

Doctrinal Insights In Acts

Record relevant Scripture references for study of the following doctrines.

Doctrinal Category	Relevant Passages
<p>Bibliology The Doctrine Of Scripture Development prompted by Gnosticism in the 2nd - 4th centuries.</p>	<p>2.16-21</p>
<p>Theology Proper The Doctrine Of God Development prompted by the Trinitarian Controversy of the 4th century.</p>	<p>1.7</p>
<p>Christology The Doctrine Of Christ Development prompted by the Christological Controversy of the 5th century.</p>	<p>2.22-36; 3.21-23</p>
<p>Pneumatology The Doctrine Of The Holy Spirit Development prompted by the early controversies and rise of Pentecostalism.</p>	<p>1.1-8; 2.1-21, 33, 38-39</p>
<p>Anthropology The Doctrine Of Man Development prompted by the Pelagian controversy, 5th - 7th centuries.</p>	
<p>Soteriology The Doctrine Of Salvation Development prompted by the Reformation (16th c.) and Calvinism-Arminian debate (17th c.).</p>	<p>2.38-41</p>

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<p>Ecclesiology The Doctrine Of The Church Development prompted by Gnosticism in the 2nd - 4th centuries.</p>	<p>1.8; 2.42-47</p>
<p>Eschatology The Doctrine Of Last Things Development prompted by Dispensationalism, Adventism in the 19th and 20th centuries.</p>	<p>1.7</p>
<p>Hamartology The Doctrine Of Sin Development prompted by the practice of infant baptism, c. AD 350 and following.</p>	
<p>Angelology The Doctrine Of Angels Development prompted by postexilic Jewish eschatology, Medieval superstitions and the New Age Movement.</p>	
<p>Demonology The Doctrine Of Satan & Fallen Angels Development prompted by Medieval superstition and Pentecostal phenomena.</p>	
<p>Celestology The Doctrine Of Heaven A largely neglected area of study.</p>	<p>1.11; 3.21</p>

The Dynamism Of The First Christians

Record your insights about why the Christians in Acts were so fruitful.

What did the first Christians have that we don't?

Boldness! The Gk. *parresia* (παρρησία) comes from *pas* (all) and *rhesis* (speech). The core idea is of free and unreserved utterance. See Act 2.29; 4.13,29,31; 28.31.

Sense of Family. As Jim said, they didn't see his or her problem, but "our problem." What a testimony: "There were no needy persons among them" (Act 4.34)!

Unity. This flowed from the continuing momentum of Pentecost. It was aided by the finiteness of the group, the shared city and culture, their minority status, and the presence of eye-witnesses.

Holiness. This much abused principle is nevertheless essential. Ananias and Sapphira died for lying! God's character and agenda were taken seriously by the first Christians. Holiness was cultivated, not by rules, but by seeking God's presence.

What do we have that the first Christians didn't?

All the material advantages, including tools and technology, that anyone on assignment could wish for.

Self protectiveness. We protect ourselves and our little kingdoms; as Schaeffer would say, "our personal peace and affluence."

Indifference to God's heart. It's not just a matter of being permissive; the answer is not policing added rules in the church.

Knowledge of Christian History. Is this more or less valuable than the immediacy of the Spirit's working that the first Christians had?

Other Insights

The first Christians also had a prepared audience in the Israelite people, though not in the rest of the Roman world. Paul for one understood how to use cultural bridges.

The Dynamism Of The First Christians

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What did the first Christians have that we don't?	What do we have that the first Christians didn't?
<p><i>A Daily, House-To-House Fellowship and Ministry. See Act 2.46; 5.42; 6.1; 20.20. Luk 10.7 is about a different issue, but the house-to-house ministry can be perverted by busy-bodies (1Ti 5.13).</i></p>	
Other Insights	

Firsts In The Apostolic Church

Record your insights about first-time events in the book of Acts.

First-Time Event	My Thoughts
<p>1. <u>Corporate Decision: Replacing Judas with Matthias</u> (Acts 1.15-26).</p>	<p>While commentators argue that Peter was too hasty, nothing in the text indicates this. Luke would have said if Paul were God's intended.</p>
<p>2. <u>Speaking In Tongues</u>: (2.4).</p>	<p>One of the signs of Spirit infilling, but a precedent does not prove that something must be done, only that it can be done.</p>
<p>3. <u>Public Sermon/Teaching: Peter at the Pentecost outpouring</u> (2.14-40).</p>	
<p>4. <u>Post-Ascension Converts: 3,000 on the day of Pentecost</u> (2.41)</p>	
<p>5. <u>Post-Ascension Healing: The cripple in the Temple</u> (3.1-9).</p>	
<p>6. <u>Arrest and Summons Before the Sanhedrin: Peter, John and the cripple</u> (?)(4.1-22).</p>	<p>See Eze 34.4 where shepherds are re-proved for not healing the sick.</p>
<p>7. <u>Corporate prayer with words (and earthquake)</u>: (4.23; cf. 1.14).</p>	

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<p>8. <u>Lie To The Holy Spirit</u> : (Acts 5.1-10).</p>	
<p>9. <u>Judgement Upon A Believer</u>: (5.1-10).</p>	
<p>10. <u>Jailbreak and Angelic Manifestation</u>: (5.17-26).</p>	<p>Why weren't Christians always miraculously freed?</p>
<p>11. <u>Flogging</u>: (5.40-41).</p>	
<p>12. <u>Mass Healings</u>: (5.12-16)</p>	
<p>13. <u>Disunity</u>: The unequal distribution of food (6.1).</p>	
<p>14. <u>Selection Of Deacons</u>: (6.2-6). This is the <u>second</u> corporate decision of the church recorded in Acts.</p>	
<p>15. <u>Martyrdom</u>: (7)</p>	

