

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

The book of Acts reveals the miracles that marked the Church's beginning. The story of the start of the Church of God has important lessons for us today.

by Joshua Travers

Jesus Christ told His followers, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). His Church would continue through the ages. It would never die out.

Christ made that statement nearly 2,000 years ago. It remains true today. Christ is still in charge of the Church that He began in the first century (Colossians 1:18). While many things about the Church are fascinating—from its teachings to the work that Christ has assigned it—one event stands out. Let's look at the beginning of the Church.

GIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

After He was raised from the dead, Christ spent 40 days with His disciples. He taught them in detail about the Kingdom of God and further prepared them for the work that was ahead (Acts 1:2-3). Jesus promised that they would soon be empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness of Him "to the ends of the earth" (verse 8).

A key part of this preparation was training the disciples for the next step in God's plan. The first step was represented by the first of God's festivals, the [Passover](#). Christ, the Passover Lamb, had sacrificed Himself for our sins. He also taught His disciples to get rid of sin and to obey His commandments (John 14:15). (This represented the meaning of the second of God's festivals, the [Feast of Unleavened Bread](#).) Now the stage was set for the third phase: the giving of the Holy Spirit.

God's Church started out small—very small. At first, there were about 120 who were meeting together when a replacement for Judas was chosen (Acts 1:15). After Christ went to be at the Father's throne, they did what He had told them. They gathered together in Jerusalem for [Pentecost](#), the third of God's sacred festivals. (For more about the festivals of God, read "[Biblical Festivals: Does God Want Us to Celebrate Them? Why?](#)")

When they were all together, God gave His disciples the Holy Spirit. With it He sent a "sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind" and "tongues as of fire." These miracles showed everyone there just how important this event was (Acts 2:1-4).

This giving of the [Holy Spirit](#) was an essential part of God's plan for humanity. And it was necessary for God's people (John 16:7; 1 John 4:13). With the giving of the Holy Spirit on that Day of Pentecost, the New Testament Church of God began.

QUIZ TIME

What did God give to the disciples on Pentecost?

DRAWN BY MIRACLES

The sound was so loud that it brought a crowd of people who came to investigate the noise (Acts 2:2, 6).

The crowd was then astonished by a miracle known as “speaking in tongues.” The Jews from around the world were all hearing these supposedly uneducated Galileans speak to them in their own languages and dialects. (For more on the miracle of speaking in tongues, see our article [“Speaking in Tongues.”](#))

THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH

The crowd was curious and eager to know what was going on. So the apostle Peter used the opportunity that God had given them. He gave a powerful sermon on the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Peter’s sermon started out by explaining from the book of Joel exactly what had taken place (Acts 2:14-21). Then he proved to them from the Bible that Jesus was actually the promised Messiah, but that they had killed Him. He had died for their sins (Acts 2:22-36). Pentecost was a major festival, so Jerusalem was filled with visitors. God had blessed the newly established Church with a chance to preach the good news to people of many different areas—from Rome to Asia to Africa—without leaving Jerusalem (Acts 2:9-11).

Peter’s message affected some of them deeply. The Bible says it cut them to the heart (Acts 2:37). The Messiah for whom they had been waiting their entire lives had been crucified—and they were responsible!

Many responded with an emotional and heartfelt question. They asked, “What shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Jesus Christ had also preached a message of faith, repentance and baptism (Mark 1:14-15; 16:16).

THE CHURCH’S BEGINNING, BUT NOT ITS END

That first day the Church grew with about 3,000 baptisms. And God continued to bless the Church with growth (Acts 2:41, 47). The rest of the book of Acts and the New Testament reveal a story of persecution, miracles and faith in God that can encourage us. It can assure us that God continues to be with His Church today.

While the story of the Church’s beginning is told in the book of Acts, it’s a story that continues today. You can be a part of that story. As we approach the second coming of Christ, you need to decide how you will respond to God’s calling.

The story of the Church’s founding is written and finished. But we can be a part of the Church today and the ongoing story of its work.

Read more about the Church, its purpose and your part in it in the article [“The Church: What Is It?”](#)

QUIZ TIME

When people asked, “What shall we do?” what did Peter tell them?



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Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

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