

# ACTS

## A CHAPTER BY CHAPTER STUDY OF: **THE CHURCH IN ACTION**

- ACTS: Acting As The Church (Chapter One)
  - Encountering God's Power (Chapter Two)
  - Power Evangelism (Chapter Three)
  - Overcoming Opposition (Chapter Four)
  - Overcoming The Enemy Within (Chapter Five)
  - Raising Up Godly Leaders (Chapter Six)
  - Life Out Of Death (Chapter Eight)
  - Radical Transformation (Chapter Nine)
  - Willingness To Change (Chapter Ten & Eleven)
  - Promises, Prayers, and Prison Doors (Chapter Twelve)
  - Advancing God's Word (Chapter Thirteen)
  - How To Be Spiritual (Chapter Fourteen/Seventeen)
  - Resolving Conflict (Chapter Fifteen)
  - Guidance In Daily Living (Chapter Sixteen)
  - Dealing With Difficulties (Chapter Eighteen)
  - Halfway Christianity / Low-Octane Faith (Chapter Nineteen)
  - A Time For Change (Chapter Twenty)
  - Standing Through Misunderstanding (Chapter Twenty-One)
  - Delays & Discouragement (Chapter Twenty-Four)
  - Communicating Our Faith (Chapter Twenty-Five & Six)
  - Everything Went Wrong, But It All Turned Out Right (Chapter Twenty-Seven)
  - Faithful To The End (Chapter Twenty Eight)
  - Bibliography
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## ACTS: The Church In Action

### ACTS: ACTING AS THE CHURCH

"Acts is the book in the Bible that puts shoe-leather on our faith"

INTRODUCTION: ACTS is a book of practical, day to day application as to how the Christian life is to be lived. The study of Acts reveals how to be a church on the cutting-edge, how to thrive under pressure, and how to actualize a vision to reach one's world for Christ.

### SOME UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTS

- Acts is the primary textbook of the **beginning** of the Church.
- Acts is the primary textbook of the **ministry** of the Holy Spirit.
- Acts is the primary textbook of the **development** of world missions.
- Acts is the primary textbook of the **spread** of Christianity.
- Acts is the primary textbook of that **bridges** the life of Christ on the earth to His life in His people.

### CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE GOSPELS & ACTS

In the Gospels	In Acts
Christ Offers His Life	Christ offers His power
God sends Christ into the World	God sends the Holy Spirit into the World
Christ is crucified and risen	Christ is ascended and exalted
We see Christ in acts of love and power	We see the Holy Spirit in acts of love and power
Christ models Christianity	Christians model Christianity

"THE LIFE THAT CHRIST LIVED QUALIFIED HIM FOR THE DEATH THAT HE DIED, AND THE DEATH HE DIED QUALIFIES US FOR THE LIFE HE LIVED." -- IAN THOMAS

### OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in..."  
Acts 1:8

Stage One: Chapters 1-7  
The Period of local missions - "in Jerusalem..."

State Two: Chapters 8-12  
The Period of national missions - "in all Judea and Samaria..."

Stage Three: Chapters 13-28  
The Period of world missions - "to the ends of the earth."

## Acts 1:8 Applies to Our Spiritual Walk

### Stage One:

The stage of being established - the "Jerusalem" stage.

### Stage Two:

The stage of being tested - the "Judea and Samaria" stage.

### Stage Three:

The stage of being broken - the "ends of the world" stage.

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## ESSENTIAL BELIEFS FROM TESTED DISCIPLES: CHAPTER ONE

- A. They believed in the **risen** Christ (Acts 1:1-11).
  - o The reality of His resurrection (1-3).
  - o The reality of His Spirit (4-8).
  - o The reality of His return (9-11).
- B. They believed in **koinonia** (Acts 1:12-14).
  - o There was unity of purpose (1:14).
  - o There was expectant joy (1:12; Luke 24:52-53).
  - o There was diversity (Acts 1:12, 13-14).
- C. They believed in **prevailing** Prayer (Acts 1:15, 24-25).
  - o Prayed for guidance (1:15-26).
  - o Prayed for courage (4:23-31).
  - o Prayed habitually (2:42-47; 3:1; 6:4).
  - o Prayed for deliverance (12).
  - o Prayed and fasted (13:1-14).
  - o Prayed and worshipped during trials.
  - o Prayed for healing.
- D. They believed in Divine **guidance** (Acts 1:16-23).
  - o Leadership (1:15-19).
  - o God's written Voice (1:20).
  - o Supernatural confirmation (1:24, 26).

"THE EARLY CHRISTIANS IN ACTS NEVER WITNESSED ABOUT THEIR LOCAL CHURCH, THEY WITNESSED ABOUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."
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# ACTS: The Church In Action

## ENCOUNTERING GOD'S POWER

### Chapter Two

INTRODUCTION: In Acts 2, the New Testament church is born, baptized in the Holy Spirit, and immediately begins to proclaim the Gospel to all who would listen. Here, the model of the church begins to become visible as they begin to learn what God has called them to be and do.

#### THE CHURCH IN ACTION: CHAPTER TWO

- A. The Church **waiting** for the Spirit (Acts 2:1-2).
  - o The power of waiting on God (1:14; 2:1-2).
  - o The power of unity with others (1:14; 2:1-4, 14).
  - o The power of praying a promise (1:14; 2:1-4).
- B. The Church **worshipping** in the spirit (Acts 2:2-13).
  - o The Spirit came in power (2:1-21).
  - o The Spirit baptized (1:5; 2:1-21).
  - o The Spirit filled and gifted (Acts 2:4-18).
  - o The Spirit inspired bold preaching (Acts 2:5-40).

