

## ACTS & CHURCH HISTORY

Acts & Church History 9-13 NEW 2-19.doc

The original notes for this class were compiled and taught by Rev. Nick Panico. He has indicated that he used several sources including: Warren Wiersbe; William Barclay; NIV Expositor's Commentary, and some materials taught by YWAM. Unfortunately, none of the quotes were noted in the material. Where we could identify the source, we have tried to give credit.

The class is taught as a survey of the book of Acts, and though the beginning chapters are taught in some detail the remainder of the study is in more of a survey format. Both the King James (KJV) and some from the New King James Version (NKJV) is used. I have added material to the outline and indicated the source by the following abbreviation at the beginning and end of quotations:

(**POSB**) for the "Preacher's Outline Sermon Bible Commentary" from Leadership Ministries Worldwide, used with their kind permission.

Comments by RevC are also indicated with (**RevC**) at the beginning and (**RevC**) at the end.

Additional material providing an overview of Church history was added in 11-03 from a larger study done by Mr. James Cochran. The material is used with Mr. Cochran's permission. You may consult his larger study, which is included on the curriculum CD of this material, for more in-depth information.

On 7-04 additional information was added to the section on Church History, which follows the scripture study of the book of Acts. This material is from (**HCC**) to indicate text from "The History of the Christian Church" by Philip Schaff from Parson's Technology's QuickVerse Library series, used by permission.

A section entitled "Jewish Persecution then & now" was added in Oct. of 2004. This material was taken from **Holy to Yahveh** by Terry Goldblum Seedman; copyright 1966, published by Longwood Communications in DeBary, Florida for more information write P.O. Box 8453 Bloomington, Indiana 47407. It is being used with her kind permission.

In March of 2005 Rev. Avis Stegemann contributed material (edited by RevC) dealing with the history of the church from 1900 to present day. The material was from the book, "Church History in Plain Language" by Bruce L. Shelley pages 394-490.

**In February of 2019 all of the Warren Wiersbe material that I know of was replaced with material from the "Preacher's Outline Sermon Bible Commentary".**

## BEGIN LESSON 1

### I. Introduction

#### A. The book of Acts: Its importance

1. Presents the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell in man
2. Church was established.
3. It forms a bridge between the gospels and the epistles.
4. Reveals the principles for missionary work, church planting, and church government.

#### B. Author and authorship

1. The author of Acts was clearly a companion of Paul. This we know from the sections where the use of the word “we” is used, 16:10-17, 20:5-21 - 21:18; 27:1-28:16.
2. By process of elimination of the companions of Paul, Luke is the only one in the “we” sections not mentioned by name therefore he is the most likely candidate as the author.

#### C. Recipient

1. Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1. Theophilus. Theory was that he was a publisher. The written history was sent to him for publishing and distribution.
2. Theos = God, Philein = to love. Theophilus= “lover of God.” Could also be a code name for some high-ranking individual believer within the Roman government to protect their identity.

#### D. Dating - When was Acts written?

1. Dated before 70 AD by most scholars
2. Written during Paul’s 2-year imprisonment in Rome. Paul was executed in 66 AD. Peter executed in 64 AD. Since Acts ends with Paul still in prison and neither his nor Peter’s deaths are mentioned, Acts was likely written between 62-64AD.
3. Key events not mentioned in Acts
  - a. Destruction of Jerusalem - 70 AD
  - b. Execution of Paul - 66-67 AD
  - c. Burning of Rome - 64 AD
  - d. Persecution of Christians by Nero, began 64 AD

- e. With these important events not being mentioned it seems most likely that it was written between 62-64 AD

**E. Sources - Where did Luke get his information?**

1. Eye witness accounts of Luke as he was a traveling companion of Paul. Other eyewitnesses would include: Peter, John, James, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla.
2. Oral and written records of the local churches: Jerusalem church, Ch 1-5 & 15-16; Caesarian church, 8:26-40, 9:31 - 10:48; Antioch church, 11:19-30, 12:25 - 14:28.

**F. Division of the book.**

1. Chapter 1: Introduction and summary of the gospel
2. Section 1: Progress of the gospel among the Jews, Peter dominant personality, Chapt 2-12
  - a. Chapter 2-7: progress in Jerusalem
  - b. Chapter 8-12: progress in Palestine
3. Section 2: progress among Gentiles. Paul is the dominant personality, chapters 13-28
  - a. Chapter 13-21:16: progress while Paul was free
  - b. Chapter 21:17-28:31: progress while Paul was captive.

**G. The time of Acts**

1. Acts covers approximately a 33-year period, 30-63 AD.
2. At the beginning of this period, Judea was governed by procurators. A procurator was the governor of the province in charge of the emperor's properties and collecting taxes and paying the Roman troops. They had to maintain order and report to the Roman ruler based in Syria. The procurator was headquartered in Caesarea and had a temporary residence in Jerusalem.
  - a. Pontius Pilate - procurator, 26-36 AD
  - b. Marcellus - 36-37 AD
  - c. Marullus - 37-41 AD
3. In 41 AD, procurator system was temporarily discontinued in Judea.
  - a. Claudius was Emperor in Rome and appointed Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, to rule.

- b. Herod Agrippa died in 44 AD and upon his death, procurators were reinstated in Judea until 66 AD
- 4. Two procurators mentioned in Acts: Antonius Felix and Porcius Festus
  - a. Felix first tried Paul, and kept him in prison for two years, and left Paul for Felix's successor to deal with.
  - b. Festus brought Paul before him and asked if he would go to Jerusalem to stand trial there before the Jews. Paul appealed to Caesar and was eventually sent to Rome.
- 5. From 66-73 AD, the Jews were in open revolt against Rome. Resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD
- 6. The world in which the gospel was first preached was subject to Roman rule
  - a. They were firm but usually just.
  - b. They granted much freedom to local authorities
  - c. Rome preserved order, built good roads, kept communication open between all parts of the empire.
- 7. The Senate and the Emperor governed the Roman Empire.
  - a. The Emperor was supposed to be the highest public official, subject to the will of the people as voiced by the Roman Senate.
  - b. Emperor's authority was absolute. They even proclaimed themselves to be gods.
  - c. Four emperors during the period of Acts:
    - (I) Tiberius - 14-37 AD
    - (II) Caligula - 37-41 AD
    - (III) Claudius - 41-54 AD
    - (IV) Nero - 54-68 AD

#### **NEEDS OF THE WORLD:**

- 85,000 unsaved people die every day.
- Approximately 45 people each minute will die without Christ.
- Over 6 billion people in the world
- Approximately 2 billion are lost without Christ or an effective Christian witness
- 2 billion live in a 1,000 mile radius of India

- 40,000 children a day die in starvation
  - 68,000 missionaries are working with the 3 billion: Hindus, Muslims, Chinese, Buddhists, and Tribal groups.
- 1/1,000,000 full time Christian workers

**THE PROBLEM TODAY: Num 32:1-6;** they had all the possessions they needed and did not want to enter into the battle for the Lord.

## **H. A Brief History of the development of the Church of Jesus Christ during the first 300 years**

Historically knowledge and understanding have always lagged behind experience. Something must happen, some new aspect of reality must come into view for people to seek to understand it or know it. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit were known since the church was born, yet the Holy Spirit received little attention for a long period of time especially in the western (European) churches. The emphasis was on studying the scriptures for knowledge (proper doctrine), keeping the carnal nature in check (monasteries, convents flourished), and little emphasis was placed upon walking in the Spirit, or depending upon the Spirit constantly for guidance, power, and the awareness of God's close presence within the daily life of the believer. The Eastern (Orthodox) churches held the Spirit in better understanding than the Western churches. But only in the last few hundred years has the Holy Spirit returned to His proper first century position in Western understanding.

### **1. THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH ERA: A.D. 30—100**

The Church began on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried. Jesus had ascended back to the Father in Heaven telling his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the Comforter-Counselor.

The experience of the 120 faithful in Jerusalem was unique, launching the new order of the Church with power (fire) and signs and wonders as the disciples spoke in other tongues so that people from other nations could hear and understand the work of God in their own language.

On the day the Church was born, tongues of fire and the sound like a mighty roaring wind filled the place where 120 disciples and followers of Jesus were tarrying. The disciples

spilled out on the street and passersby celebrating Pentecost stopped to heckle and then listen to Peter. Peter, the onetime frightened and unbelieving disciple was now filled with the Holy Spirit and power. His words pierced hearts that were open to hear the Spirit of God.

There is little evidence that those who experienced Pentecost had a complete understanding of what had happened, or what it signified at that time.

Amazingly the 120 who had this wonderful experience went right out to “explain” it to others in terms of Christ’s death on the cross for them, and speaking things the Holy Spirit gave them on the spot. Three thousand believed and were saved that day and that was just the beginning.

The disciples and those that were saved through the growing Church acknowledged the Holy Spirit, but could not define His characteristics. Yet the subtle and frequently miraculous events, and the insights and communications coming from the Holy Spirit to *Believers* in the book of Acts was convincing. God was working with mankind as never before. And believers were more open to the Spirit than ever before.

Paul and others of the Apostles began to refer to the Holy Spirit and give clues about Him as they walked in the Spirit themselves. The Apostles and many others lived, walking in the Spirit and empowered to accomplish their tasks and callings. The Holy Spirit was working mightily in individuals and throughout the Body of Christ as a whole, the church universal.

The Holy Spirit gave “the gifts of the Spirit” to Christians and must have tried to get their attention on using those gifts properly to be a blessing to others. They took pride in their gifts as a badge of Christian significance, but they were so into their human wants and needs that they often misused the gifts focusing on personal edification instead of building others. Thus Paul’s writings to the believers in Corinth were to bring instruction and correction concerning the purpose and use of the “gifts”. This you can see as you read 1 Corinthians. Those Christians who were actively walking in the Holy Spirit seemingly did so without much attempt to understand the Holy Spirit.

## END LESSON 1

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 1

1. **T or F** The Book of Acts forms a bridge between the gospels and the epistles.
2. **T or F** Sources where Luke got his information include oral and written records of the local churches.

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The church universal means the collection of all those individual saints, truly born again of the Spirit from Adam to eternity.

3. Check the name of the person that was the dominant personality in the progress of the gospel among the Jews:

- A. Paul
- B. Peter
- C. John
- D. Philip

5. T or F The Church began on the day of Pentecost, when 120 faithful received the Holy Spirit, signified by power, signs and wonders and communicating with foreigners in other tongues.

## BEGIN LESSON 2

### 2. THE AGE OF THE MARTYRS (The Ante-Nicene Era) A.D. 100—313

Martyrdom began with the stoning of Stephen as Saul (to be Paul) watched approvingly. Many Jews were martyred and beaten as Paul zealously persecuted the new church. All the Apostles died a martyr's death except for John.

However the Holy Spirit embraced the martyrs, and brought such peace and wise speech to those believers during their trials and executions that non-believers increasingly wanted what the martyrs were so willing to die for.

Now, in this second era, the supernatural life, the indwelling supernatural peace, joy and correct living in the face of likely death was being courageously displayed to a pagan world. The contrasts were so real and the demeanor and conduct of the Christians so remarkable that converts flowed into the believing communities, primarily in the Gentile nations and Rome itself. By this time there were very few conversions to Christianity among the Jews who had been dispersed throughout the known world.

**There was a growing feeling that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in power, signs and wonders had ended with the death of the last Apostle. Increasingly Christianity moved from miracles to maintaining the faith, from heartfelt experiencing of the Holy Spirit to emphasis primarily on Jesus Christ, or "God" as the undifferentiated godhead.**

Counting the persecution following the destruction of the Jewish Temple until the end of this second era, the Church faced nearly seventeen generations that thought little about the

Pentecost experience and the miracles as a source of power they might experience. They focused on being born again and baptized and being faithful even unto death.

It was the time of the gladiators, lions, and the Coliseum in Rome, which entertained by slaughtering Christians until spectators finally couldn't stand the Christians' holy reaction to death. Near the end, violent deaths no longer interested the crowds, and they ended.

The Christian sect demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit in the Believer's lives. There was no other way to explain the attitudes and strength of these people, their kindness and love for one another, and even love for their tormentors. It was easy to see their light in a dark world.

The Holy Spirit was demonstrating His presence and work in the lives of primarily ordinary people. *Believers* gave to God their self, their position in the world, and even their lives. And the Church grew. A solid, genuine Church for only the genuine, even if weak, would enlist.

The morality of the Christians stood openly attractive against the darkened mass of public and private corruption. The Christians caused the best and noblest minds and hearts to seek out their secret.

This era saw the Holy Spirit demonstrating His presence in the quality of the lives of the martyrs and of those who lived the life, yet without being martyred. Heresies were being confronted. The Holy Spirit was an inward reality, as invisible as their heart. The Bible was becoming recognizable as Paul's writings and the four gospels were added to the Old Testament, recognized as anointed by the Holy Spirit and guiding the church by about A.D. 200.

With this backdrop let's begin our study of the scriptures:



## II. The Book of Acts - Chapter 1

- In Chapter 1, the first 11 verses overlap the conclusion of the gospel of Luke and form the connecting link between the two books. After the resurrection Jesus remained on the earth for 40 days.
- Vs. 12-26; show the disciples gathered together in preparation for the coming of the promised Holy Spirit baptism.
- During this time, the replacement for Judas Iscariot is revealed.
- **KEY CHARACTERS IN CHAPTER 1:** The Risen Lord, Peter
- **Acts 1:8**, this verse is the foundation for the Book of Acts. The remainder of the book gives the account of how this verse was fulfilled.

### A. Preface to Acts 1:1-5.

1. Vs.1-2: Here Luke writes indicating the existence of his earlier writing (The Book of Luke) “my former book” (NIV) “the former account” (KJV) = Greek = Ton Logon.

**Acts 1:1-2** The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 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:

- a. This gives the direct link to the Gospel of Luke. The subject matter of the gospel is summarized in vs. 1 “All that Jesus began to do and teach” up to His ascension.
  - b. In the word “began” we find the intent of the writing of Acts.  
  
In the gospel, Luke described those things which Jesus began to do and teach within the limitation of his earthly body;... Acts carries on with the story of all that Jesus continued to do and teach through His new body, “The Church.”
2. The rest of the book of Acts records the work of the risen Lord Jesus through His new body, the Church.

- a. After the crucifixion, the disciples were scattered and their hopes were crushed concerning Jesus as Messiah establishing His kingdom on earth.
  - b. Jesus now begins to renew their confidence and prepare them for their destiny by appearing to them, alive and risen! Eleven post-resurrection appearances recorded in Scripture
    - (I) to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:11-18, Mark 16:9-11)
    - (II) to the other women who went to the tomb (Matt. 28:9)
    - (III) to Peter (Luke 24:34, I Cor 15:5)
    - (IV) to the two on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35; Mk 16:12)
    - (V) to the 10 apostles, Thomas absent (Jn 20:19-24)
    - (VI) to the 11 apostles, Thomas now present, one week later (Jn 20:25-29; Mk 16:14-18)
    - (VII) To 7 apostles by the Sea of Galilee (Jn 21:1-24)
    - (VIII) to 500 disciples on a hill in Galilee (Matt 28:16-20; I Cor 15:6)
    - (IX) to James, Jesus' brother (I Cor 15:7)
    - (X) To the disciples near Bethany at the Ascension (Acts 1:6-11; Mk 16:19; Lk 24:50-51)
    - (XI) Most likely Jesus appeared to Paul during his time of instruction as an Apostle to the Gentiles. Gal. 1:16-19. It does not state here that he met with Christ, but it is believed this is where he received his revelation.
3. The disciples needed three things if they were going to accomplish their task.
  - a. Assurance that Jesus was alive
  - b. Instruction
  - c. Empowerment
4. vs 3, **“presented Himself alive”** = unusual Greek word used only one other time in Acts 9:41 where Dorcas was dead and Peter prays. She is resurrected and he **“calls the saints together and presented her alive”**. In other words just as Dorcas was easily recognized after her

resurrection from the dead so was Jesus easily realized as the risen savior.

**Acts 1:3** To whom also he showed (presented) himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

In Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, He presented Himself alive in such a way as to leave no doubt as to His identity and the reality of His resurrection from the dead. This was important to the future of the church. It was vital that those early believers know the reality of the risen savior, otherwise they had nothing about which to witness.

5. vs. 3 “speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God”  
(INSTRUCTION)
- a. The subject matter of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances was to give the disciples instruction concerning “The kingdom of God”.
  - b. The Jews and especially the Zealots, or radicals, expected the Messiah to come as a King in power. They expected the Messiah King would overthrow the oppressive rule of the Romans and establish His messianic kingdom.
  - c. The Jews would then live in peace and serve this King who would rule from His throne in Jerusalem. Since Jesus did not come to do this they had a hard time believing that Jesus was their Messiah. He was not what they expected.
  - d. He did not come in the kind of power they expected. He did not preach revolution. He did not look regal.
  - e. They were looking at the prophecies concerning the Second Coming of the Christ, and completely missed His First Coming.
  - f. This is why it was necessary for Jesus to prepare the apostles and give them proper instruction concerning the kingdom of God.
  - g. Jesus reveals the truth of the Scriptures in what the prophecies by Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms had to say about the Messiah and His kingdom.

(Luke 24:24-27) ""And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." {25} Then He said to them, "**O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!**" {26} "**Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?**" {27} And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

(Luke 24:44-49) "Then He said to them, "**These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.**" {45} **And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.**" {46} Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, {47} "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. {48} "And you are witnesses of these things. {49} "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.""

6. vs. 4-5 "**wait for the promise of the Father**" Holy Spirit baptism  
(POWER)

(Acts 1:4-5) "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "**you have heard from Me; {5} "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.**"

- a. In closing this overlapping section from Luke's gospel, we see the final step of preparation necessary to accomplish the task: The power of the Holy Spirit
- b. Here the gift of the Holy Spirit is described:
  - (I) It is a special promise and its source is the Father. (Joel 2:28) "**And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.**"  
The source of the Holy Spirit is the Father (Jn 14:16 - 19, 26), Jesus is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11).
  - (II) There are four accounts of John the Baptist's testimony that Jesus is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. Matt 3:11, Mk 1:8, Lk 3:16, Jn 1:33
  - (III) The fulfillment of the Father's promise is at hand, "**not many days from now**" they would be baptized with the

Holy Spirit. This shows that what took place on the day of Pentecost would bring fulfillment of the Father's promise. This is why Peter could stand up in all boldness and say, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel"

## END LESSON 2

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 2

1. **T or F** James is the only original Apostle to not die a martyr's death.
2. **T or F** The early Christians, through the power of the Holy Spirit in believers lives, showed uncommon attitudes and strength through their love for each other and for their tormentors
3. How many days did Jesus remain on the earth after his resurrection?
  - A. 25
  - B. 39
  - C. 40
  - D. 50
4. How many post-resurrection appearances are recorded in Scripture?
  - A. 7
  - B. 11
  - C. 15
  - D. 24
5. **T or F** The subject matter of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances was to give the disciples instruction concerning "The kingdom of God".

## BEGIN LESSON 3

- B. The Mandate to witness - Acts 1:6-8:** This passage of Scripture sets the stage for all that is to happen in the book of Acts. The theme of being a witness is so prevalent that everything else in the book should be seen in light of it. The word "witness" is used in its various forms 39 times

(Acts 1:6-8) "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" {7} And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. {8} "But

you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

**1. vs. 6 "when will the kingdom be restored"**

This question shows again the Jews' hope for the establishment of the messianic kingdom. It was a valid question and Jesus treated it as such. They knew something special was going to take place, and were still looking for Jesus to throw off their bondage to Rome and establish his earthly kingdom. It made perfect sense to the disciples that this would be the coming of the Messiah in His glory to establish His kingdom.

2. **vs. 7: Jesus' reply, "the times and seasons are strictly in the Father's hands."**

This brings again to light that the Father has a master plan and timetable. He has all authority thus the return of Jesus and the millennial reign will happen only when the Father says so. Matt 24:36, Mk 13:32.

3. **vs. 8 The mandate to witness**

**(Acts 1:8) "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

- a. Here the mandate to witness that stands as **the theme** for the book of Acts.
  - b. It comes as a direct commission from Jesus Himself. **These are Jesus' last words before His ascension** and, therefore, are of great importance.
  - c. As believers we are as responsible as the early disciples to continue the work of fulfilling this commission. It comes to us with the **"promise of the Father"** to enable us to complete the task. It concerns **a person, a power, and a program**. Let's look at each of these.
4. **the Person: This refers to Jesus Christ "And you shall be witnesses unto Me"**
- a. Jesus is to be the subject of the witness: who He was, all that He said, and did. The primary objective of all disciples is to reveal Jesus.
  - b. As Jesus is revealed, we are revealing the very nature and character of God the Father. Jesus said, **"if you see me you see the Father"** John 14:9.
5. **The Power: The power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;..."**
- a. This is the "dunamis,"(power), that would empower them to accomplish the mandate to witness.
  - b. To go to the ends of the earth you need supernatural power. Know that God always empowers you for what He has called you to do. The power of the church, and its members comes from the Holy Spirit not from man. Thus we need the Holy Spirit.

6. **The program: “In Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth”**
- a. Here the outline of rest of book can be seen.
    - (I) Chap 2-7, The witness in Jerusalem.
    - (II) Chap 8-12, The witness in all Judea and Samaria.
    - (III) Chap 13-28, To the ends of the earth.
  - b. To the end of the earth is a very significant statement for it shows the heart of God to reach all nations with the message of salvation, and our responsibility to carry on the work.
  - c. This would break the typical Jewish thought that salvation was for the Jews only.
  - d. Throughout Scripture God’s love for all nations is shown. In Genesis God calls Abraham who would father many nations, and through Abraham all nations would be blessed. To Rev. 7:9-12.
- C. **The Ascension Acts 1:9-11:** Here in the witnessing of the ascension we close the overlapping section from Luke (Luke 24:50-53) and Acts 1:9-11

**Acts 1:9-11** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 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.

1. **The ascension is a necessary completion of the resurrection.** In other words, it is the proof that Jesus resurrection was not just a temporary resuscitation. To accept bodily resurrection, and not the ascension would mean that Christ either still lives in bodily form on the earth today or that he died again later.
2. The ascension conveyed to the disciples that the appearances of Jesus which they had experienced over the 40 day period were finished.
3. Jesus would no longer be present in physical form but His presence would be realized in each believer by the presence of the Holy Spirit.
4. The ascension was the grand exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God. It marked His entrance to His heavenly priesthood.
5. Note vs 11 ends with a promise that Jesus would return in like manner.



**D. Prelude to Pentecost Acts 1:12-26.**

1. The focal point of everything in Acts 1:12-2:47 is Pentecost. This passage divides itself naturally into 3 parts:
  - a. The prelude to Pentecost Acts 1:12-26 The prelude of Pentecost is further divided by 2 events:
    - (I) The return to Jerusalem (vs 12-14)
    - (II) The choosing of Judas' replacement (vs 15-26)
  - b. The day of Pentecost 2:1-41
  - c. The afterglow of Pentecost 2:42-47

**(Acts 1:12-14)** "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. { 13 } And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. { 14 } These **all continued with one accord** in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."

2. vs. 12 "A Sabbath's day journey." 2/3 of a mile. This was the maximum of distance Jews were allowed to walk on a Sabbath according to Mosaic law (Ex 16:29). The disciples' return to Jerusalem was strictly an act of obedience not matter of choice as the 11 apostles were Galileans. Because Jesus had just been executed there and they were His traveling companions, it was an unsafe place to be and yet Jerusalem was to be the starting point of the witness. So in obedience to Jesus' command they return to Jerusalem.
3. vs. 13 "Into the upper room where they were staying"  
Rooms like these were available for rent and used as assemblies, study, prayer, and occasionally rented for dwellings.
4. vs 14 "They continued with one accord." Literally "With one mind" or "of the same spirit."
  - a. This calls attention to their unity of purpose, feeling and desire. Note that the phrase "**in one accord**" is found six times in the book of Acts (1:14; 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25) drawing attention to the importance of unity among members of the body.

- b. They continued in prayer showing its importance from the very beginning. In almost every chapter of the book you will find a reference to prayer being offered to God. One thing that is abundantly clear in the book of Acts is that believers prayed, and prayer brought a response from God. You can measure the spiritual climate of a church and individual by the importance prayer has in their life.
- 5. Notice also Luke includes **"the women, and Jesus' mother and brother."** This gives special prominence to the fact that the promise of the spirit was for everyone, not just the disciples. It also points out that the "brethren" of Jesus who had not accepted him as the Messiah prior to the resurrection (Matt. 7:5) had come to accept him after the resurrection.
- 6. The Selection of Judas' Replacement vs 15-26

**Acts 1:15-26** 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,) 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. 1:17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 1:18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 1:19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take. 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 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. 1:23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 1:24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, 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. 1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

- a. At some point during the 10 days between the ascension and Pentecost a replacement was to be chosen for Judas.
- b. Some say that the choice of Mathias was a mistake because he was never mentioned again in the book of Acts. However, if that were the criteria then all the other apostles except Peter, James and John would be excluded as well.
- c. vs 15: Peter is the spokesman and assumes leadership.

**(RevC)** It is evident from the scripture that Peter was the accepted leader among the Apostles. His boldness, and tendency to speak up when ever there was opportunity served to put Peter in forefront far more than any other disciple. He was a “first among equals,” being recognized as an equal among his peers, but with the gift of leadership Peter was preferred among his fellow Apostles.

Some teachers have questioned as to whether the disciples should have waited for the releasing of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost before selecting a disciple to replace Judas. We should remember that the disciples received the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them in **John 20:22**. They were already serving with the unction of the Holy Spirit resident in them. (RevC)

- d. vs 16-20 Gives the explanation of the need for a successor.

Judas apostasy and death were foretold in scripture, as Peter points out Ps 41:9; Ps 109:2-8. **(POSB)** The church had an empty office because one of its leaders had died a tragic death. And note, Judas had been a leader; he had held one of the highest positions, that of being treasurer for the Lord Himself. Peter briefly covered why the office in the church was to be filled.

