

Welcome to the Worship Celebration of



SIMPLY BIBLICAL | FAMILY INTEGRATED

Church – The Beginnings, Part 54
Acts 1 thru 17 – What have we learned so far?



THE
BOOK OF ACTS

Jerusalem

Judea

Samaria

Ends of the earth

I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach ²until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.³ After he had suffered, he also presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "Which," he said, "you have heard me speak about; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days."

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?"

⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:1-8

What have we NOT Seen (nor will we ever) so far in the book of Acts:

1. **Altar Calls ... like we see today?** We read of **NO** Folks coming down to the front, down to the “altar”, down to the wooden cross (and nail some new nails) ... no one ever is called to come out of their seats and come forward and say a prayer, or to be pressured into some sort of “confession”, etc. Folks are **Called to Repentance** and to **Trust in Jesus Christ** after hearing the Gospel message. But, as in the close of Acts 17, there is **no** hint of standing up in front of folks (on stage) and pressuring people with more and more words, and music playing, etc. for folks to come down to the “altar”, etc.
2. **Celebration of any, so-called, Christian Holy Days (holidays).** Acts encompasses about 30 years. During that whole time, **not one** Christian, not one Apostle, elder, or deacon are recorded ever celebrating Christmas or decorating a Christmas tree, giving and receiving Christmas presents; nor do we see anyone celebrate Good Friday or Easter or initiate any Easter Egg Hunts, etc. Today’s huge cultural and economic “push” to have folks celebrate these Pagan-rooted, Roman Catholic holidays is **absent entirely** from the Bible (from cover to cover). **No REASON** for the **SEASON** found

What have we NOT Seen (nor will we ever) so far in the book of Acts:

2. Celebration of any, so-called, Christian Holy Days (holidays).

"Those who follow the custom of observing Christmas, follow not the Bible but pagan ceremonies."

C. H. Spurgeon

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I ask folks ... I will celebrate that supposed “*Christian*” holiday – when I can see the example of the apostles Peter, John and Paul doing that in Scripture, in particular, in the Book of Acts. Otherwise – I must ask – the ORIGIN of that Tradition, Celebration – whatever – 1 John 4:1 commands me to TEST such things ... not to just go along (sorry)

On our website → <https://NLFJI.org/BELIEF>

The Word of God:

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the inspired Word of God, fully authoritative, infallible and inerrant in their original writings, and they are complete as the Revelation of God’s will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak.

We are Biblical Christians and we STICK to the WORD of God regarding our Faith in Christ, our Living for Christ, and our Church-LIFE in Christ.

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2. Celebration of any, so-called, Christian Holy Days (holidays).

Write this down → <https://NLFJI.org/WeFollow>

The Truth is what Sets us Free – not man-made, religious traditions:

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you ABIDE in My Word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free.” John 8:31-32

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Samaria

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The Sufficiency of Scripture (the Bible) – The Bible is Enough:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be COMPLETE, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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God has spoken to man, and the Bible is his Word, given to us to make us wise unto salvation... Godliness means responding to God's revelation in trust and obedience, faith and worship, prayer and praise, submission and service. Life must be seen and lived in the light of God's Word. This, and nothing else, is true religion.

— *J. I. Packer* —

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The Early Church ONLY Followed the Apostle's Teachings – which were given by Christ, → “All Authority has been given unto Me in the Heavens and on Earth” (Matt. 28:18-2) → This is a Question of AUTHORITY.

Acts 2:42 : They steadfastly, continually devoted themselves to the Apostles Teachings, to the Fellowship, the breaking of bread, and to the Prayers.

Where are the Apostles' Teachings found, in the Bible?

→ the books of: Romans through Jude.

If it isn't the BIBLE that we follow – then what, then who?

Whose traditions? Whose truth?

Where did these supposed Christian Traditions come from?

If it isn't from the Bible, then where did they come from?

