

**A Talk by B. Cobbey Crisler,
“After the Master What? – The Book of Acts” (Acts 1)**

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Cobbey’s welcome and introduction to the Book of Acts:

Glad to see you all here. Actually, we are here for a purpose that is quite similar to the original concept that impelled the Book of Acts, because we are going to do much discussion and talking tonight about church. Because, to summarize The Book of Acts in one word, I suppose there is no better than “church.” And that word church comes from a Greek word “Ekklesia,” and I’m sure you are aware of what English word has come for that, unfortunately. Because the concept of Ecclesiasticism is **probably** not our real concept of church.

As the Greeks use the word, it just mean simple, an assembly of people, and that’s what we all are here tonight, But Christianity did something to that word, and hopefully we, individually and collectively, can do something with that word that elevates it from the sense of Ecclesiastism and puts it right in the core of our hearts which is where church has to be built anyway.

So, an assembly of people really communicating with one another, collectively, working together for a divine purpose is a hint of what church is all about as far as the Book of Acts is concerned.

Now, before we get into the content and concept of the book, let’s discuss it historically somewhat, realizing that practically every book of the Bible is involved in some form of heated dispute as far as chronology, authorship are concerned.

Many scholars think Acts was written late. And yet, I see a trend in recent writings which would tend to reverse that somewhat. Let me read you what **Professor Albright**, who I think most scholars would consider our greatest contribution to the field of Biblical archeology and Bible scholarship, has said about this book.

He says, “[Since certain points in Luke’s work,](#)” and I’m sure you realize the Book of Acts is a second volume of a two-volume work, the first volume being, Luke, right! And the reason we know that: What’s verse one in the book of Acts tell us?

It starts out with...really giving us that information, doesn’t it? It says “[The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus....](#)” (See below, Partial)

[Acts 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,](#)

Now, why in that brief group of words do we have clues about the Gospel of Luke and similar authorship? Do you know?

Well, the Gospel of Luke, if you check the opening verses there, you will find that that Gospel is addressed to “[Theophilus](#)” as well. (See below)

[Luke 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,](#)

[Luke 1:4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.](#)

And here, we’re told in the opening verse of Chapter One of Acts, “[The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus....](#)” (See Acts1:1 above)

So, it doesn’t take too much more than common sense to at least link the books in terms of the one to whom it was written and in terms of the author.

So Albright says, “[that since certain points in Luke’s work,](#)” meaning the Book of Acts, “[clearly indicate and an early date of composition at the beginning of the sixties. There is good reason to favor that date.](#)”

Now, as I say, that’s disputed because other scholars would place it in the eighties or nineties. And we can’t spend too much time on that point because, if scholars haven’t solved it, I don’t think you and I can do it together, and that really isn’t the purpose of our getting together.

There are many cogent arguments on both sides. I think one very good common sense argument for an early date, is the fact that it ends so abruptly. It doesn't tell us what happened to Paul; it doesn't tell us the result of his imprisonment in Rome. And, a good historian, like Luke, if it had occurred by the time he had written this book, one would think he would have included it. That's purely a common sense conclusion, and yet, that's one of the one's that is raised by several recent scholars on the topic.

If it were written in the sixties, it would be written when Paul and Peter were still with us, and it would have a kind of an authenticity, an eye-witness ring to it. And, as a matter of fact, we **do** run into packages in Luke that have the change from the third person to the first person. Have you noticed that?

It just suddenly shifts from a biographical tone to an auto-biographical tone. And many students have suggested that this is perhaps where the author joined the action, that Luke, himself, perhaps joined Paul at that time, and he shifted it into...and there's quite a thrilling since to that first person approach when you hit it, as we'll see as we go on through it.

Now, let's move into the opening chapter because we have an axe to grind for about six hours here – not tonight – three plus three. That means you can digest somewhat tomorrow what we are talking about today.

To give you an idea of the length of this book and what it might have taken in an original papyrus roll, **Professor Finnegan** has kind of measured it out. And he says this: “A book such as the Gospel according to Luke would have filled an ordinary papyrus roll thirty-one or thirty-two feet long, while the Book of Acts, by the same author would have required a second such roll.”

And it has been surmised; and this is one of the reasons why Luke-Acts was issued in two volumes. That's again a possible common sense conclusion.