REVIVAL STIRS OUR HEARTS WHEN WE READ ABOUT IT. BUT WOULD WE PERCEIVE IT AS OF GOD IF IT BROKE OUT NOISILY IN ONE OF OUR OWN SERVICES AND MEETINGS?

- C. The Church **witnessing** in the Spirit (Acts 2:14-41).
  - o Peter's sensitivity to the lost (2:14-15).
  - o Peter's sensitivity to God's Word (2:16-21). Peter's sensitivity to the message of Jesus Christ (2:22-38).
  - o Peter's sensitivity to the need for the Holy Spirit (2:17-18; 38-39).
- D. The Church **walking** in the Spirit (Acts 1:16-23).
  - o Repentance: A New way of **Thinking** (2:38).
  - o Water Baptism: A New beginning through the **Spirit and water** (2:38).
  - o Holy Spirit Baptism: A New **Authority** (2:38).
  - o Teaching: A New **Schooling** (2:42).
  - o Fellowship: A New **Relationship** (2:42).
  - o Breaking Bread: A New **Covenant** (2:42).
  - o Prayers: A New **Contact** (2:42).
  - o The fear of God: A New **Respect** (2:43).
  - o Signs and wonders: A New **Expectation** (2:38).
  - o Common welfare: A New **Compassion** (2:44-45).
  - o Gladness and simplicity: A New **Joy** (2:46).
  - o Praises to God: A New **Song** (2:47).
  - o Evangelism: A New zeal for **Souls** (2:47).

# ACTS: The Church In Action

## POWER EVANGELISM

### Chapter Three

INTRODUCTION: The church in Acts was active; it spoke or rather the Holy Spirit spoke through it. Everywhere the church preached signs and miracles followed. The history of the church is filled with powerful sermons and purifying sufferings. In the pages of the Book of Acts one sees the church as the visible expression of the invisible God. All men and women are valued; the poor hear the gospel and are fed, the rich are called into accountability, and entire cities turn to Christ.

#### A CHURCH IN ACTION WILL:

- A. Continually seek to abide under the **influence** of the Holy Spirit (3:1-3)
  - o Through faith in the finished work of Christ (John 15:7; Eph. 3:17)
  - o Through prayer (Acts 3:1)
  - o Through worship (Acts 2:47)
- B.
  - o Through self-implantation of the Word (Acts 1:20; 2:17-21; 3:22-23)

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS: WHO FORGIVES ALL YOUR INIQUITIES, WHO HEALS ALL YOUR DISEASES... - PS 102:2-3

- C. Continually seek to extend **compassion** to the overlooked (3:3-6)
  - o Through practical expressions of love
    - The compassionate will always attract the needy
    - The compassionate will never be without spiritual offspring
  - o Through faith working by love (Gal 5:6; Mt. 14:14)
- D. Continually seek to take bold, **faith-filled** steps to win their world
  - o Through an action of faith.
    - A faith step is essential in seeing the miraculous; an inordinate desire for safety, security and comfort is a sure sign of emotional and spiritual immaturity.
    - Cultivate boldness. The operation of God's gifts will occur when we stop passively waiting for something to happen and aggressively begin to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- E. Continually seek to **direct** all eyes on the power source Jesus and not on themselves (Acts 3:12; 14:8-20)
  - o Mass evangelism has always been associated with spiritual gifts and miracles (Acts 2:1-11; 4:4; 8:6-7)
  - o Power encounters bring the unsaved to a new level of awareness in making a decision for Christ (Jn. 14:11-12)

PETER'S PENNILESS STATE MAY HAVE BEEN A FACTOR IN HIS BEING CLOSE ENOUGH TO GOD TO EXECUTE THIS MIRACLE.

- Power encounters should not be a surprise rather they should be a normal part of a Church in action (Acts 3:12; 2 Tim. 3:5)
- Power encounters have nothing to do with human power or human goodness (Acts 3:12; Matt. 7:21-23)
  - Miracles do not validate man's ministry they validate the ministry of Jesus.
  - Miracles motivated by compassion result in God being glorified. Miracles motivated by pride result in a man being destroyed (Acts 8:18-23)

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ONE DRAMATIC HEALING IS WORTH MORE THAN A MILLION DOLLARS OF ADVERTISING

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- F. Continually seek to **call** all the unsaved to (3:12-26)
- Recal their personal rejection of Christ and guilt (Acts 3:1-18)
  - Realize the mercy and kindness of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:12-21)
  - Repent and receive the refreshing of His presence (Acts 3:19-21)
  - Remember the judgement that occurs upon those who refuse to follow Jesus Christ (Acts 3:20, 21)

EVERY REVIVAL IN THE HISTORY OF THE MODERN WORLD HAS BEEN GROUNDED IN AN EXPLOSION OF PRAYER AND EVANGELISM - GEORGE BARNA

# ACTS: The Church In Action

## OVERCOMING OPPOSITION

### Chapter Four

INTRODUCTION: The church in Acts was active; it spoke or rather the Holy Spirit spoke through it. Everywhere the church preached signs and miracles followed. The history of the church is filled with powerful sermons and purifying sufferings. In the pages of the Book of Acts one sees the church as the visible expression of the invisible God. All men and women are valued; the poor hear the gospel and are fed, the rich are called into accountability, and entire cities turn to Christ.

#### THE OLD ORDER: RELIGIOUS LEADERS ARE (4:1-7)

- A. Terrified of losing temporary **power**.
- B. Terrified of hearing the **truth**.
- C. Terrified of breaking with **traditions**.
- D. Terrified of a **miracle**.