- Judas had betrayed Christ, had actually become the *guide* for Jesus' enemies (**cp. [Matthew 26:47f](#); [Luke 22:47](#); [John 18:2f](#)**). He should have guided people to receive Christ; instead, he had guided them to reject and deny Him and to remove Christ from the scene.

- Judas had been called by Christ to serve in the ministry. He had been given a part in the ministry. He had been *numbered* and counted by all as being an apostle and a leader among God's people. Yet, he had somehow refused God's grace—the grace that truly *saved* and *sanctified*, that caused a person to diligently believe and seek God, to truly follow and live for Him.
  - Judas had given his heart over to greed, selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver.
  - Judas had died a terrible death: he had hanged himself in despair. (The rope had broken and he had fallen head first. His body had just burst open. The picture is given in descriptive terms to match the terrible deed of betraying Christ.)
  - Judas' legacy is tragic. Everyone, even the reader, knows the terrible legacy of Judas' life, the legacy of betrayal. Betraying Christ is the most terrible legacy a man can ever have. (This stands as a warning that must be heeded by all.)
  - Judas' terrible fate was an eternal loss. This verse is a quote from [Psalm 69:25](#); [Psalm 109:8](#) (cp. [Psalm 41:9](#); [Zech. 11:12](#)). Note two things.
    - The phrase "his habitation" (*hē epaulis autou*) is descriptive. It means a farm house or a place for sheep such as a pasture or sheep yard. The idea is that Judas would never again be allowed to be the farmer (husbandman) or shepherd for God.
    - The word "bishoprick" (*episkopēn*) means over-seership. It is the word from which the office of bishop is taken. The idea is

that Judas' office of *overseeing* the flock of God was to be filled by another person. Judas had lost his ministry completely.

What happened to Judas serves as a warning to every Christian leader. Judas had every opportunity imaginable, even that of brushing shoulders with the Lord Jesus day by day, yet he deserted Christ. (**See 1 Tim. 1:19, 4:1; Heb. 3:12**) (POSB)

(RevC) Though Judas did not actually purchase the field where he was buried, it was his money that was used to purchase the place of burial. As he came by the money through his betrayal of Jesus Christ it was considered as being “blood money” thus the place was known as the “field of blood” **Matthew 27:8**. (RevC)

e. vs 21-22 The Qualification of the Replacement

(I) Accompanied Jesus from the beginning.

(II) Witness to His resurrection.

f. vs 23-26 The Method of Selection was by lot.

(I) Two men who met the qualifications were chosen, and they prayed for divine guidance.

(II) The lots were cast. **Prov. 16:33** “The lot is cast into the lap but its every decision is from the Lord.” Names were written on stones. Container shaken until one came out.

(III) This is the last time this method is used to determine God's will in the NT. We now have the Holy Spirit to give us guidance, in addition we are exhorted as Christians "to search the scriptures" and know what is the will of the Lord.

END LESSON 3

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 3

1. **T or F** The theme of being a witness is so prevalent in the book of Acts that everything else in the book should be seen in light of it
2. **T or F** Jesus last words before his ascension deal with the overthrow of the Roman oppressors.
3. The disciple of Jesus chosen to replace Judas was:
  - A. Joseph
  - B. Matthias
  - C. Barsabas
  - D. Justus
4. What does not belong in the following list of qualifications for the replacement of Judas:
  - A. Accompanied Jesus from the beginning.
  - B. Had a beard as required by Jewish law.
  - C. Witness to the Lord's resurrection.
  - D. Have a real desire to take part in the ministry and apostleship.
5. **T or F** Peter is the recognized leader because he is the biggest and boldest of the group.

#### **BEGIN LESSON 4**

### **III. The Day of Pentecost: Acts 2**

- A. **One could say there are four major revelations of God to man** - three have already occurred, and the fourth one could take place any day.
  1. **In the Old Testament - God revealed Himself as God for us**  
As Jehovah, the God of covenant - He would demonstrate His power, care, provision and protection for His people, the nation of Israel - the people of God.

2. **The second major revelation of God to man took place with the incarnation - God with us**
  - a. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, and at the same time very God.
  - b. He came to reveal the Father to us.
  - c. He came and demonstrated by example what a Holy life is and how it could be lived out.
  
3. **The 3rd major revelation is what took place on the day of Pentecost. The revelation of God in us.**
  - a. The very life and power of God would now dwell in every believer.
  - b. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, dwelling in the lives of the saved.
  - c. The same Spirit that empowered Jesus to do the miracles now lives in us.
  
4. **The final major revelation will take place when Jesus comes in His glory to set up His throne forever. God for us, in us and with us all at once!**

#### **B. 2:1-4 The Promise Of The Father Arrives**

**(Acts 2:1-4)** "When **the Day of Pentecost** had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. {2} And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. {3} Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. {4} And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

##### **1. Vs. 1 "the Day of Pentecost" - means "Fiftieth" 50<sup>th</sup>**

- a. It was one of three major festivals in which all male Jews were expected to attend in Jerusalem.  
Deut 16:16.

**(Deut 16:16)** "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks,

and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed."

- b. The other two feasts were **Passover & Unleavened Bread** (these two feasts though separate are often thought of together), which were before Pentecost, and **Tabernacles** that was approx. 4 months thereafter.
- c. Pentecost was celebrated on the "Day After The Seventh Sabbath" or the 50th Day after the Feast of First fruit of the barley harvest. (a further explanation follows)
- d. The Feast of Pentecost or "day of Pentecost" as it is referred to in Acts 2:1 has also been called by other names:
  - (I) The Feast of Harvest Ex 23:16,
  - (II) The day of First Fruits Num 28:26-31 (This would be the first fruits of the wheat harvest)
  - (III) The Feast of Weeks Ex. 34:22

**(Exo 23:16)** "and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field."

- e. The Feast of Pentecost was called the "Feast of Weeks" because **it came after** a period of 7 weeks of harvesting **that began with** the offering of the first barley sheaf during the Feast of Firstfruits of the barley harvest (about the middle of April). The Feast of Firstfruits took place during the time of the Passover celebration. The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost came 50 days later at the time of the wheat harvest (about the first week of June).
- f. The Jews considered the time of Pentecost to be the anniversary of the Giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, and a time for the annual renewal of the Mosaic covenant.
- g. Let's take a brief look at the feasts listed in Lev. 23 which may help us keep each feast in its proper order:
  - (I) The **Feast of Passover** was on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the Jewish month of Nisan, which corresponds to our April. Often the



feast of Passover and Unleavened bread are considered as one.

- (II) The **Feast of Unleavened Bread** began on the next day the 15<sup>th</sup> of April and lasted 7 days (15<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup>) during which the Jews were to eat bread without leaven (yeast).
- (III) The **Feast of Firstfruits** approximately April 16<sup>th</sup> was the day they were to bring the first sheaf of the barley harvest to the priest and it was to be waved before the Lord on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week (Sunday) after the Sabbath (Saturday). (Sunday would be the same day of the week Jesus raised from the dead to be “the Firstfruits of them that slept” 1 Cor. 15:20)
- (IV) The **Feast of Pentecost** was to be 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits of the **barley** harvest. This feast would also include a “day of firstfruits” where the firstfruit of the **wheat** harvest was presented. The Feast of Pentecost would have been approximately the first week of June taking place on a Sunday.
- (V) The **Feast of Trumpets** took place in the 7<sup>th</sup> month, which was the Jewish month of Tisri, which corresponds closely to our October. This feast was on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month where offerings were to be made by fire before the Lord. Trumpets would be blown over the offerings that were presented in the temple area.
- (VI) The **Feast of the Great Day of Atonement** took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month (our Oct.). This was the only day during the year that the High Priest could go within the Holy of Holies to make atonement for himself and all the people of Israel.
- (VII) The **Feast of Tabernacles** took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Jewish month (our Oct.) and lasted 7 days plus one extra day, which was to be a day for a holy convocation or assembly.

h. The following information (used by permission from the Willington’s Guide to the Bible commentary) shows some interesting comparisons concerning the significance of the O.T. feast of Pentecost and N.T. Pentecost:

- (I) Old Testament Pentecost occurred fifty days after Israel left Egypt. Note: the Passover lamb was slain on April 14, 1491 B.C., and Israel left Egypt the next night (Ex. 12:1, 2,

6, 12, 31). Exactly fifty days later they arrived at Mt. Sinai during the first week of June (Ex. 19:1).

- (II) New Testament Pentecost occurred fifty days after Christ rose from the dead. Note: Our Lord was, of course, crucified during the Passover week in April (Jn. 19:14). He then spent forty days with his disciples after the resurrection (Acts 1:3). Then, ten days after the ascension (Acts 1:5; 2:1) the New Testament Pentecost occurred.
- (III) Old Testament Pentecost celebrated a birthday, that of the nation Israel (Ex. 19:5) and the giving of the law.
- (IV) New Testament Pentecost celebrated a birthday, that of the church (Acts 2:41-47).
- (V) Old Testament Pentecost witnessed the slaying of some 3,000 souls (Ex. 32:28).
- (VI) New Testament Pentecost witnessed the saving of some 3,000 souls (Acts 2:41).
- (VII) Old Testament Pentecost was introduced in a mighty way: *“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceedingly loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled....And Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” (Ex. 19:16, 18).*
- (VIII) New Testament Pentecost was also introduced in a mighty way. *“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them” (Acts 2:2, 3).*

**C. There is great significance to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.** We can see the master plan of God unfolding.

- 1. First, there was **Significant Strategy**,
  - a. He would be poured out when there were thousands of visitors in the city from many nations.
  - b. That day there would see a scattering of seed into many nations as the events of this day would progress

2. Secondly, there was **symbolic significance**.
  - a. Where as the feast of First fruits or Pentecost for the Jews and Judaism was a day of the Giving of the Law, for Christians it would be the day of the coming of the Holy Spirit.
  - b. This would symbolically demonstrate the difference between the law and the Spirit.
  - c. The Spirit coming on Pentecost signals the essential difference between the Jewish faith and the Christian commitment to Christ. The Jewish faith is Torah centered (Law centered) and Torah directed, while the Christian faith is Christ centered and Spirit directed.
3. Thirdly, there was a **significant example** demonstrated this day.
  - a. By paralleling Jesus Baptism by John where the Holy Spirit came upon Him with the experience of His disciples at Pentecost as they were filled with the Holy Spirit, Luke is showing that the Mission of the Christian Church, as was the Ministry of Jesus on earth, is dependent upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
  - b. As Jesus began His earthly ministry the Spirit descended upon Him at the time of His water baptism,...
  - c. ... as the disciples would begin their ministry the Holy Spirit would come upon them, also in a baptism like experience, not of water, but rather of the Spirit.
  - d. **Note:** These same disciples had already received the Holy Spirit in John 20:22. Thus this experience was a filling in the Holy Spirit for the endowment of power to be witnesses as evidenced by their speaking with other tongues, and to bring them into the body of Christ (the church) that was established on this day.

#### END LESSON 4

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 4

1. **T or F** In the book of Deuteronomy, three times a year all males were required to appear before the Lord in the place of His choosing.
2. **T or F** The Feast of Pentecost was to be 50 days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the Jews were to eat bread without leaven.

3. There have been three revelations of God to man that have taken place. Choose the one that does NOT belong:

- A. God in us.
- B. God with us.
- C. God through us.
- D. God for us.

4. T or F Old Testament Pentecost celebrated a birthday, that of the nation of Israel leaving from the enslavement of Egypt. New Testament Pentecost celebrated a birthday, that of the church.

5. T or F The Spirit coming on Pentecost signals the essential difference between the Jewish faith and the Christian commitment to Christ. The Jewish faith is Torah centered (Law centered) and Torah directed, while the Christian faith is Christ centered and Spirit directed.

#### BEGIN LESSON 5

- D. Acts 2:2-3 "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. {3} Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them."

Though the Holy Spirit had been active throughout the O.T. as seen in the events of the creation, empowering the servants of God for service, and throughout the life and ministry of Jesus. However, from this point on there would be two important changes: Now the Holy Spirit would indwell every believer, and secondly His presence would be ongoing, not temporary as in O.T. times.

1. “Wind & Fire” were symbols of the Divine Presence (vs 2-3)
2. Wind is often used as a symbol of God's presence. In Hebrew: Ruah and Greek: Pneuma. These words can be translated either wind or spirit.

**(2 Sam 5:24)** "And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines."

**(Psa 104:3)** "He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind,"

**(NIV Acts 2:2-3)** "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a **violent wind** came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. {3} They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them."

NIV = A sound like the blowing of a violent wind. Here it suggests not only the presence of God, but also the irresistible power of the Divine Spirit. Keep in mind that it was as the **SOUND** of a “mighty wind,” and not actually a mighty wind.

3. **Fire** as a symbol of Divine Presence was well known among Jews.
  - a. The Burning Bush (Ex 3:2-5)
  - b. The Pillar of fire that guided Israel (Ex 13:21)
  - c. The consuming fire on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:17)
  - d. At Pentecost the fire gives a picture of the overshadowing presence of the spirit.
  - e. These symbols of God’s divine presence were given to the disciples in that upper room that day so as to assure them that what they were experiencing was truly God and the very thing they had been waiting for.
  - f. Any Jew would be familiar with these symbols of Wind and fire as God’s divine presence.

**(Acts 2:2-3)** "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. {3} Then there appeared to them **divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.**"

5. At first it gave the appearance of one great mass of fire or cluster of flames, then divided and rested over each one individually.

Here we have a beautiful picture of the presence of God and the emphasis on personal or individual relationships with Him.

E. **(Acts 2:4)** "**And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**"

1. The Spirit is poured out on all those seeking Him, and they were all filled and spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance.

**(POSB)** The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. First, both the body (church) and each individual believer were filled. They were "all filled" with the presence and power of the Spirit—all of them corporately and each of them individually. It was both a corporate and a personal, individual infilling. Each believer had been commanded to wait for the baptism of the Spirit, and each one was to be so filled with His presence and power. It was a command to the individual believer as well as to the corporate body. Each one was to experience and know His grace and power and fruit (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

"**Other tongues**" definitely means foreign languages (**cp. Acts 2:6-13**). The disciples were supernaturally witnessing and preaching in the languages of the different nationalities gathering together. Scripture is so clear about this that there can be no reasonable doubt without really twisting the Word of God.

"**Other tongues**" could also mean the *tongues* or ecstatic utterance covered in 1 Corinthians; that is, it could have been what is commonly called the *heavenly* or *prayer language*

(1 Cor. 14:2, 14.) An ecstatic worship could be taking place while the disciples were experiencing the infilling of the Holy Spirit. There seems to be sometime between the moments of infilling and the crowds arriving to see what caused the explosive sound or noise (Acts 2:2). And there can be no doubt that the disciples were flooded with joy, an ecstatic worshipful joy. They now knew the most wonderful things...

- Christ was in them; His Spirit had actually entered into their hearts and lives. Their wonderful Lord had returned to them just as He had said He would.
- They were filled with a deep sense of His presence and power, His concern and love for the world, His courage and drive to share the great news of the glorious gospel.

One thing needs to be noted, however: the words "as the Spirit gave them utterance." They spoke in tongues "as the Spirit gave them utterance." This may indicate a clear difference from the gift of tongues in 1 Cor. 14, a clear difference in this sense:

- All gifts once bestowed by the Spirit are thereafter exercised by the believer as the believer wills to use them. In fact, in order to be faithful, the believer *has* to use his gifts as need or as opportunity arises. This is clear from 1 Cor. 14:28-33.
- The gift of tongues here in Acts 2 says that the gift was supernaturally exercised by the Spirit, not by the individual believer. (POSB)

- (I) It is important to note that **historically**, the pouring out of the Spirit with the manifestation of "speaking in tongues" took place in three stages: the pure Jewish disciples in the upper room were "**filled**" at Pentecost (Acts 2:4); the Samaritans (half-Jews, half-Gentiles) "**received** the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15-17); and the Holy Spirit "**fell upon**" the Gentiles while Peter was yet speaking in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17; and see Eph. 2:11-22).

2. **Understanding the use of terms:** (From the Preacher's Outline Sermon Bible commentary, used by permission of Nav Press)
- a. At Pentecost (Acts 2:4), the account uses the word *filled*, not *baptized*.
  - b. At Cornelius' house (Acts 10:44-48), the account says the Holy Spirit *fell*, was *poured out*, and *received*. But in reporting the experience to the Jerusalem Church, Peter used the word *baptized*. He said the Gentile believers were "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16) "*as on us at the beginning*" (Acts 11:15). This clearly says that although the word *baptized* is not used in the Pentecost experience, the disciples were baptized or immersed with the Spirit's presence at Pentecost. The words *filled*, *received*, *poured*, *baptized*, and *fell upon* are all used interchangeably to describe the Spirit's presence coming into a believer's life.
  - c. Other than these two events Acts records only four other times that the Holy Spirit came upon believers.
    - (I) A prayer group in Jerusalem was "*filled*" with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31).
    - (II) The Samaritans (half-Jews, half-Gentiles) "*received* the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15-17).
    - (III) Paul was "*filled* with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17).
    - (IV) The disciples of John experienced "the Spirit *coming on them*" (Acts 19:6).
  - d. One other fact is important. Other than Pentecost and Cornelius' house, the word *baptize* is used in connection with the Holy Spirit only once in the rest of the New Testament. Perhaps we need to pay attention to this. What is being said is that after the book of Acts, the word *baptize* is used only once with the Holy Spirit. That one reference is **1 Cor. 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."** That is, the Holy Spirit takes all believers and baptizes or immerses, places, and positions them into the body of Christ—into the church, the universal church.
  - e. **In conclusion, what does all this mean?**
    - (I) When a man grasps the gospel and believes, really believes, the Holy Spirit enters his life. He *comes upon*, *falls upon*, *pours*, *fills*, *baptizes* (immerses), Himself into the life of the believer. **This is a personal experience.** This act of the Spirit takes place in the life of the believer when he receives Jesus. The believer *experiences* the Spirit coming into his life. The believer receives the Spirit *experientially*.



- (II) When a man grasps the gospel and believes, really believes, the Holy Spirit takes him and *baptizes* or immerses, and places him into the body of Christ, which is God's Church. The believer does not feel or experience this act. It is an act of God that takes place in heaven. The believer is *counted* as a child of God. He is *counted* as a member of the body, of the church. **This is a position, not an experience, which the believer feels.** It happens once-for-all. The believer is adopted as a child of God. It is an eternal *position*, an eternal son-ship. The believer becomes a member of God's Church—positionally (1 Cor. 12:13).
- (III) After a man is saved, he is to **"keep on being filled with the Spirit"**—day by day **Eph 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;** (POSB) This command is in the present tense which means that the believer is to be constantly filled with the Spirit; he is to keep on being filled.... The Spirit's filling is the personal manifestation of Christ to the believer who walks obediently day by day (John 14:21-as we walk in obedience we will experience the "manifestation" filling of the spirit). It is a consciousness of His presence, of His leadership—moment by moment. This consciousness is the believer's privilege. But the Spirit's filling is not an automatic experience. The responsibility of being filled with the Spirit rests upon the shoulders of the believer. He is filled only as he walks obediently to Christ. (POSB) The believer must choose to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

### 3. What about speaking in tongues and its connection with receiving the Holy Spirit?

- a. Those who follow the Pentecostal belief in what is commonly referred to as receiving "the baptism in the Holy Spirit" with the evidence of speaking in tongues (of which I am one) may need at least to reconsider their choice of terminology. After examining each of the instances in the book of acts where the Holy Spirit was received we find "NOWHERE" is the term "baptism" used to describe the event at the moment it is experienced. As we discussed earlier the following verses use different terminology all of which seems to be used interchangeably:
  - (I) **Acts 2:4** those in the upper room were **"filled"** and spoke with tongues

- (II) **Acts 4:31** prayer group was “**filled**” and no tongues are reported
  - (III) **Acts 8:15-17** the Samaritan believers “**received**” and no tongues are reported though it is likely they had such an experience due to the reaction of Simon who wanted to purchase the power that he witnessed them receive. He saw something that created this desire within him.
  - (IV) **Acts 9:17-18** Paul was “**filled**” and no tongues are reported though we know Paul did speak in tongues.
  - (V) **Acts 10:44-48** Gentile believers at Cornelius’ house where the Holy Spirit “**fell**” and was “**poured out**” on them. They spoke in tongues. Peter later describes this event using the terminology “**fell on them**” & “**baptized with the Holy Ghost.**”
  - (VI) **Acts 19:4-7** Twelve disciples of John the Baptist - the Holy Spirit “**came upon them**” as Paul prayed and they spoke in tongues.
- b. From what the scripture indicates I must agree with the reasoning of the previous commentaries in so much that the terms: filled, baptized, received, poured out, etc. can be used interchangeably.
  - c. It also appears that there should be a high expectation that **the ability to exercise the manifestation of tongues is contained in the initial receiving of the Holy Spirit.**
  - d. Finally, when we refer to the baptism “WITH” the Holy Spirit (as “in” the Holy Spirit is only found 4 times in scripture and none is a clear reference to speaking in tongues) it seems to logically refer to our positioning within the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).
  - e. How then is the gift or manifestation of tongues evidenced in the life of a believer. My personal opinion is that tongues is evidenced through the exercise of faith, and yielding oneself to the overflowing expression of the Holy Spirit that is already present within every believer. Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Spirit, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives the gifts of the Spirit to believers.

The following information presents one avenue for the believer who may desire to experience the manifestation of speaking in other tongues.

**F. For those students who desire to speak with other tongues and as yet do not: what follows is a step-by-step example of how to help someone with the manifestation of the gift of tongues.**

1. Pray and ask. vs 1 Those in the upper room were all in one accord. (in prayer).
2. The presence of the Lord will come vs 2, 3. God loves to give good gifts to His children, and certainly the Holy Spirit would not withhold any good gift from us.

**(Mat 7:11)** ""If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

**(John 7:37-39)** "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. {38} "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."** {39} But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

3. They spoke vs 4 . Here is the step of faith.
  - a. The Spirit gives the utterance...but you must speak for the utterance to come.
  - b. You are submitting control of your will to the Holy Spirit, but not control of your ability to speak. You must vocalize the utterances that will be in your mouth.
  - c. If you remain closed mouthed, nothing will happen. The Holy Spirit does not force you to speak. This is where you must put faith into action. Faith is an "action" word. Faith is evidenced in our doing something.

- d. As you speak out in faith, the Spirit of God will give you the sounds to utter.
- e. Your mind says “ what should I say” – But remember **your understanding is unfruitful**. You’re not supposed to understand. You are simply allowing your inner human spirit to communicate with God by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The language is often referred to as your “spirit language” because it is not common to the one speaking and therefore our understanding is unfruitful.

(1 Cor 14:14) "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful."

#### END LESSON 5

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 5

1. **T or F** Two important changes began at Pentecost: Now the Holy Spirit would indwell every believer, and secondly His presence would be ongoing, not temporary as in O.T. times.
2. **T or F** The presence of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost manifested in a mighty wind that filled the upper room and blew through the streets of Jerusalem
3. Which one of the following words cannot be used interchangeably with the others in the book of Acts:
  - A. filled
  - B. baptized
  - C. poured out
  - D. immersed
  - E. received
4. **T or F** There should be a high expectation that the ability to exercise the manifestation of tongues is contained in the initial receiving of the Holy Spirit.
5. **T or F** When I pray in tongues, in order for it to be effective and fruitful, it is imperative that I understand.

#### BEGIN LESSON 6

#### G. Acts 2: 5-13 The Effect of the outpouring

**(Acts 2:5-13)** "And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. {6} And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. {7} Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? {8} "And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? {9} "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, {10} "Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, {11} "Cretans and Arabs; we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." {12} So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" {13} Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine.""

**1. vs 5 "devout men from every nation"**

- a. "Devout men" speaks of God-fearing Jews of the Diaspora/Dispersion. These were Jews that had been scattered all over the world. They were "**devout men**" people who took the time and trouble to return to celebrate the feast of Harvest/Weeks.
- b. The streets were packed,... the people represented the four corners of civilization.
  - (I) Parthians - modern day Iran
  - (II) Medes - partners in the empire with the Persians in Daniel's time.
  - (III) Elamites, southwestern Iran
  - (IV) residents of Mesopotamia - people living "between the rivers" ; the Tigris & Euphrates. - many Israelites lived here having been deported to that region by Assyrians and Babylonians
  - (V) Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia - all regions of Asia Minor
  - (VI) Egypt - Large Jewish population, particularly in Alexandria. - The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament had been produced there.

- (VII) The districts of Libya around Cyrene - West of Egypt on the African coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
  - (VIII) Rome – had a large Jewish population
  - (IX) Cretans from the Island of Crete
  - (X) Arabs - Jews living in the area just south of Damascus.
- c. This passage does show God’s heart for the nations as He opens up the understanding of these from many nations to hear His praises.

(RevC) Jewish pilgrims from most of the know world, as Luke enumerates had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the “Feast of Pentecost” also known as the “Feast of the First Fruits” or the “Feast of Weeks” or the “Feast of Harvest”.

What took place is in stark contrast to what had taken place at the Tower of Babel in **Genesis 11**. There God confused man’s language, so they could not understand one another, here He allows the good news to be spoken by a group of humble submissive Galileans but understood by everyone from every country represented. This fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (**Joel 2:28-32**) released the presence of the Holy Spirit to indwell all believers and followers of Christ, bringing them into one body “The Body of Christ” the “Church” universal. Where the Tower of Babel brought confusion & division this fulfillment of prophecy brought understanding and unity and initiated a program of worldwide evangelism, “unto the uttermost part of the world”. (RevC)

- d. Notice the timing and plan of God.
- (I) The Holy Spirit comes right during the most crowded time in the city.

