

What God is Doing



ACT II The Spread of the Gospel Acts...

Introduction: 5 Passages

Step 1: Transition (Acts 1-12; 4 Stages; 2 Passages)

Step 2: The Spread of the Gospel (Acts 13--)

Introduction: 5 Passages

Suggested Reading Matthew 16:13-18; 28:16-20; Ephesians 2:11-22; Acts 13, 14

Introduction: 5 Passages

Five Passages on the Church

- A. The Seed: Matthew 16:13-19
- B. The Plan: Matthew 28:18-20
- C. Two to One: Ephesians 2
- D. One but Many: Acts 14
- E. Two Flags: Acts 12ff

A. The Seed: Matthew 16:13-19 (see also Mark 8:27-38)

1. Background

2. Question: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

Answer: “John...Elijah...Jeremiah...”

Question: “But...who do you say I am?”

Answer: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

3. Response: “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church...”
(Matthew 16:13-18)

[From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples...

Matthew 16:21]

4. Interpretation of “on this rock I will build my church”

Roman Catholic:

Typical Protestant:

An alternative is to compare the two passages:

Genesis 12:2-3 "I will...make of you a _____."



NATION

Matthew 13:17-19 "I will..._____my_____."



CHURCH

"You" (plural) is used in

- * Matthew 16:19 (keys)
- * John 20:23 (forgiving sins)
- * Ephesians 2:20 (apostles)

B. The Plan: Matthew 28:18-20

1. Background

2. Matthew 28:18-20 is an extension of the progress in ACT I.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Genesis 12:2-3 | Matthew 16:13-19 |
| "I will build a nation" | "I will build my church" |

John 20:21

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| "As my father has sent me..." | "I am sending you." |
| (ACT I: Genesis 12-21) | (ACT II: Acts 1...) |

b. Matthew 28:18-19

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations."



AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME
I ALSO SEND YOU. JN. 21:21

ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN
GIVEN TO ME. GO... AND MAKE
DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS... I
AM WITH YOU MT. 28: 18-20

ALL THE EARTH
WILL BE FILLED
WITH THE GLORY
OF THE LORD
NUM. 14:21

3. Analysis

- a. **ACT I** and **ACT II** have the same ultimate goal:
“That all the earth would be filled with the glory of God”
- b. **ACT I** and **ACT II** have different redemptive channels (the means through which God accomplished His plans) and administrators.
 - 1) Redemptive Channel: **ACT I** The Nation
ACT II The Church
 - 2) Administrator: **ACT I** God the Father
ACT II God the Son

C. **Two Become One: Ephesians 2**

1. Ephesians 2:1-10 [A very personal passage—note the use of “you” throughout.]
2. 2:11 “Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by these who call themselves ‘the circumcision’...”
3. 2:12 “...remember that at that time (**ACT I**) you were separate from Christ (Messiah); excluded from citizenship (in the Nation, Israel); foreigners to the covenants (Promise, Testament, Contract); without hope and without God...”
4. 2:13-18 “But now (**ACT II**) in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself made the two one (Jew and Gentile); created one new man; reconciled both of them to God through the cross; gave both access to the Father by one Spirit.”
5. 2:19-22 “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners (xeno) and aliens (paroikos), but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household... ..In him (Christ Jesus) the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”
6. How did God bring the Jews and Gentiles together?

The Nation
Channel to bring the
Messiah to the cross

The Church
Channel to bring the
Messiah to the Gentiles

This concept was very difficult for the Jews to grasp because of their traditional contempt for the Gentiles!

D. One But Many: Acts 14

1. Background

2. Acts 14 [note the numerical and geographic spread of the gospel.]

a. 1-5 “At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers... There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews...”

b. 6-20 “But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe.

c. 21-28 “They preached... Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them...”

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church...

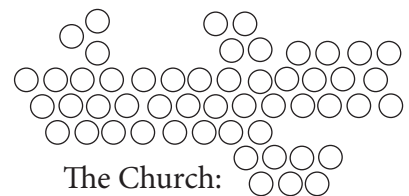
After going through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch... on arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”

3. At this point we see a major contrast between the nation and the church.



The Nation:
One place to meet God



The Church:
Many places to meet God!

E. Two Flags: Acts 12ff

1. Background [John 18:36, Acts 16:37, 38; Romans 13:1-7, I Peter 2:13-17]

2. The nation and the church have some things in common and some significant differences:

Common Ground

Nation/Church
Both are a unified group of people.
Both have leadership.
Both are God's channel.
Both base their way of life on biblical standards.