Now, Theophilus – who is he? No one knows, but translated from the Greek it means what? Do any of you know? What's “Theo” like in theology, God and Logos. All right, it's...well, not Logos, that was theology, but Theo-PHILUS, Philus meaning, like Philadelphia, **love**. So, **God-**

loving, literally, which has again caused some to think that it might not be addressed to an individual named Theophilus; it could be to **us** if we qualify in that definition, collectively.

“O All those who are God-loving.” (See below, Paraphrased) Again that is conjecture, but something worth considering.

We know that the first treatise that Luke wrote had to do with – what does the first verse tell us? (Indistinct answer from audience) Right. What “Jesus began both to do and teach.” (See below, Partial)

Acts 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

So, it really, it sounds like it was a gospel such as we have. And the progress of the gospel, narrative wise, would take us, according to Verse 2, “until the day in which he was taken up after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.” (See below)

Acts 1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

Now, probably the most extensive use of the concept and phrase Holy Ghost is in the Book of Acts. So, we’re talking about not only church but a very close relationship to church of the concept of Holy Ghost. So, let’s review that a bit. The word Ghost in Greek is pneuma. Can you see this? I hope I will become more transparent as the evening wears on and you’ll be able to see through me to the blackboard.

But, pneuma is spirit, or ghost, or wind, or breath, or air – and very much associated with **movement**, isn’t it? For instance, you know how the Bible opens: “The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” (See below, Gen 1:2)

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Gen 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And then, look what happened in the next seven days, rather remarkable accomplishments. So the pneuma is/has something to do with movement.

And even the definition of prophesy, given to us in Second Peter in the first chapter, tells us that prophesy really is the result of holy men of God being moved by the Holy Ghost. Alright, now we'll see several examples of that movement as we go through.

Reviewing the narrative in the gospel at the end, how many days between the resurrection and the ascension did Jesus have to get across to his students what they apparently had failed to get during the preceding three years? (Murmurs from audience) 40 days. Right.

All right, how many here have heard "The Walk to Emmaus"? (Murmurs) A good portion? What happened, let's just review, during that 40 day period in terms of the disciples' **radical** change of outlook that had not existed in the preceding three years?

When Jesus came back from the resurrection, what did he find? Did he find a church? ("No," from audience) In fact, some of his disciples had gone where? Back fishing, and where Jesus found them.

So, Christianity had taken a full circle from fishing boat to fishing boat. It was about to end where it began. And is really that what Jesus had spent all his time and effort in the preceding three years to accomplish? I would imagine he would have been tempted to be somewhat disappointed, don't you think?

When he returned with all that victory over every obstacle that the world had presented to him, to find that his followers had progressed very little.

And as a matter of fact, you recall what state of mind the two disciples were in on that road to Emmaus? (Murmurs) "**They were sad.**" (See below, Paraphrased)

[Luke 24:17](#) And he said unto them, What manner of [communications](#) are these that ye have one to another, [as ye walk, and are sad?](#)

Jesus actually is quoted as saying that in the last chapter of Luke, but they were more than **sad**, and they were more than disappointed, even possibly bitter, right!

And we know that because remember that when the stranger joins the two walking on that road, they don't know who it is? Can you imagine how often they must have bitten their tongues (Laughter from audience) after they found out who it was?

But, they said, "We trusted that it had been he which **should have** redeemed Israel. (See below. Partial)

Luke 24:21 **But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel:** and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

Now, it's what's **not** said in that remark that is worse than what's said, "We trusted." In other words, "We did our part."

And the implication is **somebody** did what? Somebody let them down, or failed, or possibly even deceived some. That's very strong, but it's certainly within the capability of and the scope of that statement.

The next line, a part of that sentence, is even **worse** because it says "we trusted it had been he which **should have** redeemed Israel." "Should have" (but didn't). (See above, Luke 24:21, Paraphrased)

Now, there is **where** Jesus's movement was. Does it sound like much of a movement? And yet, would you and I have responded the same way? It's very difficult to identify ourselves with the questionable characters in the Bible. We're generally the ones that were always loyal, unshaken, unmovable, right there when anyone would need us, wherever we can find that in the Bible. We never identify with Judas, do we? Or Peter when he denied Jesus. Or, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Or Thomas who **insisted** upon seeing medical documentation that Jesus actually could be the same one who was on the cross. We never would be those people, would we? And so, we kind of often approach the Bible with a certain degree of haughty self-importance and miss a great deal of the message. Because the message is that human nature hasn't really changed very

much since the Bible was written. And, that's a sad commentary, but whose responsibility is it? It really lies with us, doesn't it?

