

WEEK 7: GOD ESTABLISHES HIS CHURCH

Route for this week:

1. The Ascension (Acts 1:1-11)
2. Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47)
3. Getting Your Bearings: The Church Begins
4. Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar (Acts 3:1-11)
5. Saul's Conversion (Acts 9:1-31)
6. Peter Visits Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48)

SUMMARY

Jesus changed the world forever. God came to live among his people, and his resurrection showed them that death does not have the final word; for the first time since Adam and Eve sinned, life triumphs over death in a lasting way. But God isn't done. The resurrected Jesus returns to the Father, leaving his followers to represent him here on earth and spread the Good News of Jesus. In another amazing blessing, God himself comes to live within God's people: The Holy Spirit shows up dramatically on the day of Pentecost and empowers the disciples to represent Jesus and spread his message. They perform miracles and teach powerfully in Jerusalem; they face fierce opposition, and God enables them to faithfully represent him in the face of death. One of their persecutors, Saul, has a direct personal encounter with Jesus and is changed forever. And God makes clear that the Jews aren't the only ones he loves. God extends his invitation to anyone from any nation who believes in Jesus and receives the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. After the Resurrection, Jesus spent approximately 40 days with his disciples. This became another opportunity for Jesus to continue to teach them about their role in the Kingdom of God. What does Jesus' response to the apostles' question, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" (Acts 1:6-11) tell you about the plan

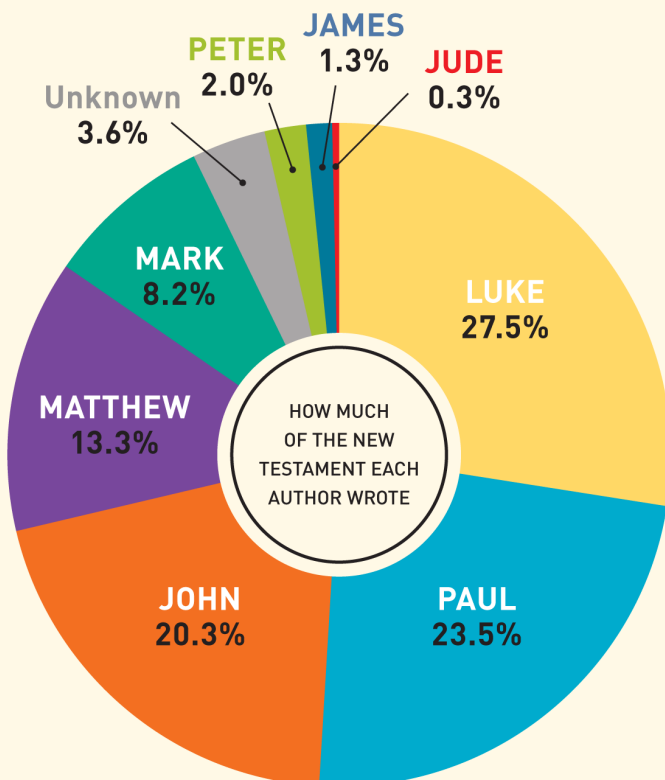
God has for his people and his kingdom? What about the comment from the angels in verse 11?

2. During his time before the Ascension, Jesus commanded the disciples to stay in Jerusalem in order to receive the promised Holy Spirit. This event happened during the Feast of Pentecost, a one-day feast where Jews from all over the world traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Harvest. What does it tell you about the promise of the Holy Spirit that God chose this particular day? Is this collaborated by Joel's prophecy that Peter quotes (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:14-40)?
3. What are the characteristics of the early church, according to Acts 2:42-47?
4. The early church saw itself as a continuation of God's plan for his people and continued to meet both at the Temple and in homes. Therefore, it is not surprising that in Acts 3 we see Peter and John going to the Temple to worship. As they interacted with the Temple authorities they came across more and more persecution. After Peter and John heal the crippled beggar, the authorities became threatened. According to their response, what was threatening to the authorities and why?
5. How do the experience both of Saul's conversion (Acts 9:1-31) and Peter's experience with Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48) demonstrate the truth of the prophecy and promise in Acts 2 through Joel and Peter?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What are the implications of the church neglecting the characteristics of the early church in Acts 2:42-47? What are the implications if the church practices these characteristics? How does your church practice these characteristics and how does it need to grow in these areas?
2. What do you learn from the response of the early church to the persecution they faced after the healing of the crippled beggar, particularly from their prayer?

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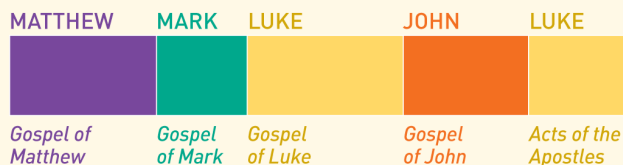


THE AUTHORS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament was written by probably eight or nine different men. The known authors are Luke, Paul, John, Matthew, Mark, Peter, James, and Jude. Some scholars disagree about the authorship of some books, but only Hebrews is unknown. Here you see how much of the New Testament was written by each of the traditionally accepted authors.

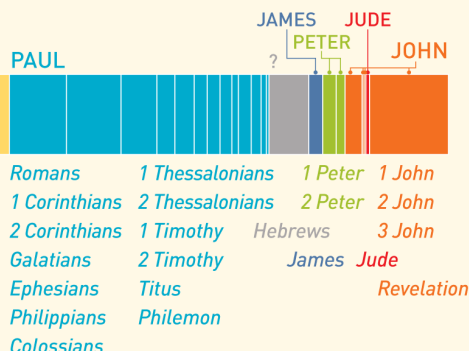
THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOSPELS ABOUT JESUS



Gospel of Matthew Gospel of Mark Gospel of Luke Gospel of John

LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES



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