THE MARK OF A LEADER IS TO REHEARSE THE VICTORY IN THE MIDST OF DEFEAT

#### THE NEW ORDER: PETER IS (4:8-12)

- A. A man transformed
- B. A man not terrified
- C. A man preaching truth

#### THE OLD ORDER: RELIGIOUS LEADERS NOTICED (4:13)

- A. The boldness of their **behavior**
- B. The boldness of the **belief**
- C. The boldness of **belonging**

#### CLASS OF OLD & NEW ORDER (4:14-22)

<u>Old Order</u>	<u>New Order</u>
Control	God's Control
Personal Power	God's Power
Intimidation of Others	Inspiration of Others
Suppression of the Miraculous	Spread of the Miraculous

#### SUSTAINING PRAYER (4:23-31)

- A. Recognizing the power of **united prayer**
- B. Recognizing the **power** of God
- C. Recognizing the power of the **Word**
- D. Recognizing the power of divine **intervention**

#### **OVERCOMING OPPOSITION (4:8-31)**

- A. Be **filled** with the holy spirit (4:8; I Pet. 4:14; Eph. 5:18-21)
- B. Be **aggressive** at seizing godly opportunities (4:8-11; I Pet. 3:15)
- C. Be **obedient** to God at all costs (4:14-22; Luke 14:25-33)
- D. Be **committed** to fellowship (4:23; Mal. 3:16)
- E. Be **prayerful** (4:24-28; 12:12)
- F. Be **desirous** of greater usefulness (4:29-31)



## ACTS: The Church In Action

### OVERCOMING THE ENEMY WITHIN

#### Chapter Five

INTRODUCTION: Satan's first approach was the attack the church from the outside, hoping that arrest and threats would frighten the servant leaders. When that failed, Satan decided to attack the church from the inside. We must face the fact that Satan is a clever foe. If he does not succeed as the "devouring lion" (I Peter 5:8), then he attacks again as the "deceiving serpent" or an "angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:3, 13-14), and the church must be prepared for both attacks.

#### THE SHARING OF THE SAINTS (4:32-37)

- A. Spiritual **Participation** (32)
- B. Strong **Preaching** (33)
- C. Sharing **Practically** (32-35)
- D. A Sample **Person** (36-37)

OPPORTUNITY IS MISSED BY MOST PEOPLE BECAUSE IT IS DRESSED IN OVERALLS AND LOOKS LIKE WORK

#### THE SINS OF THE SAINTS (5:1-11)

- A. Spiritual **Pretense** (1-2)
- B. Spiritual **Perception** (3-4)
- C. Swift **Punishment** (5-10)
- D. Solemn **Purging** (11)

THE TROUBLE WITH TROUBLE IS THAT IT USUALLY STARTS OUT AS A WHOLE LOT OF FUN.

#### DISCERNING DEMONIC SUGGESTIONS

- A. Recognize that the adversary's main target is the mind (II Cor. 10:5)
- B. Recognize that the Bible teaches "as a man **thinks** so is he."
- C. Recognize that the enemy gains control:
  - 1. Through a **renewed** mind (II Cor. 4:4; 3:14; Eph. 2:3; Col. 3:1-2)
  - 2. Through a mind that is fixed on the **flesh** (Rom. 8:6; Col. 3:1-2)
  - 3. Through lies and deception accepted in the **mind** (Matt. 16:21-23)
  - 4. Through a **passive** mind (Eph. 4:23; 2 Peter 3:1)
  - 5. Through unrestrained **curiosity** (Rom. 16:19-20)

THE DEVIL IS EASY TO IDENTIFY. HE APPEARS WHEN YOU ARE TERRIBLY TIRED AND MAKES A VERY REASONABLE REQUEST, WHICH YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD NOT GRANT.

## DISCERNING DIVINE SUGGESTIONS

- A. Recognize you have the mind of **Christ** (I Cor. 2:16)
- B. Recognize your responsibility to **think** rightly (Col. 3:1-2)
- C. Recognize the power of God's **written** voice (Jn. 1:14; Heb. 4:12)
- D. Recognize you can **win** the war (II Cor. 10:5; Phil 1:6)

# ACTS: The Church In Action

## RAISING UP GODLY LEADERS

### Chapter Six

INTRODUCTION: The church in action needs gifted men and women to take their place in leading the church to fulfill its divine mandate to become mature and reach the lost.

#### BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES: ACTS 6

- A. The need for leaders is often born out of addressing **practical** ministry needs (6:1)
- B. As a ministry grows, the need for focus among leadership increases. (6:2)
- C. The ideal place for leadership development is the local **church**. (6:3a)
- D. Spiritual leadership is to be held to **higher** standards (6:3b & 5a, I Tim. 3:8-13)
  - 1. They were of **good** reputation.
  - 2. They were **filled** with the Holy Spirit.
  - 3. They were full of **wisdom**.
  - 4. They were full of **faith**.
- E. Godly leadership is **recognized** among other leaders, and not merely "self-proclaimed" (6:6)
- F. Raising up and releasing godly leadership will have a positive **impact** on the church and the world (6:7)
- G. Even Godly leaders will face **opposition** (6:8-15)

## ACTS: The Church In Action

### LIFE OUT OF DEATH Chapter Eight

INTRODUCTION: In chapter seven the old religious order (the Sanhedrin) silenced the preaching voice of Stephen only to awaken the voice of the church (chapter 8). Their motivation was to shut-up a man who was upsetting their old order, but instead the whole church began to speak up and eventually upset the whole Roman Empire with the message of Jesus Christ. God takes the negatives of life and turns them for the good of His people. When the world and Satan has attempted to silence the church is has only resulted in a greater influence of God's power in His people. God will not be silenced. Out of death He brings life and from negative circumstances He creates blessings (Rom. 8:28)

#### PERSECUTION RESULTS IN PROCLAMATION (8:1-4)

- A. **Consenting** to the death of Stephen (8:1)
- B. **Conducting** a persecution of the church (8:1)
- C. **Contributing** to the expansion of the church (8:1,4)

PERSECUTION DOES TO THE CHURCH WHAT WIND DOES TO SEED: IT SCATTERS IT AND PRODUCES A GREATER HARVEST

#### PREACHING THE WORD (8:4-8)

- A. **Persecuted** but still preaching (8:4)
- B. **Pioneering** - going where no man has gone before (8:5)
- C. **Persuading** the multitude through power evangelism (8:6,7)
- D. **Praise** filling the city (8:8)

THE ONLY THING THAT CASTS DOUBT ON THE MIRACLES OF JESUS IS THAT THEY WERE ALL WITNESSED BY FISHERMAN.