And, when these two disciples felt that they were let down, I suspect all of us would probably have felt that too. We just committed our livelihood, our reputations, our homes, our families, and many other intricately involved things in that social society of the times, on the strength that this man, Jesus, would succeed, and where did he end up? On a criminal cross.

Now, why we're reviewing this is because it's important to see that it required the radical change of thought on the disciples' part before a church could **even be founded**.

And the radical change had to do with what? Learning the scriptures – very important. **Prophecy**. How do we know that those worked emphatically? What Jesus had in mind, had to precede the foundation of church.

That's the first thing he did talk about, wasn't it, on the road to Emmaus. He **immediately** went back to their need to comprehend who he was!

Because, when they said “we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel,” what they really meant was “we thought he was what? The Messiah.” And what they weren't saying, but they were indirectly, is “now, we don't think he was. We doubt that he was.” (See below, repeated here, and paraphrased)

Luke 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

Now, **what shaped their view**, you see, of the Messiah? What were the Jewish expectations about the Messiah that Jesus did not fulfill in the disciples' thinking?

That is the area where Jesus now worked. This is the unexplored territory. This is a pioneer breakthrough even in scriptural exegesis. Now Jesus is a pioneer in practically everything he touches, and here is one that may have been too ignored, namely in exegesis of scripture, or interpretation.

What could be more appropriate than for the **one** who was to fulfill scriptural prophesy, and that's certainly what...everything we read in the gospel seems to tell us, that Jesus felt he fulfilled the role of Messiah. Correct?

Well, if he felt he did, how come his two disciples, having witnessed all these events, were doubting that he really had? There must be a difference of views about who the Messiah would be and what his mission was. Correct?

So, let me ask you. Where did the disciples' view of the scriptural prophesy end, and where did Jesus's view of it begin? Where is the dichotomy?

The Jews thought he was to be a king, a lion, and what kind of a leader then, what kind of a king? All right. Go back in their history, and he was probably be someone who would remind them of David, maybe Solomon -- the united monarchies probably, certainly not the divided monarchy that came after Solomon -- one that would unite the entire purpose of the Jews.

And, do you get an idea that the main emphases in their expectation was on a spiritual leader? ("No." from audience)

Now, before we **entirely agree** on that, let me just read to you what Professor Davies has written in The Invitation to the New Testament, a book published by Doubleday, about the subject of the Messiah-ship. He says, "It was scandalous enough to point to the figure of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, but the point to a crucified Jesus as such, was monstrous."

Now, that gives us a clue. Once Jesus was convicted and executed on the cross, if what you are saying is correct, that the nation of Jews to a man, expected a Messiah who would be a king or a political leader to wipe out all of their enemies and bring the Jewish nation back into their historic ascendancy that, at least, the united kingdom or monarchy had given the nation.

Then what would the crucifixion do to those hopes and that optimism? (Murmurs) Destroy them completely!

Now, do we relate a little bit more to those two fellows walking on the road to Emmaus? And yet, don't you think the disciples should have had a **better** view of the Messiah-ship than the Jews generally?

Does it **look** like it though when they say, “[we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel](#)”? (See below, Verse repeated, Partial)

[Luke 24:21](#) But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

(Unheard comment from audience) Who did? The disciples wanted a personal Messiah? Well, what, didn't the others, didn't the rest of the Jews? What I'm getting at is...What's the difference? What's the difference that we see here?

(Murmurs) All right. But, there is a difference, you see here, between the way the disciples viewed the Messiah and the Jews in general. There is one, specific, difference. And that is the Jews in general accepted a Messiah who would be a king and political leader. Where did the disciples depart? They believed Jesus had fulfilled it. In other words, here is the candidate. He is the one. And you remember how pleased Jesus was to hear Peter say “[Thou art the Christ.](#)” (See below)

But, I think we can understand that in his statement: “[Thou art the Christ,](#)” he was **only** embracing the general Jewish view about the Messiah, king and political leader.