- (II) Now the disciples would further understand why Jesus told them to "wait in the city." What often doesn't seem to make sense to us at first makes plenty of sense when God responds to our obedience.
- e. There is an important lesson to learn here - God has a plan, and a time table
  - (I) throughout scripture we will find many examples of God telling His servants to do something that at the time seems to make no sense... God also has a time-table. His timing is perfect, because He is perfect
  - (II) however, if we would just trust Him, and know He has a plan for our lives, we will see His divine purposes worked out
  - (III) God has a plan to see His name be glorified throughout the nations

**(Hab 2:14)** "For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,  
As the waters cover the sea."

## 2. vs 12-13 Notice Two Reactions of Observers

**(Acts 2:12-13)** "So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another,  
"Whatever could this mean?" { 13 } Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

- a. Amazed and perplexed and seeking the true meaning "Whatever could this mean?"
- b. Mocking "They are full of new wine."
- c. you can expect this kind of reaction whenever God's Spirit begins to move around you in your life
- d. some will be amazed and perplexed, wondering what this could mean others will mock - casting judgement

## H. The Preaching of Peter 2:14-36

### 1. The Importance of Preaching

- a. in an effort to appeal to people's interest, the church in the USA today emphasizes a great many different programs, methods, and approaches. Small group activities, sharing, "culturally relevant" worship services emphasizing music and drama...you can find psychology, management techniques, and advertising strategies all making significant inroads in the life of the church.
- b. Seminars on everything on how to have a happy marriage and how to handle your finances abound in churches. None of these things are wrong in themselves and some are even very helpful, however all too often these programs and strategies, and marketing techniques are substitutes for the priority of preaching
- c. The first event recorded following the Spirit's coming was the preaching of Peter. Preaching was a priority to Jesus, to the Apostles, and to any church who desires to accomplish God's mission.

**(Luke 4:16-21)** "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. {17} And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: {18} **"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; {19} To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."** {20} Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. {21} And He began to say to them, **"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."**

**(Rom 10:14-17)** **"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? {15} And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" {16} But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" {17} So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

**(RevC)** The streets were filled with people who were there to honor this holy season and worship. His message was in the everyday language of Aramaic that these foreign Jews could understand. It was indeed a Jewish message, to Jews, about the resurrection of the Jewish Messiah whom had been crucified



and raised from the dead. There would have also been Gentile proselytes there who had converted to the Jewish religion, but Peter's message was not meant to open the door for the Gentiles as that does not happen formally until **Acts 10** in the house of Cornelius. What a contrast to the same man who denied Jesus 3 times only a short time ago yet now anointed by the Holy Spirit stands and boldly proclaims the crucifixion and resurrection of the Jewish Messiah and lays the blame squarely on his listeners while offering the opportunity for repentance, forgiveness, and salvation. The result being the salvation of thousands of people and the birth of a Spirit filled Body of Christ—the Church. (RevC)

2. Six themes are found repeatedly in the 3 sermons Peter preaches in Chapter 2-4. These themes are very representative of the preaching of the early church. They are..
  - a. The Age of Fulfillment has dawned - the Messiah has come
  - b. This has taken place through the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, of which a brief account is given, with proof from scriptures.
  - c. Because of the resurrection & ascension, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God, as the Messianic head of the "New Israel," all those who demonstrate faith like Abraham.
  - d. The Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Joel 2:28 was the sign of Christ's present power and glory.
  - e. The soon coming return of Christ.
  - f. The message always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness, opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit, and the promise of Salvation..."
3. The 1st Christian Sermon --The message breaks down in the following way:
  - a. An explanation of what has taken place in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit vs 14-21.
  - b. A proclamation of the Apostolic message of the gospel vs 22-36.
  - c. A call to repentance with the promise of blessing vs 37-41.

4. In vs. 14-16 Peter responds to the accusation "They are full of new wine."

**(Acts 2:14-16)** "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. {15} "For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. {16} "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

5. **The Defense: vs 15 --It's only 9:00 a.m.**

This was the hour of prayer, at which time the morning sacrifice was offered in the temple. No decent Jew would drink before that time on a holy day such as Pentecost. The explanation would have to be found elsewhere.

6. The explanation of the supernatural phenomena is found in the scripture vs 16-21.

**(Acts 2:16-21)** "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: {17} 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. {18} And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. {19} I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. {20} The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. {21} And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'"

- a. The word "**this**" in vs 16 refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- b. The words "that" or "what" points to the prophecy that Joel gave. Joel's prophecy was given in 835 BC. That's how long they were waiting.

## END LESSON 6

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 6

1. **T or F** The building of Babel was an act of rebellion, but Pentecost was a ministry of humble submission to God.

2. **T or F** Devout men” speaks of Jews that had been scattered all over the world, who took the time and trouble to return to celebrate the feast of Harvest/Weeks.

3. **T or F** The streets of Bethlehem were packed during Pentecost,... the people represented the four corners of civilization.

4. During the experience of Pentecost, what reaction did NOT occur among the observers in the city:

- A. Casting Judgement
- B. Seeking the true meaning
- C. Amazed and Perplexed
- D. Receiving an offering
- E. Mocking

5. **T or F** Peter preached his first sermon in tongues and everyone understood him.

6. **T or F** The message always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness, opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit, and the promise of Salvation.

**BEGIN LESSON 7**

7. Peter mentions "**The Last Days**": In these "Last Days" the following could be expected:
  - a. A return of the spirit of prophecy, revelation dreams, visions and prophecy. This was very significant because of the long period since the last prophecy. About 475 years.
  - b. Pouring out of God's spirit on everyone.
  - c. The return of signs and wonders:
  - d. The long awaited Last Days are here and now,...and we know this because of the reinstitution of prophecy. Prophecy in the NT has more to do with forth-telling (a declaration of the Word of God) then fore-telling (declaring unforeseeable future events).
8. The Proclamation vs 22-36
  - a. vs 22 Jesus' ministry was attested by God through supernatural miracles, signs and wonders, and by those who witnessed his ministry. **John 5:31** "**If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.**"

**Acts 2:22** **Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:**

(I) John the Baptist bore witness of Him (Jn 5:33)

(John 5:33) **""You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth."**

(II) The works which He did bore witness of Him (Jn.5:36)

(John 5:36) **""But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish; the very works that I do; bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me."**

(III) The Father bore witness of Him (Jn.5:37-38)

**(John 5:37-38)** ""And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. {38} "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe."

**(IV)** The scriptures bore witness of Him (Jn. 5:39)

**(John 5:39)** ""You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

**(V)** The fact that he had the supernatural power flowing in His life always caused the religious people of the day to wonder if He was the Messiah. (Jn 9:15-16, 24-34) The proclamation of Peter's message was clear - Jesus was attested to by the Father, by signs and wonders, and by the prophets.

- b.** The Death of Jesus was part of a divine plan and human freedom. vs 23. If Jesus was the Messiah, why was He a victim? Why did He not use His power to avoid the cross?

**(Acts 2:23)** "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;"

**(I)** **Jesus' death and suffering was part of God's plan for man's redemption.** The cross was no accident!  
It belonged to the eternal plan of God. Throughout Acts we see the Apostolic teaching that the Cross was in the heart of God eternally

**(Acts 3:18)** "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled."

**(Acts 13:29)** "Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb."

**(2 Tim 1:9)** "who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,"

**(Rev 13:8)** "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

**(II) The death of Christ was the fulfillment of the Law**

**Heb 9:22-28** according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

**(III) The Death of Christ was the fulfillment of prophecy Is 53:5, 10-12.**

**(Isa 53:5)** "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."

**(Isa 53:10-12)** "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. { 11 } He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. { 12 } Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors."

- (IV)** Here Peter puts down the difficulty his audience would have with believing that the Messiah was put to death. Remember, the Jews of the day were looking for their Messiah to come in power and overthrow the Roman oppression. They were looking for "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah" - They were not expecting the "Lamb of God". Though Jesus' death was part of God's plan that does not absolve those who put Him to death of their guilt.
- (V)** Man's free will made way for him to do the Wicked Act "by lawless hands."

**(Acts 2:23)** "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by **lawless hands**, have crucified, and put to death;"

- (A)** Here we see a biblical paradox - God is sovereign, and man has free will.
- (B)** It was a part of God's divine plan that His Son would die, and give His life a ransom for many...and yet it was done by godless men, "**lawless hands**", that nailed Him to the cross
- (VI)** "**Lawless men**" here is a common phrase to refer to Gentiles who are without the Mosaic Law.
  - (A)** While the Jews instigated the crucifixion, the term "lawless hands" points to the Roman authorities (Gentiles) that carried out the crucifixion.

- (B) Here is an important lesson to learn from this passage of scripture - God is all powerful, God is sovereign, yet God has given men free will. All the evil in this world is done by lawless men - all the starvation, all the murder, all the wickedness, is the direct cause of people living outside of obedience to God's will and purpose.

**In summary, "God's purpose and foreknowledge stands as a necessary factors behind whatever happens; yet whatever happens occurs through the instrumentality of men expressing their human freedom of will."**

Now Peter will turn his attention to the glorious victory of Jesus earthly ministry...

c. The Resurrection vs 2:24—35

(Acts 2:24-35) "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. {25} "For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. {26} Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. {27} For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. {28} You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' {29} "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. {30} "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, {31} "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. {32} "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses {33} "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. {34} "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, {35} Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'""

- (I) Peter stresses the resurrection as the final proof that Jesus was indeed God's Chosen One.



- (A) Without the resurrection there would have been no Christian Church at all. After the cross the disciples were bewildered, broken men, with their dream gone and their lives shattered. It was the resurrection that changed all that, and turned them from cowards to heroes.
- (B) The resurrection was a major theme of Apostolic preaching, and it is a tragedy that many churches confine preaching the resurrection to Easter Sunday.
- (C) However we are children of the resurrection. Everyday is resurrection day, and we must recognize its importance. In the Eastern church, on Easter Sunday, when two Christians meet one says to the other "Christ has risen", and the other respond, "He has risen indeed!"

(II) The Resurrection: It's attributed to God,  
vs 24

(Acts 2:24) "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it."

- (A) By raising Jesus, God "loosed/ destroyed or abolished the pains of death."
- (B) Some translations read: "God put an end to the agony of death for Him."
  - (1) The word translated "agony or pains" comes from a Greek word "odinas" which literally means "birth pangs (pains)".
  - (2) Like the pain of a woman in labor, the pain of death for Jesus was temporary and resulted in something glorious - resurrection life.
- (C) The tomb was not a holding cell for dead bones, in Jesus case it was a womb, waiting to burst forth with new life.

(III) vs 24 "because it was not possible that he should be held by it (death)"

- (A) Death could not hold the Son of Life, death had no power over Him - Why? **Death could not hold Him because of Divine Power.**

(John 11:25) "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."

(Heb 2:14) "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,"

- (B) **Death could not hold Him because of Divine Promise as Jesus promised to rise from the dead.**

(John 2:18-22) "So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" {19} Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." {20} Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" {21} But He was speaking of the temple of His body. {22} Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

(Luke 24:46) "Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,"

- (C) **Death could not hold Him because of Divine Purpose**

- (1) God has designed that His people be with Him for all eternity.
- (2) In order to do that, they need to go through death and come out the other side.
- (3) Death is simply a door we all must face and walk through some day. Jesus had to go through first to make a way.

END LESSON 7

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 7

1. In the "Last Days" mentioned by Peter, what should not be expected?:

- A. A return of the spirit of prophecy, revelation dreams, visions and prophecy.
  - B. Pouring out of God's spirit on everyone.
  - C. The return of signs and wonders.
  - D. A re-emphasis on the Law and need to be better people.
  - E. The reinstitution of prophecy... forth-telling vs. fore-telling.
2. **T or F** Jesus' ministry was attested by God through supernatural miracles, signs and wonders, and by those who witnessed his ministry.
3. Mark all that did not significantly bear witness to the claims of Jesus Christ:
- A. The Father bore witness of Him.
  - B. The scribes, Pharisees and teachers of the law bore witness of Him.
  - C. John the Baptist bore witness of Him
  - D. The scriptures bore witness of Him
  - E. The works which He did bore witness of Him
4. **T or F** Gentiles who have a Torah but do not read it everyday are referred to as 'lawless men'.

## **BEGIN LESSON 8**

**(1 Cor 15:16-26)** "For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. {17} And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! {18} Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. {19} If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. {20} But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. {21} For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. {22} For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. {23} But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. {24} Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. {25} For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. {26} The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."

**(John 14:19)** "'A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also."

**(IV)** In vs. 25-35 Peter shows that the Resurrection is in fulfillment of prophecy. Speaking of David's words concerning the promise of the resurrection of Christ as fulfillment of prophecy.

**d.** The Summary to Peter's Proclamation vs 33, 36

**(Acts 2:33)** "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."

**(Acts 2:36)** "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

- (I)** Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. (this shows His equality with God) Jesus gave the promise of the H.S. coming; Jesus gave/poured out the H.S. This is what you are now seeing.
- (II)** Whom they crucified God has made both Lord and Christ.

## I. The Response of the People vs 37-41

(Acts 2:37-41) Now when they heard this, **they were cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" {38} Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. {39} "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." {40} And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." {41} Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

1. **Cut to the heart - Gr = Katanyssomai "Pricked in their heart."**  
**Broken in heart, conscience smitten, they felt crushed.**
  - a. All of a sudden the enormity of their sin hits them. Their long awaited Messiah was put to death by their own plans.
  - b. Some of those there that day yelled "crucify Him, give us Barabbas."
  - c. Proof of their open heart is in their response "Brethren (brothers) what shall we do?" Those whom they had just accused of being drunk, they now call brothers.
2. **"What must we do"**, How can we get ourselves right with Him whom we crucified?
3. Peter's reply to their question Acts 2:38-39

(Acts 2:38-39) "Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and **you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. {39} "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

- a. **Repent/Repentance** = a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Repentance involves turning in the opposite direction of our sin to walk in newness of life with a determination never to return to our sinful way. Repentance denotes an inward and complete change of mind that is rooted in the fear of God and sorrow for offenses committed against Him.

**(2 Cor 7:8-12)** "For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. {9} Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but **that your sorrow led to repentance**. For you were **made sorry in a godly manner**, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. {10} **For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation**, not to be regretted; but **the sorrow of the world produces death**. {11} For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What **diligence** it produced in you, **what clearing of yourselves**, what **indignation**, what **fear**, what **vehement desire**, what zeal, what **vindication**! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. {12} Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you."

Repentance - a turning away from sin, an inward and complete change of mind rooted in the fear of God and sorrow for offenses committed against Him

- (I) This change of mind will find expression in a change of conduct.
  - (II) True repentance produces a "godly sorrow" for sin, an act of turning around and going in the opposite direction.
  - (III) True repentance is not just a turning away from something, it is also a turning to Someone, ... Jesus
  - (IV) When one has truly repented, you will begin to see the fruit of their repentance...
  - (V) John the Baptist gave this admonition to the Saducees, and Pharisees. (Mat 3:8) ""**Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance**,"
- b. "**Be baptized**" = This would be an open proclamation of their repentance and faith in Christ.
- (I) To be baptized in the name of Jesus would acknowledge Him as their Messiah.
  - (II) Water Baptism is solely for the purpose of giving a **public proclamation** of your faith in Jesus Christ
  - (III) In water baptism you identify your life with Christ's. In essence you are saying "I identify with Jesus death, burial, and resurrection. I am His".

(IV) **Water Baptism does not “save you”**, you get water baptized because you are saved.

(RevC) The word in the Greek “eis” that is translated “for” in Acts 2:38 “...for the remission of sins,...” can also be correctly translated as “on the basis of” or “on account of”. The KJV translation infers that water baptism is necessary for salvation. When we examine the ministry of John the Baptist we see that people were water baptized “on account of” their repentance from sin. Water baptism is done on the basis that we have already repented of our sin and accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as our justification for salvation. Note that those in the home of Cornelius (**Acts 10:44-48**) who heard the good news from Peter all received the Holy Spirit before any were baptized in water. Notice also that **after** there was the evidence of their salvation Peter **commanded** them to be baptized in water. (RevC)

(VI) You should be water baptized because it is the command of Jesus, an ordinance of the church, ... out of obedience

(Mat 28:19) ""Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"

(Acts 2:41) "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

(Acts 8:12) "But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized."

(Acts 8:36-37) "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" {37} Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

(Acts 10:47-48) "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" {48} And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days."

(Acts 11:16) "Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"

(Acts 16:15) "And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us."

(Acts 16:33) "And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized."

(Acts 18:8) "Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized."

(Acts 19:3-5) "And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." {4} Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." {5} When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

(Acts 22:16) 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

**(VII) What if I was water baptized as an infant? -** remember the purpose of water baptism... to publicly identify your life with Christ's... after you have been born again. The command is believe, then be water baptized.

**(VIII) How can I know if my child is ready to be water baptized?**



When a child understands what it means to be saved, and they can understand how they were saved, and can explain why they want to be water baptized, then they are ready for Water Baptism.

(IX) If you have not been water baptized since you gave your heart to Jesus Christ, you should do so immediately.

(X) Peter said, "repent and be water baptized..."and

c. Receive the Gift of the H.S.

(Acts 2:38-39) "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. {39} "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

(I) Here the person who has repented and made the proclamation of faith receives the indwelling Spirit.

(II) The verse is often quoted in reference to receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, however, in context you can see this is in reference to salvation in which the Holy Spirit indwells the believer.

(III) **Anyone who is born again receives the gift of the Holy Spirit.** The indwelling presence of God, the Spirit of Christ.

(Rom 8:11) "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

(Rom 8:16) "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,"

1 Cor. 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

#### 4. The Response to Peter's Answer vs 41

(Acts 2:41) "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

- a. The word was gladly received.
- b. The word brought hope and freedom.
- c. 3,000 souls were saved-The Church is born.

#### **J. The Devotion of the Early believers vs 42-47**

**(Acts 2:42-47)** "And they **continued steadfastly** in the **apostles' doctrine** and **fellowship**, in the **breaking of bread**, and in **prayers**. {43} Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. {44} Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, {45} and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. {46} So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, {47} praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

#### **1. The day of Pentecost saw a great manifestation of the outpouring of God's Spirit.**

- a. Peter boldly proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ a result of being filled by the Holy Spirit.
- b. The Church is born as people hear the Word and believe.
- c. This early church was on fire for God. They continued in what the apostles taught them, fellowship, & prayer. They were in one accord, took care of one another's needs, and were filled with the joy of the Lord. It should still be this way today.

**(RevC)** These early believers experienced radical changes in their lives. They were "steadfast" indicating that they had staying power in their lives. They were not driven by every new wind that was meant to carry them away. They stuck to the teachings and doctrine of the Apostles. We get the sense that they were so hungry for God's Word that a once a week meeting was simply not enough.

Therefore, they continued in "fellowship" which means to "have things in common" to agree on the same things. **1 John 1:3-7** shows us that "fellowship" comes about as two or more people hold in common the same beliefs concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was alive and

living in the lives of each of these radicalized followers of Jesus Christ.

Thus, we see in Acts that they met “Daily”, studied the Word “Daily”, took care of one another “Daily”, won people to Jesus “Daily”, and increased in number “Daily”, were “Daily” in one accord without division or confusion, “Daily” they were praising God, and “Daily” they were experiencing the favor of God, as they walked “Daily” in gladness and singleness of heart. Such a far cry from the church of today. (RevC)

## END LESSON 8

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 8

1. **T or F** There is no indication anywhere in the Scriptures concerning the resurrection of the Christ.
2. What are the responses by the people in the crowd after Peter finished his first sermon on Pentecost?
  - A. Broken in heart
  - B. Cut to the heart
  - C. Conscience smitten
  - E. They felt crushed
  - F. Pricked in their heart
  - G. All of the above
3. Peter exposes the truth of their participation in putting the Christ to death. What does not belong with the following statements:
  - A. All of a sudden the enormity of their sin hits them. Their long awaited Messiah was put to death by their own plans.
  - B. The crowd, in realization of their mistake, wanted to now put Barabbas to death.
  - C. Some of those there that day yelled "crucify Him, give us Barabbas."

**D. Proof of their open heart is in their response "Brethren (brothers) what shall we do?"**

**E. How can we get ourselves right with Him whom we crucified?**

**4. T or F Repent/Repentance = a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God.**

**5. What following statements do NOT conform to the purpose or reason for water baptism?**

**A. To be baptized in the name of Jesus would acknowledge Him as their Messiah.**

**B. By being water baptized, other people in the church now hold you in higher esteem.**

**C. Water Baptism is solely for the purpose of giving a public proclamation of your faith in Jesus Christ**

**D. In water baptism you identify your life with Christ's.**

**E. Water Baptism does not "save you", you get water baptized because you are saved.**

## **BEGIN LESSON 9**

### **2. The Devotion of the New Believers Was to: (vs 42)**

#### **a. The Apostles Doctrine:**

**(I)** What did they teach?

**(II)** There were no epistles at that time

**(III)** There were no gospels written yet

**(Luke 24:44-45)** "Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." {45} And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures."

**(IV)** The teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount

**(V)** Their final conversations with the risen Christ before His ascension

**(Col 3:16-17)** "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. {17} And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

#### **b. Fellowship –**

- (I) "Koinonia" oneness, communion with, sharing in common.
- (II) Every time this word is used in the New Testament it denotes some kind of sharing

**(2 Cor 8:4)** "imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

**(2 Cor 9:13)** "while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men," .. here the sharing was that of an offering to meet needs.

- (III) Koinonia - Fellowship also was used to describe "sharing in" something with someone
- (IV) Fellowship cost something in the early church. Fellowship is not just a sentimental feeling of oneness. Fellowship comes through giving.
- (V) The early church came together often, and they shared together: they shared life, and blessings, and material things out of a heart of oneness and unity
- (VI) Many people never learn the joy of Christian fellowship because they have never learned to give themselves away. They visit a church only with an eye for their own needs, hardly aware of others, and go away saying "there is no fellowship there".
- (VII) The truth is, we will have fellowship only when we make it a practice to reach out to others, and give something of ourselves to others.
- (VIII) When the Spirit of God is poured out on a people they not only have a zeal for God's word, but a hunger for true fellowship and are ready to give of themselves to one another.

**c. Breaking of Bread:**

- (I) Agape feast to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ and the joy of fellowship OR the Lord's Supper and to recognize His death.

**(Acts 2:46)** "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,"

- (II) there is something special about breaking bread with one another -- intimacy, sharing - that's why we Christians love to eat
- (III) This phrase of devotion to breaking bread could also be a reference to that of the celebrating of communion. After the principle meal when believers came together to eat, they would take the left over bread and wine and remember the Lord's death and His atoning for their sins
- (IV) He should always be the center point of our coming together.

**d. Prayer:**

- (I) Here the emphasis is clear that from the very beginning prayer was a foundation of the early church.
- (II) Jesus told His disciples just prior to His departure...

**(John 14:13-14)** ""And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. {14} "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

- (III) The early church took that promise as the source of God's provision for all their needs, and they relentlessly pursued divine help.
- (IV) The early church took this instruction seriously. They went to the temple daily to pray. They had prayer meetings in homes - Acts 4:24-31 and because they prayed they saw the divine intervention of God in their lives and the church.
- (V) If we as a church will fulfill our greatest destiny, it can only begin with corporate prayer.

**3. these were the things the early believers were devoted to...**

- a. they gave themselves continually to the teaching of God's word
- b. they gave themselves continually to one another in fellowship
- c. They gave themselves continually in communion to the Lord
- d. They gave themselves continually to prayer
- e. If you and I are going to save ourselves from this perverse, crooked generation in which we live... then we must give ourselves continually to these same disciplines.

**4. John Stott in his commentary on the book of ACTS said:**

- a. “Looking back over these marks of the first Spirit filled community, it is evident that they all concerned the church’s relationship. First, they were related to the apostles (in submission). They were eager to receive the apostles instruction. A Spirit filled church is an apostolic church, a New Testament church, anxious to believe and obey what Jesus and His apostles taught.
- b. Second, they were related to each other ( in love ). They persevered in the fellowship, supporting each other and relieving the needs of the poor. A spirit filled church is a loving, caring, and sharing church.
- c. Third, they were related to God (in worship). They worshipped Him in the temple and in the home, in the Lord’s Supper and in the prayers, with joy and with reverence. A Spirit filled church is a worshipping church.
- d. Fourthly, they were related to the world (in outreach). They were engaged in continuous evangelism. No self-centered, self-contained church absorbed in its own affairs can claim to be filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit. So a Spirit filled church is a missionary church.

**5. The Character Of The Early Church vs 43-47**

(Acts 2:43-47) "Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. {44} Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, {45} and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. {46} So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, {47} praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

a. **When believers in a church are devoted to, continue steadfastly in, persevere in...**

- (I) teaching and understanding the word of God,...
- (II) fellowship - true koinonia,....
- (III) communion - celebrating the Lord and His death, looking to His return, and to ...
- (IV) prayer...
- (V) then the church will be characterized by certain things. These disciplines produce spiritual character... lets look at four aspects/ Characteristics of the first church

(A) **#1. It was an awe-inspiring church**

(Acts 2:43) **"Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles."**

- (1) "Fear" - phobos, (gk) = alarm, fright, be afraid, exceedingly fear or terror. This word refers to holy terror related to the sense of divine presence, which brings with it the attitude of reverence
- (2) It describes the feeling produced when one realizes that God is at hand.
- (3) Isaiah could relate...

(Isa 6:1-6) **"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. {2} Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. {3} And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!' {4} And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. {5} So I said: 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.'" {6} Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar."**



- (4) This concept of the fear of the Lord is used in Acts 5 to describe the reaction of the church to the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira

(Acts 5:5) "Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things."

(Acts 5:11) "So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things."

- (5) Again in Acts 19: to describe the reaction of the whole town of Ephesus to the attack on some Jewish exorcists by a demon possessed man.

(Acts 19:17) "This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

- (6) Luke 7:16 uses it to portray the reaction to our Lord's raising of the widow's son

(Luke 7:16) "Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people."

- (7) the life of this first fellowship was so genuine and spiritually powerful that everyone, whether inside or outside the church, kept feeling a sense of awe.
- (8) They weren't awed by the church because of it's building, programs, or anything reflecting human ability...they were awed by the supernatural character of it's life! This church was an awe-inspiring church.

