

**The Acts of the Apostles I**  
***The Promise of the Father***  
**Acts 2:41-47 (ADDENDUM TO LAST WEEK)**

- A. The First Church at Jerusalem (**Acts 2:42-47**)
- i. Its steadfastness (**Acts 2:42**)
    1. In doctrine (apostles doctrine—no New Testament scripture and things were transitioning) AND FELLOWSHIP with the apostles (no comma in sentence)
    2. In fellowship (apostles doctrine and apostles fellowship). Fellowship with chief men; no hierarchy
    3. Breaking of bread—could be taking means together. Enjoyed each others company. See verse 46 “breaking of bread” from house to house
    4. In prayers
  - ii. Its signs (**Acts 2:43**)
    1. Fearful signs
    2. Many signs
    3. Apostolic signs (Acts 5:12)

*Acts 5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.*

*2 Corinthians 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*

- iii. Its structure (**Acts 2:44-45**)
  1. Community – all “together” (**Acts 2:44**)
  2. Communal – common ownership of property (**Acts 2:44-45**; Acts 4:32) – More will be discussed on this topic in Acts chapter 4.
  3. Not commanded; voluntary
- iv. One accord DAILY
- v. Its service (**Acts 2:46-47**)
  1. In the temple (**Acts 2:46**; Acts 3:1)—not observing sacrifices
  2. From house to house (**Acts 2:46**)

3. In the church (**Acts 2:47**; Acts 5:12)—church/saved—this is not a Jewish Pentecostal church. Paul says that the church he persecuted is the church he became a part of after he got saved.
- vi. With gladness and singleness of heart—not divided

## When Did the Church Begin?

The answer to this question is one of the most sought for answers by dispensational students and believers in general! Did the Church, which is Christ's Body (**Colossians 1:18, 24**), begin prior to or following Paul's conversion to Christianity in Acts chapter 9? Paul repeatedly wrote that he persecuted the (already existing) Church.

**Philippians 3:6** Concerning zeal, **persecuting the church**; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

**1 Corinthians 15:9** For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because **I persecuted the church of God**.

**Galatians 1:13** For ye have heard of my conversation in time past **in the Jews' religion**, how that beyond measure **I persecuted the church of God**, and wasted it:

If the Church began with Paul, how could he have persecuted an entity not yet in existence? Obviously, the Church began prior to Paul's conversion because he persecuted the entity that Jesus said He would build. The Church mentioned by Jesus is the one that Paul persecuted.

**Matthew 16:18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Take note that Jesus does not say that He would build His churches, one being Jewish and the other being a Gentile church. Paul not only admitted to persecuting the Church, but also proclaimed that he began preaching the same faith that he once attempted to exterminate.

**Galatians 1:23** But they had heard only, That **he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed**.

Since Jesus is the Head of this Church which is His body, Paul's persecution was effectively directed toward Jesus.

**Acts 9:5** And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest**: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

When Paul persecuted the Church (the members), the Lord testified to Paul that he was persecuting Jesus Christ who presently sat at the right hand of the Father. The only means whereby this could be true is that the believers had to be "in Christ," otherwise, Paul could not have been persecuting Jesus.

If the Body of Christ/the Church began with Paul, why would he **repeatedly** state that there were others *in Christ* before him (**Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 15:22, etc.**)? For instance,

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**Romans 16:7** Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were **in Christ before me**.

The mystery of Christ involves Gentiles **joining** their Jewish brethren **already in the Body!** Redeemed Gentiles become fellow-heirs with the Jews and not the other way around.

**Ephesians 3:4** Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand **my knowledge in the mystery** of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That **the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body**, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

The Gentiles are grafted in among the Jews who were already in that Body.

**Romans 11:13** For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the **Gentiles**, I magnify mine office:...17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and **thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them**, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

The hope of the Gentiles comes from realizing that the wall separating them from God is broken down by Jesus who makes one new man with Jew and Gentile together.

**Ephesians 2:13** But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath **broken down the middle wall of partition between us**; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; **for to make in himself of twain one new man**, so making peace; 16 And that he might **reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross**, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him **we both have access** by one Spirit unto the Father.

Paul continues the thought later in the same chapter by emphasizing that the Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners.

**Ephesians 2:19** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but **fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God**; 20 And are **built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone**;

This building that Paul is adding to consists of a defined foundation and the chief corner stone. The apostles and prophets are the foundation with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone of that foundation.

In summary, the church/body existed before Paul (Ephesians 2) but was not explained until him (Ephesians 3). The Church could not have started with Paul; Paul was given the explanation so that he could write it down and we could understand. Acts is the history of what took place and the epistles explain the doctrine by shining light upon and interpreting what happened. They complement one another.