[Mark 8:29](#) And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

And, you know how we know that. Because after Peter says, “[Thou art the Christ,](#)” you remember what Jesus began to tell the disciples for the first time? (See below)

[Mark 8:31](#) And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

He said, “I'm going to be betrayed by the Jews, handed over to the gentiles, and I will be crucified, and I will suffer, rise again the third day.

And Peter says “Far be it from thee oh Lord that will not happen to you.”
(See below, Paraphrased)

Mark 8:32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

Mark 8:33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

So, there is the difference as far as scriptural insight is concerned. Jesus apparently embraced a concept of Messiah which he saw in the Bible that no one else in his era had seen.

And when he came back via the resurrection, he not only had to overcome death, which is enough concentration, one would think, in a lifetime, he also had to do **what** as far as the view of the scriptures was concerned in his entire nation?

He not only had to **completely** reteach his nation, but in doing so, it would also give them a new concept of the Messiah. And they would understand what he was doing on the cross, **why** the suffering aspect would be associated with the Messiah.

Now, that's hard for us to realize because we think we have seen quite **easily** in the Old Testament the prophecies of a suffering servant, in Isaiah, and Psalms, and so forth.

But, we're talking about what **they** saw then. And before we start to rejoice over our great advancement and progress over the first century, let's ask ourselves how adept and familiar are we really with inspired prophecy in the Bible?

Which (prophecy) may just not have ended because we get an idea that prophecy, according to the Book of Revelation, ends when time ends. And time hasn't ended yet. Is there more in that Bible that we haven't seen?

Paul, remember, looked out at his congregations and said that “those in Jerusalem had convicted Jesus, and yet they had sat every Sabbath Day and heard the same prophets read. And, usually, we all chuckle and laugh over that, “See they didn’t hear what they were...didn’t really listen to what they were hearing.”

And yet, I imagine all of us have a regular habit, at least once weekly, of showing up at some church, and the same prophets are being read to us. Are we really listening to what we are hearing, or is there more there, the spiritual insights, individually as well as collectively, should embrace in the scriptures? It’s just something, a question that we need to ask ourselves.

So, let me go one with Professor Davies quote here; he says “Most Jews had certainly not anticipated a Messiah who should suffer. No Jews, we may be certain, had anticipated a Messiah who should endure the shameful death of crucifixion. Such a death, in the light of Deuteronomy, placed Jesus under the condemnation of the law. To proclaim Jesus as Messiah was to proclaim that one whom the law had condemned was upheld by God.”

And let me read you a quotation from the Jewish Encyclopedia, the most recent edition, on the subject of the Messiah which will give us one additional bit of evidence.

“The Messiah was expected to attain, for Israel, the idyllic blessings of the prophet. He was to defeat the enemies of Israel, restore the people to the land, reconcile them to God, and introduce a period of spiritual and physical bliss.”

Now, those two disciples on the walk to Emmaus weren’t feeling much of a spiritual bliss, were they? And, if that were their expectation...in fact, they were running for their lives, rather than feeling a spiritual or physical bliss.

Then the Encyclopedia Judaica continues: “He was to be prophet, warrior, judge, king, and teacher of Torah, or the law.” And then adds a little later in the **same** article: “The early sources do not mention a suffering Messiah.”

Now, look at that great gap, you see, that’s being caused by the crucifixion

itself. You know, Paul refers to the crucifixion as what for the Jews? “A [stumbling block](#).” (See below, Partial)

[1 Cor 1:23](#) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a [stumblingblock](#), and unto the Greeks foolishness;

It was a stumbling block. Why? Why, perhaps, is that more explained now, after this discussion? Why would it be a stumbling-block for the Jews? (Murmurs) That’s right. They hadn’t embraced that, really, in their thoughts. They couldn’t conceive that their Messiah would be crucified.

And Paul said it was a “[stumblingblock for the Jews](#),” and **what** for the Gentiles? “[Foolishness](#).” (See above, paraphrased)

Stumbling block is another view for a rock. And remember that Jesus reaches back into the Book of Psalms telling us that “[the stone which the builders rejected was to become head of the corner](#).” (See below, Paraphrased)

[Ps 118:22](#) The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

Remember that? Now he brings that out right from the Old Testament. Now, if Jesus is the student of the scriptures that we give him credit to be, pioneer insights, then that verse is worth our study. In fact, it’s worth comparing with some of the other things that he said.

