



The Book of Acts: The Original Gospel

The study of the book of Acts is necessary to know the original Gospel and see its power in action with signs and miracles following. There, the early Church can be seen how it began to revolutionize the old world with the Gospel with just a handful of young believers in Christ. The effect was that millions, in a short period of time, would receive salvation and all types of miracles, get baptized into water as a public testimony to the faith, and get baptized in the Holy Spirit for power-living.

After Jesus's ascension, the first half of the book of Acts starts off with Peter as the protagonist. He was an appointed leader along with the other 11 apostles to guide the young Church comprised of Jews as majority. It was so until the time came for God to unveil the Gospel in its purest form. To do so, God began to correct Peter's belief with 3 visions with a meaning far beyond than what meets the eye.

Around the same time, God appointed another leader – Paul. Unlike Peter, Paul was willing to preach this audacious Grace called the Gospel to its full measure, just as he had received it from the Lord by revelation in Arabia. For this reason, Peter decreased as Paul increased as protagonist at the start of the second half of the book of Acts.

Much like today, the Church was perplexed with the scandal of Grace as the Spirit began to account righteousness to the ungodly, the lawless, the rebellious and the sinful apart from the Law of Moses. So much so, that Paul confronted Peter for not being straightforward with the truth (10 years after Peter's 3 visions) As a result, the Jerusalem Council summoned the apostles Peter and Paul and the rest of the leaders to resolve this issue once and for all.

Acts 15:6-9

So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue. At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: “Brothers, you well know that from early on God made it quite plain that he wanted the [pagans] to hear the message of the good news and believe. And God, acknowledge them by giving them [righteousness] exactly as He did to us. He treated the outsiders exactly as he treated us, beginning at the very center of who they were and working from that center outward, by faith.

Peter finally humbled himself and put an end to the issue once and for all. Here, he finally agreed not to put any requirements or additions to the Gospel that Paul was preaching. Peter goes on to say, “So why are we now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? We believe that we are all made [righteous] the same way, by the underserved grace of the Lord Jesus.” However, Peter continued to struggle with it since he admitted that some of things Paul preached were really hard to digest.

A well respected Bible teacher describes the Gospel that Paul preached in this manner:

- “Paul’s claim [was] that the message he preached was the authentic gospel of Christ. – **F.F. Bruce**

Without a doubt, Peter and the rest of the early Church repented or changed their mind about the birth of this unique and audacious message that Paul initially preached called the Gospel of Grace that excluded all religious traditionalism and externalism.

Acts 15:22

Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to report on this decision.

The whole early Church came to a decision: the Gospel of Grace was in reality the true Gospel of Christ and would be preached with Paul as main teacher along with his apprentice, Barnabas. This report is called the Jerusalem Decree (Acts 15:24-29).

The main idea of the decree is as follows:

- “Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses”—to whom we give no such commandment.” – **The apostles, the elders, and the brethren of the early Church**

According to the early Church leaders, they gave no such commandment for the believer in Christ to submit to the Law of Moses or any other traditional law.

However, due to the immaturity of the early Church and lack of confidence in the Gospel of Grace to really change a person’s heart and actions without external conformity to laws, it seemed good to the leadership to give the following commands:

- “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: abstain from eating meats offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. If you do this, you will do well. Farewell.” – **The apostles, the elders, and the brethren of the early Church**

It also seemed good to the Holy Spirit at the time to give these commands to protect young believers with a weak conscience and flesh. Remember, the only New Testament book written at the time was the Gospel of Matthew. Paul’s epistles teaching the Gospel of Grace had not been written yet. Therefore, the believer in Christ at that time had no basis to stand firm in the faith except through the spoken Word, which the majority had to wait until an apostle visited.

Today, it’s different. We have a mature Church and the written Word. So make no excuse; the original Gospel has no additions, remakes, or sequels to it. It must be delivered in its purest form in order to impact the way it was intended. It was a settled issue then. Is it a settled issue in your heart, today?

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