**(B) #2. This was a Miraculous Church**

**(Acts 2:43)** "Then fear came upon every soul, and **many wonders and signs** were done through the apostles."

- (1) Jesus brought confirmation of His ministry with the miraculous...
- (2) now the same signs and wonders would bring affirmation to the credibility of the early church
- (3) Signs and wonders are for the purpose of attracting attention and pointing to spiritual truth

**(John 14:10-12)** ""Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. {11} "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. {12} "Most assuredly, I say to you, 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."

- (4) Power evangelism is a key to winning a people who seek spiritual answers. A church that is willing to follow after all the Lord has for them...who is willing to go anywhere and preach the Gospel..... will find signs, wonders and miracles confirming the Word.
- (5) Miracles often work hand in hand with evangelism.

**(Mark 16:15-18)** "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. {16} "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. {17} "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; {18} "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.""

**(Acts 1:8)** ""But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.""

**(1 Cor 2:4-5)** "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, {5} that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

## END LESSON 9

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 9

1. **T or F** In their final conversations with the risen Christ before His ascension, Jesus opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.
2. **T or F** "Koinonia" is a Greek term used in the New Testament to designate the paying of ones church tax to the proper tax collection authorities.
3. Early church fellowship included which statements below:
  - A. Fellowship cost something in the early church. Fellowship comes through giving.
  - B. The early church shared life, and blessings, and material things out of a heart of oneness and unity
  - C. We will have fellowship only when we make it a practice to reach out to others, and give something of ourselves to others.
  - D. Fellowship included reporting what all owned and the apostles would determine how much each gave.
  - E. When the Spirit of God is poured out on a people they not only have a zeal for God's word, but a hunger for true fellowship and are ready to give of themselves to one another.
4. The early church were characterized by certain disciplines which produce spiritual character... what does not belong?
  - A. teaching and understanding the word of God,...
  - B. fellowship - true koinonia,....
  - C. identifying non-believers and boycotting their businesses....
  - D. communion - celebrating the Lord and His death, looking to His return, and to ...
  - E. prayer...
5. **T or F** Early converts weren't awed by the church because of it's building, programs, or anything reflecting human ability...they were awed by the supernatural character of it's life. This church was an awe-inspiring church.

## BEGIN LESSON 10

(C)     **#3. The first church was a SHARING  
CHURCH**

(Acts 2:44-45) "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, {45} and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need."

- (1)     In these early days, before strife and divisions affected the church, all those who had believed were together. They possessed not only a spiritual unity but also a practical oneness.
- (2)     The phrase "**they had all things in common**" does not imply, nor mean, that they lived communally. The first church was not a commune...
- (3)     A decision to follow Jesus as a Christian did have the potential to wreak havoc in the new believers support system as they were often rejected by unsaved family members and even put out of their homes.
- (4)     Financial pressures within the family and community caused needs. The response within this new Christian community was that of helping to meet each other's needs.
- (5)     Their sharing was not limited to material things but included spiritual things as well...prayer, communion, and worship
- (6)     I believe it is because they touched the "whole need" that they were effective in reaching their community...we must be careful not to neglect either side of the "need equation"
- (7)     If a person is hungry, it will be hard to receive spiritual truth ...however, at the same time, if you only give them a sandwich, and fill their belly, what eternal value does it have...

- (8) The early church was a sharing church...they touched the physical needs around them... they cared for the spiritual needs...they went daily to the temple to pray and worship...they shared meals together...they were truly united in heart and mind and spirit.

(D) #4. They were A JOYFUL CHURCH

(Acts 2:46-47) "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food **with gladness** and simplicity of heart, {47} praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

- (1) It comes as no surprise that a unified, miraculous, sharing church was also a joyful church.
- (2) Gladness = noun form of the verb "agalliao" = joyful
- (3) one key reason for the joy was the sincerity of heart they manifested...
- (4) the simplicity of their love for God and for one another!
- (5) Another reason they were a joyful church - "**praising God**" vs 47a.
- (6) Praising God produces joy. To praise God is to recite His wonderful works and attributes.
- (7) The goal of that first fellowship was to exalt the Lord, and that produced true happiness.
- (8) Those who glorify themselves and seek the preeminence will never know lasting joy. Those who remain self absorbed, self centered, will never know joy...
- (9) Joy comes to those who give glory to God with joy comes strength to face every challenge!

(Neh 8:10) "Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD. Do not sorrow, **for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**"

- b. What was the result of a awe-inspiring, miraculous, sharing, joyful church

(Acts 2:47) "praising God and having favor with all the people. **And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**"

Favor with people...The Lord added to their number daily.

#### IV. THE EARLY CHURCH IN ACTION 3:1-26 ...The Lame Man Healed

(RevC) The early church was very culturally Jewish. In this chapter we see Peter speak in terms that are very Jewish such as referring to Jewish men as "children of the prophets and of the covenant" (Acts 3:25) and he speaks of the "times of restitution" (Acts 3:25) a Jewish reference to the Kingdom of the Messiah. These early believers were followers of Christ but still closely tied to their Jewish traditions and beliefs. They were still going to the temple and worshipping in their local synagogues, observing the hours of prayer, following what had become their customary way of life, yet radical changes were also taking place in their hunger for more of God, their care and love for one another, and their joy and gladness of heart as they followed the example and teachings of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit was actively at work in their lives. The transition from what might be seen as a branch of Judaism to the inclusion of the Gentiles into one new body of Jew and Gentile as one in Christ was a gradual process. Change is almost always a slow process and one that meets with its share of resistance. The road to becoming neither Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free but one new identity as a member of the Body of Christ was a bumpy road yet it is evident that the Holy Spirit was at work throughout the process making one new body of believers. (RevC)

## A. The Scene Acts 3:1-2

(Acts 3:1-2) "Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, **the ninth hour. {2} And a certain** man lame from his mother's womb **was carried, whom they** laid daily at the gate of the temple **which is called Beautiful,** to ask alms **from those who entered the temple;**

1. The gospels and Acts reveal that Peter and John were closely associated
  - a. partners in a fishing business - Luke 5:10
  - b. part of the "inner circle" of the disciples, along with John's brother, James - Matt.17:1; Mark 5:37
  - c. They were the two disciples sent to prepare for the Passover meal - Luke 22:8
  - d. They were the only two disciples who followed Jesus to the high priest's house after His arrest
  - e. They were the first two disciples to visit the tomb of Jesus following His resurrection
  - f. And in the early chapters of Acts we find them ministering and traveling together
2. **Vs 1 The early church still followed Jewish traditions of prayer and worship.**
  - a. They went to the Temple for prayer.
  - b. They went during the hour of Prayer
  - c. There were three "hours" of prayer on the daily calendar for the Jews
    - (I) the first being at 9:00 AM - the time of the morning sacrifice
    - (II) the second at noon
    - (III) the third "hour of prayer" was at 3:00 PM the time of the evening sacrifice

**Ps. 55:17** Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud,  
And He shall hear my voice.

- (A) This time may also have some significance for this miracle because it was also the time that Jesus died on the cross and said “it is finished”
- (B) This time was certainly significant because it was a time of day when the temple would be most crowded

### 3. The gate of the temple...

**(Acts 3:2)** "And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple;"

- a. The Beautiful Gate, inside the temple mount area on the eastern side, separated the Court of Gentiles from the Court of the Women
  - (I) Like the other gates, it was large and ornate
  - (II) According to the Jewish historian Josephus, it was made of Corinthian Brass, and was so large it took twenty men to close it.
  - (III) At the entrance of the gate they meet up with the lame man who was most likely one of many beggars who were seeking alms by the entrance.

### 4. The Lame man

- a. was over 40 (4:22) and lame from birth.
  - (I) Crippled from birth, his case was hopeless - the doctors had no cure
  - (II) Although he had no cure for his disease he did have friends!...He was carried daily to the temple gate to beg for alms. This was the best place to beg. Beggars in Palestine favored three locations to beg...
    - (A) in front of the house of a rich man - Luke 14:1-2; 16:19-21
    - (B) on main highways - Mark 10:46



(C) but the best location was the temple. The temple gate was the best place to beg because it drew a crowd daily - three times a day. People going in and leaving the temple gave alms, an important part of Jewish life, with the hope of gaining some favor from God thinking that by their good deeds He would be more inclined to answer their prayer.

- b. The lame man was strategically placed at the gate for maximum effect. So, the scene is set. Peter and John are on their way to church for prayer meeting. The lame man is at his post expecting to find some merciful souls help him out a little so he can survive life, but today would be like no other day at the temple gate!

#### **B. The Sign ...Acts 3:3-7**

(Acts 3:3-7) "who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. {4} And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." {5} So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. {6} Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." {7} And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength."

#### **Four aspects of this miracle are noteworthy**

1. #1. It was unexpected
  - a. In response to the beggar's cries for alms, Peter and John stop, and fix their gaze upon him
  - b. The very same Greek word (Atenizo) is used to describe the apostles intense gaze at the ascending Lord in Acts 1:10
  - c. When people encounter someone who is begging, most people just walk by. If you see somebody who is needy and you do not want to help, you try not to notice them
  - d. This would not be the case that day with Peter and John. The two disciples focus their attention on the unhappy cripple,...
  - e. Once they see the need - Peter now commands the beggar - "Look at us!"

- f. With eager anticipation, the beggar gave them something - his attention, expecting to receive something.
- g. I don't know if Peter processed this thought, but what he did by demanding the man look at them was to activate his faith. The beggar did not have anything to give, except his attention -when he gave it, his anticipation to receive was activated

**(John 16:24)** ""Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

**(Mat 21:22)** ""And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.""

- h. One clear principle of receiving from the Lord in scripture is that of believing. Even though this beggar was expecting something very different, even though his faith was fixed on Peter and John - He did not yet see Jesus.
- i. He gave his attention - he gave what he had - and God met him and gave, exceedingly, abundantly, above anything he could have asked for or thought of that day...
- j. "silver and gold I do not have"...
  - (I) I am certain, when the man heard that, his faith and expectation must have dropped. He was expecting his need to be met. He thought that he needed money to meet his need,
  - (II) but God saw beyond the money and the surface level of his need. God sees our real need not just as we see ourselves. He knows what you really need...

**(Mat 6:31-33)** ""Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' {32} "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. **For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.** {33} "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

- k. The Miracle this man received that day was totally unexpected! - (God does things unexpectedly, and suddenly)

**END LESSON 10**

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 10

1. T or F The early church was known as a 'sharing church', known for their communal living and sharing of possessions.

2. **T or F** One key reason for the joy of the early church was the sincerity of heart they manifested...the simplicity of their love for God and for one another.

3. **T or F** The phrase “times of restitution” is definitely Jewish and refers to the messianic kingdom promised in the prophets.

4. The Gospels and Book of Acts reveal that Peter and John were closely associated in many ways. Which of the following was NOT among those:

- A. they were partners in a fishing business.
- B. They both defended Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane with swords.
- C. They were the only two disciples who followed Jesus to the high priest’s house after His arrest.
- D. They were the first two disciples to visit the tomb of Jesus following His resurrection.

5. **T or F** The Beautiful Gate, inside the temple mount area on the eastern side separated the Court of Gentiles from the Most Holy Place.

## BEGIN LESSON 11

2. #2 notice this Miracle was done in the name of Jesus

(Acts 3:6) "Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: **In the name of Jesus Christ** of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

(Acts 3:16) "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

- a. A name does not just identify or distinguish a person, it expresses the very nature of his being. Therefore, the power of the person is present and available in the name of the person.
  - (I) To other people, everything that you are to them is evoked by your name. Whatever they see in you is what your name means to them; your character, your actions, your power, are all tied up in your name.
  - (II) When you hear a person’s name it evokes some response in you.
  - (III) The name of Jesus here is not some magical formula for healing

- (IV) It's not the postage stamp on the end of your prayers...
- (V) In the name of... means by virtue of Christ's character, authority, and power
- (VI) To do something "in the name of Jesus Christ" is to act consistent with His will; to do what He would do if He were here, to act in His authority and with His delegated power

b. The ambassador principle

- (I) The messenger of the king would go in the name of the king.
- (II) He carried the authority of the king when giving decrees in his name
- (III) to disobey the king's messenger was to disobey the king.
- (IV) Peter had authority to use the name of Jesus.
- (V) Jn 14:12-14 All disciples of Jesus have authority to use His name.

**(John 14:12-14)** ""Most assuredly, I say to you, 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.  
 {13} "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, **that the Father may be glorified in the Son.** {14} "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

c. The purpose - Why will the Lord answer prayer in Jesus name?

- (I) that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
- (II) That they would bear lasting fruit (Jn 15:16).

**(John 15:16)** ""You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

d. Acting on behalf of His Lord, Peter commands the beggar to rise up and walk

**(Acts 3:7)** "And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength."

- (I) Peter, now doing a typically Peter thing, grabbed him by the right hand and began to hoist him up
- (II) it was a bold move on Peter's part
- (III) as soon as he did this, the man's feet and ankle bones received strength

e. vs 16: Faith in the name released the power.

(Acts 3:12) "So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

(Acts 3:16) "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

f. Peter's faith released the power in the name.

(I) He knew who Jesus was, where he came from and what he was able to do.

(II) Peter had faith in the nature, character and power of Jesus.  
Jn 16:23-28

(John 16:23-28) ""And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. {24} "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. {25} "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. {26} "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; {27} "for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. {28} "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.""

(III) It was faith in who Jesus is, His nature, His character, His power... It was all about Jesus, so the Father would be glorified in the Son...

(IV) The miracle was not an end in itself... Signs and wonders are for the purpose of pointing to spiritual truths - they go hand in hand with evangelism

3. #3. it was instantaneous

(Acts 3:7) "And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength."

a. It was an immediate answer to a long-standing need

(I) God is still a God of miracles - God reached down and touched this lame man and instantly he was made whole

- (II) This was a notable miracle - Divine intervention into human affairs, the doctors could offer this man no hope, friends and programs had nothing that could fix him, he needed a miracle if he was to be made whole

(Mat 3:9) "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that **God is able** to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."

(Rom 11:23) "And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for **God is able** to graft them in again."

(Rom 14:4) "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for **God is able** to make him stand."

(2 Cor 9:8) "And **God is able** to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."

(Jude 1:24) "Now to Him who is **able to keep you from stumbling**, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,"

(Eph 3:20) "Now to **Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to the power that works in us,"

#### 4. #4 The miracle was complete

(Acts 3:8) "So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them; walking, leaping, and praising God."

- a. Peter did not have to manhandle this beggar to get him on his feet

- (I) As soon as he felt the strength surge through his feet and ankles, he began walking, & leaping, Peter and John did not have to support him
- (II) His symptoms were completely gone. He did not limp along - he began to walk. The same feet that had never carried this body, now became able and whole.

### C. Acts 3:8-11 The Sequel

**(Acts 3:8-11)** "So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them; walking, leaping, and praising God. {9} And all the people saw him walking and praising God. {10} Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. {11} Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed."

1. There were three results of the miraculous healing of the lame man
  - a. **#1. The joy of the beggar**
    - (I) he went around praising God
    - (II) the quiet ritual of the evening sacrifice was interrupted by shouts of hallelujah
  - b. **#2. A public testimony was given**
    - (I) the beggar's outburst of praise caused shock and amazement
    - (II) all the people in the temple saw him walking and praising God
    - (III) They knew who he was they recognized him as the lame man who sat by that temple gate for years begging
    - (IV) there was no doubt as to the reality of the miracle
    - (V) even the skeptical, Jewish leaders did not deny the miracle
    - (VI) Notice the similarity to your own salvation experience:  
  
**(RevC)** Our salvation experience is not unlike the healing of this lame man. He was a poor soul unable to even walk upright. We are all born in poverty counted as having nothing worthy of God love or care for us. He was unable to walk upright and who of us could stand before a Holy and Righteous God knowing our sinful condition we are all crippled whether we recognized our condition or not. Though he was placed near the temple door he was outside the house of God unable to enter in by his own merit. He was an alien in his own country, dispossessed left to beg for his survival yet this man had faith to believe—just as God has given to every

man a measure of faith (**Rom. 12:3**). He responded to the words of Peter—He knew Peter had the power of God to heal and acted on those words when presented to him. We all enter God's grace through the same doorway "**by grace through faith**" (**Eph. 2:8-9**). The man did not stop with his healing but gave immediate testimony of the miracle working power of God as he went about "**walking and leaping, and praising God**" (**Acts 3:8**). (RevC)

(**Acts 4:16**) "saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it."

**c. #3. Result of the Lame man's healing - the stage was set for a great in gathering**

- (I) God knows how to draw a crowd - all that took place this day, was in preparation for the gospel to be preached and people to be saved
- (II) Let's remember, that the circumstances of our lives often are not what they seem. The Master has a plan - He is setting the stage - It's about His plans and purposes
- (III) When things are not going your way - hold tight - the chapter has not yet been completed.
- (IV) Realize something today - Jesus walked by that same lame man when He went to the temple to pray
- (V) He did not heal him - there is a time and a season for everything under the sun. There is a purpose in God's great plan
- (VI) Trust Him, don't lose hope, don't give up! Have faith in Him! His nature, His character, His power, His willingness.

**D. Peter's Second Sermon Acts 3:11-26.**

(RevC) God's timing is always perfect and He is always at work around us preparing an opportunity for us to seize the moment and



allow Him to fulfill His will on earth. How many times has the Holy Spirit been at work in your life or mine and we were so busy going about our own purposes that we missed the opportunity to see God use us to do something truly wonderful.

Fortunately, Peter is a much different person now that he is walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and not trusting in his own strength. The healing of the lame man had generated great interest and a crowd of Jewish leaders have gathered mixed within a host of people that Jesus died to save. Peter sees the opportunity and boldly presents the truth in a way that is unmistakable. The power of Christ is evident both in His resurrection and in the miracle of the lame man whom these Jewish men and women were accustomed to seeing begging and unable to care for himself. Peter's message was spoken boldly unashamed of the truth, openly declaring that his Jewish audience was complicit in the unwarranted crucifixion and death of their Messiah who willingly purchased their salvation through faith in His sacrifice for their sin. Further proof of His power stood before them in the presence of the once lame man who now leaps with praise to His God. How could anyone walk away from such a testimony. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to the heart. Unless we see our need for a savior we will not seek one. Note that even though Peter did not get to finish with an opportunity for his listeners to respond we know that "...many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." Praise the Lord! (RevC)

1. God once again sets the stage for a huge harvest

**(Acts 3:11 NKJV)** Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, **all the people ran together** to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

The Master Planner **knows** the perfect time (the hour of prayer). The temple would be most crowded at this hour. The fact that God knows our situation should give us comfort, and encourage our faith.

**(Psa 103:13-14 NKJV)** As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. { 14 } For **He knows** our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

(Nahum 1:7 NKJV) The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And **He knows** those who trust in Him.

(Deu 2:7 NKJV) "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. **He knows** your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing."

#### END LESSON 11

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 11

1. **T or F** The “name” of a person had little meaning beyond identification.
2. **T or F** When someone was sent as an “ambassador” they carried the authority of the person who sent them.
3. **T or F** Peter’s “faith” released the power in the name of Jesus.
4. There were three results of the healing of the lame man. Which of the following was NOT one of those:
  - A. Joy of the beggar
  - B. It prepared the way for the gospel to be presented
  - C. It provided a testimony
  - D. The Jewish leaders denied the miracle took place
5. **T or F** In Peter’s second sermon presented to Jewish leaders he was very careful not to offend them or make them feel partly responsible for the crucifixion of Christ.

#### BEGIN LESSON 12

##### 2. Peter, His servant, recognized the opportunity...

(Acts 3:12 NKJV) So **when Peter saw it**, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

- a. Just for a moment, let's us consider this one fact... it is vitally important to take advantage of those God given opportunities if we are to be used of Him.

- b. There are times we come to when God is doing something in the life of someone around us and we must be quick to act.
- c. Peter begins his discourse by asking two questions to the crowd which gathered

**(Acts 3:12 NKJV)** So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, **why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us,** as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

**(I) "Why do you marvel at this?" is a mild rebuke**

- (A) as the covenant people of God, they knew God to be a miracle working God. Miracles played an important role in their history...
- (B) Many of these same people saw Jesus perform many miracles.
- (C) The fact that God did another miracle, should not have shocked the people

**(II) "Why look so intently at us?"**

- (A) First the crowd looked down – at the lame man
- (B) Then they looked at him when he walked, and they were astounded at the miracle.

- (C) Then they looked at Peter and John as if they were something special, and it was by their great power or godliness, that this man's healing came...

*(RevC) Note Peter's quick response. He accepts no glory for the working of the miracle but immediately ascribes the event to the work of "the God of their fathers" to bring glory to "His Son Jesus; whom you delivered up and denied". Peter wastes no time in connecting this miracle power to the name of Jesus as proof of the resurrected Christ and their guilt in having crucified their Messiah. Not until vs 17 does Peter show them the way of forgiveness. A sinner must see his need before he can receive a savior. (RevC)*

But all the time they should not have been looking down, nor at any human being... they should have been looking up!

- (1) Please realize that when God uses you, it's not because of some great act of faith on your part...
  - (2) Nor because you are so godly and holy
  - (3) But rather it's about God finding willing vessels who will allow the Lord to pour Himself through them, while they look up! – giving glory to the only one worthy
  - (4) Spiritual pride destroys supernatural flow.
- (E) And let's remember to keep our eyes firmly fixed on Him, and not the vessel He may choose to use. In other words, take your eyes off of the servant and put them on the Master!... we would all be much better off if we would stop looking around and look up!

### 3. Peter takes as the theme of his message the matchless name of Jesus

- a. He presents five of the many names of our Lord. All of these names have messianic implications.
- b. Peter will use these titles of the messiah from the Old Testament and link/ or identify Jesus of Nazareth with them. These titles also reveal part of the nature and character of Christ.

#### 4. The Titles Of Messiah in the Old Testament

##### a. “His Servant Jesus”

(Acts 3:13 NKJV) "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, **glorified His Servant Jesus**, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.

- (I) Servant of God --Refers to Messianic prophecy given by Isaiah 42:1-4, 52:13.

(Isa 42:1-4 NKJV) "**Behold! My Servant** whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

(Isa 52:13 NKJV) **Behold, My Servant** shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

**Isa 53:1-12** is probably the best known passage of the “suffering servant” ... the one who took upon Himself the sins and iniquity of us all... (Isa 53:10-11 NKJV) **Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. {11} He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.**

- (II) Matthew identifies Jesus as the Servant in Isaiah’s prophecy 42:1-4; as He applies it to Jesus in Matthew 12:18-21. Jesus teaches that one of the reasons He came was to serve.

(Mat 20:28 NKJV) "just as **the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve**, and to give His life a ransom for many."

(John 8:28 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "**When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.**

- (III) If God is working the image of His son into us, then what do you think should be one of our primary character traits?  
– **serving one another!**

##### b. The Holy One: vs 14 - Title of the Messiah Ps 16:10, Mark 1:24

(Acts 3:14 NKJV) "But you **denied the Holy One and the Just**, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

(Psa 16:10 NKJV) For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your **Holy One** to see corruption.

(John 6:69 NIV) We believe and know that you are the **Holy One of God.**"

Even the demons recognized Jesus as the Holy one of God! (Luke 4:34 NIV) "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the **Holy One of God!**"

- (I) Holy = Hagios in the Greek = to be separated to God
- (II) Jesus is not only holy by nature, but also separated to do God's will

**c. The Just Or Righteous One:** vs 14 7:52, 22:14

(Acts 3:14 NKJV) "But you **denied the Holy One and the Just**, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

- (I) From the Greek word "dikaios" it carries with it the idea of being innocent of any crime.
- (II) Faced with a choice between a murderer and Jesus, their innocent Messiah, they chose the guilty murderer Barabbas.

**d. Prince of Life/Originator of Life/Author of Life:**

(Acts 3:15 NKJV) "and killed the **Prince of life**, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

- (I) Peter has been identifying Jesus with titles of their long, awaited Messiah.. And at the same time he has been presenting a series of paradoxes...
  - (A) Although Jesus was a servant, God exalted Him
  - (B) He was their deliverer, yet the nation delivered Him to Pilate
  - (C) They rejected the Holy and Just one and received the Unholy, unjust murderer Barabbas
  - (D) Now Peter offers the greatest paradox of them all... they put to death the Prince of Life, while asking for the one who took life

(II) Prince of life refers to the originator, pioneer, or beginner of something.

(Psa 36:9 NKJV) **For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.**

(III) God is the fountain of life, the originator of life, and Jesus, the messiah is identified with this title

(John 1:4 NKJV) **In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.**

(1 John 5:11 NKJV) **And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**

(1 John 5:20 NKJV) **And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.**

(John 14:6 NKJV) **Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

(IV) Peter not only identifies Jesus as the originator of life – He states that though He was dead, yet now He lives

(Acts 3:15 NKJV) **"and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.**

(V) Here Peter gives his eye-witness testimony to the fact of the resurrection, and later Paul bears witness to the resurrection in 1 Cor.

**(1 Cor 15:3-7 NKJV)** For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, {4} and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, {5} and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. {6} After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. {7} After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

**(VI)** If Jesus had not risen from the dead, that claim would have been easy to disprove... all the religious leaders or the Roman officials had to do was produce His dead body, but they could not

**(VII)** The Prince of Life, lives! And without Him you cannot live!

**(1 John 5:11-12 NKJV)** And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. {12} He who **has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

**e. A Prophet Like Moses VS.22**

**(Acts 3:22 NKJV)** "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you **a Prophet** like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.'

**(I)** Peter ties Jesus to the prophecy in Deut. 18:15-19. Moses the deliverer, a foreshadow of the coming Messiah who would deliver the people of God from Egyptian bondage.

**(Deu 18:15-19 NKJV)** "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, {16} "according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' {17} "And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. {18} 'I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. {19} 'And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.

