

Whatever Happened To The Apostles In The Bible?

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By Mike Fletcher

For anyone who holds that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a man-made hoax conspired by a group of disciples should check out what happened to them.

It verifies the truth of the Bible.

For 11 of the 12 apostles, and many thousands of other early Christians, died for believing this story.

This is dramatic, since they all witnessed the events of Jesus and still went to their deaths defending their faith.

Why is this dramatic, when many throughout history have died martyred deaths for a religious belief?

Because people don't die for a lie. Look at human nature throughout history. No conspiracy can be maintained when life or liberty is at stake. Dying for a belief is one thing, but numerous eyewitnesses dying for a known lie is quite another.

Here is an account of early Christian persecution, as compiled from numerous sources outside the Bible, the most famous of which is Foxes' Christian Martyrs of the World:

Around 34 A.D., one year after the crucifixion of Jesus, Stephen was thrown out of Jerusalem and stoned to death. Approximately 2,000 Christians suffered martyrdom in Jerusalem during this period.

About 10 years later, James , the son of Zebedee and the elder brother of John, was killed when Herod Agrippa arrived as governor of Judea. Agrippa detested the Christian sect of Jews, and many more were martyred under his rule.

Around 54 A.D., Philip , an early disciple from Galilee, was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified.

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About six years later, Matthew , the tax–collector from Nazareth who wrote his gospel, was preaching in Ethiopia when he suffered martyrdom by the sword.

James , the brother of Jesus, whose burial box was recently discovered, became the leader of the early church in Jerusalem and was the author of an Epistle by his name. At age 94, he was beat and stoned, and finally had his brains bashed out with a club.

Matthias was the apostle who took the place of Judas. He was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.

Andrew was the brother of Peter who preached the gospel throughout Asia. He was crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed in an X–Shape in the ground (this is where we get the term, St. Andrew's Cross).

Mark was converted to Christianity by Peter, and then transcribed Peter's account of Jesus in his

Gospel, was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria Egypt in front of Serapis, their pagan idol.

Peter was crucified at Rome... upside down, at his own request, because he said he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord.

Paul suffered in the first persecution under Nero. Paul's faith was so dramatic in the face of martyrdom, that the authorities removed him to a private place where he was beheaded with a sword.

In about 72 A.D., Jude , the brother of James who was commonly called Thaddeus, was crucified at Edessa.

Bartholomew preached in several countries and translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India. He was savagely beaten and then crucified there.

Thomas , called Didymus, preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where he was thrust through with a spear.

Luke the physician and the author of the Gospel under his name and traveled with Paul through various countries... was hung on an olive tree in Greece.

John , the "beloved disciple," was the brother of James. From Ephesus he was ordered to Rome, where he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. The Romans banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.

What is so amazing, and why I went into so much detail here, is because Christian persecution didn't slow the growth of the Christian faith during the first few centuries after Christ. Even as its early leaders died horrible deaths, Christianity flourished throughout the Roman Empire.

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How can this historical record of martyrdom be viewed as anything but dramatic evidence for the absolute truth of the Christian faith - a faith, unlike any other, that is founded on historical events and eye-witness testimony?

This historical record, I submit... tells us the Real Story of Jesus and further demonstrates the truth of the Bible.

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How to Solve a Wonderful Mystery

By Paul Griffitts

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The first issue we must recognize is the way God uses the word Gentile in His Word. The context will usually show you how the words are meant to be used. In addition, the scope of the particular section of a book must be accounted for. Before and after Acts 28:28 there are Gentile believers spoken of in the Bible some are called a wild olive branch while others are called The Church which is His Body, Why?

The Apostle Paul's epistles usually use the word Gentile meaning the Gentile believers in the many synagogues. The usage of Gentiles in Romans is especially of interest. Failing to discern this usage in Romans has caused much dismay over many years. It was the Gentile believers, who attended the synagogues, which were grafted into the olive tree, the olive tree being Israel. These were the Gentiles Paul spoke to in his Acts ministry with possibly 3 exceptions.

Taking a look at the scope of Acts, we see that the ministry to the Gentiles was for the benefit of Israel; God was not at that particular time interested in saving the Gentiles. God told Israel, in Romans 10:19, "But, I say, did not Israel know?" First Moses said, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you." Yes, the Gentiles were blessed for Israel's sake.

But after Acts the Gentiles were blessed because there was no Israel. They became the center of God's plan, even as Israel had been God's chosen people before now. The purpose of provoking Israel

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was not made known to them at the first, either by Peter at Cornelius' house, or by Paul at Antioch. Paul tells the Jews in Acts 13:47 that they had been chosen to be a light unto the Gentiles, but since they had rejected their King and His kingdom he turned to the Gentiles. He did not say here that the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles. Salvation was still for the Jews (John 4:22), and had not yet been sent to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28).

This shows us why Paul wrote in Acts 26:22, 23 that in all he did from the beginning of his ministry until that time, he has said no other thing than those things which Moses and the prophets said. This was all the will of God not the Apostles choice or his own ministry. Now what did Moses and the prophets say? That Christ should suffer, be the firstborn from the dead and show light to Israel and the Gentiles. This is not the mystery which had been hid in God from ages and generations. Paul could quote chapter and verse from the Jewish Bible to prove what he said.

From the beginning of Acts the twelve Apostles continued what the Lord both began to do and to say. Paul simply continued that same ministry; for it was what he saw (Acts 26:16). Throughout Acts Paul preached what he had seen and heard the twelve Apostles preaching. That was his theme also.

The Apostle Paul needed a vision concerning the scope of that ministry. Peter had the same experience. Peter was told to go preach to the house of Cornelius. Peter did not change his gospel he just preached it to somebody else, the Gentiles. So it was with Paul. He preached his gospel of the King and kingdom to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles. Paul did not require the Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the law. They were blessed with Israel thru Abraham by grace without the

addition of the law. This was Paul's gospel of the grace of God. But that ended in Acts 28:28.

Acts 28:28 declares the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles, and this salvation was not the blessings of the kingdom, but rather the Church with Christ as Head.

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