When he talked about a rock with Peter, it was **after** Peter said “[Thou art the Christ](#).” (See below)

“[Thou art the Messiah of biblical prophecy](#)” that we’ve been looking for. (See below, Paraphrased)

[Mark 8:29](#) And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

And, immediately Jesus said two things: “[My Father hath revealed it unto thee, not flesh and blood](#).” (See below, paraphrased)

[Matt 16:17](#) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

It came from God, and if that's true, then guess what that means for you and me? No one in this room or anywhere else can really **tell** it to you. It must come, that revelation, if Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah of Bible prophecy, **you** have to find it yourself, and where? In the word which was revealed from God.

And that forces, and you know that is one of the most (probably) ignored facets of Jesus's approach to his students, including us – namely, Jesus **forces** you and me to become Bible students. Because he's communicating to Bible students. He's actually embracing all of humanity, but he communicates especially to Bible students.

So, when he said, to us as Bible students, presumably, [“The stone which the builders rejected has become head of the corner.”](#) (And, at the same time, in somewhat of a paraphrase (somewhat) of this Old Testament verse, he says to Peter, after Peter has said [“Thou art the Christ,”](#) that [“The father hath revealed it to him.”](#))

The second thing he said [“Upon this rock I will build my church...”](#) Now, if that rock has something to do with [“the stone that the builders rejected, that was going to be the corner stone,”](#) it's rather important to find out what that is. (See below, repeated, Paraphrased) What is that rock?

[Ps 118:22](#) The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

And Peter in saying, [“You are the Messiah,”](#) brought out from Jesus, the first time, the mention of the word [“church.”](#) (See below, repeated, Partial)

[Mark 8:29](#) And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

It's the first time he mentions it.

[Matt 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.

And, secondly, he tells them what is going to happen to him. And this again is for the first time, according to the Gospel of Matthew, that “the crucifixion would occur and the resurrection.” (See below, Paraphrased)

Matt 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

And that, as we find from the walk to Emmaus later, every step of that can be found in Bible prophecy. But, Peter, nor anyone else, at the time, had **seen** that, because they saw the King, the political leader, not the sufferer on the cross.

All right, now, if that’s the “stone, then that the builders are rejecting,” how would you summarize it? (See below, repeated, Paraphrased)

Ps 118:22 The stone which the builders **refused** is become the head stone of the corner.

We should look somewhere, related to the rock on which the church is founded, what? The rock hasn’t moved; that’s the advantage of being a rock. But, what (unheard comment from audience) “stability” sure, that’s what a rock would stand for, but what was Jesus getting at when he said, that “upon this rock I will build my church.” (Murmurs) (See below)

Matt 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.

And what is the acknowledgement of the Messiah? What was he **needing** to see emerge in the thoughts of his students, **before his church could be built**? (Unheard answers from audience) Well, he went to a great deal of effort to show that prophecy had included, really, every step in his career.

And the understanding of prophecy does what, according to that last chapter of Luke? When the two disciples in Emmaus first came into contact with these verses in the Old Testament which in **detail** described the crucifixion -- you know you can practically do that? You can get Bible readings together describing **in detail** the crucifixion and never leave the

Old Testament. Now, that's something the human mind can't really accomplish, isn't it?

So, if that's possible to do, and Jesus did that with his disciples for the first time on the road to Emmaus, and then, later when they were all meeting together, the first Christian church meeting, where he goes over the same scriptural passages with them again. If that is what was going on, and we're following the line of church, the first time he ever mentions "church" is when Peter said, "You are the Messiah." (See below, Matt 16:16)

And then, "On that rock, I will build my church," this comprehension of the scripture.... (See below, repeated for convenience, Partial and Paraphrased)

Matt 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matt 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.

And then we find that the next time he goes into this prophetic understanding of scriptures is on the walk to Emmaus, and it turns into the first church meeting, the first Christian church meeting in history, in that last chapter of Luke.

So, this comprehension of Jesus's role in prophecy is, apparently, important.

