roles

APOSTLES & PROPHETS - "Foundation-layers" through the message and ministry they received from the Lord

EVANGELISTS, PASTORS, TEACHERS - "House-builders" whose functions serve to build upon that established foundation - thus propagating the church from generation to generation (See Mat 28:19-20; 2 Tim 2:2)

📖 Eph 3:1-5

The foundation was being laid as the Spirit revealed the message to those apostles and prophets (see Rom 16:25-26) REVEALED, WRITTEN, READ and UNDERSTOOD! (See John 20:30-31)

4. This "foundational" apostolic role included the ability to perform miraculous signs and distribute them as God willed

📖 Mark 16:17-20 - where there were believers, there would be "confirming" signs - to establish the veracity of the message (See Hebrews 2:1-4; 1 Cor 1:4-7)

📖 Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-21 & 33 - Jesus delivers to the apostles what He promised!

📖 Acts 2:38,43; 5:12 - All believers had the Holy Spirit, but in the early months/years of the church, only the apostles performed miracles!

📖 Acts 6:3-8; 8:5-20 - Once the leadership expands so does the ability to perform the miracles! (When the apostles laid hands on Stephen and Philip, they too could perform miracles - but Philip was unable to pass that ability on to others. Only apostles could do that!; NOTE: This would include Paul, the late-comer! See Acts 19:1-6 & 2 Tim 1:6;)

5. Were the "confirming" signs of the 1st Century meant to be "continuing" signs of every century? (Review Mark 16:19-20; Heb 2:1-4 & the scriptures from #3 before continuing)

📖 Joel 2:28-32 with Acts 2:14-21 - the signs that accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit were limited to "those days" - they served both to call attention to the new message of Christ and His universal salvation - and to authenticate that message.

📖 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

- a. The key to understanding this scripture is to take it in the context of the subject Paul is addressing here - spiritual gifts! (Read chapters 12-14)
- b. What did the Corinthian believers have only "in part"? (Notice that all three gift areas have to do with THE MESSAGE - the ability to hear it, know it and share it.)
- c. When would the "partial" be done away with? (Answer: When the "complete" had come - Greek word, τέλειος - *teleios*, meaning "complete, perfect, mature, having reached its purpose")
- d. Once the entire message had been revealed, the direct, miraculous function of the apostles and prophets would cease - it would no longer be needed. By the middle of the 2nd Century, the apostles had died off and those they laid hands on were also gone. And not coincidentally, the reports of apostolic-type miracles disappeared. The inspired apostle said they would "cease" and they did indeed.
- e. What's love got to do with it? Love is something permanent which Paul uses in contrast to the temporary "gifts" the Corinthians were so caught up in. He was basically telling them not to get so caught up in temporary things!

IN CLOSING: Make sure we're clear: God still works mighty wonders today - His power is unlimited! (Mark 9:23; 6:5-6; Jn 14:12-14; Eph 3:20) But from what we read in the New Testament, we should not expect God to work wonders today through human apostles and prophets, as He once did. We don't need that approach anymore - that was part of the church's foundation. The Lord has given us a better, confirmed way!