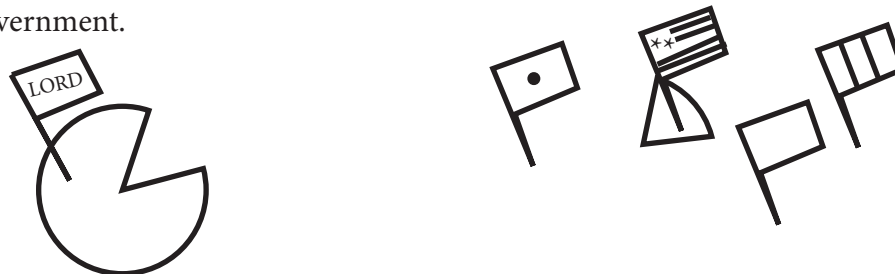
Israel was a nation in the common senses of the term, with a government that handled the civil responsibilities.

Differences

Nation	Church
Jews	Jews&Gentiles=One
Jerusalem	In "Every Place"
Jewish way of life	Local Culture
Ceremonial, civil law	Local and National government

The church has leadership, discipline, and organization, but it operates under the local government which handles civic responsibilities.

3. The church is a "parasite" that "eats at the table" of national and local government.



4. Summary: The church is an "anthropological/sociological miracle!"

- > Universal
- + Local
- + Cross-Cultural
- + International
- + National

Review Questions and Vocabulary: Act II, Introduction (Five Passages):

1. Compare and contrast the “seed” of the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 with the “seed” of the church in Matthew 16.
2. In what sense was the church “built” on Peter (and others)? Give biblical support.
3. Describe the two “plans” referred to in John 20:21. How are they alike and different?
4. Explain “Two Become One,” including biblical evidence.
5. Explain the idea that both the nation and the church were “channels.”
6. Explain “One But Many,” including biblical support.
7. How are the nation and the church alike and different?
8. Explain the “Two Flags” concept. Give some biblical support.
9. Build a case for the church as an anthropological/sociological miracle.

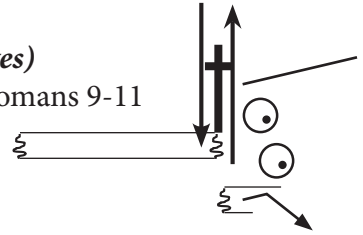
Act II, The Spread of the Gospel (Introduction/5 Passages) Concepts

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Matt 16:13-19 | 7. John 20:21 | 13. The church at... |
| 2. Seed | 8. Ephesians 2 | 14. Acts 12ff |
| 3. “I will build” | 9. Reconciled | 15. Two Flags |
| 4. “You” | 10. Two to One | 16. Parasite |
| 5. Matt 28:18-20 | 11. Acts 14 | |
| 6. Plan | 12. One but Many | |

ACT II, Step One, Transition

Step 1: Transition (Acts 1-12; 4 Stages, 2 Passages)

Suggested Reading: Acts 1-5; 8-11; Matthew 21: 33-39; Romans 9-11



The Historical Transition

= confirmed by the Holy Spirit

From the Nation to the Church

1. the Seed (Matthew 16:18)

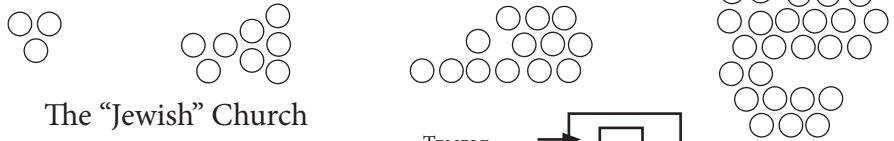
2. The Program (Matthew 28: 18-20)



3. Conception (Acts 1-2:40)

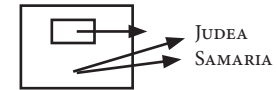
At this point, all members of the church were Jews who received Jesus as their Messiah.

4. Growth (Acts 2:41-Acts 6)



5. The "Jewish" Church

6. Moving Out (Acts 8:1b-8:40)



7. Leadership Development / Abolishment of Prejudice (Acts 9-11:18)



8. The Gentiles Believe! (Acts 11:19-30)

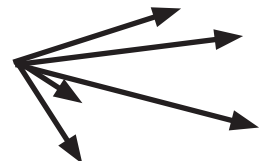
They were first called Christians at Antioch (11:26)



