INTRODUCTION

The Book of Acts spans three decades, from early 30's AD to 61/62 AD. It starts dramatically with Christ's Ascension into Heaven and closes just before the apostle Paul's trial in Rome, and before the martyrdom of James (brother of Jesus). The Book of Acts relates the exciting story of the Apostles' courageous exploits as they struggled to launch the Early Church in Jerusalem, and later, to spread the Gospel from there to the Gentile lands of Asia Minor (Turkey), Greece, and finally Rome.

It is a valuable blueprint for anyone on how to conduct his or her life and service for the Lord, and a great inspiration to our faith to know that, if they could wield the power of God so vigorously in their day, then so can we in ours.

Now we may wonder, what does the Book of Acts (about events that happened long ago) have to do with this website (which is supposed to be about events happening now and in the near future)? Well, if we look at the story of the Early Church's growth and exploits, we can see that it hasn't stopped but has continued throughout history… and will continue in God's modern day movement of His people in the End Time. The generation which sees the end of the *"Last Days"* of history is destined, not only to carry on but also finish the work that began with Jesus' first coming.

The early Apostles' work 2,000 years ago featured great outpourings of spiritual power, miracles, and dynamic proclamations of the Word of God. Likewise, we can expect the same, and even greater manifestations of God's power, in these days of preparation prior to Christ's Second Coming.

And there is much regarding this near future that we can learn from the daring exploits of the Early Church, both their triumphs and defeats, made during those former days of intense opposition in the truth-starved world of Roman times.

> **Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus promised, "He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." (John 14:12) Then after His resurrection, when He appeared to His**

disciples, He said that signs (miracles) would follow those who believed in Him, and miracles *did* follow. (Mark 16:17-18,20)

It wasn't long before others were saying of the first Christians, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too." (Acts 17:6) Those first followers and the ones who were to come had such confidence that the supernatural power of God was at their command that they dared to challenge the mighty Roman Empire and shook it to its very foundations. If Jesus is "the same yesterday, today, and forever," why is it so hard to believe that He, in answer to prayer, can do the same kinds of miracles today? (Hebrews 13:8)

(Virginia Brandt, from "Miracles of Faith")

(Continue to ACTS, chapter 1)

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Source material:

ESV Study Bible

The MacArthur Study Bible

Matthew Henry's Commentary

Barnes' Notes

Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown Commentary

Keil and Delitzsch Commentary

Lectures, notes, and writings from the *Jesus Revolution* era

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Note: The Scripture text is taken from the New King James Version of the Bible, unless noted otherwise.

(Continue to ACTS, chapter 1)