

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:  
A History of the Early Church in Transition  
Gulf Coast Baptist Church  
Bible Institute

A. v. 14-40: Peter's Speech

1. Peter demonstrated a boldness that was in direct contrast to the cowardice that had been evident since the Garden of Gethsamene - Peter was filled with the Spirit
2. Peter's quotation of the Prophet Joel
  - a) Was Pentecost the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy?
    - (1) Joel was referring to the events surrounding "*the last days*" or "*the Day of the Lord*" when He would pour out his Spirit upon the remnant of Israel
    - (2) Peter used this passage to demonstrate that Pentecost and this event were similar although they were not the same
    - (3) The Jews should not be surprised that God would pour out His Spirit and that when He does so amazing events would accompany this outpouring
3. Peter addressed a Jewish crowd - "*Ye men of Israel!*"
4. Peter proceeded to give the Gospel to these unbelievers:
  - a) Christ's death, though carried out by men, had been previously planned out by God
  - b) Christ rose from the dead because sin and death were not powerful enough to keep Him in the grave
  - c) Christ's resurrection had been prophesied in the Old Testament
  - d) Christ is God and the Anointed Savior
5. v. 22: Peter states that "we" (the ones speaking - the apostles) were witnesses of the Resurrected Christ
  - a) See handout of the use of "witness" in Acts and the early epistles
  - b) The term "witness" is used to denote one who actually saw the Resurrected Christ during the 40 days prior to His ascension
  - c) In Acts, this word is not merely a reference to one who shares the Gospel or lives a God-honoring life
6. The crowd's response:
  - a) "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*"
  - b) "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*"
    - (1) "Repent" - *metanoia* - change of mind about the Nazarene whom they had just recently crucified as a blasphemer and malefactor
    - (2) "Be baptized" - not Spirit baptism but the outward demonstration of an inward change
    - (3) Grammatically, the passage is better understood to signify that water baptism is the result of remission of sins, not the cause of forgiveness

B. v. 41-47: The results of Pentecost:

1. 3,000 individuals were saved
2. Practice of the early church

- a) Continued in the apostles doctrine -
  - (1) Old Testament (few distinctions were being made for their Jewish believers)
  - (2) Christ's Upper Room teaching
- b) Fellowship and the breaking of bread - believers were sharing and spending time with one another while eating meals
- c) Prayers - much time was given to worship
- d) Had all things in common - the early Church practiced a form of communalism
- e) Continuing daily with one accord - the Temple remained the focal point of the Church's activity in the early days

## II. Chapter 3 - A.D. 33

### A. v. 1- 10: Peter and John in the Temple - the Lame Man is Healed

1. Peter and John continue the practice of going to the Temple
  - a) Paul in Jerusalem - James states that there were thousands of Jewish believers who were still "zealous of the law" (Acts 21:20) - this would have included both Temple worship and ceremonies - A.D. 57
  - b) Transition - author of Hebrews calls on Jewish believers to leave the Temple practices - A.D. 63/64
2. Peter heals the lame man, "*in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*"
3. The crowds, "*were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him*"
  - a) Miracles and wonders in the Book of Acts
    - (1) Purpose: Miracles, signs, and wonders served as God's sign of approval of the message being taught
      - (a) Ex. 4:1-5 - God performed miracles by Moses so that the nation would believe his report
      - (b) Ex. 19:8 - God descended upon Mount Sinai and spoke to Moses so that the nation would believe - institution of the Mosaic Covenant
      - (c) 1 Ki. 18:24 - God sent fire from heaven upon the altar at Mount Carmel to demonstrate that He is the One True God
      - (d) Jo. 3:2 - Nicodemus recognized the Christ was from God because of the miracles he performed
      - (e) Jo. 10:37-38 - Jesus stated that the crowd ought to believe his words because of His miraculous works
      - (f) Acts 2:22 - Peter stated that God demonstrated His approval of Christ and his teachings because of the miracles, signs and wonders He performed
    - (2) The miracles, signs, and wonders performed by the apostles in Acts validated the preaching of the brand new message that faith in the Resurrected Christ provided forgiveness and acceptance with God
    - (3) Occurrences of miracles and wonders diminish as the Book of Acts progresses
      - (a) There are two separate waves of miracles and wonders recounted in Acts - *see* handout out on Signs and Wonders
        - i) Peter and the apostles in Jerusalem - early
        - ii) Paul in the Mediterranean - later
    - (4) As the Gospel message and New Testament revelation grew and became more established, the necessity of miracles and wonders were less and less necessary
    - (5) Miracles and wonders are not prescriptive for the Church today because God's written revelation is complete - 1 Cor. 13:10