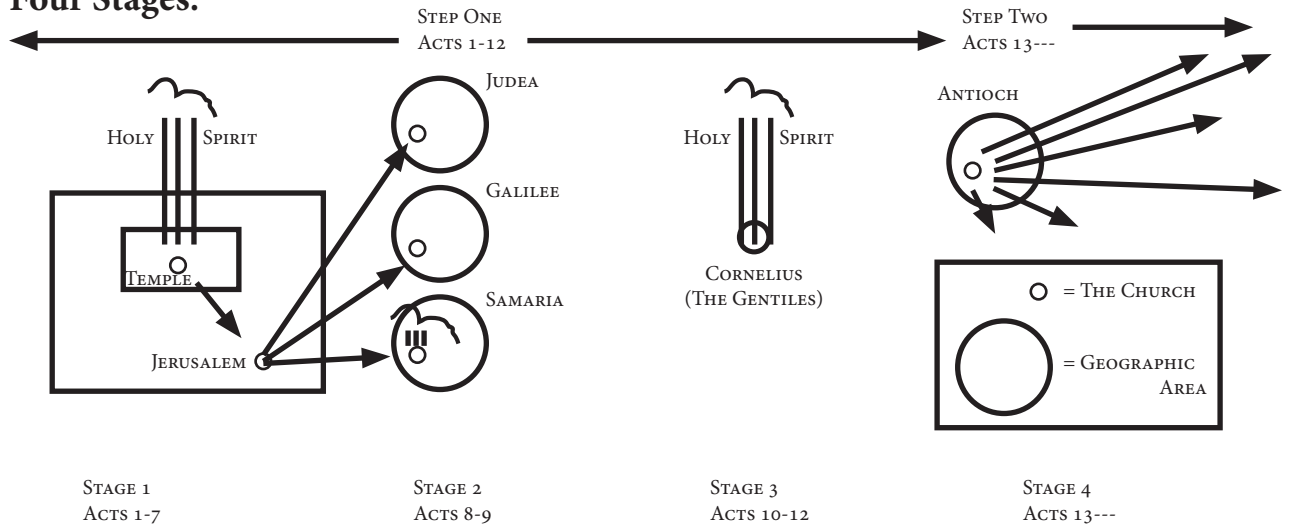
9. A Last Look at Jerusalem (Acts 12)

(See also Acts 15 and 21: 15-23)

10. To the Nations (Acts 13ff to the present)



Four Stages:



Two Additional Passages

Matthew 21: 33-39

Taking Away and Giving (The Parable of the Wicked Tenants)

1. A Land Owner: GOD (see vs. 42-46; Isaiah 5:1-7)
2. The Tenants: The Jewish Leaders (v. 45)
3. Question: When the Landowner comes, what will he do to the tenants?

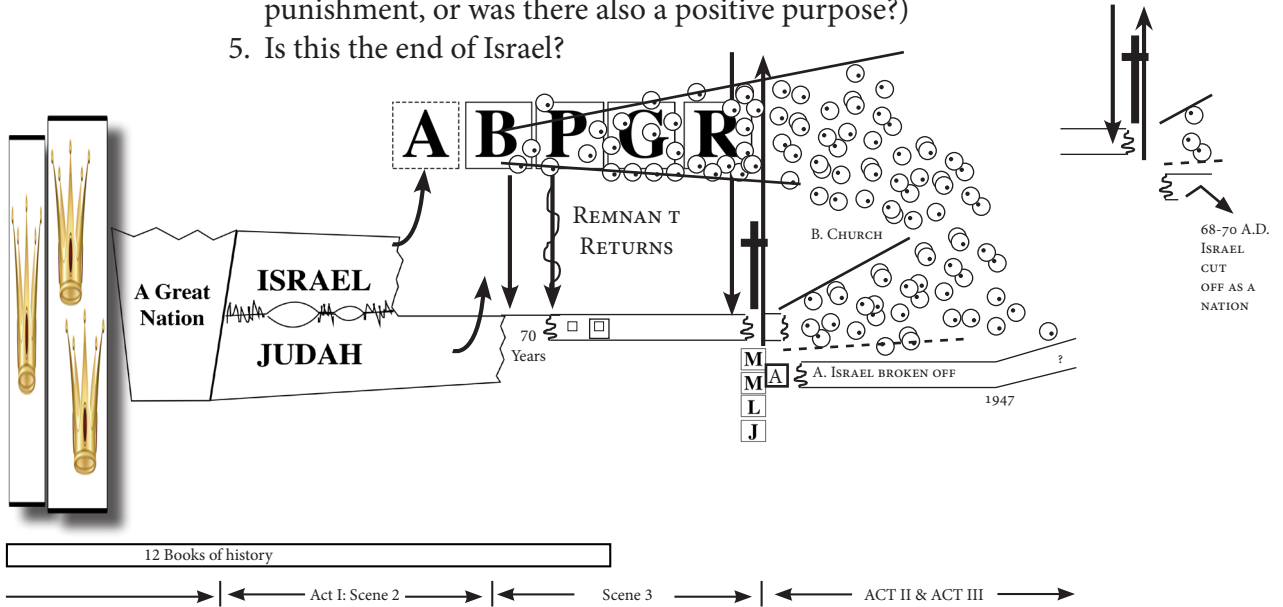
Answer: a. Bring the wretches to a wretched end (v. 41a)
 b. Rent the vineyard to other tenants (v. 41b)

4. A "Progress" interpretation of this parable:

The role of "redemptive channel" is taken away from Israel
(the nation) and given to the church!