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What have we NOT Seen (nor will we ever) so far in the book of Acts:

3. **Open-Air Street Preaching** – we don't see this in the book of Acts or in the New Testament, anywhere. That which we see today as Open-Air Street Preaching is not seen. In all the cases that we've looked at so far, including Paul's time in the Athens Marketplace and his speaking engagement at the Areopagus (which was by invitation to a private meeting) – we have no example of this. I am not saying that folks should never do it, it is just that we have no example of it in scripture, even in Acts 2. Peter was in the upper room, either in the window or at a balcony when addressing the crowd after the Noise of the Holy Spirit's arrival in them. Peter did not initiate the "sermon", he was responding and explaining what just happened (Pentecost, etc.). So, when folks seem to want to pressure us to all be Street Preachers, they don't have a leg to stand on. But, we are all called to spread the Gospel. It isn't just Pastors, Missionaries and Evangelists who are called to spread the Gospel, all of us are.

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What have we NOT Seen (nor will we ever) so far in the book of Acts:

4. Professional Clergy (or a profession class of clergymen) – Jesus warned about this in Revelation 2 → “The Nicolaitans” ... the high society leadership class ruling over the Laity. Although we do see apostles, elders, and deacons – they are all brethren in Christ – spiritual leaders in the Body of Christ, but not Better than others. (ref. 1 Peter 5:1-5)

→ 1 Cor. 9:14 / Galatians 6:6-8 → Supporting Missionaries and Pastors
It is OK for pastors and missionaries to be supported fulltime as applicable, etc. But, in the beginning it was not thought of as a career

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Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

- 1. God, the Holy Spirit, is the one leading the church, actively, in the Name of Jesus Christ.**

Acts 2 → we see Him fulfilling Christ's promises of Luke 24:44-49 and John chptr 14 thru 16.

The Promised coming of the Holy Spirit fulfilled Ezekiel 36:25-27 – The Messiah's Kingdom, of the New Covenant, would be filled with the Holy Spirit, transforming lives. The Gospel of Christ transforms lives.

I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances. Ezek. 36:25-27

Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

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According to John 14 thru 15 – The Holy Spirit would convict sinners of their sin and of Christ's righteousness (that Christ is the rescue from God's Righteous Judgment). The Holy Spirit would lead the apostles and subsequent disciples into all of God's Truth (per God's Written Word). The Holy Spirit would lead the church, and the spread of the Mission of the Gospel from start to finish. And this is what we've seen so far. (Acts 1:8)

Acts 2 – The Beginning – Mighty rushing wind → Peter's Gospel Message → 3000 saved.

Act 13 – The Holy Spirit spoke and direct the Missionary efforts from Antioch

Acts 16 – The Holy Spirit forbade Paul's team into certain regions, but sent a vision for reaching Europe – the Macedonian Vision.

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Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

2. Every believer is responsible for Spreading the Gospel – no one had to over emphasize this to them – they all pitched in, prayerfully and spread the Gospel, together. Again, it wasn't just the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastoral-elders, and deacons (those with titles and that were well-known, etc.) – but every Christian. We don't see the leaders seeking to “beat” this message into those that they were serving. Christians just did it, without being asked over and over again. This is one of those undeniable, identifiable Marks of a true believer in Christ.

They don't try to find excuses so that they can avoid sharing the Gospel or wait for some “opportunity” to “happen” somehow. They make it happen and go out and spread it.

Here are two cases:

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Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

2. Every believer is responsible for Spreading the Gospel –

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- a. Acts 4:23-31 – After Peter and John were released from being falsely accused and threatened, the whole church prayed, together and then evangelized together.

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, ³⁰by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they SPOKE the word of God with boldness.

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Here are two cases:

b. Acts 11:19-21 – (unnamed Messianic Jewish followers of Yeshua evangelized all the way up the coast from Israel to Syria – folks from the Island of Cyprus and from the North African Region of Cyrene (Libya, Algeria, Tunisia – today))

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started because of Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰ But there were some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The Lord's hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.

Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

2. Every believer is responsible for Spreading the Gospel –

What we learn from this is → all Christians, no matter our “status” within the church, are called to and responsible for the Spreading of the Gospel, personally (not by proxy through others). These examples, recorded, emphasize, every born-again, disciple of Jesus Christ felt it was their joy, passion, obligation, and responsibility to share the Gospel with the Lost, no matter the cost. Again, we are not saying all Christians have to be “Open-Air Street Preachers”. We have example after example of how Christians shared the Gospel with Jews and Gentiles, so far, up to this point (to the end of Acts 17).

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Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

3. The Spread of the Gospel – The Great Commission is the Overarching Emphasis of the Book of Acts: We see in all 4 Gospels there is some sort of mention or articulation of the Great Commission → Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21-32 (“As the Father has sent me, I also send you” → i.e. the Great Commission). Within all 4 Gospels, we see that Jesus sought to prepare His disciples for what we see happen in the Book of Acts.

We see the apostles follow & obey what Christ said – example - Matthew 10:

- a. Finding a household of peace and use that as the “Gospel-base of operations” for reaching that town for Christ. We see, Paul and his team do this many times. Matt. 10:11-15**
- b. When persecution comes because of the Gospel, flee to the next town. Again, Paul’s team (or Paul himself) seems to use this tactic, as well. (Matt. 10:23)**

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We see the apostles follow & obey what Christ said – example - Matthew 10:

c. If they were captured for the Spreading of the Gospel – they relied upon the Holy Spirit to speak through them. Matt 10:19-20

Thus – we see that they STUCK to the WORD of GOD in HOW they Spread the Gospel – to Christ’s Teachings on the Gospel and how to Spread it. So should we today. We should REJECT human, man-made methodologies that think that they are Better than what Jesus taught and what the Apostles followed and Obeyed. Follow Jesus actually means something. Spread the Gospel – the Jesus-Way

Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

4. Prayer – it starts in Acts chapter one – 10-day prayer meeting – and we see it throughout the book. From Acts 2, onward, the emphasis is always on the Spread of the Gospel, in particular → Acts 4, 6, 7 & 13 ... some might ask how Acts 6 related to this? Praying for Deacons?

If we read – right after the deacons were chosen – the result was → Acts 6:7 - So the word of God spread, the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly in number, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith.

So, prayers, even though they might have been for something internal within the Body of Christ – the emphasis was always upon Outreach – the Gospel Mission.

Stephen cared more about the salvation of those killing him, than of his own life: → They were stoning Stephen as he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin!” And saying this, he fell asleep.” Acts 7:59-60

Why the loud voice? Because God was up in Heaven and he needed to yell to get God’s attention? Nope – he loudly prayed so that those killing him would here his prayer on their behalf.

Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

4. Prayer –the emphasis is always on the Spread of the Gospel →

Other Prayers: Acts 9:40; 11:18 (Prayer of Praise); 12:5 (prayer for Peter); We can learn from the Gospels regarding what Jesus commanded us to Pray, and the actual prayers recorded (or sessions of prayer recorded, as in Acts 13). What is the emphasis, overall, with all of those prayers?

The overarching emphasis of all of those Prayers → the Spread of the Gospel and the Spiritual/Doctrinal Health of the Body of Christ. We don't really see any other examples of any other kinds of prayers in the New Testament.

We do not see prayers for prospering individuals in business, or to be financially wealthy. (e.g.: Name-it & Claim-it Prosperity Gospel – false gospel) We do not see prayers that relate to individual's or of a family's "comfort", to be "happy", or to be "safe", etc. – we don't see anyone praying or saying → "God just wants you to be happy".

Some of the Reality of What we DO see in the Book of Acts:

What we've just learned, let's apply what we've learned and **follow** the Bible, **God's Word**, in the **Power of the Holy Spirit**, in the **Name of Jesus Christ**, to the **Glory of God the Father**, AMEN.

Acts 2:42 : They steadfastly, continually devoted themselves to the Apostles Teachings, to **the Fellowship**, the **breaking of bread**, and to **the Prayers**.

Where are the Apostles' Teachings found, in the Bible?

→ the books of: **Romans** through **Jude**.

We need to spend much time in them, learning the apostles' teachings instead of following the newest "Christian Fad" (**Jude 1:3**)

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