So, after understanding that, let's go on further into the Book of Acts, and we find the summary in the early Chapter One, leading to the ascension in verses 9 and 10, **the only really detailed view of the ascension that we have.**

Acts 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Acts 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

Most of the gospels, they either do not mention it, or refer to it very slightly.

And, in Acts 1, Verse 11, the angelic rebuke could sometimes apply to modern church members. “Ye men of...wherever we live, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?” Get to work! In other words, “this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall still come in like manner as you have seen him go unto heaven.” (See below, Paraphrased)

Acts 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

They return to Jerusalem, and we have the **second** Christian church meeting recorded beginning in Act 1, verse 13. There in that “upper room,” who are assembled? Assembly, Ekklesia. Who are assembled? The disciples are all named in verse 13.

Acts 1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

And, who else, in Acts 1, verse 14? All right. “The women” are included in the church meeting. (See below)

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Now, lest you think that that sounds **normal**, let us recall that in that era, there were certain rabbinical writings even that said “one should not should not teach women even the scriptures.” And some Rabbis would not even greet their women relatives in the street or talk to them. There was no question in the minds of the theology of that time that women were subordinate. A lot has changed. (Laughter)

Now, not only the women are there, but Acts 1, Verse 15, in parentheses, adds up the entire group, and who do we have? How many? “120.”

Acts 1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

Now, I ask you to focus on that now because when we finish the Book of Acts, you will see an entirely different church. From 120, huddled together for warmth in an alien world, the book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome and Christianity having spread itself across the known globe in less than one generation. That is a major achievement!

And, the enthusiasm came from **somewhere**, and it was **certainly** different from what impelled Peter who was drumming his hands on the side of a fishing boat on the shore of Galilee and figured he had nothing else better to do. So, he says, “[I go a-fishing.](#)” (See below)

[John 21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.](#)

And everybody else, John and some of these sterling characters, you know, say, “[Well, we ought to go with thee; that sounds like a good idea.](#)” (See above, Paraphrased)

We don't find that state of mind anymore. And on which state of mind could you build your church? Their thought, the disciples thought, had to be on the **rock**, or we had no church.

And, where does church have to be built first? (Murmuring answers out of earshot) **In our hearts.**

If it is not there, it's nowhere, for us. Our names may be on the register of some denomination, but it means absolutely nothing, unless the church has been built in our hearts. Because when those two disciples heard who Jesus was, as outlined by God hundreds of years before he arrived humanly, their “[hearts burned within them.](#)” (See below, Paraphrased)

[Luke 24:32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?](#)

And from those “[burning hearts](#)” came **Christianity** and the **church**. (See above, Paraphrased)

And you know, Christianity now, well perhaps it looks like it's reached an apathetic phase; at one point, it used to be a “knocking-on-doors” phase.

But we find that in the study of the primitive Christian church, they didn't even have to knock on doors, that many came to **join** and be **part** of that early church, merely because they saw the **glow** and felt the **warmth** from "the burning hearts." (See below, Repeated for convenience)

And they wanted to be part of it. Why not?

[Luke 24:32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?](#)

If the rock of church must be planted in the human heart, must be **seen** there already – not really implanted, but seen there, isn't the yearning of all humanity to be on a rock, and a little bit more stable and secure, and knowing what's beneath us? No mudslides.

So, let's get a hint of developing Christianity from its infancy, when we find that church meeting including the women; already from the beginning it has shown a more **universal** outlook than Judaism.

And here is what Albright says about the Christian church from its origin:

["We are convinced that the content of the first church of Acts accurately reflects the tradition earlier than originally thought. We now know that apostolic Christianity was Ecumenical in the strict etymological sense of the term, with Pharisees, Essenes, Baptists, and Samaritans, included among its inherence."](#)

And, he didn't add women, but that would be an important group to add.

Now, let's notice the use of three words in Acts which you will see leaping out at you before very long throughout the entire book. And it's a word that really defines church extremely well in its early context.

And those three words, in Acts 1, Verse 14, we run into them for the first time: "with one accord." (See below)

[Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.](#)

How does that sound to you? As something desperately needed all over the world? That's why church is desperately needed all over the world. "With one accord" tells us something very important and speaks to the human need like probably nothing else, as a description, right now. And, "with one accord" is what church really means by definition. (See above)

Let me illustrate it somewhat by using a diagram of a square of several dots (writes on chalk board). This, perhaps, could be said to illustrate what the phalanx in Greek military operations introduced into tactics of war – that the closer you are, the stronger push and impact you can have against an enemy.