Five Questions Related to the Transition from the Nation to the Church

1. Has God Failed?
2. Did Israel Fail?
3. Has God rejected His People?
4. Did Israel 'stumble so as to fall'? (Was the taking away from Israel only punishment, or was there also a positive purpose?)
5. Is this the end of Israel?



1. Has God Failed? (Romans 9) Paul's great sorrow [he is willing to be lost if it would mean that Israel could be saved] for the Israelites, to whom belong...

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| ... adoption as sons | ... the divine glory | ... the covenant |
| ... the receiving of the law | ... the temple | ... the promise |
| ... the patriarchs | ... the human ancestry of Christ | |

Question: Has God's Word (Promise) failed? Has He Broken His word?

Answer: "It is not as though the word of God has failed." (Romans 9:6)

Question: Is God unjust? Has God's character failed?

Answer: God has the right to redeem the world _____!

[See Roans 9:16-22, 23-29; Matthew 21:42; John 1:11.]

2. Did Israel Fail? (Romans 10)

Paul's Heart

"My heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they might be saved."

They (Israel)

Are zealous but without knowledge;
Sought their own righteousness;
Did not submit to God's
righteousness

Question: So, did God fail??? (Romans 9)

Yes No

Question: But, did Israel fail?? (Romans 10)

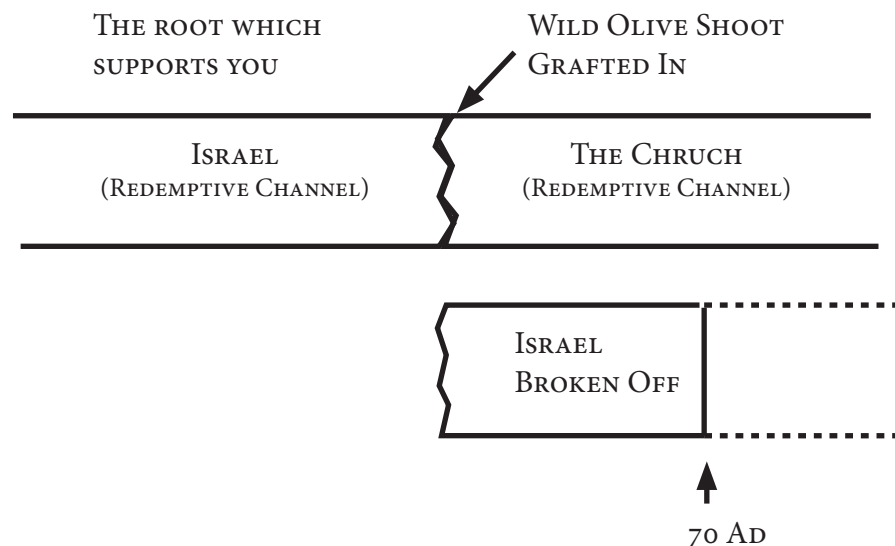
Yes No

3. Has God rejected His people? (Romans 11:1-6)

Yes No

4. Did Israel stumble so as to fall? (Romans 11:11-22) Was the purpose of their fall only to disciple them?

Yes No



5. Is this the end of Israel? (Romans 11:12-29)

Yes No

Concluding Doxology

Oh, the death
of the riches
of the wisdom
and
knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgements,
and
his paths beyond tracing out!

Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or
has been his counselor?
Who has even given to God,
that God should repay him?

For from him
and
through him
and
to him
are all things.