#### PORTRAITS OF THE HEART

- A. Saul a furious **Persecutor** (8:1-4)
- B. Philip a faithful **Preacher** (8:4-40)
- C. Simon a false **Proselyte** (8:9-25)
- D. Ethiopian a fervent **Pupil** (8:26-39)

#### AUTHENTIC EVANGELISM WILL ALWAYS:

- A. Offer **Jesus Christ** as the gift of God (8:5,35)
- B. Offer liberating **power** from bondage (8:6-7, 22-23)
- C. Offer the sustaining **joy** through the trials of life (8:3,8)
- D. Offer a life **filled** with the Holy Spirit (8:14-17)

#### EFFECTIVE EVANGELIST EXHIBIT

- A. **Availability** to go anywhere God leads you (8:26-27)
- B. **Sensitivity** to the voice of the Holy Spirit (8:29)
- C. **Attentiveness** to the needs of others (8:30)
- D. **Tactfulness** to bridge the gap between others and Christ (8:30)
- E. **Clarity** that Jesus Christ is the Savior (8:35)

MEN OCCASIONALLY STUMBLE OVER THE TRUTH, BUT MOST PICK THEMSELVES UP AND HURRY OFF AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED. - WINSTON CHURCHILL
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# ACTS: The Church In Action

## RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

### Chapter Nine

INTRODUCTION: In the Book of Acts we encounter the power of the gospel radically transforming individuals and even whole cities. The fearful have been made bold. The skeptic has become faith-filled. The drunkard has become a family man and those once demonized have become Spirit-filled. In chapter nine we will encounter Saul praying to God instead of preying on the church due to a power encounter with the living Christ.

#### DEDICATION TO JESUS CHRIST (9:1-4)

- A. **Confronted** with the Truth (9:1-4)
- B. **Convicted** by personal sinfulness (9:4)
- C. **Converted** from the old to the new (9:5)
- D. **Consecrated** to do the will of God (9:6-9)

#### DESPERATE INTERCESSION (9:10-12)

- A. **Facing** that desperate need (9:5)
- B. **Falling** upon the grace and mercy of God (9:8-19)
- C. **Fervent** fasting and intercession (9:9, 17-19)
- D. **Fighting** and wrestling with self, Satan, and God (9:10-19)

BEFORE SAUL WAS MADE A SAINT, HE FULLY SAW THAT HE WAS A SINNER.

#### DEVOTION TO MINISTRY (9:13-19)

- A. **Willingness** to listen and obey the voice of God (9:10-14)
- B. **Willing** to risk for the gospel sake (9:13-14)

#### DEEP FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (9:17)

#### DISCIPLED BY DISCIPLES (9:18-19)

#### DECLARING THE FAITH (9:20-22)

- A. **Balancing** between knowing God and working for God (9:5; 22:10)
- B. **Balancing** between spiritual and secular knowledge (9:20-22)
- C. **Baffling** the critics (9:22)

#### DYING YET LIVING (9:23-31)

- A. **Suffering** the suspicions of the early church (9:26)
- B. **Suffering** the hatred of the old order (9:29)

## ACTS: The Church In Action

### WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE Chapters Ten & Eleven

INTRODUCTION: In Acts chapters ten and eleven we see God challenging His Church to change. To accept that the gospel is powerful enough to radically transform not only the Jewish people but all people. Peter is God's key man to model this change to the Church. He is confronted with his traditional thinking concerning God and God's plan for mankind. In these verses we will encounter resistance to change that is based upon pride, and we also will encounter resistance to change that is based upon faith. Peter cries out, 'No, Lord!' yet he learns that you can say 'No' and you can say 'Lord' but you cannot say 'No, Lord!' This session of Acts imparts to us the key to personal and congregational growth, which is a willingness to change.

#### A GREAT MIRACLE - HEALING THE BODY

- A. Supernatural power is given by God to set people free (9:34; 10:38).
- B. Supernatural power should be a normal part of our lives (Mk. 16:17).
- C. Supernatural power brings the unsaved to a new awareness of the Savior.

#### A GREATER MIRACLE - RAISING THE DEAD (9:36-43)

- A. Peter was **available** (9:36-39)
- B. Peter was **prayerful** (9:40-41)
- C. Peter was **fruitful** (9:42)

#### THE GREATEST MIRACLE - WINNING THE LOST (10 & 11)

- A. **Preparation** (9:42-10:22)
- B. **Motivation** (10:7 & 17)
- C. **Explanation** (10:23-33)
- D. **Proclamation** (10:34-43)
- E. **Impartation** (10:44-48)
- F. **Transformation** (11:1-18)

#### THREE MINDSETS TOWARDS CHANGE

- A. **Innovators**
- B. **Conservatives**
- C. **Inhibitors**

#### CHANGE IS GOD'S ANSWER FOR STAGNATION

- A. Changes are **inevitable**

## ACTS: The Church In Action

### PROMISES, PRAYERS AND PRISON DOORS

#### Chapter Twelve

INTRODUCTION: The events in chapter twelve occur almost twelve years after our Lord's resurrection and His sending the power of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost. The church in action for twelve years has reached out in Judea and now recently in Samaria bringing the Gentiles to God's Kingdom. But now the enemy strikes back, moving the legal authorities to behead James and imprison Peter. "Studying the persecuted church in the Book of Acts is like following a wounded deer over the snow. You get splotches of blood along the way just to remind you you're on the right track."

