

Acts part 1

Community Christian Church

There is SO much to unpack from the book of Acts. The formal and traditional name of the book is the "Acts of the Apostles." This gives us a great idea of what to expect when diving into this great book written by Doctor Luke who of course wrote the Gospel of Luke dated somewhere between 80-90 AD.

The first thing about Acts is when a central figure is no longer around (Jesus, after the ascension), especially in a movement, it begs the question: What are we going to do now? The answer seems to be to do what they were instructed to do (*go and make disciples baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:20]*). So, after the 11 disciples of Jesus decide who to replace Judas with, then comes Pentecost: the debut of the Holy Spirit. Some have speculated that the Holy Spirit reversed what had happened at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) if only for a moment. This is a cool scene of showing just a glimpse of what the Holy Spirit is capable of. Then Peter gets up to preach. Peter, the guy who had just recently denied Jesus gets up to preach about Jesus in the "Post-Jesus era." The classic moment here happens in the sermon when the crowd calls out to Peter after "feeling cut to the heart." "Brothers what shall we do?" "*Repent (change your mind from your ways first to wanting God's ways first) and be baptized in the name of Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*"

So now that there is the amazing gift in the Holy Spirit, we learn a little about the early church. We know that the church is not just a building, it's a body of believers. A building is a great tool but not the main thing that makes up the church. This body of believers shared what they had in common. The church was not exempt from its own challenges and challengers. Saul of Tarsus was totally against any and everything the church represented and seemed to think it was his job to stomp out this new movement. Even to the point of approving of Stephen being martyred via stoning. This stance of Saul's did not last long as he soon was changed dramatically on the road to Damascus. The church was not going to be a repackaged and repurposed version of Judaism when Peter is told that he is permitted to eat that which was previously considered "unclean (Acts 10)." So not only was Saul of Tarsus trying to stop the movement from causing problems, Herod who was King at the time wanted to do harm to the church. But even a king putting people in jail was not even close to being able to do enough to stop this movement that was sweeping their nation and taking over people's hearts and minds.