Firsts In The Apostolic Church

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<p><u>16. General Persecution Of The Church:</u> (Acts 8.1-3).</p>	
<p><u>17. Outreach to Samaria:</u> (8.4-25).</p>	
<p><u>18. Ministry In a Gentile House:</u> (10.1-11.18).</p>	
<p><u>19. Disciples Called Christians:</u> (11.26).</p>	<p>Eusebius calls the Ethiopian Eunuch of Acts 8 the "first among the Gentiles [who] received the mysteries of the divine word..." (ECC Hst 2.1), but the eunuch was surely a proselyte, many of whom were in attendance on the day of Pentecost.</p>
<p><u>20. Mission to Asia Minor:</u> (13)</p>	
<p><u>21. Church Council: The Jerusalem Council</u> (15).</p>	
<p><u>22. Outreach into Europe:</u> (16.6-18.17).</p>	
<p><u>23. Lengthy-Sermon Fatality:</u> (20.7-12)</p>	

The Connotations Of “Baptism”

References

Baptismal Connotation

Mat 3.6-11; Luk 3.3, 7-8; Act 2.38;
13.24; 19.4

Repentance.

Mar 16.16; Act 8.12-13; 18.8

Mat 3.11-12; Mar 10.38-39; Luk 3.16-
17; 12.50; 1Pe 3.18-22

Joh 1.21-31

Mat 28.19; Joh 4.1; Act 22.12-16;
1Co 1.12-13; 10.1-2; Heb 10.22-23

Mat 3.11-12; Luk 3.16-17; Act 1.5;
11.15-16; 19.1-3; 1Co 12.13

Rom 6.3-4-5; Col 2.12

Gal 3.27 (Cf. Gen 3.21; Psa 132.9;
Isa 22.1; 61.10; Dan 5.29; Mat 22.11;
Luk 15.22; 24.49; Rom 13.11-14; Col
3.8-12)

Eph 4.5; 1Co 12.13

Mat 3.13-17; Mar 1.9-11; Luk 3.21-
23

Priestly consecration.

Correlations In Acts

What We Want

What It Requires

Daily Converts
Acts 2.47



- *Daily Proclamation and Teaching (2.42; 5.42; 17.17; 19.9)*
- *Daily Ministry To The Poor (6.1)*
- *Daily prayers (2.42)*
- *Daily home fellowship (2.42,46; 20.31)*

Power In Ministry
Acts 1.8



Signs & Wonders
Acts 4.29-31



Fruitful Mission Results
Acts 16.5; 14-15



Divine Intervention
Acts 4.31



Church Growth
Acts 5.14



- *Real presence of the Holy God of grace (5.1-16)*
- *Sacrificial leadership*
- *Faith-community ministering to practical needs*
- *Message authentication by the Holy Spirit (5.32)*

Seven Compelling Facts About The First Christians

The First Christians:

1. Were Jewish

- A. The Church would break completely from its Hebraic heritage by AD 135. Until then, Christianity was understood as a Jewish sect.
- B. In reality, Christianity was simply Judaism universalized. The first Christians thought in Jewish categories with a Hebraic worldview.

2.

- A. The Jewish priority on kinship carries over into the NT ideas of spiritual adoption (Rom 8.15; Gal 4.4-7; Eph 1.5), “the household of faith” (Gal 6.10), “the household of God” (Eph 2.19; 1Ti 3.15; 1Pe 4.17; cf. Heb 2.11), the corporate temple (1Co 3.9-17; 2Co 6.16), filial respect in the Church (1Ti 5.1-3; 1Pe 1.22; 2.17), brotherly love for believers (Rom 12.10; Heb 13.1; 1Pe 3.8; 5.9), and justification by faith (i.e., by a trusting relationship).
- B. Two models for church life compete in our culture: the business model (performance and bottom line) and the family model (relationships and fruitfulness). The Church in Acts clearly operated on the family model (Acts 1.12-14; 2.42,44; 4.32,23; 5.42; 6.1; 20.20; 21.17; see 1Ti 3.1-5).

3.

- A. Their whole of religion was summed up in the commands to love God and one another (Joh 13.34; 1Jo 4.20-21), and they understood this love as an action that would holistically address what we now call social justice (Jam 2.15-17; 1Jo 3.10,16-17).
- B. In the NT, the common apostolic phrase “in Christ” has varied connotations depending on context, but in many passages we may paraphrase it as “in [the household (or family) of] Christ,” or simply “in [(or by) relationship with] Christ” (Rom 8.1; 12.5; 16.3,7,9; 1Co 1.30; 3.1; 4.15; 15.22; Gal 1.22; 3.28; 5.6; Eph 1.1; 2.13; Philip 1.1; Col 1.2; etc.).

4.

- A. They understood the Human-Divine Partnership (Act 4.29-30; 14.3).
- B. They ministered creatively to other cultures (Act 17), but also used common sense (Didache 11).

5.

- A. They fellowshiped with a city church rather than with a competing church.
- B. They associated their leaders with the cities where they ministered.

6.

- A. Over Themselves: They depended upon hearing from God by Scripture, counsel (Acts 15.28), and by corroborated revelation (Acts 16.10).
- B. Over All Creation: They obeyed God before man, stood against heresy (like Gnosticism), and decided on the basis of rightness rather than feasibility (Acts 13.3).

7.

- A. Peter: “God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified” (Act 2.36). The book of Acts correlates bold proclamation with signs and wonders.
- B. Stephen: “Behold, I see the heavens opened! ... Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Act 7.54-60).