### DIVINE DELIVERANCE (12:1-19; 2 PET. 2:9; JOB 5:19-27)

#### Lessons In Deliverance

- A. Peter was a **target** of Satan (I Pet. 4:12; Lu. 22:31-34)
- B. Peter's **deliverance** came at the last possible moment.
- C. Peter's experience must be **balanced** with that of James.

#### Lessons In Prayer

- A. The church in action were praying **to God** (1 Chr. 5:20; Rom. 11:2; 15:30)
- B. The church in action were praying **together** (Acts 4:24-31; Phil. 1:19; Mt. 18:19)
- C. The church in action were praying **earnestly** (James 5:16-18)
- D. The church in action were praying **specifically** (Jn. 15:7; I Jn. 5:14)
- E. The church in action were praying **in faith** (Mk. 11:22-24; Deut. 32:30)

#### Extra Lessons In Prayer

- A. Prayer is designed that God's people shall **participate** in what He does (Ez. 22:30; Jm. 4:2; Isa. 38:5; Isa. 62:6-7)
- B. Prayer imparts **peace** (Phil 4:6-7; Num 6:26)
- C. Prayer can produce sudden **change**.

### DIVINE DISCIPLINE (ACTS 12:20-24; GAL. 6:7)

#### Lessons On Judgement

- A. There will be an **account** for sinful actions.
- B. **Pride** brings a fall (Prov. 16:18; Job 40:12)
- C. **False** praise is the downfall of leaders (12:22-23; Prov 27:6; 10:18)
- D. **Demonic** worship produces judgement (12:22-12; Dan. 3:1-10)

### DIVINE DIRECTION (ACTS 12:24-25)



### **Lessons Concerning the Bible**

- A. God's Word is not **bound** (12:24a; Heb 4:12)
- B. God's Word has creative ability to **multiply** and change individuals and societies (12:24b)

### **Lessons Concerning Ministry**

- A. **Practical** ministries are essential (12:25)
- B. **Follow** through is essential (12:25)
- C. **Discipleship** is essential (12:25)

# ACTS: The Church In Action

## ADVANCING GOD'S WORD

### Chapter Thirteen

INTRODUCTION: Chapter thirteen marks a pivotal point in the life of the Church in Action. Nearly sixteen years after Pentecost (Acts 1 & 2), the Church begins to actively fulfill the prophecy in Acts 1:8; that they would take the Gospel to the gentiles. In chapter thirteen, under prophetic direction, the Church sends its first missionaries, Paul and Barnabas to advance the word of God westward to the Gentiles. In this first of three missionary journeys taken by the Apostle Paul, we see the church partnering with the divine purposes of God to take His Word to the ends of the Earth!

#### HIS WORD WAS OBEYED (13:1-3)

- A. A Prophetic **calling** (vs 2)
- B. A Prophetic **consecration** (vs 2,3)
- C. A Prophetic **commission** (vs 3)

#### HIS WORD WAS DEFENDED (13:4-12)

- A. A Spirit-Inspired **confrontation** (vs 4-10)
- B. A Supernatural **consequences** (vs 11,12)

#### ELYMAS: CHARACTERIZING A COUNTERFEIT Five Characteristics (vs 10)

- 1. They are full of **deceit**.
- 2. They are full of **fraud**.
- 3. They are actually **followers** of Satan.
- 4. They are **enemies** of righteousness.
- 5. They **pervert** the ways of the Lord.

#### HIS WORD WAS PREACHED (13:13-41)

- A. The components of the **Gospel** (vs 17-38)
  - o The **acts** of God in history (vs 17-22)
  - o The **coming** of Christ (vs 23)
  - o The **ministry** of Christ among men (vs 24-26)
  - o The **death** of Christ for men's sins (vs 27-29)
  - o The **resurrection** of Christ from the dead (vs 30,31)
- B. The consequences of their **response** (vs 17-38)
  - o Those who believe are **justified**.
  - o Those who reject are **judged**.

#### HIS WORD WAS RECEIVED (13:42-52)

- A. Some were **opposed** to it (vs 42-45)

B. Some were **open** to it (vs 47-49)

## ACTS: The Church In Action

### HOW TO BE SPIRITUAL

Themes from 14 & 17

INTRODUCTION: Like the believers in the early church, we live in a culture with a variety of ideas about "spirituality". Acts 14 and 17 highlight three different groups of people who heard and responded to the gospel message based on their idea of what it meant to be spiritual. Two of them were imbalanced and extreme, and one was called "noble".

### TWO EXTREMES (ACTS 14:8-20 & 17:32)

- A. Fanaticism: The People of Lystra (14:11, 19)
  - 1. A tendency toward **emotional** extremism (v 11-18)
  - 2. A tendency toward **idolatry** (v 11-18)
  - 3. A tendency to be **fickle** (v 19)
- B. Elitism: The Men of Athens (17:32)
  - 1. A tendency to be **cynical** (v 18)
  - 2. A tendency to be purely **philosophical** (v 21)
  - 3. A tendency to minimize the **miraculous** (v 32)

### THE NOBLE APPROACH (ACTS 17:10,11)

- A. Balance: The Bereans (17:10,11)
  - 1. Eagerness to **receive** from God (v 11)
  - 2. Willingness to **test** all things by the Word (v 11)

### A RECIPE FOR BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY

- A. Pursue **unity** with the brethren. (I cor 3:1-3)

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as spiritual people, but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ."

- B. Seek to **obey** the Word of God. (I Cor 14:37)

"If any man thinks himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I am writing are the commandment of the Lord."