To him be the glory forever!
Amen

Romans 11:33-36

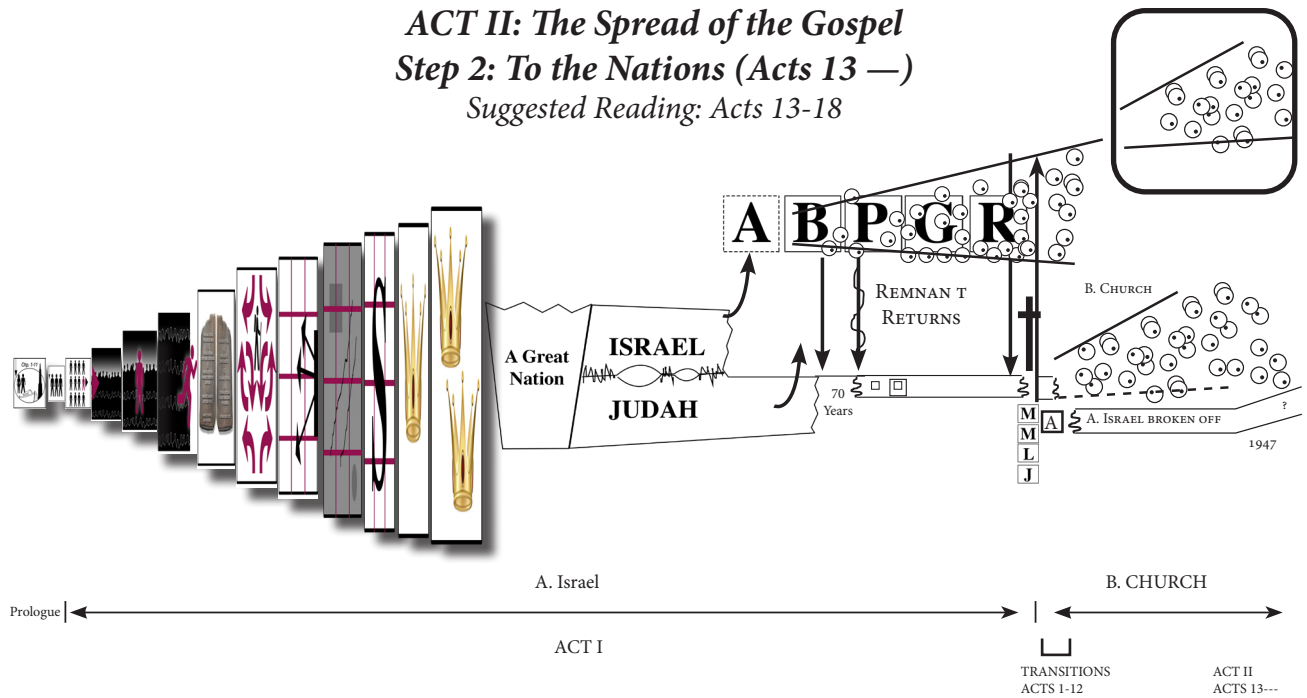
Review Questions and Vocabulary: ACT II, Transition (Acts 1-12, 4 Stages)

1. How does the transition from the nation to the church in Acts 1-12 demonstrate the principle that “God grows things?”
2. Describe the “four stages” of transition from the nation to the church.
3. Not the “confirmations” when the Holy Spirit was poured out in a dramatic fashion (perhaps this happened every time someone was converted, but it is only described, as such, a few times). What is true about each of those occasions?
4. Describe the “Progress” interpretation of the parable in Matthew 21:33-39.
5. How does the fact that Paul himself was a Jew (Romans 11) contradict the idea that God’s word had failed and that He had rejected His People? Explain.
6. Explain how Israel’s pursuit of righteousness was an act of obstinate disobedience to God.
7. What was the positive result of Israel’s fail? Be specific.

Act II, The Spread of the Gospels (Transition) Concepts

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 1. Acts 1-12 | 6. Romans 9-11 | 12. If God did not spare |
| 2. Four stages | 7. Paul’s sorrow | 13. All Israel will be saved |
| 3. Holy Spirit confirmation | 8. Paul’s desire | 14. Enemies of the gospel |
| 4. Matt 21:33-39 | 9. Broken off | 15. From/through/to Him are all things |
| 5. Other tenants | 10. Grafted in | |
| | 11. Greater Riches | |

ACT II: The Spread of the Gospel
Step 2: To the Nations (Acts 13 —)
Suggested Reading: Acts 13-18



A dozen thoughts on the two “Redemptive Channels”

A = Israel

B = Church

1. A and B are different
2. B is linked to A — past (rooted), present (enemies), future (acceptance).
3. B is the present channel (given to)
4. A is “set aside” (taken from).
5. At the present, A is an enemy of B’s gospel.
6. A has a future (all Israel; “how much more”).
7. A was an appropriate channel for bringing the Messiah into the world and to the cross.
8. Is B an appropriate channel for taking the gospel to the nations?
9. Theological systems offer a spectrum of emphasis, stressing either what A and B have in common (“unity”) or how they differ (“Progress”)
10. There is a biblical balance regarding A and B, and it should be sought.
11. B must not take its status for granted, as did A, which assumed it was an end in itself.
12. A is national and Jewish; B is cross-cultural, universal, and local.