So, marching together with shields close together on every side, made this much more invulnerable to attack, and the phalanx, for a while, before defenses were designed against it, became quite a military coup or weapon.

Now, all right, let's look at that though, because, in the phalanx, they had to put shields close together. In other words, the dots separated as they were, even though close together, were still vulnerable, correct? If this represented an attacking force, that arrow could approach a square of dots such as this and enter at any given point and do what? Isolate a section of it, and thus destroy the unanimity.

Now, do this. Just simply graphically join the dots by lines and keep joining the dots by lines, not just around the edges, but all the way in. And, what does it begin to look like, graphically, as far a strength is concerned?

Even if you beat against that, how would your hands feel? It's a tight unit, isn't it? (See illustrations on next page.)

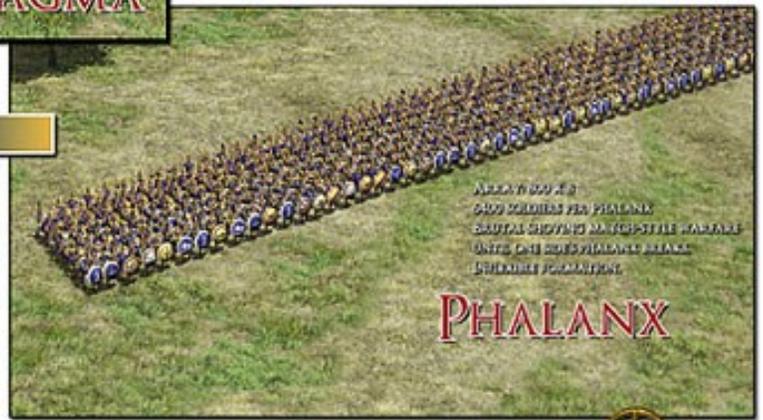
Images of samples of Phalanx – Greek war weapon

THE MACEDONIAN SYNTAGMA VS. THE HELLENIC PHALANX



THE PHALANGITE (FUH - LAN - GEE - TAY) AKA: PEZHETAIROS

- PHALANGITE MEANS 'THALASSI SOLDIER'
- PEZHETAIRAI MEANS 'FOOT COMPANION'
- LATE THIRACIAN AND FURYGIAN TYPE OF HELMET
- 2 FOOT ROUND WOODEN SHIELD BEING OVER LEFT SHOULDER
- 8 FOOT LONG SPEAR (DORY)
- BODY ARMOUR RANGING FROM NONE TO THE UNMOTHORAL TO THE BRONZE CLASMS
- LEATHER OR LINEN PTERIGES GROOM STRAPS
- BRONZE GREAVES AND LEATHER SANDALS
- IS A PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER FROM THE LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASSES



- ARRAY FORM
 200 SOLDIERS PER PHALANX
 CAPITAL SHIELDS IN THE FRONT
 UNITS CAN BE REFINELY MANEUVERED
 FLEXIBLE FORMATION

THE HOPLITE (OP - LEE - TAY)

- MEANS 'ONE WHO IS EQUIPPED FOR WAR'
- CORINTHIAN AND CHALCIDEAN HELMETS
- 3 FOOT ROUND WOODEN SHIELD
- 8 FOOT LONG SPEAR (DORY)
- BODY ARMOUR RANGING FROM NONE TO THE UNMOTHORAL TO THE BRONZE CLASMS
- WITH OR WITHOUT PTERIGES GROOM STRAPS
- BRONZE GREAVES AND LEATHER SANDALS*
- IS A CITIZEN LEVY FROM THE MIDDLE CLASS

* A DORIC BAGS WHETHER HOPLITES WORE SANDALS OR NO FOOTWEAR.





Now, there is “[with one accord](#),” everyone important to the success of the whole. (See below repeated here for convenience)

[Acts 1:14](#) These all continued [with one accord](#) in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Take it into the field of music. All of us, I think by this time in history, to give ourselves somewhat credit, we could probably be a successful hermit, right?