- C. Commit yourself to **physical** purity (Rom 12:1)

"... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service."

- D. Live a life that is above **reproach** (I Cor 2:15)

"He that is spiritual appraises all things, and is judged of no man."

- E. Assist a weaker brother to become **strong** (Gal 6:1)

"Brethren, if any man is caught up in sin, you who are spiritual restore him in a spirit of gentleness, looking also to yourselves that you also may be tempted."

# ACTS: The Church In Action

## RESOLVING CONFLICT

### Chapter Fifteen

INTRODUCTION: Acts tells a joyful story, one that illustrates the trials and triumphs of the power of the Gospel. We have seen the church grow and touch entire cities, but too, Acts is honest about the costliness of spreading the Gospel. Everywhere Paul and Barnabas traveled there was revival or riot. Now in the fifteenth chapter we encounter the clear emergence of legalism in the Church and how our church father dealt with it.

### THE DIVISION (15:1-5)

- A. The first division within the church was **racial** and **ritual**.
- B. The first division within the church was **propagated** by sincere people.
- C. The first division within the church had a great deal of **scriptural** support.
- D. The first division within the church seemed to be **backed** by Jerusalem, the mother church.

### THE DEBATE (15:6-18)

- A. Past **revelation** proves salvation is by grace (15:7)
- B. The gift of the **Holy Spirit** proves salvation is by grace (15:8-9)
- C. Their heart **cleansed** and **transformed** proves salvation is by grace (15:9)
- D. The inability of the **law** to save proves salvation is by grace (15:10-11)
- E. The outpouring of **miracles** proves salvation is by grace (15:12; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb 2:3,4)
- F. **Prophetic** promises proves salvation is by grace (15:13-18; Amos 9:11-12)

THERE ARE ALWAYS TWO KINDS OF SPEAKERS: THOSE WHO HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, AND THOSE WHO HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING

### THE DECISION (15:19-29)

- A. Two things decided about the moral realm.
  - 1. **Idolatry** (II Cor. 6:16)
  - 2. **Immorality** (I Cor. 6:17-20)
- B. Two things decided in the Christian realm of love
  - 1. **Dietary**
  - 2. **Laws**

### THE DELEGATION

- A. **Celebration**
- B. **Comfort**
- C. **Confirmation**
- D. **Continuation**

# ACTS: The Church In Action

## GUIDANCE IS DAILY LIVING Chapter Sixteen

INTRODUCTION: Chapter sixteen removes the confusion and mystery out of receiving divine guidance. There are at least five specific and distinct ways God guides Paul and his traveling companions in these events. Every follower of Christ can be assured of discovering their divine destiny if they apply the Biblical principles displayed in this chapter.

### EVANGELISM: THE RIGHT MESSAGE (15:36-16:10)

- A. The Right **Personnel** (15:36-16:3)
- B. The Right **Precautions** (16:3b)
- C. The Right **Presentation** (16:4-5)
- D. The Right **Place** (16:6-10)

### PORTRAIT OF TWO WOMEN (16:1-18)

- A. The **Prayerful** Woman (16:11-15)
- B. The **Possessed** Woman (16:16-18)

### TURNING PERSECUTION INTO PROCLAMATION

- A. Miserable **Persecution** (16:19-24)
- B. Magnificent **Praise** (16:25-29)
- C. Mighty **Preaching** (16:30-32)
- D. Meaningful **Provision** (16:33-34)
- E. Marvelous **Protection** (16:35-40)



# ACTS: The Church In Action

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

### Chapter Eighteen

INTRODUCTION: Paul in his second missionary journey encounters increased opportunities as well as increased opposition. In Lystra (14:8-20) he had been dragged from the city and stoned for preaching. In Philippi (16:4-40) he had been beaten and thrown into the inner prison for casting out a demon. In Thessalonica (17:1-9) he was accused of inciting the city to violate the Law for he was teaching grace. In Athens (17:16-34) he had been ridiculed for his beliefs concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now in Corinth (18:1-22) alone and facing more intense persecution Paul is battling discouragement and fear. Here, from chapter eighteen, we learn how to Deal with Difficulties.

### THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE DIFFICULT

- A. Lack of Friends
- B. Lack of Funds
- C. Lack of Fruit
- D. Last of Favor

### THE CITY WAS DIFFICULT

- A. Corinth was Corrupt
- B. Corinth was Cosmopolitan
- C. Corinth was Commercial

### THE CHRIST IN DIFFICULTY

- A. Supernaturally natural Friends
- B. Supernaturally natural Funds
- C. Supernaturally natural Fruit
- D. Supernaturally natural Favor

### THE PROPHETIC WORD FOR WARFARE

- A. "Do not be afraid..." (vs 9)
- B. "Keep on speaking, do not be silent..." (vs 9)
- C. "I am with you..." (vs 10)
- D. "No one is going to harm or attack you..." (vs 10)
- E. "I have many people in this city." (vs 10)

A PESSIMIST SEES ONLY THE PROBLEMS;  
AN OPTIMIST SEES ONLY THE POTENTIAL;  
BUT A REALIST SEES THE POTENTIAL IN THE PROBLEMS.

## **ACTS: The Church In Action**

### **HALFWAY CHRISTIANITY/LOW-OCTANE FAITH Chapter Nineteen**

INTRODUCTION: Chapter nineteen speaks to all those who have started on their walk of faith and then stopped growing in Bible knowledge and spiritual experience. This chapters warns us against carnal Christianity and half-hearted commitments in receiving all God has for us.

#### **ONE MAN WITH AN INCOMPLETE MESSAGE (18:23-28)**

- A. Apollos was a mighty **intrument** in God's hand.
- B. Apollos was limited which caused others to be **limited**.
- C. Apollos had a three-fold message:
  - 1. Forgiveness on the basis of **repentance**
  - 2. Water baptism was **necessary**
  - 3. Expectancy on the truthfulness of **Scriptures**.