B. v. 12-36: Peter's 2nd Sermon

- a) Peter gave Christ full credit for having healed the lame man
- b) Peter demonstrated the Christ was the prophetic fulfillment of the suffering Messiah (difficulty for unbelieving Jews)
- c) Peter states that Israel's faithless rejection of Christ prohibited them from experiencing the Messianic kingdom

III. Chapter 4 - A.D. 33-34

A. v.1-22: Peter and John arrested for teaching the crowds about the Resurrected Christ

1. It is notable that the Church's first persecutors were from the "religious crowd"
  - a) Those motivated by religious zeal (work of the flesh) often despise genuine believers in Christ
  - b) Demonstrated by the Pharisees hatred of Christ during His earthly ministry
  - c) Self-righteous religious Jews persecuted believers who were operating by the Spirit of God - Gal. 4:29
2. v. 8-12: Peter "*filled by the the Holy Ghost*" (Aor. Pass. Part.) preached that Christ, whom they had rejected, is the only One who could provide salvation
3. v. 13: The religious leaders and Sadducees marveled at the apostles' bold and impressive speech although they were unlearned men
4. v. 17-20: The Pharisees threatened Peter and John not to continue preaching
  - a) Peter and John's response - "*Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*"
  - b) The only legitimate reason for disobeying civil authority is when a believer in Christ is commanded to disobey God
5. v. 21-22: The Jewish religious leaders released Peter and John because of public opinion - demonstrated improper motivation for their actions

B. v. 23-31: The disciples reaction

1. v. 24: the apostles and the disciples worshipped God
  - a) Worship is a proper response for the believer in all situations - demonstrates confidence in the person and character of God
  - b) Civil authorities cannot stop God's plan and program
  - c) God's determinations will be carried out regardless of governmental resistance
2. v. 31: The apostles and disciples were "*filled (Aor. Pass. Ind.) with the Holy Ghost, and they spake (Imp. Act. Ind.) the word of God with boldness*"
  - a) Once again, they were filled by God, which resulted in boldness to preach the good news

C. v. 32-37: Life in the early Church

1. v. 32: believers were united in thoughts, desires, and feelings towards one another.
  - a) Multitude of believers practiced a form of communalism
  - b) This type of giving appears to be a very organic outflow of the unified hearts and souls and not something mandated by the apostles
  - c) This type of giving is not prescriptive for the Church today
2. v. 36: Barnabas ("*the son of consolation*" - gift of exhortation?) is introduced as an influential person within the early Church and was noted for his generous financial gift

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**SIGNS AND WONDERS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

Peter and the apostles establish the foundation of the early Church

(A.D. 30) Acts 2:4-6 – At Pentecost, the Apostles miraculously began to speak in other known languages.

(A.D. 30) Acts 2:43 – Following Pentecost, many signs and wonders were performed by the Apostles.

(A.D. 30-31) Acts 3:7 – Peter healed a lame man in the Temple.

(A.D. 30-31) Acts 5:12, 15-16 – The people observed the Apostles perform many signs and wonders.

(A.D. 32/33) Acts 6:8 – Stephen was credited with many wonders and miracles among the people.

(A.D. 35) Acts 8:6, 7, 13 – Philip performed many miracles during his evangelistic efforts in Samaria.

(A.D. 37/38) Acts 9:32-34 – Peter healed Aeneas of palsy and many were subsequently saved.

(A.D. 37/38) Acts 9:38-41 – Peter raised Dorcas from the dead and many people believed on Christ.

(A.D. 40/41) Acts 10:45 – Cornelius and other Gentile converts spoke in tongues following their salvation.

Paul's 1st Missionary Journey

(A.D. 47/48) Acts 13:11 – Paul blinded the sorcerer Elymas and the deputy believed the Gospel.

(A.D. 48/49) Acts 14:3, 9 – Paul and Barnabas were given the ability to perform signs and wonders.

(A.D. 49/50) Acts 15:2 – At the Council of Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas recounted the signs and wonders they had performed during their missionary journeys. - *reference to previous miracles*

(A.D. 53-56) Acts 19:11 – Paul performed special miracles.

(A.D. 57) Acts 20:9-12 – Paul raised Eutychus from the dead.

(A.D. 59/60) Acts 28:3-6 – Paul miraculously survived being bitten by a poisonous snake.

(A.D. 59/60) Acts 28:8, 9- Paul healed the father of Publius.

\*\*\* No mention of miracles occurring in the New Testament after Acts 28

\*\*\* No mention of miracles, signs, or wonders occurring in any of the Epistles