The roles of the redemptive channels: the nation (ACT I) and the church (ACT II):

ACT I	ACTII
Luke 24:44-49	
Christ should suffer and rise again	v47 that repentance & forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations.
Genesis 12:1-3	
I will make of you a great nation... & through your seed: blessing for all the families of the earth.	And all peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.
John 20:21	
As the father has sent me	I will send you
Matthew 16:18, 21	
From that time on Jesus began to explain... that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life	I will build my church
Summary	
ACT I: The Father provides redemption through a nation Our response: _____! Do we suffer to obtain this? Yes No	ACT II: The Son proclaims redemption though the church Our response: _____! Do we suffer to obtain this? Yes No

Step 2 (step 1, transition): To the Nations (Acts 13 to ???)

“... all the families (peoples) of the earth will be blessed.”

A. The term “families” or “peoples” (mishpachah) in the Promise to Abraham:

mishpachah [4990]

- Numbers 26 “clans”; five “families” of Judah
- Judges 9 “clan”; Four “families” of Reuben
- Ezekiel 20 “tribes”
- Amos 3:2 “families”
- Psalm 22:7 “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord (and...) will worship before You.”

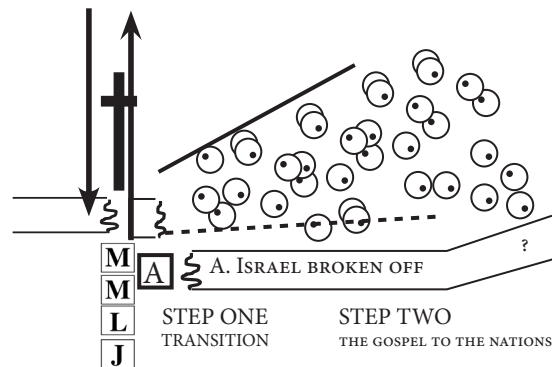
“Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and nation.” Revelation 5:9

Mishpachah: _____

Some key questions that arise as we ponder how all the family (mishpachah) of the earth can be blessed through the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham:

1. What about those people groups that do not have a church? Romans 10:9-15
2. What is God doing? What is the purpose of the church?
See Isaiah 49: 5-6; Acts 13:47; see also Acts 13:17-18
3. Must the task of making Christ known to the nations be integral to local churches? Is it essential or is it a desirable option?

C. Acts 13ff shows that the Gospel spread to all nations because it was recognized as the central priority of the church.



D. Another (!) Dozen thoughts on Acts 13ff that inform our missiology:

1. Note the contribution of the Diaspora, the Jews scattered among the Gentiles by the Babylonian captivity; the Jews and the synagogues were a first point of reference for the missionaries.
2. There is an ever widening circle of the gospel.
3. The gospel went first to cities.
4. The gospel started with the Jews, the synagogues.
5. Among the characteristics of the spread of the gospel were acceptance, rejection, crowds, interest, riots, opposition, beatings, imprisonments, being dragged through the streets, and an ever widening network of individuals and churches.

6. There were teams of “apostles” which regularly added personnel from among the newly established church, e.g. Aristarchus and Secundus (Thessalonica), Timothy (Lystra) and Gaius (Derbe).
7. The base of the teams was their home churches.
8. There were repeat visits to many cities.
9. Different strategies were used at various places.
10. The newly established church become self-governing and provide people and money to the teams.
11. The churches were sociological miracles: cross-cultural, national, international, universal and local.
12. The gospel was contextualized and indigenous.

A warning and closing thoughts on ACT II.

1. Why did God reject Israel as His redemptive channel?
2. The church has been given the responsibility and privilege of being God’s redemptive channel.
3. The church is an anthropological/sociological miracle, beautifully designed to go to every nation: both universal and local; national, international, cross-cultural and compatible with a variety of civil governments
4. But, if the church is rebellious and disobedient, if it does not fulfill its function, what then? Romans 11:20, 21 warns: “They (the nation) were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.”
5. What if Israel had not rebelled? Would God have used the church anyway?
6. Is the church an appropriate channel for ACT III?

Review Questions and Vocabulary: ACT II, To the nations (Acts 13-??):

1. Compare and contrast the nation and the church.
2. Explain the significance of the Hebrew word mispachah.
3. What is the task of the church today?
4. What characterized the methods of the “missionaries” in Acts 13ff?
5. How is the church a more appropriate channel for taking the gospel to the nations?
6. Sketch and be prepared to identify the specifics of a graphic illustration of ACT II.