#### **TWELVE MEN WITH AN INSUFFICIENT FILLING (19:110)**

- A. The importance of **declaring** the reality of the Holy Spirit (19:1-2)
- B. The importance of **humility** in receiving the Spirit (19:2-4)
- C. The importance of **administering** the Spirit (19:5-7)
- D. The importance of **permitting** the gifts of the Spirit (19:6)

#### **SEVEN MEN WITH INADEQUATE POWER (19:11-20)**

- A. Facing demonic forces without divine **power** (19:13, 14, 19, 20)
- B. Facing life powers without supernatural **grace** (19:15, 18)
- C. Facing demonic attacks without supernatural **protection** (19:16)
- D. Facing demonic destruction without supernatural **restoration** (19:16)



## ACTS: The Church In Action

### A TIME FOR CHANGE Chapter Twenty

INTRODUCTION: Paul is in transition in chapter twenty, he is moving away from his role as a "Pattern Setter" to the "Prisoner of the Lord". We have followed Paul from chapters 13 to 19 as he has extended the kingdom of God through exercising demands, healing the sick, and preaching the gospel that has radically transformed men and women. He has been an example to us on how to impact our world for Christ. Now starting in chapter twenty Paul will show us how to embrace transitions while holding to godly transitions.

#### A NEW PATH (20:1-5)

- A. We must face transitions (vs 1) "... he departed"
- B. We must pass the baton (vs 1,2) "... he encouraged them with many words."
- C. We must care for others (vs 3) "... he decided to return."

#### NEW PRIORITIES (20:6-12)

- A. The Lord's **Day** (vs 7)
- B. The Lord's **People** (vs 7,8)
- C. The Lord's **Supper** (vs 7)
- D. The Lord's **Message** (vs 7)
- E. The Lord's **Power** (vs 9-12)

WE MUST BECOME THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE

#### A NEW PURPOSE (20:13-38)

- A. Learning from the **past**
  - o Remember the foundation.
  - o Focus on building a testimony others will want to remember (vs 18-21, 33-35)
- B. Living in the **present**
  - o Focus on God's purpose regardless of the problems (vs 22-27)
- C. Looking to the **future**
  - o Focus on the prize regardless of the peril (vs 28-32)

"IN THE LONG RUN, THE PESSIMIST MAY BE PROVEN RIGHT, BUT THE OPTIMIST HAS A BETTER TIME ON THE TRIP."

#### A PRAYER (20:36-38)

- A. **Anointing** the purpose in prayer.
- B. **Establishing** the purpose in prayer.

C. **Decreeing** the purpose in prayer.

IF YOU FIND A PATH WITH NO OBSTACLES, IT PROBABLY DOESN'T LEAD ANYWHERE

# ACTS: The Church In Action

## STANDING THROUGH MISUNDERSTANDING

### Chapter Twenty One

INTRODUCTION: All sought to convince Paul that he should not go to Jerusalem, that it would be too dangerous, that there would be persecution there. But Paul, against overwhelming pressure to abort his travels, stands alone as he heads toward Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem he faces the misunderstanding of others without surrendering to resentment. There are times that the comfort of others is removed from our lives to test our inner convictions.

### DETERMINING GOD'S DESTINY

- A. The **general** destiny for believers.
- B. The **specific** destiny for believers.
- C. Steps to **understanding** your destiny:
  - 1. God's written voice
  - 2. God's inner voice
  - 3. God's voice in others
  - 4. God's voice in circumstance and reproof

### DEDICATED TO GOD'S DESTINY

- A. Making a **quality** decision releases God's miracles
- B. Developing a strong **will**.
- C. Making a **plan** enables us to fulfill it.

### DIVISION CONCERNING GOD'S DESTINY

- A. Faithful **friends** and God's destiny
- B. Faithful **servant leaders** and God's destiny
- C. Faithful **partners** and God's destiny

### DEMONIC ATTACK AGAINST GOD'S DESTINY

Misunderstandings and rumors

- Exaggerations
- Misinformation
- Prejudgements
- Semantics
- Hot buttons
- Negative Influences

### DIVINE INTERVENTION

- A. Learning to **live** with that which is difficult
- B. Learning to **hear** God in the night season.

"THOUGH A RUMOR DOES NOT HAVE A LEG TO STAND ON, IT TRAVELS MIGHTY FAST"

## ACTS: The Church In Action

### DELAYS & DISCOURAGEMENT

(Prolonged Discouragement)

Chapter Twenty Four

INTRODUCTION: Delays and discouragement are one of Satan's most effective weapons against the Body of Christ. The definition of discouragement is to deprive of confidence, hope or spirit. Symptoms of prolonged discouragement are a lack of motivation, developing a cynical attitude, pessimism, anger, and a strong feeling to isolate one's self. Paul in Acts twenty-four is delayed from his destiny and tempted to be discouraged by delayed hopes.