**END LESSON 12**

**QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 12**

**1. T or F** Peter recognized at the healing of the lame man a great opportunity to influence the crowd with his anointing and get them to become members of his church.



2. **T or F** The fact that God did another miracle should not have shocked the crowd after many of them witnessing the miracles of Jesus

3. **Titles Of Messiah in the Old Testament:**

- A. My Servant
- B. The Holy One
- C. The Just or Righteous One
- D. Prince of Life, Originator of Life, Author of Life
- E. A Prophet like Moses
- F. All of the above

4. **T or F** Spiritual pride destroys supernatural flow.

## **BEGIN LESSON 13**

### **5. The miracle explained – done through Faith in His Name**

(Acts 3:16 NKJV) "And His name, **through faith in His name**, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the **faith which comes through Him** has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

- a. Peter's faith, in the name of Jesus = the nature and character of Jesus resulted in the man's healing
  - (I) It was not Peter's personal power or holiness...
  - (II) It was not the faith of the man... although there was expectancy on his part to receive something
  - (III) It was faith in Jesus name that released the power of God's healing...
  - (IV) Peter trusted in Jesus' nature, by nature, Jesus is a healer
  - (V) Peter trusted in Jesus character, His willingness to heal
  - (VI) Peter trusted in Jesus power - ability to do the work of healing
  - (VII) Peter trusted in Jesus and as Jesus' ambassador, with the delegated authority to do the works of Jesus, Peter, stopped and spoke healing to this man, and Jesus healed him

(Mark 9:23-24 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, **all things are possible to him who believes.**" {24} Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

- b. Realize also that Faith is a gift from God. You cannot believe without His help.

(Acts 3:16 NKJV) "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, **the faith, which comes through Him** has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

- c. Faith comes from God, it's not something you can "muster up", based on personal holiness or good works
- d. You can promote an environment where faith can grow, ...
  - (I) Through prayer – "Lord help my unbelief"
  - (II) Through praying in the Spirit

(Jude 1:20 NKJV) **But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,**

- (III) Through reading the word of God –

(Rom 10:17 NKJV) **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

## 6. Realize that healing is an act of the mercy of God

- a. It is God, acting out of His compassion and mercy for the suffering, who extends His power to heal
- b. Be careful about putting together some neat little formula for healing
- c. Be careful about judging those who don't receive their healing, and thinking they are in sin or there is a lack of faith on their part.
  - (I) We are to pray, we are to have faith, we are to stand on God's word, we are to know Him as our healer, and we are to remember that He is sovereign.
- d. The miracle of the healing of the lame man came in God's timing and for God's purpose. It was a sign and wonder used to attract people to the miracle worker, Jesus – there was evangelism in the heart of this miracle

## 7. Acts 3:17 is a transitional verse in Peter's sermon. Up to this point he was convicting them of executing their Messiah.

a. “Brethren”... 3:17

**Acts 3:17** And now, **brethren**, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

- (I) By addressing them as **brethren**, he identifies with them as fellow Jews and places himself on their level. Too often, we fail to do this with people we are trying to reach
- (II) You want to find a way into a persons heart by finding some common ground, identify with them so they will hear the message...

b. (Acts 3:17) “**you did it in ignorance**”...

- (I) (RevC) I find it very interesting that the very person who denied even knowing Jesus is seen now boldly condemning his fellow Israelites for murdering the innocent Jesus while releasing a criminal. To make matters even worse the innocent Jesus was their Messiah. Peter seems to give no quarter to his Jewish audience until vs. 17. He must have seen the convicting power of the Holy Spirit resting on them and thus was prepared to show them the grace and love of God as demonstrated in the prayer of Christ on the cross when he prayed, “**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do**” (Luke 23:34).

The Bible indicates that there was a difference in judgment throughout the Old Testament upon someone who committed sin willfully and those who did so in ignorance or unintentionally (**Lev. 4 & 5; Numbers 15:22-31**). If the sin was done in ignorance or unintentional the sinner could repent and find forgiveness (note: forgiveness does not necessarily remove the consequence) and if he/she had, for example, committed manslaughter without prior intent or maliciousness he/she was afforded the opportunity to flee to a “City of Refuge” where he/she could live free of reprisal as long as they

remained inside the city until the death of the High Priest at which time he/she could return to their home (**Numbers 35**). (RevC)

(Num 15:22-31 NKJV) 'If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which the LORD has spoken to Moses; {23} 'all that the LORD has commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations; {24} 'then it will be, if it is unintentionally committed, without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one kid of the goats as a sin offering. {25} 'So the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it was unintentional; they shall bring their offering, an offering made by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their unintended sin. {26} 'It shall be forgiven the whole congregation of the children of Israel and the stranger who dwells among them, because all the people did it unintentionally. {27} 'And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. {28} 'So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the LORD, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. {29} '**You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, for him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them.** {30} '**But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people.** {31} '**Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.'**

(II) Paul wrote that if the rulers of the people had known who Jesus was, “**they would not have crucified the Lord of glory**”. **1 Cor. 2:8**

(III) What they did, they did in ignorance, yet ignorance does not make one guiltless... there was still sin, and a need to repent. (RevC) Beginning with **Acts 3:17** Peter begins to show his audience the way of salvation. What an unusual sequence is presented as Peter the prosecutor becomes Peter the defense attorney saying that that their sin of crucifying their Messiah was done in ignorance. Now he is showing them the place of refuge – in Jesus Christ. (RevC)

**8. Acts 3:18 – God foretold all these things would be done to the Messiah**

(Acts 3:18 NKJV) "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

The suffering and the crucifixion were clearly foretold by the prophets: Isaiah 53, Psalm 22; Zech.12:10

**9. Repent...– Acts 3:19**

(Acts 3:19 NKJV) "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

- a. Repentance is a key New Testament term
- b. Metanoeo =Literally – “to change one’s mind or purpose”.
- c. However, repentance is not just a turning away from something....it also involves – turning to God.

**10. Be converted – turn to God**

(Acts 3:19 NIV) Repent, then, **and turn to God**, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

- a. Our English text has Peter encouraging his listeners to “turn to God”, the Greek text actually says “**flee to God**”
- b. This terminology brings to mind the O.T. image of the cities of refuge
  - (I) In Israel, if someone accidentally killed someone, they could flee to a city of refuge and live their protected from any kinsmen avenger of the victim.

(II) They would live their until the death of the High Priest, and after his death, they could return home

- c. It is not enough to feel sorry for your sins. Repentance is feeling sorry enough to quit, ...and quitting means turning from sin to Jesus

(Acts 17:30 NKJV) "Truly, **these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,**

## 11. God uses various means to bring us to repentance

- a. **Revealed truth**, is one vehicle the Lord uses to bring people to repentance... Matt.11:21-24

(Mat 11:21-24 NKJV) "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. {22} "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. {23} "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. {24} "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

- (I) God can use miracles, and signs to reveal truth
- (II) God uses His word to reveal truth that can lead to repentance - this is illustrated in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus

(Luke 16:30-31 NKJV) "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' {31} "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

- b. God uses sorrow for sin to lead men to repentance

**(2 Cor 7:9-10 NKJV) Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance.** For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. {10} For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

- (I) Sorrow or regret for sin must not be confused with genuine repentance as Judas felt remorse over his betrayal of Jesus, yet he never repented
  - (II) It is possible to have sorrow for sin without repentance, just as it is possible to have knowledge without repentance
- c. God uses His goodness and kindness to lead people to repentance

**(Rom 2:4 NKJV) Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

- (I) When you remember all of God's goodness, and you see His kindness toward you, it can bring you to a place to see the emptiness of sin, and the fullness of God that leads to repentance.
  - (II) This world has nothing to offer you – it's all a counterfeit compared to a life in fellowship with Jesus
- d. Fear of final judgment can lead people to repentance

**(Acts 17:30-31 NKJV) "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, {31} "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."**

**12. "your sins may be blotted out/ wiped away" – Acts 3:19**

- a. Forgiveness is what people need, and the only place anyone will ever really find forgiveness is in Jesus Christ

(Isa 43:25 NKJV) "I, even **I**, am **He who blots out your transgressions** for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

(Isa 44:22 NKJV) **I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions**, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

(Num 14:18 NKJV) '**The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression**; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.'

(Psa 85:2 NKJV) You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; **You have covered all their sin**. Selah

(Psa 86:5 NKJV) For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

(Psa 130:3-4 NKJV) If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?  
{4} But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.

(Col 2:13-14 NKJV) And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, **having forgiven you all trespasses**,  
{14} having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

## END LESSON 13

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 13

1. T or F Peter quickly explained that it is only through faith in his name that the lame man was healed.
2. T or F Your personal holiness or the more good works you produce is a tangible way to measure your faith.
3. You can promote an environment where faith can grow:
  - A. Through prayer - 'Lord, help my unbelief'!



**B. Through praying in the Spirit**

**C. Through reading the Word of God**

**D. All of the above**

**4. T or F** In the Old Testament Law, there is a difference between deliberate sins and sins of ignorance.

**5. God uses various means to bring us to repentance. Which of the following is NOT one of those:**

**A. Revealed truth**

**B. Through modern day advertisements**

**C. Sorrow for sin**

**D. His goodness and kindness**

**E. Fear of final judgment**

**6. T or F** Forgiveness is what people need, and the only place anyone will ever really find forgiveness is in Jesus Christ

#### **BEGIN LESSON 14**

### **13. “That Times of refreshing may come” – Acts 3:19**

**(Acts 3:19 NIV)** Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, **that times of refreshing may come** from the Lord,

**a.** this can be understood in a couple of different ways

- (I)** In Peter’s context it most likely concerns a future day of blessing when the Jewish people will turn to Christ in large numbers and a final age of national blessing will come. Romans 11 speaks to this future event
- (II)** On the other hand there are times of refreshing for God’s people even now! When we come to God and receive His forgiveness it opens the door for times of refreshing to our spiritual lives. Times, when He is so real, so close, when you open the word it is alive to you! If we will but draw close to Him, He will draw close to us.

(James 4:8 NKJV) **Draw near** to God and He will **draw near** to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

14. Then in verses 20-25 Jesus is referenced in the context of being a Prophet. For those who hear His words they are life, but shall yield destruction for those who fail to heed the words of the Prophet.

**Acts 3:20-25** And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. 3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 3:23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. 3:24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. 3:25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

15. Finally in verse 26 we see **a final reason to repent** in the fact that Jesus was sent to bless us by turning us from our iniquities.

**Acts 3:26** Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, **sent him to bless you**, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

(RevC) When you consider the events of the life of Christ remembering that He was “very God” while at the same time “very man”, and as a man was of Jewish decent, opposed by the authorities whether religious or otherwise throughout His life on earth, yet from the time He began to go about His Father’s business the Spirit of Grace was constantly about Him as the love of His Father for the creation of mankind was made evident. Especially during the last week of His earthly life is the love of God so evident.

Consider that many of the very people who hailed Him as King upon His dramatic entrance into Jerusalem were the same people who only a few days later were betraying Him for the freedom of the criminal Barabbas. Then mocking Him every step of the way to Golgotha and His crucifixion. Yet while hanging from the cross among His last thoughts and

words as the man Jesus are the words, **“Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”**

**To say that God is longsuffering somehow seems to be a gross understatement at the very least.** Yes, sin must be punished, the sinner must be dealt with and just how far will our Heavenly Father go to make a way for mankind to be forgiven, to be reconciled to Him, to have fellowship with Him, and to dwell with Him free of condemnation and shame. The cross and suffering of Jesus Christ is just how far He has gone.

So, at a time when one might expect the judgment of God to be released on all who were guilty of murdering their Messiah; instead God releases the Holy Spirit to heal a beggar as unmistakable proof in the power of Christ and the reality of His resurrection. There is nothing quite like a powerful life changing demonstration to show the reality of God’s presence. With this demonstration as proof Peter now proclaims the way of salvation by convincing them of the reality of Christ’s resurrection, and proof of their crime, which allows the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit to begin to draw man back to God. Such grace and mercy, such love the world would otherwise have never known. Thank you, Jesus!  
(RevC)

## **V. Review Summary:**

### **A. Chapter 1: Gave a review of Christ's last days on earth,...**

- 1.** His promise of sending power to fulfill the mandate to witness,...
- 2.** the choosing of Mathaias as Judas Iscariot's replacement.

**B. Chapter 2: Opens with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples and the direct results of that significant event,...**

1. Peter boldly preaches the word, 3 thousand receive the word and the church is born,...
2. The chapter closes with a discussion of the life of early believers.

**C. Chapter 3: Luke examines an early event in the birth of the church.**

1. Here the story of the healing of the lame man is recounted and the effect it has on the people in the city of Jerusalem.
2. Peter gives his 2nd sermon as the temple is crowded around the healed beggar who was lame for 40 years. Two thousands more were saved

**D. From this point forward our class will be conducted in survey fashion examining the key issues and events without verse by verse commentary. During the next few sessions we will survey Chapters 4 through 12.**

1. We will see the development of the church at Jerusalem.
2. The persecution raised against it by the Sanhedrin.
3. The martyrdom of Stephen, and the Persecution by Saul.
4. Saul's conversion.
5. The opening up of the gospel message to the Gentiles.
6. The killing of James, the Brother of John by Herod.

**VI. Chapter 4**

**A. The effect of Peter's preaching 4:1-4**

(Acts 4:1-4 NKJV) Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, {2} being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. {3} And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. {4} However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

1. Peter and John were put into custody.

- a. vs 1 Mentions the captain of the temple: He was the commanding officer of the temple police force. Considered inferior in rank only to the High Priest. He was responsible for maintaining order in the temple precincts.
- b. **Sadducees:** Their origin is not certain, some scholars believe the name Sadducees came from Zadok, the High Priest in David's days (2 Sam 15:24).

- (I) They were priests from the Tribe of Levi who trusted only in the Law of Moses.

- (II) They did not believe in the Resurrection of the dead, or the immortality of the soul. They also failed to believe in angels, demons, heaven or hell, or rewards or judgment after death, simply because these doctrines did not appear in the Law of Moses.

- (III) They were the political rulers and dominant landlords. Most priests were Sadducees, the temple police force was composed entirely of Levites, the captain of the temple guard was always a high-caste Sadducee, and so were each of the High Priests.

- c. After looking at the individuals involved in this situation, and the content of Peter and John's preaching, you can see why they bumped heads. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead, and that the disciples proclaimed He was the Messiah caused problems with the Sadducees.

## 2. **Second affect of their preaching: Many people were added to the faith.**

- a. (vs 4) The number of men came to be about 5,000.
- b. This does not mean that 5,000 were added that day, but that the total number of male believers in the Jerusalem church was now about 5,000.

### **B. The Trial 4:5-7**

**(Acts 4:5-7 KJV)** And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 4:7

And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, “By what power or by what name have you done this?”

1. Again, we can see the hand of God directing their path as they are taken into custody and brought before the whole council.
2. The testimony of who Jesus is would now be preached to the same men that orchestrated His crucifixion.
3. **The moral to the whole story here is that God ordains the footsteps of the righteous, and even what may appear to be a set back is actually God carrying out His Master Plan.**

**C. The Sanhedrin: The Supreme Court of the Jewish Nation.**

1. 70 members sat on this council.
2. President who was the High Priest
3. Dominated by Sadducees (the Priestly Party)
4. Scribes, who were interpreters of the Law, most belonged to the Pharisaic Party.
5. Elders who were heads of influential families.
6. They could not carry out a death sentence. That had to go before the Roman courts.
7. The two men were set in the midst of the Sanhedrin, and gave their defense to the question/accusation (vs 7) "By what power or by what name have you done this."

**(Acts 4:7 NKJV)** And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, “By what power or by what name have you done this?”

8. The members of the Sanhedrin were wise enough to recognize that there was power in the name by which these men had performed the miracle healing.

**D. (4:8-12) In Peter's Defense he:**

**(Acts 4:8-12 NKJV)** Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: {9} “If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, {10} “let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ** of Nazareth, **whom you crucified**, whom **God raised from the dead**, by Him this man stands here before you whole. {11} “This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ {12} “**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**”

1. vs. 8 Spoke with the power of the Holy Spirit
2. vs. 9- 10a. He declared the name of Jesus, as the source of healing and power
3. vs 10 b - Condemned them for crucifying Him.
4. vs 10c - Proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus: putting him at direct odds with the theology and teaching of the Sadducees who denied the resurrection of the dead.
5. vs 11 – Peter speaks of Jesus as being the “**stone**” that they “**the builders**” rejected (quoting Psa. 118:22). And now He has become the “**chief cornerstone**” to all who trust in Him. The reference to the Messiah as the “stone” was something these men were very familiar with as they knew the O.T. scriptures. *(RevC) No less than 5 times in Deuteronomy 32 do we see God referred to by the symbol of a “Rock”. Then in the book of Daniel where Daniel is interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar we see Daniel refer to the “stone” that will be an everlasting Kingdom as a picture of the Messiah & His Kingdom on earth (Dan. 2:31-45).* (RevC)
6. vs 12, Declared that there is salvation in no other name.

#### END LESSON 14

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 14

1. **T or F** For those who hear His words they are life, but shall yield destruction for those who fail to heed the words of the Prophet.

2. T or F "Times of refreshing" from the Lord are His promised land flowing with 'milk and honey'.
3. T or F To say that God is "longsuffering" seems to be a gross understatement at the very least.
4. T or F Peter gives his 2nd sermon as the temple is crowded around the healed beggar who was lame for 28 years.
5. What were the effects of Peter's preaching:
  - A. They received the greatest love offering so far.
  - B. **Peter and John were put into custody**
  - C. The former lame man was made an elder in the Jerusalem church.
  - D. The crowd grew violent and attacked the temple guard.
6. T or F The Sanhedrin knew that the "rock" was a symbol of God, and that the Prophet Daniel had used the 'rock' to picture the Messiah and the coming of His kingdom on earth.

#### BEGIN LESSON 15

##### E. The Decision of the Court vs 13-22



**(Acts 4:13-22 NKJV)** Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. {14} And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. {15} But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, {16} saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. {17} “But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.” {18} And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. {19} But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. {20} “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” {21} So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. {22} For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

1. Faced with certain facts and fears they had no choice: They had a healed man in front of them.
  - a. The apostles spoke boldly and as educated or trained men.
  - b. The council knew they were with the company of Jesus. – The council feared if they punished them the crowd would react.
  - c. They commanded them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus (In a sense they were issuing a warning).
  - d. It is important to keep in mind that: **(RevC)** The council faced with the healed man standing in front of them and the crowd of witnesses could do little to Peter and John other than threaten them to no longer speak in the name of Jesus. This healing was not proof of Jesus’ resurrection but it was a power evidence that God was working through the apostles. (RevC)

## F. The Prayer Meeting, 4:23-31.

1. They had mandate from Jesus to be his witness in Jerusalem. ...They had a mandate from the Sanhedrin to stop. What should they do? = Have a Prayer Meeting.

(Acts 4:23-31 NKJV) And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. {24} So when they heard that, **they raised their voice to God with one accord** and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, {25} “who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? {26} The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.’ {27} “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together {28} “to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. {29} “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, {30} “by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” {31} And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

2. Their Prayer:
  - a. They prayed “in one accord.” Unity in prayer is a key to success, as united prayer is powerful prayer.
  - b. Prayed to God as Sovereign Lord, Creator of Universe (recognizing His omnipotence).
  - c. They prayed using scripture and recognized that God was sovereign and that the events taking place were all a part of His Master Plan. **(RevC) Psalm 2:1-2** begins their plea before the Lord. It is always important to pray according to the Word and Will of God. Often, we want God to do our will and then wonder why nothing seems to take place. Jesus was asked by His disciples to teach them to pray. He then taught them what we refer to as “the Lord’s prayer” **(Matt. 6:9-14)**. Keep in mind it was not “the Lord’s prayer” it was what He was teaching us to pray. One part of that prayer was “thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”.

Jesus was teaching us to pray that the Father's will would be done. There are many places in God's Word where He tells us what His will is. These are the things we should be praying if we want to see results. When I pray I realize that my responsibility is to "release God to have His will in each situation of my life". If there is a passage of scripture related to His will be accomplished in the situation I also add that as part of my prayer. Let me encourage you to pray releasing God to have His will in each situation of your life and be specific. You will see God move and His will accomplished. One of my favorite passages in prayer is 1John 5:14-15 I quote it almost in every prayer. (RevC)

- d. They yielded to the Will of God vs 27c-28. **(RevC)** Notice in verse 27 they are recognizing that God was at work even though the people and rulers were set against Jesus. Jesus was serving the will of the Father which they go on in verse 28 to acknowledge everything that took place had been predetermined by God. There was no prayer by them seeking to have their situation change to something more of their liking – rather their prayer in the next two verses is for boldness and the empowerment needed to accomplish the will of the Father. (RevC)
- e. Prayed for boldness - showing their determination to stand in the face of opposition. **(RevC)** Their prayer was for boldness – not the kind of boldness that says, "I can do this!" but the kind of boldness to stand in the face of opposition and wait on God to work with His power through them. The body of Christ, the Church, was an infant and the life that was being evidenced in the Body was the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit – they as mere men wanted that power to continue to be manifested. Thus, the need to release God to work His will in every situation. (RevC)

- f. **(RevC)** They were wise to realize that the power they were seeing manifested was the power that came through the name of Jesus. It was He who deserved the glory, and still does! Their prayer was one of “release” releasing God to work His will in and through them on earth. Notice in verse 31 that immediately God responded with a manifestation of His presence and approval as the anointing of the Holy Spirit came upon them and they went out and preached God’s Word with boldness!  
(RevC)

### 3. The Result Of Their Prayer vs 31

**(Acts 4:31KJV)** And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

- a. The building shook.
- b. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- c. They spoke the words with boldness.

### G. The Communal Church, 4:32-37

**(Acts 4:32-37 KJV)** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 4:34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 4:35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 4:36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 4:37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- 1. In the close of Chapt. 4 we find the description of the Church again:
  - a. They were in one heart and one accord. vs 32

- b. The miraculous was still flowing through the Apostles. vs 33
  - c. The church still shared all that they had with those who had need.
2. This section vs 34-37 in particular sets up Chpt 5. It gives the noble example of Barnabas who sold all he had and laid it at the apostles' feet.

(RevC) “Barnabas” meaning “son of consolation” or “son of exhortation” is a very interesting disciple. His real name was Joseph though his nickname was Barnabas and likely the name most people knew him by. It is also interesting that he was a Levite from Cyprus. Barnabas sold a piece of land and though verse 34 indicates that there were others who did, Barnabas is publicly acknowledged for having done so. Perhaps it may have had something to do with the fact that Levites were not to own land according to **Numbers 18:20** and **Deuteronomy 10:9**. It could be that the law only applied to land that was part of the land grant God gave to Israel and this piece of property was in Cyprus. Or perhaps there was some other means by which he acquired ownership, and knowing the law, was eager to sell it and give the money to the apostles for the work of the ministry. Though it is very likely that he was not seeking recognition, the apostles recognized the gift and their doing so evidently filled the hearts of Ananias & Sapphira with envy (Chapter 5).

Barnabas is mentioned many times in the book of Acts and several times in the epistles. He was known for many works:

- His life was committed to the welfare of others
- He was sent to Antioch to encourage the early believers
- He stood up for Paul when others feared Paul and served with Paul
- He stood up for John Mark (his cousin) when Paul was upset with John Mark
- He was one of the first two missionaries – Paul the other
- Paul spoke very highly of him to the church in Corinth

His life definitely made a difference in the early church.  
(RevC)

## VII. Chapter 5

In Chapter 1 of Acts, we saw the mandate to witness given by Jesus to the disciples. Chapter 2 closes with an account of the church growing together and accomplishing that task. As in all cases when you are accomplishing anything for God, there will come opposition. The first opposition to the witness was seen in Chapter 4 when the lame man was healed and the Sanhedrin took Peter and John into custody and warned them to stop with their witness. Remember that when Satan's attempt fails in one way, he changes his strategy.

In Chapter 5 will find another kind of opposition to the witness. This opposition can be more destructive than the first kind due to the fact that it was internal. Sin and deception will cause direct opposition to the witness of Christ. Corruption from within would endanger the very heart of the fellowship.

**(RevC)** The most dangerous foe is the one you underestimate. Most of us are aware that our enemy, Satan comes but to steal, kill, and destroy **(John 10:10)**. We naturally expect his attack to come from the outside, however, we are often caught off guard when his attack is from the inside, someone close, trusted, and least expected. We easily forget that people are human beings and therefore prone to sin and failure. Jesus was quick to recognize when Satan was using Peter to influence Him to choose a different course other than His sacrifice in Jerusalem **(Matt. 16:23)**. Most of us do not recognize the enemy is using someone to influence our decision making. That is another reason why we should be very careful as to whom we let get close and whom we go to for advice—it is always best to ask God first and look to His Word for direction. (RevC)

**A. Background:**

1. In Chapter 4:32-37 is a prelude to the opening section of Chapter 5.
2. Here we see the strong fellowship of the church. All with one heart in one accord.
3. All sharing as any had need. Giving freely of themselves to make sure no one went without what they needed.
4. An example is given of this type of sacrificial giving - Barnabas sold his property and gave it to the disciples. His sacrifice was recognized.

**B. The Description Of Their deed, 5:1-2**

**Acts 5:1-2** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 5:2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it, at the apostles' feet.

1. This is the only place Ananias and Sapphira were mentioned in the Bible.
2. Their names mean "God is gracious" and "beautiful"
3. Vs 1,2 They sold a property and kept back a portion for themselves. Was there anything wrong with this? (No vs 4a) There was nothing wrong with keeping back a portion for themselves as long as they did not present it as being the total they received for the land, which is evidently what they did.

5:4a Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?....