ACT II, The Spread of the Gospel (To the Nations) Concepts

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Israel | 6. mispachah |
| 2. Church | 7. Romans 10:9-15 |
| 3. Father | 8. Isaiah 49:5-6 |
| 4. Son | 9. Acts 13:17-18 |
| 5. Do we suffer? | 10. Romans 11:20,21 |

What God is Doing

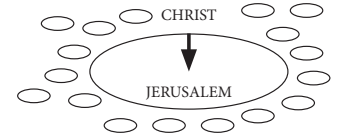


Act III: The Future of the Gospel

The Nations Seek the Lord

The Nations Seek the Lord

*Suggested Reading: Isaiah 2:1-4; 4:2-6; 11-12
Micah 4:1-4; Revelation 5; 21:1 - 22:5*



“Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Declare his glory among the nations,
Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;

Let the heavens rejoice... the earth be glad;
let the sea resound... let the fields be jubilant,

Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;
they will sing before the LORD,
for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his truth.”

Psalm 96

***There is a connection between making Christ known
“to the uttermost parts of the earth” and His return to the earth...***

Acts 1:8 “You will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.”

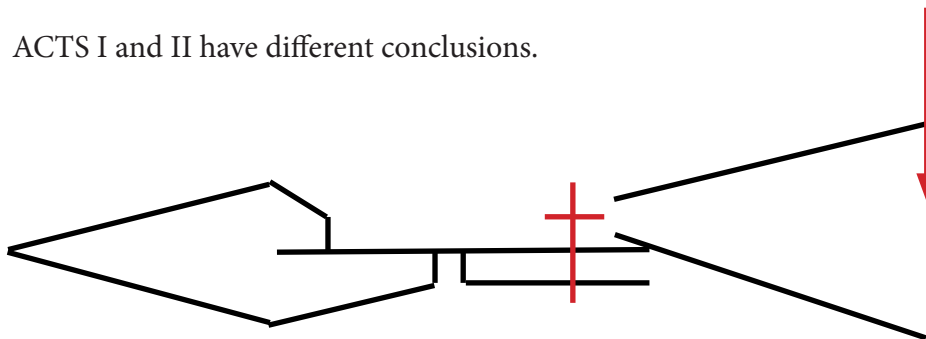
Acts 1:11 “men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? The same Jesus, who had been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

John 14:3 “I will come back.”

WE LIVE IN HOPE!!

The “last days” (or “the end of the age”)

A. ACTS I and II have different conclusions.



B. Jesus links the proclamation of the Gospel and the end of the age in Matthew 28:18-20

“...make disciples of all nations...”

“...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

C. The term “end of the age” refers to the end of this world as we know it. The age began at creation, “since the world began” (John 9:32; Acts 3:21; Ephesians 1:4), and at some point this world will be destroyed and dissolved (2 Peter 3:10-11)

D. The last days of **ACT II** will culminate in the return of Jesus Christ:

“When our Lord Jesus comes... When our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones... The coming of our Lord...; the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God... They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, await power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds... Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him... We wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and savior Jesus Christ... And so we will be with the Lord forever. Encourage one another with the words.”

(I Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Matthew 24:30-31; Titus 2:13)

Will there be (actually and literally) an ACT III here on earth?

A. Two Views

1. View #1: End of Age (**ACT II**), then eternity

A-Millennialism: the “millennium” is not a literal period on earth, but figurative of the godly influence of the church. After Christ’s return there is a direct move to the eternity of heaven.

2. View #2: End of Age (**ACT II**), then an **ACT III**.

Pre-millennialism: the “millennium” is a literal period on earth in which Jesus Christ reigns over the world as a righteous king (pre = a millennium before eternity).

Laymanism -

Bernard, the author of *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament*, was a-millennial, a common theological view in his day. Nevertheless he comments: "Take from the Bible the final vision of the heavenly Jerusalem [and we will not just have lost] an important revelation, but a conclusion which interpreted and validates all that went before... A Bible that did not end by building a city of God for us would fail to provide much of what we need, and leave much of its content unexplained." (p. 128)

If there is an **ACT III**, when will it take place?

Romans 11:25: "Israel has experience a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved..."

Matthew 24: 3, 14 The disciples asked when the temple will be torn down and what will be the sign of Jesus' coming and the end of the age (**ACT II**). Jesus replies that, "... this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end (**ACT II**) shall come."

Acts 1:6-8 The Disciple ask: "Lord are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (**ACT III?**) Jesus answered: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 2:16ff/Joel 2:28ff Peter at Pentecost said the outpouring of the Holy Spirit there fulfilled the prophecy in Joel 2:28ff. In his prophecy Joel, after predicting the outpouring, prophesies the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. Is this **ACT III?**

Acts 15:12-17/Amos 9:11-12 James, commenting on reports by Paul and Peter about God's work among the Gentiles, says: "The prophets are in agreement with this report, as it is written: 'After this (the Gentiles are saved) I will return and rebuild and restore David's fallen tent.... that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord...'" [quoted from Amos 9:11-12]

What happens to Israel in ACT III?