### DECEPTIVE WORDS (24:1-9)

- A. **Seductive** suggestions and false flattery (24:2-4; Eph. 6:16; Job 31-32; Prov. 20:19; 29:5)
  - o An attempt to turn others against Paul. Division is always a tool and strategy of the devil.
  - o Don't tell me what I want to hear; tell me what will help us.
- B. **Shameful** accusations
  - o Paul is a plague (5a) "You are no good, a burden to your kids and your spouse"
  - o Paul is a problem (5a) "It's your fault", "You always cause a fight"
  - o Paul is a radical (5b) "Your faith is the problem", "You're too committed; too emotional"
  - o Paul is reckless (6) "You've destroyed your kids", "You have wrecked this relationship and there is no repairing it"

### DIPLOMATIC WORDS (24:10-21; PROV 15:1)

**Sincere** rebuttal

- Paul worshipped God
- Paul believed in the Bible
- Paul hoped in God for the future
- Paul strove to obey
- Paul was a devout Jewish Christian
- Paul had been found innocent
- Paul was a giver

### DISCOURAGING WORDS (24:22-27; PROV 15:30; 13:12)

- A. **Stifling** procrastination (24:22-23, 25-27)
- B. **Stirring** preaching (24:24-25)
  - o Righteousness -----> Yesterday's Sin
  - o Self Control -----> Today's Temptations
  - o Judgement -----> Tomorrow's Judgement
- C. **Selfish** promotion (24:26-27)

### THREE LEVELS OF DISCOURAGEMENT

1. **Low** level discouragement

2. **Strong** level discouragement
3. **Disabling** level of discouragement

# ACTS: The Church In Action

## COMMUNICATING OUR FAITH

### Chapter Twenty Five & Six

INTRODUCTION: The Church is presently having a great difficulty communicating with society. It's ironic that the world, having mastered the art of communication, has little to say. On the other hand, the church, exploding with content, has yet to learn how to communicate effectively. Paul by his example in Chapters 25 and 26 teaches us how to be the church in action and communicate effectively with our culture.

### SEIZING THE MOMENT

- A. **Current** Opportunities (25:23-27; Col 4:5; Jn. 4:35)
  - o Seeing the potential in the problems
- B. **Communicating** with insight (26; I Chron. 12:32)
  - o Seeing the questions before they are asked
- C. **Communicating** with warmth (26:1, 2, 29; Lu. 9:11)
  - o He received them
  - o He spoke to them
  - o He healed them
  - o He fed them

EVANGELISM: THE CHURCH IS LIKE MANURE. PILE IT UP, AND IT STINKS UP THE NEIGHBORHOOD, SPREAD IT OUT AND IT ENRICHES THE WORLD. - LUIS PALAU

### SHARING THE MYSTERY

- A. A testimony **prevails** over the adversary (Rev 12:11)
- B. A testimony **provokes** movement in the Heavens (Mat. 10:32)
- C. A testimony **pierces** the human heart (Acts 26:24, 27)

### SOWING THE MESSAGE

- A. He **displayed** his personal joy (26:1,2)
- B. He **discovered** his personal interests (26:3a)
- C. He **desired** his personal attention (26:3b)
- D. He **detailed** his background (26:4-13)
- E. He **declared** the power of God (26:12-18)
- F. He **describes** the promise of Scriptures (26:22-23)
- G. He **dealt** with the opposition (26:24-26)
- H. He **demanded** a personal response (26:27-29)

## ACTS: The Church In Action

EVERYTHING WENT WRONG, BUT IT ALL TURNED OUT RIGHT  
Chapter Twenty Seven

### DESTINY & REALITY (27:1-8)

### DIVISIONS & DANGERS (27:9-20)

- A. Be aware of impatience that leads to **foolish** impulses (27:9; Is. 28:16)
- B. Be aware of ignoring **godly** wisdom. (27:9,10)
- C. Be aware of ignoring **practical** wisdom (27:9)
- D. Be aware of **worldly** influences (27:11,12)

### DISCERNMENT & DIRECTION (27:21-26)

- A. Panic led to **hopelessness** (27:20)
- B. Prophetic insight led to **hopefulness**
  - o Prophetic history breeds assurance
  - o Prophetic pronouncement creates faith
- C. Prophetic promise led to **preservation**
- D. Prophetic and **practical** in concert
  - o God's promise includes man's activity

### DISASTER & DELIVERANCE

- A. He offers **encouragement** (27:33-37)
- B. He delivers an **exhortation** (27:27-31)
- C. He sets an **example** (27:35)
- D. He inspires **endurance** (27:31-44)

### DISRUPTIONS & DEMONS (27:13-44)

- A. Storms often come due to **demonic** attack (I Thess. 2:27, 18; Mk. 4:35-39; Rom 15:22)
- B. Storms often come when we **disobey** the will of God (Jonah)
- C. Storms can not **hide** the face of God (27:22-25)
- D. Storms give us the **opportunity** to serve others and bear witness concerning Jesus.



## ACTS: The Church In Action

### FAITHFUL TO THE END Chapter Twenty Eight

INTRODUCTION: The book of Acts ends in the same way it began. Here we see Paul, faced with adversity, overcoming the attacks of Satan, the opinions of men, moving in the power of the Holy Spirit, and preaching the good news of Jesus to anyone who would listen. Paul is a living example of the church in action remaining faithful to the end.

The Witness In Jerusalem (1:1 - 8:4) <b>Two Years</b>	The Church In Power 1:1 - 2:47
	The Church In Progress 3:1 - 8:4
The Witness In Judea & Samaria (8:4 - 12:25) <b>Thirteen Years</b>	The Church In Expansion 8:5 - 12:25
The Witness To The Ends Of The Earth (13:1 - 28:31) <b>Fourteen Years</b>	Paul's Three Journeys 13:1 - 21:16
	Paul's Three Trials 21:17 - 28:31

\*Adapted from Wilkinson/Boa, *Talk Through the New Testament*, Nashville, TN: WTB Ministries, 1981 (page 351).

### PAUL: A CAST STUDY OF FAITHFULNESS

- A. A faithful warrior (v 1-6)
  - o He put Satan in his **place**.
  - o He put human opinions in **perspective**.
- B. A faithful **worker** (v 7-10)
  - o He showed God's **compassion**.
  - o He shared God's **cure**.
- C. A faithful **witness** (v 17-31)
  - o He told His **story**
  - o He taught the **scriptures**

## **ACTS: The Church In Action**

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