

Outline

Acts 1 - On-Going Christianity

- Irrefutable Resurrection - 1:1-3
- Imminent Reinforcement - 1:4-8
- Identical Return - 1:9-11
- Intently Readying - 1:12-14
- Installation of a Replacement - 1:15-26

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- The Setting - 2:1
- The Sign - 2:2-4
- The Sensational - 2:5-13
- The Sermon - 2:14-36
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- Prayer Meeting - 4:23-30
- Possessions Mutual - 4:31-37
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- Higher Authority - 5:12-32
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- Stephen's Spirituality - 6:1-15
- Stephen's Sermon - 7:1-53
- Stephen's Stoning - 7:54-60

Acts 8 - Chariot-Chasing Christianity

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Acts 13-28 - World-Reaching Christianity 13-28 (Volume 2 of 2)

THE FIRST CHURCH AND GOD'S DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Acts is the bridge between the earthly ministry of Christ and the mission of His church.

It answers three major questions:

1. What did the first church do?
2. Why did they do it?
3. How do we continue it today?

Acts is not simply a history book—it is a blueprint. The same God who empowered the church then empowers us now. The same Word they trusted is the same Word we hold. And the same Holy Spirit who filled them desires to fill us.

Today we start in Acts chapter 1, move chronologically, and let God show us how He intended His church to operate.

I. THE FIRST CHURCH BEGAN WITH A CLEAR COMMISSION (Acts 1:1–8)

A. Jesus' Final Instructions (Acts 1:1–3)

Luke tells us that Jesus spent 40 days after His resurrection teaching about “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”

This mirrors Moses' instruction to Joshua (Deut. 31), Elijah's passing of the mantle to Elisha (2 Kings 2), and David's charge to Solomon (1 Chron. 28).

God always prepares His servants before the work begins.

B. The Command to Wait (Acts 1:4)

Jesus said:

“Wait for the promise of the Father.”

Why wait?

Because the work of God cannot be done in human strength.

Jesus taught this repeatedly:

- “Without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5)
- He promised the Spirit in John 14–16.

Old Testament principle:

Zechariah 4:6 — “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit.”

C. The Commission Explained (Acts 1:8)

Jesus gives the strategy:

1. Jerusalem – home
2. Judaea – community
3. Samaria – outsiders, disliked groups
4. Uttermost parts – world missions

This follows the Abrahamic promise (Gen. 12:3):

“All families of the earth” would be blessed.

Lesson for today:

A biblical church always keeps the main thing the main thing—preaching the gospel everywhere, starting at home.

II. THE FIRST CHURCH OBEYED TOGETHER (Acts 1:9–14)

A. The Ascension (Acts 1:9–11)

Two angels say:

“This same Jesus... shall so come in like manner.”

This shows the early church lived with expectation of Christ’s return.

Jesus taught this in the Gospels:

- Matt. 24:44 – “Be ye also ready.”
- John 14:3 – “I will come again.”

Old Testament echo:

- Daniel 7:13–14 – the Son of Man coming in glory.

Why did the first church operate urgently?

Because they believed Jesus could return at any moment.

B. Unity in Prayer (Acts 1:12–14)

They gathered in the upper room and continued “with one accord in prayer.”

This reflects:

- Jesus’ prayer in John 17:21 – “That they all may be one.”
- Psalm 133:1 — “Behold, how good... for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

Unity is not uniformity—it is many people with one purpose: obeying Jesus.

Lesson for today:

A spirit-filled church is a praying, unified church, not a divided one.

III. THE FIRST CHURCH HONORED SCRIPTURE IN DECISION-MAKING (Acts 1:15–26)

A. Peter Stands Up with Scripture (Acts 1:16–20)

He explains Judas’ betrayal using the Psalms (Ps. 41:9; 69:25; 109:8).

This shows:

- The early church believed Scripture was authoritative.
- Jesus had taught them this (Luke 24:44–45).

B. Choosing a Replacement for Judas (Acts 1:21–26)

They sought:

- Biblical qualifications
- Prayer
- Submission to God's will

OT echo:

Proverbs 3:5–6—"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Lesson for today:

Every ministry decision—leadership, direction, programs—must start and end with Scripture and prayer, not opinion or tradition.

IV. THE FIRST CHURCH WAS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY GHOST (Acts 2:1–13)

A. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1)

They were still "with one accord."

