



SURPRISED BY THE SPIRIT

The ever-expanding story of “Acts of the Apostles”

I. THE LAUNCH OF THE KINGDOM IN JERUSALEM (Act 1:1-8:3)

A. PREPARATION (Act 1:1-26)

1. The ascension of Jesus (Act 1:9-11)
2. The waiting for the Spirit (Act 1:12-14)
3. The selection of a new apostle (Act 1:16-26)

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH (Act 2:1-47)

1. The Unique Coming of the Spirit (Act 2:1-4)
2. The reaction of the crowd (Act 2:5-13)
3. The first gospel sermon by Peter (Act 2:14-36)
4. The Church grows: conversion of 3000 souls (Act 2:37-41)
5. The Community of Spirit-Filled People (Act 2:42-47)



C. THE SUFFERING, SPIRIT LED CHURCH IN JERUSALEM (Act 3:1-8:3)

1. Initial Cause: The healing of the lame man (Act 3:1-26)
2. The Beginning of persecution; the liberality of the church (Act 4:1-37)
3. Conflict within and Persecution around (Act 5:1-42)
4. The disturbance resolved; intensifying persecution without (Act 6:1-15)
5. The martyrdom of Stephen (Act 7:1-60)
6. The persecution involving Saul against the church (Act 8:1-3)

II. THE KINGDOM EXPANDS THROUGH KEY SERVANTS (Act 8:4-12:25)

A. THE PREACHING BY PHILIP (Act 8:4-40)

1. The conversion of the Samaritans (Act 8:4-25)
2. The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (Act 8:26-40)

B. THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS (Act 9:1-31)

1. The appearance of the Lord on the road to Damascus (Act 9:1-8)
2. The baptism of Saul by Ananias (Act 9:9-19)
3. The initial ministry and persecution of Saul (Act 9:20-31)



- C. **THE MIRACLES OF PETER (Act 9:32-43)**
- D. **THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS (Act 10:1-11:18)**
 - 1. The account recorded by Luke (Act 10:1-48)
 - 2. The account retold by Peter (Act 11:1-18)
- E. **THE MINISTRIES OF BARNABAS, SAUL AND PETER (Act 11:19-12:25)**
 - 1. The work of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch (Act 11:19-26)
 - 2. The work of Barnabas and Saul in Judea (Act 11:27-30; 12:25)
 - 3. The persecution by Herod; James beheaded, Peter arrested (Act 12:1-4)
 - 4. The release of Peter from prison by an angel; Herod's death (Act 12:5-24)

III. **THE KINGDOM EXPANDS TO THE END OF THE EARTH (Act 13:1-28:30-31)**



- A. **THE FIRST JOURNEY INTO THE CULTURE (Act 13:1-14:28)**
 - 1. The departure from Antioch of Syria (Act 13:1-3)
 - 2. The ministry on the island of Cyprus (Act 13:4-12)
 - 3. The preaching in Antioch of Pisidia (Act 13:13-52)
 - 4. The work and persecution in Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Act 14:1-20)
 - 5. The confirmation of churches and appointment of elders (Act 14:21-23)
 - 6. The return trip to Antioch (Act 14:24-28)
- B. **CONFLICT RESOLVED AND REMAINING (Act 15:1-41)**
 - 1. What to do with those Pesky Gentiles (Acts 1-29)
 - 2. Resolved Conflict and the Letter (Act 15:30-35)
 - 3. Unresolved conflict between of Paul and Barnabas (Act 15:36-41)
- C. **THE MESSAGE REACHES ACROSS THE SEA (Act 15:36-18:22)**
 - 1. The addition of Timothy to Paul and Silas (Act 16:1-5)
 - 2. When God changes the plans (Act 16:6-10)
 - 3. Prison break in Philippi! (Acts 16: 11-40)
 - 4. The proclamation of Jesus to the Philosophers: Athens (Act 17:1-34)
 - 5. Renewed courage and new recruits (Act 18:1-22)
- D. **CHURCHES ARE ESTABLISHED (Act 18:23-21:17)**
 - 1. More new recruits as the team expands (Act 18:23)
 - 2. The conversion of Apollos by Aquila and Priscilla (Act 18:24-28)
 - 3. The riots that led to repentance: Ephesus (Act 19:1-41)
 - 4. The trip through Macedonia, three months in Greece, and return through Macedonia (Act 20:1-5)
 - 5. The breaking of bread and miracle at Troas; heading toward Jerusalem (Act 20:7-16)
 - 6. The emotional farewell with the Ephesian elders (Act 20:17-38)
 - 7. The warnings and return to Jerusalem (Act 21:1-17)



E. **“TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD AND BEYOND” (Act 21:18-28:31)**

1. Questions and warnings about the mission (**Act 21:18-25**)
2. The arrest of Paul in the temple (**Act 21:26-40**)
3. The series of court appearances
 - I. Before the Jewish mob (**Act 22:1-30**) **Anger**
 - II. Before the Sanhedrin council (**23:1-35**)...**Escape**
 - III. Before Felix (**Act 24:1-35**)**Apprehension**
 - IV. The appearance before Festus and appeal to Caesar (**Act 25:1-12**)
 - V. And finally! before King Agrippa (**Act 25:13-26:32**) **Amazement**
4. Shipwrecked on the Journey (**Act 27:1-28:16**)
5. The explanation of Paul to the leaders of the Jews in Rome (**Act 28:17-29**)
6. The waiting, preaching and teaching (**Act 28:30-31**)



Outline Summary:

The gospel is clearly shown to expand in spite of, and even because of, suffering. By implication, ‘nothing can stop the gospel but its spread still causes grief and loss’. This is the ongoing story of the Gospel. Four major sections of Acts are suggested:

1:1–6:7 Development of the church in Jerusalem under the leadership of the Twelve. The transitional summary in 6:7 indicates that growth of the word followed the satisfactory resolution of conflict in the church with the appointment of the Seven (cf. 6:1–6).

6:8–12:24 Spontaneous expansion to Judea, Samaria, and Gentile areas, with a widening of ministry to include the Seven and others scattered because of the persecution in Jerusalem. The transitional summary in 12:24 indicates that growth of the word followed the release of Peter from prison and the death of Herod, the persecutor of the church (cf. 12:1–23).

12:25–19:20 Planned geographical expansion into Asia Minor and Europe, under the leadership of Paul, emanating from Antioch in Syria. The transitional summary in 19:20 indicates that growth of the word in Ephesus was specifically related to the overcoming of demonic opposition and the power of magic (cf. 19:11–19).

19:21–28:31 The word of the Lord continues to grow and prevail, even though Paul is persecuted and arrested. The focus is on Paul’s testimony to the gospel when he is on trial, climaxing with the statement about his freedom to preach when under arrest in Rome (28:30–31). At the same time, various travel companions are mentioned and supportive groups of believers are encountered in his journey, suggesting that the progress of the word will continue through such as these, no matter what happens to Paul.

As cited from David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 33–34.

To the end of the earth! (Acts 29 and following)

Arthur Pierson (1895) “*Church of Christ! The record of these acts of the Holy Spirit have never reached completeness. This one book in the New Testament has no proper close, because it waits for new chapters to be written as fast and as far as the people of God shall live them*”. We are writing the remaining chapters in our lives...until “*this same Jesus that was seen being lifted up shall return*”.