**C. The Description Of Their Sin, 5:3-4**

**Acts 5:3-4 KJV** But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 5:4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

1. **(RevC)** Envy, jealousy, and pride are three qualities of the heart that almost always lead to sinful behavior. Have you noticed that Satan seldom ever attacks you in areas where you and he both know you are strong? He looks for our weaknesses our places of vulnerability. He looks for the evidence of a weakness and then brings the temptation to ensnare and entrap **(James 1:13-15)**. The real issue is not whether Ananias and Sapphira were Christians—they were like many who are still dealing with their flesh and old nature. This particular sin was more grievous in that it was against God and not man. Thus, the swift revelation to the apostles of the nature of their sin and God’s sure and immediate judgment. How do we guard ourselves from such behavior—daily put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the enemy **(Eph. 6:10-13)**.  
(RevC)

2. They sought similar recognition, the motivation was pride. Key sin to avoid in your ministry--don't seek the glory of another's ministry. It will cause a downfall. **(RevC)** Pride is one sin that God hates and says so! **(Prov. 6:16-19, 8:13)**. Whenever we begin to think in terms of ownership we are in jeopardy of finding evidence of pride in our hearts. We are at the mercy of an Almighty yet Gracious and Loving God—far too often we forget the “Almighty” character of God and even more often we forget that we are but stewards, and pilgrims only passing through this life on our way to eternity. Everything placed within my hands God is in one way or another responsible for doing so. Thus, we need to be careful as to how we give, and who is glorified. If we settle for the praise and recognition of men, then we should expect nothing more from God. We do well to remember we are never owners, only stewards. (RevC)



3. They lied to the Holy Spirit (vs 4b) **(RevC)** As indicated in an earlier point I do not question whether Ananias and Sapphira were Christians. The scripture indicates that their sin was that they had lied to God—not to men. Therefore, it seems evident that they had the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives but there was envy, jealousy, and pride in their hearts and thus they bore a false witness before an “all knowing” God. Not the smartest of decisions for sure! Sin and deception always come against the witness of Christ and His Church.

Again, the Church was still very young, and God could not tolerate giving Satan vehicles that he could work through to wreak havoc in the church. When they yielded to the temptation they became instruments of evil and God was swift to eradicate the evil from the young but growing body of Christ on earth. (RevC)

4. It’s interesting to note that Ananais lied to Peter and really thought that’s who he was deceiving; however Peter shows clearly another important principle: by lying to men you are insulting God, sinning against God.

**(RevC) James 1:13-15** warns us that when lust conceives that is when the sin occurs and when sin is finished it ends in death. We must keep in mind that their sin had nothing to do with the money as they were not obligated to sell the property or give the money once it was sold, but rather they had both lied to God and had purposed to steal the glory that belonged to Him. They were looking to exalt themselves with glory that belonged to God. We do the same thing anytime we receive glory without acknowledging the One who made it possible. (RevC)

## END LESSON 15

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 15

1. T or F Recognizing the formal training both Peter and John had, the Sanhedrin were at odds on how to control them.

2. **T or F** By commanding them not to speak of Jesus any more, the religious leaders were attempting to put to rest any future talk of Jesus.

3. In the apostles prayer following the meeting with the Sanhedrin, they prayed for many things, but which of the following was NOT among those:

- A. they prayed that God would get revenge on those who crucified their Lord.
- B. they prayed in unity - 'in one accord'.
- C. they recognized they were praying to our sovereign God, Creator of the universe.
- D. they recognized God was in control and all taking place was part of his plan.
- E. they yielded to the will of God.

4. There were several results of their prayer, which of the following was NOT among the results:

- A. the building shook
- B. men came running from all around the city, hearing a 'mighty wind'
- C. they were filled with the Holy Spirit
- D. they spoke the word of God with boldness

5. **T or F** It was the noble act of Matthias that apparently filled Ananias and Sapphira with envy so that they attempted to impress the church with their giving and ended up being killed.

6. **T or F** Sin and deception will cause direct opposition to the witness of Christ.

**BEGIN LESSON 16**

5. They conspired together. The sin of Ananias was to lie to the Holy Spirit. The sin of Sapphira was to agree and stand with her husband in the sin. This is the fatal mistake made by many who allow a relational bond to draw them into sin. As will be seen shortly, there is no justification for sin.

#### **D. The Judgment Of Their Sin 5:5 – 10**

**Acts 5:5-10** And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 5:6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 5:7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 5:8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 5:9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 5:10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

Judgment was swift and severe. While it may appear merciless and too severe for the crime, these points should be kept in mind:

**God is a just and righteous judge. The wage of sin is death.** Like it or not **they got what they deserved.** There are times when God mercifully postpones our punishment but we should not think it unjust when He chooses to carry out a just sentence on the spot. We would all be better off if we lived as if His punishment would be carried out at any moment. Perhaps then we would be less likely to take our sinful behavior so lightly.

God was cleaning house before it got too dirty. The church was young, the witness was new to people and the Lord dealt swiftly with the first signs of corruption.

#### **E. The Result Of God's Judgment 5:11**

**Acts 5:11** And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Fear came on all who heard these things. Luke emphasized this fact showing the profound effect their judgment had on the whole church. This same thing can be seen today as we observe how God's judgment against unrighteousness has "cleaned house."

**F. Third opposition To The Witness**

1. This 1st opposition to the witness came from the outside, by the Sanhedrin, as Peter and John preached doctrine, which directly opposed the Sadducees' teachings. Due to the fact that their teaching was confirmed by a great miraculous sign, a warning was given.
2. The second opposition was from within, as seeds of corruption crept in to the fellowship. However, due to God's swift judgment, the witness was able to go on without being negatively affected.
3. Now the third opposition to the mandate to witness arises. Once again the apostle's teachings, and confirming signs, bring the wrath of the Sanhedrin upon them.

**G. 5:12-16 The Reason For The Opposition: The Apostles Power**

**Acts 5:12-16** And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 5:13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 5:15 Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 5:16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

1. As is typical, when purity comes to the church there is renewal in spiritual power.
  - a. Miraculous demonstrations by the Apostles. There is no other place recorded in Acts that compares to the great outpouring of miracles. (vs 15-16).
  - b. Unbelievers feared them and esteemed them Vs 13  
**(RevC)** How exciting this time must have been for the people and the Apostles to see the power of God and faith at work. So much so was faith at work that people believed they could be healed if only the shadow of Peter were to

fall upon them. Though it does not say people were healed that way it is implied, and very likely did happen as God always responds to faith and the sick knew that the power of God was operating through the Apostles. Note also that multitude of people that came to faith in the Lord both men and women. Two items of interest: First, the scripture does not say that the multitudes were joined to the church but rather to the Lord an indication of true salvation. Secondly, we see the mention of women being saved. The mere mention of women given the culture of that day is an important inclusion and indication of the important role women were to play in the body of Christ (see **Gal. 3:28**). (RevC)

2. The increase of spiritual power had a great effect on the convincing of the people. "The proof of the apostles teaching was confirmed through signs and wonders. This brought the people in.

#### **H. 5:17-28 The Effect Of The Apostles Power**

**Acts 5:17-28** Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 5:18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 5:19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. 5:21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 5:22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 5:23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 5:24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 5:25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. 5:26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. 5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 5:28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

1. The arousal of jealousy in the hearts of the Sadducees vs 17 as they saw that they were losing their grip and the church was gaining momentum quickly.
2. The Apostles (possibly all of them) were arrested by the Sadducees vs 18, but they were miraculously released vs 19-21.

**(RevC)** It does not tell us how many of the Apostles were arrested but quite possibly all of them. There were several reasons for their arrest and imprisonment:

- Both Peter and John were preaching in the name of Jesus after being ordered to stop.
- Their preaching proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus bodily while the Sadducees taught there was no resurrection of the body.
- The multitude of miraculous healings, and numbers converting to faith in Christ through the ministry of such common men was difficult to counter creating jealousy and “indignation” among the Jewish religious hierarchy.
- The people were coming into Jerusalem from everywhere bringing the sick and seeing them healed before their very eyes through the ministry of Apostles who undoubtedly gave the glory and credit to the Lord. There was growing support by the people that the Jewish leaders needed to suppress.

It is also interesting that the Apostles did not defy the arrest or try to draw the attention of the people but cooperated with the authorities. Thus, they spent some time in prison. Certainly, God has a sense of humor as He sent “the angel of the Lord” to open the prison doors and instruct them to return to the temple and teach the people “the words of this life.” (Sadducees also denied the existence of angels). (RevC)

3. Notice their escape was not meant to simply free them, but rather to complete the task given to them. Divine intervention was given so they could fulfill their calling.
4. They were divinely arrested again vs 23-26. After discovering their absence from the prison someone discovered them teaching in the temple and reported it to the High Priests.
5. The captain of the temple guard brought them back before the Sanhedrin.

#### **I. 5:29-32 The 2nd Trial**

**Acts 5:29-32** 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

1. Peter's Defense - Summarized by vs 29-32. **We ought to obey God rather than man!**
  - a. A key to successful ministry is to be obedient to those things God has spoken to you.
  - b. Once again he condemn the Sanhedrin and elders of Israel of murder. Vs 30
  - a. He preached Jesus resurrection and forgiveness of sins to them. Vs 31
  - b. They declared they, as well as the Holy Spirit, were Jesus witnesses whom God gives to those who obey Him.
2. Note: **(RevC) “We ought to obey God rather than man”** consider that this statement is coming from simple men not learned or men of religious or governmental position, yet they speak as those who are learned and of the highest of positions. This is possible because they know they are standing before these religious leaders by the will and design of God who has empowered them and is giving them the words to speak. Compare them full of the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit with the men of the religious council that they are standing before who are educated, positioned, but have no presence of God being manifested through them. When we strive to serve God, give ourselves totally to doing His will, depending on His power, then He will provide everything that is needed to accomplish His will for us on earth. (RevC)

#### **J. 5:33-42 The Council's Reaction To Peter's Defense**

**Acts 5:33-42 KJV** When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. 5:34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; 5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 5:36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 5:37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 5:38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these



men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. 5:40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

1. They were ready to kill them. vs 33
2. They were restrained by the council of a Pharisee, Gamaliel, 34-39
3. They warned the Apostles again not to teach in the name of Jesus. - vs 40
4. They flogged them giving each one 39 stripes or lashes with the whip.

## K. The Apostles' Reaction To The Council

1. They rejoiced at being counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. I Pet 4-12-16
2. They continued daily in the temple and in every house witnessing. The actions of the council, although getting more severe did not sway or stop the apostles from continuing their witness. They seemed to be encouraged and grateful for the opportunity.
3. We are wise to examine ourselves at this point. How many of us are looking for and seizing every opportunity to witness? Are we willing to continue in the face of persecution? Jesus warned, **"If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you."** John 15:20

## VIII. Chapter 6

### A. Persecution spreads – Stephen is martyred

1. The intensity of persecution of the church rises in proportion to the growth and effect of the church in Jerusalem. Persecution began with a warning to Peter and John in Acts 3.
2. Next we see it spread to all the apostles in Acts 5 and instead of a warning, they are flogged.
3. Now we will see the persecution spread to all the believers, and witness the first death for the cause of Christ. **(RevC)** Stephen was a man full of the Holy Spirit and on a mission to preach the gospel to the many Grecian Jews who had returned to Jerusalem after being expelled from Rome by Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Naturally, the leaders of the Grecian synagogues where Stephen went opposed his message and he the messenger. To them his message of Jesus being the supreme sacrifice came against their practice of sacrificing animals; and if Jesus is now the mediator between God and man then human priest are no longer needed. His preaching was an affront to the Law in which they had placed all their trust. This was ultimately to lead to his death. It is interesting that the very name "Stephen" comes from the word "stephanos" which means "victor's crown". The scriptures admonish us that if we are faithful unto death we shall receive of the Lord "a crown of life" **(Rev. 2:10)**. Certainly, Stephen was faithful in life and victorious in death and shall be wearing "a crown of life". (RevC)

4. While it would appear that the persecution would have a drastic negative effect, just the opposite occurs. Instead of stifling the witness of Christ, it is spread throughout Judea and Samaria, fulfilling Jesus mandate.

#### **B. Ministry To The Poor 6:1**

**Acts 6:1** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

1. Jewish custom of ministering to the poor. "No nation has ever had a greater sense of responsibility for the less fortunate than the Jews."
2. In Jerusalem, 2 collectors went to the market and the private houses **every Friday morning** and made collection of money and goods. Later in the day it was distributed. Those who had a temporary need would receive enough to carry on. Those with permanent needs (such as widows) received enough for 14 meals, 2 meals a day for 1 week. This was called the Kappa or Basket.
3. In addition, a house to house collection was made **daily** for those in pressing need = Tamhui or Tray. This tradition was evidently carried on by the Christian church.
4. Hellenist Widows: In the Christian Church there were two kinds of Jews: **Jerusalem and Palestinian Jews** who spoke Aramaic, the descendant of the ancestral language. They prided themselves that there was no foreign mixture in their lines. **Jews from foreign countries (the Diaspora)** who came back to live in Jerusalem. Many had been away from Jerusalem for many generations and had forgotten Hebrew and spoke only Greek. They were not only Greek speaking but had Greek characteristics = **Hellenists**.
5. The natural Aramaic speaking Jews were always looking down on these foreign Hellenists Jews. This evidently affected the distribution of Alms.
6. (RevC) Job said, **"...man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward"** (Job 5:7). Trouble comes yet we spend most of

our lives trying to avoid the inevitable and often stress out when problems and difficulties arise. Often, we fail to realize the positive side of facing problems: Problems call our attention to areas that need attention if they are to function successfully. Problems can keep us from moving too quickly and can be used by God to slow our pace and teach us patience. Problems can also show us that we are going in the wrong direction and give us opportunity to find a suitable solution.

The Apostles took the time to gather the information they needed to correctly identify the issue that was creating the disturbance. They concluded that it was no one's fault but their own. How refreshing that they did not place blame on someone else but accepted responsibility and acted in a way that would be of benefit to the whole body of Christ. They were able to see that they were too involved in areas that they were not called to do and that by doing so they were neglecting their true responsibility. Thus, they learned the importance of "delegation" letting others share the responsibilities of the ministry. It is much better to put many people to work than to do the work of many people. (RevC)

#### END LESSON 16

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 16

1. **T or F** The sin of Ananias was to lie to the apostles. The sin of Sapphira was to spend the money before being confronted.
2. **T or F** God was cleaning house before it got too dirty. The church was young, the witness was new to people and the Lord dealt swiftly with the first signs of corruption.
3. Which of the following is NOT one of the reasons the high priest had for arresting the Apostles and bringing them to trial:
  - A. Peter and John defied the order to stop preaching in the name of Jesus
  - B. They were refusing to pay the temple tax.
  - C. Proclaiming the resurrected Christ, they were in direct opposition to the Sadducees who denied a bodily resurrection.
  - D. They were envious of the lack of training and incredible results of the Apostles and their teachings.

4. **T or F** There was a tremendous contrast between the council, which was educated, ordained, and approved, and yet they had no ministry of power and the Apostles, who were ordinary laymen, yet God's power was at work in their lives.

5. Which of the following is NOT part of the Council's response to the Apostles:

A. They desired to kill them because they could not control them.

B. They had James killed by the sword.

C. Gamaliel, a Pharisee, restrained them from murder.

D. They were once again warned not to teach in the name of Jesus

E. They were flogged with 39 lashes of the whip.

6. **T or F** Persecution raises to its highest level as the first disciple for Christ, Stephen, is stoned for his witness and convincing arguments.

7. **T or F** There was a problem in the early church with the distribution of alms, the Hellenists looked down on the local Jews and disfavored them.

## BEGIN LESSON 17

### C. Church Structured To Meet The Needs and Strengthen The Witness 6:2-4

**Acts 6:2-4 KJV** Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

The priority of the Apostles and Elders of the Church should be to the Word of God and Prayer. In order to minister to the Spiritual needs it is essential to be given to the Word and Prayer. It is not possible to adequately minister to both physical and spiritual needs when pastoring a flock. A common pitfall of pastors is to try and be everything to everybody. A common mistake of congregations, especially smaller ones, is to make too many demands on the pastor. As a pastor, you must guard yourself against being stretched so thin you have no time for the Word of God and prayer. This must be 1st priority.

### D. The Apostles Solution:

1. Choose people acquainted with the need to minister

2. Choose empathetic people full of faith and the Holy Spirit.
3. Faith is a priority so the people ministering will see the need is not too big to be met by God.
4. Full of the Holy Spirit is necessary to have wisdom and guidance to know what to do.

#### **E. The Result Of Right Priorities And Prayer Solution 6:5-7**

**Acts 6:5-7 KJV** And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6:6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

1. **(RevC)** This event and how the Apostles handled the situation is perhaps one of the greatest examples of preferring others as being more important than ourselves **(Phil. 2:3 & Romans 12:10)**. Note, that all 7 of the men selected to respond to this need were Grecian Jews. The church at this point was largely Jewish yet the Jewish majority humbled themselves and demonstrated preference to the minority. The result was that the “whole multitude” was pleased and the church grew. We must always be considerate of others in our decision making. **(RevC)**

**Rom 12:10** Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

**Phil 2:1-4** If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

**(RevC)** The 7 men though not referred to as “deacons” get the title of deacon from the Greek words used to describe their

responsibility to “serve” *diakoneo* the needs of the widows in the daily “ministration” *diakonos*. Later in Philippians 1:1 we see Paul use the word “deacons” in his opening address and enumerates the qualifications for being a deacon in his first letter to Timothy (**I Tim. 3:8-13**). These men were “servants” to the practical needs of the growing Body of Christ while the Apostles were then freed to give more of their time

**Acts 6:1-2** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily **ministration**. 6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and **serve** tables.

2. The Word of God Spread = Because the Apostles were able to give themselves fully to it. Disciples were added because the Word was being preached. The witness of Christ and His body meeting the spiritual and physical needs of people touched the lives of many people. Hard hearts were being won.

#### **F. Accusations Against Stephen 6:8-15**

**Acts 6:8-15 KJV** And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. 6:9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. 6:10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. 6:11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. 6:12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, 6:13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 6:14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. 6:15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

1. Why were accusations brought against Stephen v 8b? - There is a pattern that has developed in Acts. When someone is brought before the Sanhedrin, you will find that they have been operating with signs and wonders. Therefore out of jealousy, fear of the supernatural, or the Devil just trying to prevent the witness for Christ, the accusations are brought forth.

2. **(RevC)** As Jews returned or migrated to Jerusalem from other countries they most often resided in areas where others of their same ethnic group resided. The “Libertines” were those who’s relatives had been in bondage to Roman authorities and have gained their freedom and return to Jerusalem. The “Cyrenians” were those who came from Cyrene located in Africa. The “Alexandrians” were Jews from Alexandria, Egypt a city that was second only to Rome built by Alexander the Great who commissioned the man who built the Temple of Diana, Deinocrates and gave him a free hand to build the most beautiful city in the world. Then “those of Cilicia” a Turkish city located near Tarsus from which Paul had come (Acts 21:39), and not far from Antioch in Syria. Finally, “and of Asia” which would include Turkey, Syria, Armenia, and Mesopotamia. These Jews likely had their own synagogues and Stephen being Greek traveled from synagogue to synagogue preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and undoubtedly discussed the scriptures with these Jews who were “married” to the law of Moses. Note, that Stephen not only preached but did “great wonders and miracles” among the people. We find that whenever the gospel message is tied to the manifestation of the miraculous power of Jesus it becomes problematic for the “spiritual leaders”. Though they did their best to dispute Stephen’s message they could not “resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke.”

They urgently needed a solution to the “problem” of Stephen thus they like with Jesus resorted to hiring false witnesses to testify against him, stirring up the people accusing him of saying the Temple, the Law of Moses, and the customs were to be destroyed. They needed a solution and resorted to put him to death as the final solution. Even in death Stephen was preaching and speaking the truth. (RevC)



## **IX. Stephen's Defense Chapter 7—8:4**

- A.** His speech is not a rebuttal of the charges, nor was he trying to win an acquittal before the Sanhedrin. His defense was a historical narration that can be sub-divided in the following manner:
  - 1. vs 2-16 Concentrate on the period of the Patriarchs.
  - 2. vs 17-43 The Mosaic Period
  - 3. vs 44-50 The Tabernacle and the Temple
  - 4. vs. 51-53 Application of the Message
- B. Two Main Points To His Presentation**
  - 1. The worship of Jehovah had not been confined in times past only to Jerusalem, nor had His habitation been in the temple only (God's worship not confined to Jerusalem).
  - 2. The Rulers of the people had continually made the same mistake as those who were now accusing him. Historically the leaders of Israel had threatened and persecuted prophets who, like himself, had pointed out the true worship of their God, and their failing to hear the prophets had even led to their killing the Messiah."
  - 3. **(RevC)** Stephen's words were not so much a defense of the accusations against him as they were an inditement against the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people for always resisting the plan of God. He spoke of God's faithfulness throughout their rebellious history. He spoke of God's love for His people, so much so, that He sent His own Son to deliver them from their sin. As in the past the present generation had also resisted the Spirit of God and crucified their Messiah. (RevC)

**C. 7:1-8 Developing His Main Points**

Stephen in response to the high priest shows that God had been with Abraham and made promises and covenant with him and his seed (v 1-8)

**Acts 7:1-8 KJV** Then said the high priest, Are these things so? 7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 7:3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. 7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. 7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. 7:6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. 7:7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. 7:8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

**D. 7:9-41 Though God was with his children, they rebelled**

He shows that God had been with Joseph and Jacob preserving Israel in Egypt. He was also with Moses from the time he was an infant until he became the deliverer. Stephen goes on to recount how the people of Israel rebelled against God even though He had taken care of them. v 9-41

**Acts 7:9-41 KJV** And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, 7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. 7:11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. 7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. 7:13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. 7:14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. 7:15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, 7:16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. 7:17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 7:18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. 7:19 The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. 7:20 In which time Moses was born,

and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: 7:21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. 7:22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. 7:23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. 7:24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: 7:25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. 7:26 And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? 7:27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 7:28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday? 7:29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons. 7:30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. 7:31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, 7:32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. 7:33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. 7:34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. 7:35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. 7:36 He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: 7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, 7:40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 7:41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

#### **E. 7:42-47 God rejects Israel**

God then rejected Israel because of their continued idolatry. Though He had made His presence known to them in the wilderness and brought them into the land through Joshua continuing to David, who had a heart to build God a tabernacle though it was given to Solomon to do, He could tolerate their idolatry no more (vs. 42-47).

**Acts 7:42-47 KJV** Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? 7:43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. 7:44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. 7:45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; 7:46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. 7:47 But Solomon built him an house.

**F. 7:48-50 God does not dwell in houses**

1. Then he reminded them that God does not dwell in houses made with hands vs 48-50.

**Acts 7:48-50 KJV** Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, 7:49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? 7:50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

2. It is here He is dealing with the spiritual pride of the Jews. And points out that God receives our worship wherever we are. **We don't have to go to the temple to be heard by God.**
3. This also speaks of the importance of relationship and bringing worship to God. We must never lose sight of developing a daily attitude of worship wherever we are.

**END LESSON 17**

**QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 17**

1. **T or F** The quarrel among the widows showed the Apostles the need for them to separate themselves to prayer and ministry of the Word and appoint others to the work of the ministry.
2. **T or F** Deacons were chosen because of their faith, desire to serve and ability to quickly count the offering.
3. False accusations against the elect are generally brought forth when:
  - A. Out of jealousy for the signs and wonders sent of God.
  - B. Fear of the supernatural and the unknown.

**C. The devil trying to prevent the witness for Christ.**

**D. All of the above**

**4. T or F Since nobody could match or resist Stephen's wisdom and power, their only alternative was to destroy him.**

**5. Which of the following answers is NOT one of the ways the treatment of Steven paralleled the way the Jewish leaders treated Jesus:**

**A. Hired false witnesses to testify against them.**

**B. Both executed after consulting the Roman authorities.**

**C. Stirred up the people who accused them of attacking the Laws of Moses.**

**D. After listening to their witness, they executed them.**

**6. T or F Stephen points out how the people of Israel rebelled against God even though He had taken care of them.**

## **BEGIN LESSON 18**

### **G. 7:51-53 God's Purposes Often Missed By His People**

1. Stephen points out how Joseph was rejected by his brothers, but was God's appointed messenger, v 9
2. Moses experienced the same thing (v 35-40),
3. With the line of logic He comes to the conclusion that just as their forefathers rejected the prophets and God appointed messengers, they rejected the Messiah, (v 51-53)

**Acts 7:51-53 KJV** Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

### **H. 7:54-56 The Councils Reaction**

**Acts 7:54-56 KJV** When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

1. All restraint leaves the council. Stephen is filled with the Holy Spirit. Cuts through every deception and false accusation, and by the Spirit brings a cutting message that fills their hearts with contempt for him.
2. vs 54 Their Fury was based on 4 Things:
  - a. He was a Hellenist and not a pure Jew, which would have touched their prejudice against him.
  - b. He appeared to them to renounce those things that were most precious to them, their land, the law, the temple.
  - c. He wanted to make Jesus the center of Jewish worship instead of their traditions.
  - d. vs 55-56 Perhaps what displeased them the most was his vision as he saw Jesus exalted at the right hand of God. This would imply that Jesus is equal with God and shares His glory.

#### **I. 7:57-59 Stoning of Stephen**

**Acts 7:57-59 KJV** Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 7:58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

Stoning was a cruel and inhuman means of death. Stones large enough to crush a man's bones and head, yet small enough to be thrown with force, were used. It was a slow, painful death, unless a vital spot in the head was immediately hit. After the stoning, the body was dragged by the heels outside the city gates and left for the savage dogs and beasts that ran wild through the wilderness.

#### **J. 7:60 Stephen's Reaction**

**Acts 7:60 KJV** And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

It is extremely difficult to understand the depth of this kind of forgiveness. It parallels the words spoken by Jesus on the cross.