Unity precedes power.

B. The Holy Ghost Fills Them (Acts 2:2–4)

Jesus promised this in:

- John 14:26
- Luke 24:49

OT foreshadowing:

- Joel 2:28–29 — God pouring out His Spirit.

Why did the first church operate boldly?

Because God lived in them, not just among them.

C. Speaking in Languages (Acts 2:5–11)

This miracle showed:

- The gospel is for all nations

- God reverses the curse of Babel (Gen. 11)

D. The Reaction (Acts 2:12–13)

Some were amazed; some mocked.

Wherever God is working, there will always be both.

V. THE FIRST CHURCH PREACHED JESUS AS THE CENTER (Acts 2:14–41)

A. Peter's Sermon Rooted in Scripture

He quotes:

- Joel 2
- Psalm 16
- Psalm 110

Jesus taught them to preach Scripture:

Luke 24:27 — “He expounded unto them... the scriptures concerning himself.”

B. The Message Focused on Christ

Peter preached:

1. Jesus' life (v. 22)
2. His death (v. 23)
3. His resurrection (v. 24)
4. His exaltation (v. 33)
5. His lordship (v. 36)

The early church did not preach politics, philosophy, or social reform.

They preached Christ.

C. The Response (Acts 2:37–41)

They were “pricked in their heart.”

They repented and believed.

OT echo:

Zechariah 12:10 — God pouring a spirit of grace and supplication.

Lesson for today:

A biblical church keeps preaching Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and returning.

VI. THE FIRST CHURCH CONTINUED STEADFASTLY (Acts 2:42–47)

This passage summarizes the core habits of the early church.

1. Doctrine

They continued in “the apostles’ doctrine.”

This was the teaching Jesus gave them (Matt. 28:20).

OT principle:

Deuteronomy 6:6–7 — continual teaching of God’s Word.

2. Fellowship

More than eating together—it means sharing life.

Jesus modeled this by living with His disciples.

3. Breaking of Bread

Communion—remembering the cross.

Instituted by Jesus (Luke 22:19–20).

4. Prayers

Corporate prayer was the engine of the first church.

5. Generosity (Acts 2:44–45)

They met needs sacrificially.

Not communism—voluntary Spirit-led giving.

OT foundation:

Deut. 15:11 — “Thou shalt open thine hand wide.”

Prov. 19:17 — Giving to the poor is lending to the Lord.

6. Daily Worship and Praise (Acts 2:46–47)

The church grew because:

- They were joyful
- They were generous
- They were unified
- They were Scriptural
- They were Spirit-filled

And what happened?

“The Lord added to the church daily.”

Lesson:

God grows the church—not programs, not personalities—when the church obeys His design.

VII. HOW SHOULD TODAY’S CHURCH IMPLEMENT THESE LESSONS?

1. We Must Keep the Gospel Central (Acts 1–2)

Every ministry, every message, every mission must point to Jesus.

2. We Must Pray Together (Acts 1:14; 2:42)

Corporate prayer should be as important as preaching.

3. We Must Value Scripture as Final Authority (Acts 1:15–26)

Decisions must be Bible-based, not preference-based.

4. We Must Seek the Power of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1–4)

Not emotionalism—true Spirit-filled living:

- Holiness
- Boldness

- Love
- Witnessing

5. We Must Live in Unity (Acts 1:14; 2:1)

Unity releases power; division quenches it.

6. We Must Be Generous and Others-Focused (Acts 2:44–45)

Giving is evidence of revival.

7. We Must Be Devoted to Fellowship (Acts 2:42, 46)

Christianity is not a spectator sport—it's family.

8. We Must Trust God for Church Growth (Acts 2:47)

We plant.

We water.

God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

CONCLUSION: THE FIRST CHURCH AND US

The Book of Acts does not end—it continues through the centuries in every Spirit-filled church.

The question is:

Will we operate God's way or man's way?

The first church:

- Waited on God
- Prayed together
- Followed Scripture
- Preached Christ
- Loved one another
- Met needs
- Worshiped joyfully
- Reached the lost
- Expected Jesus' return
- Was filled with the Spirit

If we do what they did...

God will do again what He did then.

May our church become an Acts 1–2 church—

Spirit-filled, Scripture-fed, Christ-centered, prayer-powered, generous, joyful, unified, and on mission.