Amos 9:11-15 In that the Lord will...

1. restore and rebuild the "tent of David"
2. in order that the remnant of men will seek the Lord. And,
3. he says, "I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them..."

Hosea 3:4-5 “For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, (or) without sacrifice... Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.”

Ezekiel 37: 1-14 Ezekiel sees a vision of a valley full of bones, scattered and dry. “Can these bones live?” As he watches the bone gather into bodies and become living flesh and blood people. The Lord explains that “... these bones are the whole house of Israel. ... I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ... I will put my Spirit in you and you will live...”

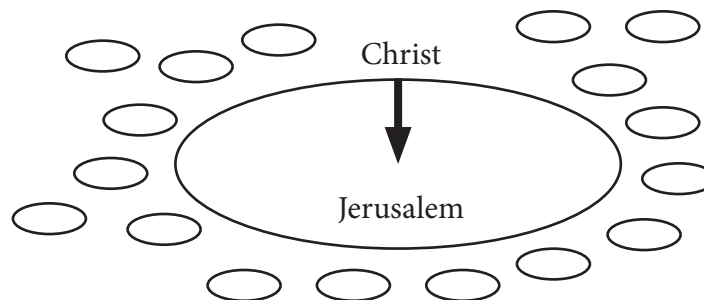
Jeremiah 31: 31-34 The Lord promises, “The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. ... they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.”

Scripture describes the nations seeking the Lord in a revived Israel.

Isaiah 2:1-5; 8:9-10 “In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established ... and all the nations will stream to it. “They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ... the nations will rally to him...”

“As surely as I live says the Lord, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord.”

Numbers 14:21



Micah 4:1-2 “In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; ... and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob.’”

Transition from ACT II to ACT III

The prophecies speak not of a church, but of the nation Israel, and that there will be a hardening of Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles, then “all Israel will be saved.” This raises a number of questions about the transition between **ACT II** and **ACT III**.

Transition Questions

- A. What revives Israel?
- B. How does the church fit in to the millennium?
- C. What will be the order of events?

Does a “great tribulation” “revive” Israel?

A “great tribulation” (Revelation 7:14; 12); a “time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.” (Jeremiah 30:7); a “time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then (Daniel 12:1). The tribulation passages all seem directed toward Israel.

How does the church fit in to the millennium?

The church was an appropriate channel to take the gospel to the nations, but is it an appropriate channel to rule the nations?



Is there a danger that, like Israel, the church might be cut off [not the “true church” but the institution] as a channel because of rebellion and unbelief? [e.g. the harlot (Revelation 17) and the bride (Revelation 22); see also Revelation 1-3.]

Is the method of removing the true church the “rapture”? (I Thessalonians 4: 13-18)

Where does the church fit into the millennium?

We are told that we will reign with Christ, yet there is no mention of the church in the millennium.

Perhaps there will be a parallel with the transition from **ACT I** to **ACT II**. True Israelites were not cast off. They were (and there are still) Israelites after the flesh who became members of the church (Romans 11:1-10). In like manner, perhaps the true church will be reincorporated into the true Israel.

What will be the order of the events?

Matters that are NOT clearly revealed:

1. Tribulation (toward Israel)
2. The renewal of Israel
3. The removal of rebellious church
4. The rapture of the saints

But was is clearly revealed:

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power,
and riches,
and wisdom,
and strength,
and honor,
and glory,
and blessing.

(Revelation 5:12)

“Because of little children soiled,
And disinherited, despoiled;
Because of hurt things, feathered, furred,
Tormented beast, imprisoned bird,
Because of many-folded grief,
Beyond redress, beyond belief,
Because the word is true that saith,
The whole creation travaileth -
Of all our prayers this is the sum:
“O come, Lord Jesus, come.”

Lord Christ
Your Servant Martin Luther
said he only had two days
on his calendar today
and that day and that’s
what I want too.
And I want to live today
for that day

- Joseph Bayly

- Amy Carmichael, in *Gold Cord*

Review Questions and Concepts: ACT III, The Future of the Gospel

1. Compare and contrast the culmination of ACT I to ACT II.
2. How do a- and pre-millennialist differ regarding ACT III?
3. ACT III appears to be silent about the church. Why?

ACT III, The Future of the Gospel (The Nations Seek the Lord) Concepts

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| 1. Amillennial | 7. The LORD’ Temple |
| 2. Premillennial | 8. “Dry bones live again?” |
| 3. Bernard | 9. Great Tribulation |
| 4. “The full number
of Gentiles” | 10. The role of the church
in the millennium? |
| 5. “All Israel” | 11. Worthy! |
| 6. “Restore the Kingdom?” | 12. Amos & Micah |

END OF ACT III