## **X. Acts 8:4 - 12:25 Summary: Witness in Judea and Samaria**

- A.** The death of Stephen was the crucial event that started the expansion of the church. On the heels of persecution in Jerusalem, the Gospel was spread into Samaria, and Judea.
- B.** This period, which we just completed, covered the strictly Jewish witness of the church (Acts 2:1-8:3).
- C.** The period that we will look at now, is a transition from the predominantly Jewish witness in the first 7 chapters to the predominantly Gentile witness in Chapter 13-28.
- D.** Jerusalem remained the center of Christian work, but just before this section closes we will see a gradual shifting of the center to Antioch in Syria.
- E.** We will treat this section from 8:4-12:25 as one block and break it up as follows:
  - 1.** The persecution, scattering, and the witness of Philip 8:1-40
  - 2.** The conversion of Saul 9:1-31
  - 3.** The work of Peter 9:32-11:18
  - 4.** The work of Barnabas 11:19-30
  - 5.** The Persecution of Herod 12:1-25

## **XI. The persecution, scattering, and witness of Philip 8:1-40**

### **A. The persecution and scattering of believers**

**Acts 8:1-4 KJV** And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church, which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 8:2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

- 1.** After the death of Stephen there was continued persecution of new Christians with many being dragged from their homes regardless of age or gender. The devil meant to destroy the early church but the persecution only aided in its expansion as the scattering of believers meant the spreading of the gospel message to everywhere they went.

2. **(RevC)** Most often we think of Paul as “the great Apostle to the Gentiles”, but prior to God’s call on his life and by his own testimony was perhaps “the greatest persecutor of the church” (**Gal. 1:13**). When we consider Saul/Paul there is much about him that we can learn from God’s Word.

- He was of the circumcision—a Hebrew – A Jew (**Phil. 3:3,5**)
- From the tribe of Benjamin (**Phil. 3:5**)
- A Pharisee & the son of a Pharisee (**Acts 23:6; Phil. 3:5**)
- A Hebrew of the Hebrews (**Phil. 3:5**)
- Blameless before the law (**Phil. 3:6**)
- A Roman citizen (**Acts 16:37**)
- Born in Tarsus (**Acts 22:3**)
- Taught by Gamaliel (**Acts 22:3**)
- Zealous in his persecution of the church (**Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6**)
- “the chief of sinners” (**1Tim.1:16**)
- consented in the death of Stephen and raised havoc in the church (**Acts 8:1-3**)

It is important to remember that Paul’s zeal in persecuting new followers of Jesus unto death (**Acts 22:4**) was done with the mindset that he was serving God by doing so and therefore did so with a “clear conscience” (**2 Tim. 1:3**). With a “clear conscience” he went from city to city breaking into homes and captured believers in synagogues and forcing them to “blaspheme” (recount their salvation in Jesus) commanding them to prison or death, if they refused (**Acts 26:11**).

To imagine such a person becoming perhaps the most revered of God’s great evangelists is certainly a testimony to the grace of God and the power of God to save and change a life. (RevC)

## **B. 8:5 The Witness of Philip**



**Acts 8:5** Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

1. Philips Identity: He was not the Apostle Phillip. This can be deduced because in 8:1 it says all the Apostles remained in Jerusalem.
2. He was a Hellenist Acts 6:1,5
3. He was called an Evangelist in 21:8, the only person in all of Acts so designated.
4. He had 4 virgin daughters, all of them prophetess.

**C. The Samaritans:**

1. vs 5 A city of Samaria: It is uncertain if Philip went to the capital of Samaria, Sebaste, or if he went to a city in Samaria, such as Shechem, or Gitta.
2. There was long standing animosity between the Jews and Samaritans.
3. The Samaritans were descendants of the 10 tribes separated from Solomon's kingdom upon His death. Judah and Benjamin = the Southern Kingdom, the 10 tribes the Northern Kingdom.
4. In 722 BC when Assyria captured the Northern Kingdom and deported some of them (Dispersion). They resettled the area with Assyrians. The Samaritans mixed races by intermarrying.
5. Shortly thereafter, the southern kingdom was captured by Babylon and carried into captivity. They, however unlike the 10 northern tribes, refused to intermarry and kept their Jewish roots pure.
6. In the 5th century BC the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple under Ezra and Nehemiah, the Samaritans were not allowed to help in the rebuilding due to their being of mixed race.
7. The Samaritans erected a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim around the time of Alexander the Great, and even sided with the Seleucids in 167-165 BC war.
8. The Judeans considered the Samaritans "a race of foolish people" and no nation at all.

9. The Samaritans believed in the Pentateuch and no other writings. They were waiting for the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy given by Moses Deut 18:15,18,19.

#### D. Philip's Preaching Was Characterized By:

1. **He preached Jesus** (v 5,35). Notice one theme of his preaching was Jesus. His success as an evangelist was directly correlated to the nature of His message.

**Acts 8:5** Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and **preached Christ unto them.**

**Acts 8:35** Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and **preached unto him Jesus.**

2. **He preached about the Kingdom of God** (vs 12) Here the emphasis is showing that Jesus is the Messiah and fulfills the prophecies concerning the Kingdom of God. Being able to lay out in an understanding way the scheme of the Kingdom of God made him able to win souls.

**Acts 8:12** But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the **kingdom of God**, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

#### E. 8:6-7 Signs and wonders confirmed His preaching

**Acts 8:6-7** And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 8:7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

Notice again that the miracles did not save anyone they are important in that they confirmed the authority of the word concerning Jesus that Philip spoke. Thus people were set free by the truth. Many believed and were baptized. vs 12.

#### F. 8:9-13 Simon The Sorcerer/Simon Magus

**Acts 8:9-13** But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 8:10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 8:11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the

things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 8:13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

1. He was called in Post Apostolic writings a leading heretic in the early church. We should not be surprised that Satan would empower a counterfeit to deceive the people.
2. Justin Martyr (165 AD) who was a converted Samaritan said Simon was revered as a god by the people of Samaria.
3. Irenaeus (180 AD) calls Simon the Father of Gnosticism. Gnostics believed they had a higher knowledge and that Jesus was not real, but more like an apparition (he only seemed real). Chapter 1 of 1<sup>st</sup> John was written to combat the Gnostics.
4. Simon has a conversion experience of sorts vs 13. But it was more head knowledge than true heart changing belief.
5. Notice his interest is in the miracles of Philip. It is apparent from the text that Simon was allured to a conversion confession of belief because of a desire to have the same power as Phillip and later Peter vs 18.
6. It was apparent that there was no real heart change in Simon. His motives for conversion were based on the miraculous signs and therefore his commitment to Jesus was inferior to a true repentance.

## END LESSON 18

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 18

1. **T or F** Stephen pointed out to the Council that just as their forefathers rejected the prophets and God appointed messengers, they rejected the Messiah
2. The Council's reaction to Stephen, their fury, was NOT based on which of the following things:
  - A. He grew his hair and beard to try to look like Jesus.
  - B. He was a Hellenist and not a pure Jew, which would have touched their prejudice against him.
  - C. He appeared to them to renounce those things that were most precious to them, their land, the law, the temple.

- D. He wanted to make Jesus the center of Jewish worship instead of their traditions.
  - E. The vision as he saw Jesus exalted at the right hand of God. This would imply that Jesus is equal with God and shares His glory.
3. **T or F** The death of Stephen was the crucial event that started the expansion of the church. On the heels of persecution in Jerusalem, the Gospel was spread into Samaria, and Judea.
4. **T or F** Saul's zeal for the Law was displayed most vividly in his persecution of the new followers of Jesus Christ, including both men and women "unto the death".
5. **T or F** The Book of Acts recounts Phillip the Evangelist traveling to Caesarea to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Samaritan people there.
6. Which of the following statements are NOT true about Simon the Sorcerer:
- A. He was known as a leading heretic in the early church.
  - B. Simon was reported to be revered as a god by the people of Samaria.
  - C. Ireneaeus calls Simon the Father of Gnosticism. Gnostics believed Jesus second coming would be to defeat the Roman oppressor.
  - D. Simon's conversion was more 'head than heart' with no true heart changing belief in evidence.

## BEGIN LESSON 19

### G. 8:14-25 The Witness confirmed by the Jerusalem Church

**Acts 8:14-25 KJV** Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 8:15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 8:17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 8:18 **And when Simon saw** that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 8:19 Saying, **Give me also this power**, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 8:21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 8:23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 8:24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. 8:25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

1. Peter and John were sent by the church in Jerusalem to see if the rumors were true about the Samaritan revival. When they arrived they found believers who had not experienced the manifestation of the Holy Spirit vs 14-17.

This is a portion of scripture that has brought much theological debate because of the statement that the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen on them.

It would be hard to imagine that Philip had not properly explained the way of salvation to these Samaritan believers, or that they had been baptized in water prematurely. However, when we consider that there was a tremendous and bitter separation between the pure Jews in Jerusalem and the Samaritan Jews (mixed race), we can see why God may have wanted them to have a special experience similar to what took place on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. Doing so at the hands of the Apostles from Jerusalem would show that the same salvation and Spirit that was given in Jerusalem was also given to the Samaritans, thus removing the wedge of separation between these two Jewish groups. It would also be the next logical progression in taking the message of Pentecost to the eventual Gentile world. To the Jew (pure Jew) first, then to the Samaritan (Jew-Gentile mixed), and finally to the Gentiles in Acts 10 at the house of Cornelius. In this manner we can see that there were essentially 3 Pentecostal experiences:

- a Jewish Pentecost (Acts 2).
- a Samaritan Pentecost—a half-Jew and half-Gentile Pentecost (Acts 8).

- a Gentile Pentecost (Acts 10).
2. A key is found in the words: “**And when Simon saw**” = what did he see, what took place. I believe it can only be deduced that after the Apostles laid hands on these new believers they received the filling with the manifestation of tongues much like the Jews had received on the day of Pentecost.
  3. I personally believe that these believers had received the Holy Spirit when they believed becoming members of the body of Christ. However, as the experience in the Holy Spirit was a very new event, coupled with the desire of God to remove the separation that existed between the Jews in Jerusalem and those in Samaria, it was important for them to have their own experience much like what took place on Pentecost in Jerusalem. Thus when the apostles were present they laid hands on these believers agreeing in faith and the manifestation of tongues most likely came forth being what Simon saw and wanted the power to impart. Keep in mind that God is not bound by our rules of thinking. In other words He does not have to follow the same pattern in Samaria as He did in Jerusalem or will eventually do in the house of Cornelius. The main event is that the Holy Spirit is indeed being poured out on all flesh.
  4. Simon's conversion is proven to be a false repentance. Peter discerns his true heart motive vs 23. Simon, who was interested in external evidences shows in vs 24 that he only wanted to escape punishment, not repent. **(RevC) Romans 10:9** makes it very clear that for a person to be truly saved they must confess with their mouth and believe with their heart. Mental awareness is simply not enough as the demons know who Jesus is and yet they are not saved **(James 2:19)**. This man did all the outward steps: heard the Gospel, professed faith in Christ, was baptized in water; and yet he was not born again. This should be a warning to us of just how close a person can come to true salvation but if their belief is not rooted in their heart their confession is empty, void, and worthless. (RevC)
  5. vs 25 indicates that the Apostles, probably accompanied by Phillip returned to Jerusalem; preaching in Samaritan villages along the way, vs 26. After a period of time, Phillip was directed by a vision or appearance of an angel to go south of Jerusalem on a road that led to Gaza; a city 60 miles south of Jerusalem.

6. The reason this passage appears here is most likely to emphasize how the Gospel is being furthered among non-Jewish people, first among Samaritans, and now a Gentile proselyte. It is also important because of the need to unite the Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile believers.
7. This Ethiopian was a Gentile convert to Judaism (Proselyte). They followed the Law, worshipped in the temple, observed the Laws of clean and unclean foods and followed Jewish customs. The truest proselytes were even circumcised.

#### H. 8:26 – 40 Phillip's witness to the Ethiopian

**Acts 8:26-40 KJV** And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. 8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, 8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 8:30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 8:32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

##### 1. About the Ethiopian.

- a. He was a high governmental official. He was in charge of the Queen's treasure. vs 27
- b. He was a Eunuch = Emasculated man, usually done to those chosen to work among the king's harem.

- c. He was a proselyte to the Jewish faith or near proselyte. He was open to instruction vs 31,34. He was a man who read the scriptures, was seeking the truth, but as yet did not have a personal saving relationship with Jesus. Reading the scriptures and showing an interest in spiritual things is not salvation. Salvation involves the acknowledgement of our sinful condition, repenting of our sin, and surrendering our life and heart to Jesus.

**2. Phillip was directed by the Spirit to Witness**

- a. Look at the importance of listening to the Spirit's voice.
- b. Philip did not consider that this was some high royal person. He was simply obedient.
- c. Your ministry will always prosper as you learn obedience to the still small voice.

**3. Phillip's Message**

- a. He preached Jesus to him.
- b. Philip had knowledge of the scripture and knew how to handle the Word of God.
- c. It is vital to the success of your ministry to learn how to handle the Word. To be able to open up the scriptures and share truth, to shed light.

**4. The Ethiopian Is Converted – Philip continues to preach**

- a. The Ethiopian was convinced, by the scripture, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He was ready to make the commitment by an outward profession -baptism.
- b. The evidence of the repentance and conversion is often true rejoicing. Vs 39
- c. Phillip's ministry continued throughout all of Samaria until He came to Caesarea, where we find him -in Acts 21:8,9.

**XII. The Conversion of Saul 9:1-31**

In his "**Turning Points in History**" the late earl of Birkenhead wrote: "of all men who may claim to have changed the course of the worlds history, St. Paul must surely take first place. He altered the basic ideas of Western civilization: the whole of our history bears the marks of that busy career of impassioned teaching which the Jewish tent-maker under took after his conversion to faith in Jesus Christ."



Luke has previously introduced Saul in 7:58 as a young man agreeing with the stoning of Stephen. In 8:1,3 we find him carrying out a vicious campaign, going house to house, and dragging men and women who believed in Jesus, off to prison.

**A. 9:1-2 The time and circumstances of His conversion.**

1. Dated about 34-37 AD.
2. 9:1 Paul was still carrying out his campaign to wipe out the church.

**Acts 9:1** And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

3. Saul did not want any Christian to escape thus, he goes to the High Priest to get letters to extradite Hellenistic Christians who fled to Damascus. vs 2.

**Acts 9:2** And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

4. High Priest has jurisdiction over all matters of religion not only within Palestine, but also outside Palestine. The High Priest was either Caiaphas or Theophilus.
5. Damascus was 150 miles northeast of Jerusalem. About a week's journey. There was a large Jewish community living in Damascus.

**B. The Conversion Experience 9:3-6; 22:4-11, 26:13-18**

**Acts 9:3-6** And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

1. A light from Heaven = in Acts 26 Paul states that this light was brighter than the Sun. It should be noted that this incident occurred at mid-day. The effect of the suddenness and intensity of the light knocked him to the ground.
2. Saul hears the voice and question of Jesus vs 4. The question asked by the Lord indicates that when someone does wrong to a follower of Christ he has done wrong to Christ.
3. In Saul's response vs 5a he used the Word "Lord" which indicates that he knew he was in the presence of one greater than himself. He did not, at this point, understand fully who was speaking to him.
4. Jesus reveals Himself to Paul 5b. What an incredible revelation these words must have been to Saul as he believed he was serving God by trying to wipe out this apostasy that was going around Jerusalem.
5. Then he finds out that this Jesus, whose followers he was trying to eradicate, was really alive, and exalted next to God. This left him with one conclusion. The things Stephen preached were true.
6. Paul's Reaction To The Revelation vs 6a
  - a. He responded with submission to the voice.
  - b. He was directed into the city to wait for further instruction. 6b

**Acts 9:6** And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

- c. When he arose he was blinded needing to be lead into Damascus.

#### **C. Paul's Commissioning vs 9:10-19**

**Acts 9:10-19** And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 9:11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 9:12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 9:14 And here he hath authority from the chief

priests to bind all that call on thy name. 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for **he is a chosen vessel** unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 9:16 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 9:19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus.

1. Saul was a chosen vessel 9:15. He was to extend the message of hope to the Gentiles. Acts 9:15b. This was a continuation of the direct fulfillment of the promise God made to Abram "In you all the nations will be blessed"
2. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit in order to begin the task 9:17. When we desire to serve Christ we must do so in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Paul spent time with the disciples in Damascus vs 19b. Here was a time of strengthening, counseling and instruction before going.
4. (RevC) A careful reading of Acts 9 could leave you with the impression that they were trying out names to use in describing the growing number of new believers. Consider all the titles we find in Acts 9:
  - disciples of the Lord 9:1
  - those of the way 9:2
  - disciples 9:25
  - all that call upon thy name 9:14
  - saints 9:13
  - them which called upon this name 9:21
  - brethren 9:30

Though the term "disciples" appears most often in Luke's writing of the book of Acts; we see "saints" used in the Epistles; while today we most often call ourselves "Christians". Perhaps in heaven it will simply be "brother", "sister" or "friend" as there is neither male or female in Christ. (RevC)

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 19

1. **T** or **F** Simon's conversion only shows how close a person can come to salvation and still not be converted. Simon heard the Gospel, saw the miracles, gave a profession of faith in Christ, and was baptized; and yet he was never born again
2. **T** or **F** The eunuch met by Phillip was a Kenyan Gentile convert to Judaism (Proselyte).
3. Which following statements was **NOT** true at the time of Saul's conversion:
  - A. Paul was zealous in his campaign to wipe out the early church of Jesus Christ.
  - B. His goal was to become the High Priest so he thought this persecution would help.
  - C. The High Priest has jurisdiction over all matters of religion not only within Palestine, but also outside Palestine.
  - D. Paul had targeted Damascus as a city where some Hellenistic Christians had fled.
4. **T** or **F** Paul's reaction to Jesus personal revelation to him was one of humility and submission.
5. **T** or **F** The Christians of Damascus jailed Paul until they could discern if his conversion were true.

### BEGIN LESSON 20

#### D. 9:20-22 Saul's 1st Preaching

1. He began preaching Jesus. He gave testimony of His personal experiences, the Damascus road experiences, the profound effect of Stephen's death

**Acts 9:20-22** And straightway **he preached Christ in the synagogues**, that he is the Son of God. 9:21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 9:22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

2. From the passage in Gal. 1:15-19 we know that Paul did not meet with the Apostles until after he spent time receiving instruction of the Lord. We do not know how long Paul spent in Arabia, but we do know that he returned to Damascus and after 3 years he went to Jerusalem. If we were to place the time Paul spent receiving instruction from the Lord within the text of the book of Acts it would most likely be between verses 21 & 22.

**Gal. 1:15-19** But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 1:16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 1:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but **I went into Arabia**, and returned again unto Damascus. 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

3. Why did Paul go to Arabia to receive instruction from the Lord?

**(POSB)** When Paul was converted, he had a dire need to be alone with God. He did not need the counsel and help of men; he needed the presence and help of God and His Spirit. He already knew the Scripture. He had studied them at the feet of the greatest religious teachers of his day, but he had not known God nor Christ, not in a personal way. Paul had no knowledge of God, not a personal knowledge. What he had known about God had been twisted and corrupted, misapplied and misused. He desperately needed...

- time to learn how to live with Christ day by day, drawing confidence and strength from Him.

- time to learn the real meaning of the Scriptures: how they applied to Christ.
- time to accurately handle the Word of Truth (the Scriptures).
- time to learn how to fellowship with Christ in daily worship (devotions, quiet times).
- time to learn how to walk in the presence and communion and fellowship of Christ all day.
- time to learn the commandments and will of Christ.
- time to think through how to go about making Christ known to a world steeped in dire need and sin and darkness.

How much time did Paul need? Apparently, he spent about three years in Arabia. (POSB)

**(RevC)** It would seem likely that Paul did some evangelism while in Arabia as by the time he arrived in Damascus they were already looking to kill him. He was now the “prey” being stalked instead of being the stalker that he was before his conversion. This also should not have been a surprise to him as God had revealed to Ananias in Acts 9:13-16 His intention to share with Paul the “great” things he would suffer for the sake of the Lord. (RevC)

#### **E. 9:23-31 Conspiracies Against Saul's Life:**

The 1st conspiracy was staged in Damascus. 23-25

The 2nd Conspiracy was staged in Jerusalem. 26-31

### 1. The 1st Conspiracy

**Acts 9:23-25** And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 9:24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

- a. Paul lived and preached in Damascus 3 years. Gal 1:15-18. However, his message concerning Jesus was displeasing to the Jews who were still into their traditions and they sought to dispose of Paul. The hunter was now the hunted.
- b. Vs. 25 His escape came by means of being let down in a basket, through a window on the wall. 2 Cor 11:32-33

### 2. The 2nd Conspiracy

**Acts 9:26-31** And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 9:28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 9:29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. 9:30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

- a. There are parallel accounts of Paul's first visit to Jerusalem told by him personally. Acts 22:17-21 and Gal 1:18-20. Notice the following points about this portion.
  - (I) This was Paul's 1st visit to Jerusalem following 3 years of preaching in Damascus. Gal 1:15-18. He stayed only 15 days Gal 1:18.
  - (II) He was not accepted by the disciples and they rejected him due to fear. Acts 9:26

**(III)** Barnabas befriended Saul, convinced the apostles that he was truly converted and gave testimony of his ministry.

- b.** There is an important point to remember here: When you are a part of a local fellowship, submitted to the leadership of a church body, they can support and testify to your calling and the validity of your ministry.
- c.** Without the support of Barnabas, Paul would have been completely shut off by the apostles and this would have further affected his ministry.
- d.** Plug in, get involved, serve where you are, and establish a healthy track record of faithful service.
- e.** He ministered amongst the Hellenist Jews in Jerusalem. vs 29 and ran into the same opposition that Stephen did, they attempted to kill him. The Persecution and a vision sent Paul from Jerusalem.
- f.** The Brethren sent him to Tarsus 9:30, where he remained until Barnabas came and took him to Antioch in 11:25-26.
- g.** In Summary vs 31. Despite the persecution, the early church was growing stronger as they walked in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

#### **F. The Work of Peter (9:32-11:18)**

Peter was in Jerusalem when Saul arrived. Aside from James, he was the only apostle to meet with Saul.

Up to this point in time, he remained in Jerusalem with the exception of a brief journey to Samaria, his work continued in 4 places Lydda (9:32-35), Joppa (9:36-10:23), Caesarea (10:23-48), Jerusalem (11:1-18).

#### **G. Peter In Lydda 9:32-35**

**Acts 9:32-35** And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. 9:33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. 9:34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. 9:35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.



1. Lydda -- A town about eleven miles SE of Joppa, called Lod in the OT (1 Chronicles 8:12), and modern Israelis have reverted to the OT name. It is located in the midst of a rich and fertile plain. It was one of the most westerly of the Jewish settlements after the Exile, the site of which is described as Ge-haharashim, the valley of the smiths or craftsmen. It was here that Peter healed the paralytic and secured many converts (Acts 9:32-35). (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
2. Peter's purpose for going may have been to fulfill Jesus' command to feed the sheep. Or to inspect the progress of the gospel in the Jewish community.
3. Aeneas, was probably a Hellenist convert to Christianity, possibly saved at Pentecost OR during the scattering of the Hellenists at Jerusalem or even possibly by Phillip's ministry.
4. vs 34a "Jesus the Christ heals you" is in the Aoristic tense = "this moment Jesus Christ heals you." Instant healing - the news spread, revival, vs 35.

#### H. Restoration of Dorcas by Peter At Joppa (9:36-43)

**Acts 9:36-43** Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 9:38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. 9:39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 9:40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 9:41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. 9:42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. 9:43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

1. There are many significant events that changed the course of the early churches history.
  - a. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

- b. The persecution of the Jewish believers and their subsequent scattering.
  - c. The conversion of Saul.
  - d. Now a most significant event, the restoration of Dorcas to life, takes place in Joppa that will change the course of the church forever.
2. Joppa is 35 miles northwest from Jerusalem. A modern suburb of Tel Aviv. It is an ancient city dating back to 15 century BC.
  3. This is the first act of someone being raised from the dead in the Book of Acts.
  4. Dorcas was a disciple of Jesus who was "full of good works and charitable deeds" v 36. She became sick and died shortly after v 37. The disciples heard that Peter was at Lydda - 3 hours on foot from Joppa and sent for him. Here was an obvious act of faith on their part and they didn't send for Peter to do the funeral service. Peter came immediately. An act of faith on his part.
  5. vs 40 Notice the difference between this event and the raising of Jairus' daughter by Jesus. Jesus simply spoke life back into her. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Peter went first to the one who possessed the resurrection and life.
  6. vs 42 Notice again the direct result of this miracle was a revival.
  7. vs' 43 Simon The Tanner. This verse is a key link to the upcoming conversion of Cornelius. Tanning was considered an unclean trade. Women whose husbands became tanners had sufficient grounds for divorce. This verse shows Peter's increasing emancipation from ceremonial law and traditions. One commentary said, "Peter had gotten half way to Cornelius and the Gentiles when he lodged with a tanner ... God's providence leads men step by step."

## END LESSON 20

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 20

1. **T or F** A woman named Rahab helped Paul escape through a window in a wall as he was hunted in the city of Damascus.
2. **T or F** Because of the intense persecution, the early church was growing weaker, even though they walked in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.
3. Which of the following are NOT true of Saul's first return to Jerusalem after his conversion:
  - A. He had been away preaching in Damascus for 8 years.

- B. He was not accepted by the apostles and they rejected him due to fear.
  - C. It was Barnabas that befriended Saul and gave testimony of his ministry.
  - D. He ministered to Hellenist Jews until he ran into opposition.
4. **T or F** Peter traveled to Joppa to check on the spiritual condition of the church, where he raised Aeneas from the dead in the name of Jesus.
5. **T or F** Simon the Tanner worked in what was considered an 'unclean trade' when Peter stayed with him and encouraged him to leave tanning and enter the ministry.

## BEGIN LESSON 21

### XIII. Chapter 10

#### A. The Preparation for Witnessing to The Gentiles 10:1-23a

There are 4 main reasons why Luke records the conversion of Cornelius and his household:

1. The early church resisted the idea of Gentiles being directly evangelized or accepted into Christian fellowship apart from any relationship to Judaism.
2. God demonstrated that he was the one who introduced the Gentiles into the church by giving miraculous approval.
3. It was Peter and not Paul, who was the human instrument used in opening the door to the Gentiles.
4. The Jerusalem church finally accepted the Gentiles conversion to Jesus, apart from any allegiance to Judaism, for God had so obviously validated it.