I mean that if suddenly we found ourselves alone, we would learn to live with ourselves, no matter how tough that might be.

So, if we were alone on a Pacific island somewhere, we'd probably be doing alright until someone else parachuted in. You add one more person to you, and you add an awful lot of potential problems, don't you? But, do all the potential problems come from the one who's parachuted in?

(Laughter) Well, how are we relating? And is it necessary to relate?

In music, if we continued to sound our individual note, everyone would see us as we went along and say, "There goes melody," and melody is fine; it does a great deal for music, doesn't it? But, none of us would be members of local symphony society is that's all the orchestras played. There's something else that does something, even for individual melody, that it cannot do on its own. And what is it? Harmony! That sounds good, doesn't it? Harmony, "[with one accord.](#)" (See above)

Harmony is collective, and melody is individual. Now, I cannot see, can you, either in music, or in life, where those two can be mutually exclusive, and the importance of one contributing to the other? If that's true, and if church were being introduced by Jesus to accomplish such a collective achievement, and give man the opportunity to work together in harmony, then how important is it, especially when we head out the back door of the church because no one within those four walls seems to agree with our ideas anyway, and we don't need it?

The sad thing is we desperately need it, if it's true we need harmony. And, we must learn to play a cord, and that means every note in it contributing to the overall beauty and result. And church is accord. It should be. But, as in music, you have discord as well a cord, and dissonance, and all sorts of things that begin to come in as counterfeit cords.

If church then is designed to be "[with one accord,](#)" look at how it begins in Acts 1, verse 14. (See below)

[Acts 1:14](#) These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

"[These all continued with one accord...](#)" and what was contributing to that oneness of thought and action. "[Prayer and supplication.](#)" (See above)

And both male and female (were) represented, and doing their equal part, just as the First Chapter of Genesis gave them equal assignments and responsibilities.

Peter gets up in the midst of this 120 group, and notice how he begins, because in studying the primitive church structure, the first thing he appeals to is what? **Scripture**. "[Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled.](#)" (See below)

Acts 1:16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

What does that sound like to you? (Murmurs) It does, and the walk-to-Emmaus approach, right, **always** going back to scripture for authority for church, business even, in this case?

Now, they had no manual of operation; it was in its infancy. And the thing that **made** them "of one accord" was their search of the scriptures. (See above, Acts 1:14)

And, when he goes into this scripture being fulfilled about Judas and the betrayal of Jesus, we find that Acts 1, Verse 21, introduces the necessity of replacing him in the church. What would be the qualifications for replacing Judas in Acts 1, verse 21?

Would he be a newcomer to Christianity? No. It says, "that he would have to be one that..."? How long? "...all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us." (See below, Partial)

Acts 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

And, how far back? "Beginning from the baptism of John...." (See below, Partial)

Now, if that means what it says, it looks like the one that we're about, or the two candidates up for election, were with the original group, ever since the "baptism of John." (See below)

The possible implication is they might have been some of John's disciples because some of Jesus's most prominent disciples were John the Baptist's disciples, first.

Acts 1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

So, nominations are in order, and “Joseph called Barsabas, surnamed Justus...” that’s an awful lot to put on a ballot, but there it was, “and Matthias.” (See below, Paraphrased) They are the two nominated.

Acts 1:23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

What is the pattern set for church elections in Christianity, right here? “They prayed....” (See below, Partial)

The choice, in other words, was going to be left to God. “They prayed, and said, **Thou**, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou has chosen.” (See below)

Acts 1:24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

Acts 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

And when they vote, “and giving of lots” is very close to voting, it was with inscribed potsherd. And, we find that “Mathias is selected.” (See below, Partial)

Acts 1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Now, do you think Justus went out of that church meeting with his head down, not speaking to anyone and went home and explained to his wife the he really wasn’t appreciated by his fellow church members because he should have been elected to the board? (Laughter) **Hardly!** Because elected offices weren’t really the primary church function; it was a service responsibility.

But let me you what Eusebius was writing about 300 A.D. records of an earlier Christian, named Patheus who was writing not too long after the Apostolic Age. And Patheus tells of this. This is quoted from Eusebius: “Another miracle connected with Justus, surnamed Barsabas, where he drank poison, but by the Lord Grace suffered no harm.”