#### B. Background - 10:1-2

**Acts 10:1-2** There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 10:2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

1. Caesarea = On the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, 65 miles northeast of Jerusalem. In NT times, it was the Roman capital of the Province of Judea.

2. Cornelius = Centurion was a non-commissioned officer, a cohort was 1/10 of a Roman Legion; 300-600 men. vs 2 A pious and intensely religious man who gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

### C. God's Preparation of Cornelius 10:3-8

**Acts 10:3-8** He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 10:4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 10:6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. 10:7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 10:8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

1. It must be noted that God specifically reached out to prepare the Gentiles for acceptance into the church. He also prepared the way for them to be received by the Jerusalem church.
2. The Reason: There was an immense prejudice on the part of the Jews towards the Gentiles. To touch a Gentile would defile a Jew, His food was an abomination and His religion blasphemy. This gap couldn't be overcome except for the hand of God.
3. vs 3 Cornelius had a vision at the 9th hour (3:00 pm). The point was it was in broad daylight. It was at the time of prayer for Jews.
4. vs 5-6 The angel gave him instructions to send for Peter. He was not given an option to act or not. Obedience to the vision was vital
5. vs 7,8 Cornelius responded by sending his men to Joppa for Peter.

### D. God's Preparation Of Peter 10:9-23

**Acts 10:9-23** On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 10:11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and

creeping things, and fowls of the air. 10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 10:15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 10:16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. 10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 10:18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 10:19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, **doubting nothing**: for I have sent them. 10:21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 10:23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

1. Peter was praying. Notice that in both visions the men were praying, this could be a point well taken.
2. Peter fell into a trance vs 10b and saw a vision. Sheet with all kinds of animals, clean and unclean. Voice said to kill and eat. The voice commanded him 2 more times. vs 15 What God calls cleansed we must not call unclean. After 3 times, the sheet is taken into heaven.
3. vs 17 Peter did not understand the implications of this vision, however, God would soon reveal its meaning.
4. Notice the difference in the responses of Cornelius and Peter. Cornelius acted immediately in obedience to the vision he had. Peter did not act immediately and was left bewildered and confused.
5. In vs 18-23 the men of Cornelius arrive at Simon's house. The Spirit directs Peter to greet and accept them. They lodge with Peter for the night and travel the next day for Caesarea.

#### E. Peter At Caesarea vs 10:24-48

**Acts 10:24-48 KJV** And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. 10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 10:28 And he said

unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 10:29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. 10:32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. 10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 10:37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 10:40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; 10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 10:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

1. Peter went to Caesarea in obedience to the Spirit and because of the vision. The meaning was made clear by the explanation of Cornelius's messengers.
2. Peter expected something special to occur so he brought along witnesses. This would be significant later in Jerusalem.
3. Here, we can learn that at times, it is important to have other witnesses with us when we are going into unusual situations. For support, for strength, and for protection against false accusations.
4. What situations can you think of where this might be important?
  - a. Going to a single man or woman's home to minister to the opposite sex.
  - b. Going to a meeting or group where there might be confrontation or hostile reaction,
5. Cornelius expected something special to happen. 24b Peter preached to Cornelius and his household.
6. The vision he had earlier was now clear. God had accepted the Gentiles. vs 34-35
7. Peter shared about Jesus of Nazareth, His life and works, his crucifixion and death, his resurrection and the witnessing of it by many people—how He was appointed judge over the living and dead, finally gives the way to salvation vs 43.
8. The Gentiles received Christ in their hearts, and God gave indisputable evidence. vs 44-48 Salvation and filling with the HS all in one fell swoop. The Jews were amazed.
9. This crushed their understanding, God accepted people apart from any allegiance to Judaism. Indisputable evidence was given. This event would change the direction of the church forever. God accepts any who believe.

#### **XIV. Chapter 11**

##### **A. Peter At Jerusalem 11:1-18**

**Acts 11:1-18 KJV** And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 11:2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 11:3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and **didst eat with them.** 11:4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 11:5 I was in

the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

11:6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 11:8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 11:9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 11:10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11:11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. 11:12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 11:13 And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 11:17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

The admission of Gentiles into the fellowship of the Christian community was an event of such magnitude that the news of it spread quickly (v 1).

This passage tells the story of the reaction of the brethren in Judea and how they came to accept the new state of affairs.

1. The charge against Peter 11:1-3
  - a. The source of the charge "**Those of the circumcision**" (this designates Jewish "believers" zealous for the law). These people would be referred to later as **Judaizers**, who believed that Gentiles had to embrace Judaism and the works of the law as well as Christ in order to be saved.
  - b. This faction would cause great trouble in the church, and become enemies of Paul (Tit 1:10, Acts 15:5, The Letter of Galatians)
2. The Nature Of The Charge, His Defense, & the Verdict 11:4-18



- a. It was not Peter preaching to the Gentiles, but rather his going to fellowship with them that irritated these Jewish believers. They were still looking to the law and not faith in Christ.
  - b. Peter's Explanation –
    - (I) Peter recounts his vision and initial reluctance to heed the command of God.  
v 4-10
    - (II) He explained that the spirit told him to go with Cornelius' messengers.
    - (III) Peter brought forward his 6 witnesses who accompanied him (notice in v 12-15, the use of the word "we").
    - (IV) He shared how God approved them by giving an outpouring of the Spirit just as they had received.
    - (V) vs 17 How can I stand in the way of God.
  - c. The Courts Verdict vs 18 Rom 10:12-13
3. In Summary: We can learn 4 Great Lessons from this story about Cornelius.
- a. The gospel was intended for all people, therefore, it follows that if God wants all people to hear the gospel, it is our duty to take it to them.
  - b. Christian fellowship transcends all racial, social and cultural differences. Those whom God receives we should receive.
  - c. Careful observation of religious duties is not enough to save someone. Cornelius, who prayed to God regularly and gave alms, was instructed to send for Peter who would declare to him the words of life.
  - d. When people act on the light that God has given them, they can expect God to give them more light.

## END LESSON 21

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 21

1. Which of the following is NOT one of the main reasons why Luke records the conversion of Cornelius and his household:

- A. The early church resisted the idea of Gentiles being directly evangelized or accepted into Christian fellowship apart from any relationship to Judaism.
  - B. God demonstrated that he was the one who introduced the Gentiles into the church by giving miraculous approval
  - C. The Gentiles had been sending delegations to Jerusalem in hopes that by lobbying the church there, the Jews would accept them as Christians.
  - D. It was Peter and not Paul, who was the human instrument used in opening the door to the Gentiles.
  - E. The Jerusalem church finally accepted the Gentiles conversion to Jesus, apart from any allegiance to Judaism, for God had so obviously validated it.
2. T or F Cornelius was a Centurion of Indian descent that served Rome in the Province of Caesarea.
3. T or F The Jews resisted the Gentiles conversions because the Gentiles had such an immense prejudice against the Jews.
4. T or F Through the conversion and the filling of the Holy Spirit, God showed that he accepted people apart from any allegiance to Judaism.
5. Peter's explanation before the confronted Jewish leaders in Jerusalem about what happened at Cornelius' home did NOT include which of the following:
- A. God gave him a vision and he followed it though initially reluctant to do so.
  - B. He claimed they only ate 'kosher' the whole time away.
  - C. He was directed by the Spirit to go with Cornelius' messengers.
  - D. His six witnesses also backed up his version of events.
  - E. It was God who gave the outpouring of the Spirit.
6. T or F God desires all people to hear the Gospel. It is our duty to take it to them.

**BEGIN LESSON 22**

## **B. The Work Of Barnabas/The Church At Antioch**

1. Background on Antioch  
Founded in 300 BC by Seleucus Nicator served as capital of the Seleucid monarchy until 64 BC when it became part of the Roman empire.
2. 3rd largest city of Roman Empire, next to Rome and Alexandria. Called the Queen Of The East, Antioch the Great, Antioch the Beautiful.
3. City and its suburbs had 800,000 inhabitants.
4. Located on the Orontes River 300 miles north of Jerusalem and 23 miles east of the Mediterranean.
5. Was made a free city in 64 BC with it's own municipal Government. It served as the seat of Roman provincial government for all of Syria.
6. Population was mainly Syrian, Language and culture was Greek. Had a large Jewish population.
7. The city hosted the temple of Daphne, Temple of Apollo and Artemis. It was a center of moral depravity of every kind.
8. In Christian history, a part from Jerusalem, no other city played a more important role in the life of the early church.
9. It was the birthplace of foreign missions.
10. The home base for Paul's outreach for the Eastern part of the Empire.
11. It was the first place where those of "The Way" (9:2) were called Christians (11:26).
12. It was where the question of the necessity for Gentiles to submit to circumcision first arose.
13. It had among its teachers: Paul, Barnabas and Peter.  
Gal 2:11-13.
14. It eventually superseded Jerusalem as the center of Christianity.

## **C. The Founding of the Church at Antioch (11:19-21)**

**Acts 11:19-21 KJV** Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 11:20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the

Lord Jesus. 11:21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

1. Beginning with the story of Phillip in Acts Chap 8, Luke has been recording each incident that led to a gospel free of Jewish limitations. This present passage represents the final step toward a definite program based on this principle.
2. v 19 The first witness was to Jews only. The witness had come this far due to the persecution following Stephen's death.
3. v 20 Now we see the witness by believers who were probably Helenists from the scattering, went to Antioch and spoke to Helenists Jews.
4. Here the word is trans. Helenists in N.K.J. in the NIV it says Greeks. The point here is that the gospel had **not** yet spread to people totally detached from Judaism.
5. The message preached v 20c = "They preached the Lord Jesus. .
6. vs 21 The result of preaching Jesus. "The hand of the Lord was with them" = an expression for the power of the Lord. Many were saved.

#### **D. 11:22-26 The Mission of Barnabas**

**Acts 11:22-26 KJV** Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. 11:23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 11:24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 11:25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

1. vs 22 The Jerusalem Church sent a representative Barnabas, to investigate the work at Antioch.
2. Notice the Jerusalem church felt some sort of accountability to God for the spread of the witness. Today when a church sends people out they should follow this example by visiting missionaries and seeing their

work, staying in touch with them, supporting and helping, and maintaining a line of accountability for the support they are given.

3. v 22,23 Barnabas' response was that he found God has favored the work at Antioch and He rejoiced. He encouraged their steadfastness in the Lord. Barnabas' purpose was to encourage them to stay on the right track. We should do the same for our missionaries.
4. v 25, 26 Barnabas sought out Saul to help him in the ministry in Syria. Saul was in Tarsus for a long time and it was during this time that he probably was disinherited due to his Christian confession. They returned to Antioch and spent a year teaching in the church.
5. vs 26 Here they received the title Christians.

#### **E. The Benevolence of the Church at Antioch 11:27-30**

**Acts 11:27-30 KJV** And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 11:30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

1. Agabus, a prophet revealed by the Spirit that a famine was going to come, and in the same (vs 28) we see it coming to pass.
2. Each man gave according to his ability to assist fellow believers in Jerusalem. Here we can see the special bond of love that fellow believers had for one another. The gift was sent to the elders by Paul and Barnabas. (This is the first mention of elders in the Jerusalem church)

#### **F. In summary, we see 3 new things emerge from this section in 11:19-30:**

1. A new center for missionary work (Antioch)
2. A new name for disciples (Christians)
3. A new team for spreading the gospel (Barnabas and Saul).

## **XV. Chapter 12 The Persecution and Death of Herod**

- A.** Background on Herod: 6 members of the Herod family appear in the Biblical records as rulers. Herod the Great was King of the Jews at the time of Jesus' birth.
  - 1. Archelaus (called Herod the Ehtnarch) reigned in Judea "in the room of His father Herod" (Matt 2:22)  
4 BC-6 AD was never given the title of King.
  - 2. Herod the Tetrarch (Luke 3:19) A son of Herod the Great, also know as Antipas - ruler whom executed John the Baptist.
  - 3. Phillip, Son of Herod the Great.
  - 4. Herod the King (Acts 12:1) also called Herod Agrippa I grandson of Herod the Great.
  - 5. Agrippa II (Acts 25:13-26:32) Son of Herod The King, great-grandson of Herod the Great.
- B.** Herod the Great died and His kingdom was divided among 3 of His Sons:
  - 1. Phillip became Tetrarch of Iturea, the community northeast of the Sea of Galilee, reigned until 34 AD.
  - 2. Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, reigned until 39 AD. He was recalled by Rome for a suspected plot against the emperor's life.
  - 3. Archelaus became (Ethnarch = Gov;) inferior to King of Samaria and Idumea- the largest part of the kingdom. Disposed in 6 AD and banished to Gaul.
- C.** Judea was then made part of the province of Syria and governed by procurators until 41 AD. In 41AD the whole of Palestine passed under the rule of Herod Agrippa I. He was raised in Rome in close association with the imperial family. He remained ruler of Palestine until AD 44. He was considered a successful ruler and found favor with the Jews because He embraced Jewish regulations.
- D.** **Chapter 12 is divided into 4 parts:**
  - 1. v 1,2 The execution of James.
  - 2. The attempt on Peter's Life (v 3-19)

3. The outcome of Herod's persecution v 20-24
4. The return of Barnabas and Saul (v 25)

#### E. The Execution Of James 12:1-2

**Acts 12:1-2 KJV** Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 12:2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

1. Little space is given to the 1st Apostle to die as a martyr. He was John's brother, son of Zebedee.
2. He was probably very visible in the activity of the church, which is why he may have been targeted.
3. He was either beheaded or in some fashion killed by a sword. Ordered by Herod Agrippa I.
4. The motivation behind this harassment and execution of James was simply that Herod desired to win greater favor in the eyes of the Jews.

#### F. The Attempt On Peter's Life 12:3-19

**Acts 12:3-19 KJV** And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 12:4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. 12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. 12:6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 12:7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 12:8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 12:9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. 12:10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. 12:11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12:12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many

**were gathered together praying.** 12:13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 12:14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. 12:15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. 12:16 But Peter continued knocking: and **when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.** 12:17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. 12:18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. 12:19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode.

1. The motivation (vs 3) of Herod was to gain Jewish favor.
2. The time of the arrest (4,5). During the time of unleavened bread that was eaten for 7 days following the Passover Meal. He was to be brought before the people following the Passover Celebration. Guarded by 16 guards.
3. vs 5-9 Describe Peter's Angelic Deliverance or Jailbreak. This account Emphasizes 5 Things:
  - a. v 5 The timeliness of the deliverance (on the very night before he was to be brought before Herod). God's timing is perfect in your life.
  - b. v 6 The maximum effort in the security of the imprisonment (chained between 2 guards, guards at door, and an iron gate). Yet man will not stop God's plan.
  - c. Peter's peace (sleeping) He needed a sharp poke by the angel. He also submissively followed every order the angel gave him. Comes from the heavenly Father.
  - d. 5 b & 12b The prayer of the church. There is always power in prayer.
  - e. The surprise of the church at his deliverance, and their answered prayer. Prayer works! Believe and you receive.
4. From this last fact, it would appear that the prayers of the church were lacking in faith, by their shock to see Peter at their door, but this is simply proof that God often gives us more than we expect and always more than we deserve. We must also take into account that these believers were just learning all that God had for them. Certainly



answered prayer strengthened their faith, and provided motivation for future prayers and intercession.

#### **G. The Outcome of Herod's Persecutions 12:20-24**

**Acts 12:20-24 KJV** And **Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon:** but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. 12:21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 12:22 And **the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.** 12:23 And immediately **the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory:** and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. 12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

1. Divine Judgment: The people of Tyre and Sidon had gotten Herod angry and were worried that he would cut off their food supply. They arranged a special meeting with Herod. Herod arrives on the set day decked out in royal attire. He gives a speech and the people trying to flatter him shout "it's a voice of a god and not a man." v 23.
2. The Word of God grew and multiplied. This statement is a vivid contrast to the judgment that had befallen Herod, an enemy of God. No man will stand in the way of the growth and spread of the gospel. That is something God will see to.

#### **END LESSON 22**

#### **QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 22**

1. **T or F** In Christian history, apart from Jerusalem and Bethlehem, no other city played a more important role in the life of the early church than Antioch.
2. **T or F** Antioch was the first place where Christians were referred to as those of "The Way".
3. Which of the following statements is NOT true about the founding of the church at Antioch:
  - A. The first witness in Antioch about the Lord was to Jews only.
  - B. Gentiles in Antioch at first stoned anyone who spoke in Jesus name.
  - C. Hellenist (Greek/Jews) were the next to hear the Good News as a result of the persecution that started with the death of Stephen.
  - D. Many were saved as a result of the preaching of the Lord Jesus.

4. **T or F** As with the relationship of the Jerusalem church and Barnabas and the Antioch Church, we today should support and hold accountable those we send out to spread the Gospel.

5. Mark the following statement that is NOT true:

- A. Herod the Great was King of the Jews at the time of Jesus birth.
- B. In 41AD the whole of Palestine passed under the rule of Herod Agrippa I.
- C. Herod Agrippa I was considered a successful ruler and found favor with the Jews.
- D. When Herod the Great died, his kingdom was divided among 4 of his sons.

6. **T or F** The motivation behind the harassment and execution of James was simply that Herod desired to win greater favor in the eyes of the Jews.

7. **T or F** Peter was imprisoned by Herod because he spoke out loudly and publicly about Herod's choice of a wife.

## BEGIN LESSON 23

### H. The return of Barnabas and Saul to Antioch 12:25

**Acts 12:25 KJV** And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Paul and Barnabas had fulfilled their mission of mercy to the Jerusalem church. They took John Mark (Barnabas' cousin; Col 4:10) back with them to Antioch. Now all things were ready for the great missionary thrust into the Gentile world. Beginning with the witness in Cyprus and Central Asia.

### XVI. Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey; Acts 13:1-14:28

Here the book of Acts takes a new direction. In the first 8 chapters the witness was confined to Jerusalem. In chapters 8-12 the witness spread through Judea and Samaria. Now in Chapter 13 through the end of Acts, the gospel spread beyond Palestine and eventually goes to Rome.

Up to this point, with just a few exceptions, the Christian witness had been taken to the Jews. From this point forward, the witness will go into Gentile areas yet Paul will use a familiar method to spread the gospel. In each city he goes first to the synagogue where he knows he will find people (Jews) seeking God. There he will present the gospel to the Jews which will create a stir generally getting him tossed out, but this will create the needed opportunity to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles who have an ear to hear.

Up to this point Peter was the main character. Now Paul takes the major role. After chapter 15 Peter is not mentioned again in Acts.

#### **A. The call of Barnabas and Saul to missions; 13:1-3**

**Acts 13:1-3 KJV** Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, **the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.**

1. The leadership of the church was made up of prophets and teachers. The prophets were men and women inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak messages of exhortation to the church, vs 1.
2. The teachers gave instruction to believers in the practical duties of Christian life, and to ground them in knowledge of the OT and teachings of Jesus.
3. Vs. 2, 3. Prayer, worship and fasting revealed God's will. Paul and Barnabas were seeking direction. The gospel was spread in the past by the persecution of believers. Now we see that as these men were seeking new fields, they were divinely directed.
4. Notice three things:
  - a. They were in prayer and fasting, seeking God's will.
  - b. THEN God gave them a word to go.
  - c. The leadership recognized their call. They had been ministering right in Antioch at that local church. Others observed their gifts. When God calls someone to a task, He will often make it known to others.
5. Vs. 3b. They laid hands on them and sent them away. The laying on of hands is a symbol of recognition by the church leadership of the gifts and calling that already exist. At times gifts are imparted to those receiving the laying on of hands; I Tim 4:14. That they sent them out indicates the church supported their ministry by prayer, and financial support. Paul and Barnabas were an extension of the church ministry in Antioch.

## B. The Missionary Journey 13:4-13

**Acts 13:4-13 KJV** So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. 13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 13:7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 13:10 And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. 13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

1. Covered a period of approx 2 years. 46-48 AD. Covered in Acts 13:4 – 14:28
2. V 4, sent out by the Holy Spirit. This gives the primary formula for people being sent into ministry. The Holy Spirit separates them. The church sends them.
3. First stop, Seleucia, built in 301 BC, a stopover point en route to Cyprus.
4. The visit to Cyprus, 4b – 12. The country of Barnabas' birth. Largest island in the Eastern Mediterranean. Population mainly Greek, large Jewish community. Ruled by Roman procurator.
5. Vs 6. They traveled the entire island but made two specific stops – Salamis (v 5) and Paphos (6b – 12)
6. In Salamis – John Mark was their attendant. They preached in the synagogues to the Jews.
7. Paphos – provincial capital and residence of the Roman governor. Notoriously wicked, center of worship for Aphrodite. Three significant occurrences are recorded in Paphos

- a. The encounter with Bar-Jesus, a sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, who attempted to stop Paul and Barnabas, and the pro-consul (deputy).
  - b. The result of Bar-Jesus' actions, he is blinded v 9-11
  - c. The pro-consul (deputy) becomes a believer, v 12
- 8. Perga of Phamphlia, vs 13. Phamphlia is a province on the south coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Perga saw two significant events:
  - a. Before arriving in Perga Paul assumes leadership. Previously the record in Acts gives Barnabas as the leader, from here on Paul will lead, 13a.
  - b. John Mark leaves and returns to Jerusalem. His reasons for leaving are all speculation. Some say he resented Paul assuming leadership over Barnabas, his cousin. Some say he disagreed or feared the effect that preaching to Gentiles directly would have in Jerusalem. Some say he could not handle the travel.

### C. Pisidian Antioch - 13:14-43

**Acts 13:14-43 KJV** But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 13:15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. 13:17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 13:18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 13:19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 13:20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 13:21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 13:22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. 13:23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 13:25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. 13:26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 13:27 For

they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 13:28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 13:29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. 13:30 But God raised him from the dead: 13:31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 13:32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 13:33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 13:34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 13:35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 13:36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 13:37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 13:40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 13:41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 13:43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

1. Antioch Pisidia, actually in the province of Galatia. Was made a Roman colony in 6 BC and was the administrative and military center for the province of Galatia.
2. V. 16-41; Paul's sermon. Given at the request of the rulers of the synagogues. 14b – 15. Reveals
  - a. Paul's theology of Justification by faith.
  - b. The inadequacy of the law for man's redemption, v 38-39.
  - c. Promise of forgiveness to those who believe, v 40-41,
  - d. and warning to those who don't believe.
3. Vs 42-43. The Gentiles were begging for more and asked them to return. They desired more light. They had never heard this kind of teaching.

#### **D. The second stage of the witness – 13:44-52.**

**Acts 13:44-52 KJV** And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 13:47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 13:49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. 13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. 13:51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

1. A week later nearly the whole town came to hear the word.
2. Vs. 45. Such interest caused envy on the part of the Jews, which brings strife.
3. Paul turns now specifically to the Gentiles, v 45-46.
4. The Jews stir up trouble and cause Paul and Barnabas to be expelled. vs 50.
5. Vs. 51. Shaking off the dust from their feet was a sign of severance of responsibility
6. Vs. 52. Even persecution and rejection could not rob them of their joy. In 16:22

**John 16:22** And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, **and your joy no man taketh from you.**

**E. Founding the church in Iconium – 14:1-5 90 miles from Antioch.**

**Acts 14:1-5 KJV** And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. 14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. 14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 14:4 But the multitude of the city was

divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. 14:5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them, 14:6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

1. Iconium is known today as Konya, a small Turkish town of 30,000 people. Here they preached in the synagogue to Jews and Gentiles. Vs. 1. And many believed. The unbelievers among the Jews stirred up contention again. This time their attack was aimed at poisoning the minds of the Gentiles. Vs. 3. Signs and wonders bore witness to the validity of the message. This came for two reasons:
  - a. They did not leave when persecution arose.
  - b. They spoke the word boldly.
2. The city was split and with some on the side of the unbelievers and some on the side of the apostles. The unbelievers stirred up the officials and they plotted to stone them. Paul and Barnabas left the city.

**F. Lystra & Derbe– 14:6-21.**

**Acts 14:6-21 KJV** They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 14:7 And there they preached the gospel. 14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. 14:11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 14:12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. 14:13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. 14:14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 14:17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. 14:18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them. 14:19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. 14:20



Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

1. Lystra, 18 miles south of Iconium, was made a Roman colony in 6 BC. Two major incidents are recorded here: vs. 8-18 – a miraculous healing of a man lame from birth, and the stoning of Paul (19-20a).
2. The Miracle – vs 8-18. Lame from birth, Paul saw he had faith.
  - a. Word of knowledge. The faith found a vent in the command of Paul. He was immediately healed.
3. The crowds thought they were gods and called **Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius** and came out to sacrifice to them. Vs. 14 proved they were just men
4. Paul's sermon – v 15-17 – preaches
  - a. One God. He is living. He is creator of all. He guides the course of history. He is a good God and full of grace.
  - b. Even with this message they could hardly prevent the crowds from sacrificing to them.
5. Paul's stoning – v 19-20b
  - a. The unbelieving Jews from Antioch and Iconium came, stirred up the crowds and stoned him.
  - b. He rose up – surely a miracle. Notice his courage. He went back into the city and the next day departed.
6. In Derbe they made many disciples and began their return to Antioch.

**END LESSON 23**

#### **QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 23**

1. **T or F** Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch with the Apostle John after bringing a gift to the Jerusalem church to bring relief from a famine.
2. **T or F** The Apostle Paul takes the major role in the spreading of the Gospel in the book of Acts from Peter, beginning with his first missionary journey in Acts 13.

3. Paul and Barnabas were called out of the Church at Antioch by the Holy Spirit. Which of the following statements are NOT true concerning that event:

- A. Rather than persecution, it was the leading of the Holy Spirit that directed these men to go out and share the Gospel.
- B. They received the direction from the Holy Spirit AFTER prayer and fasting.
- C. The leadership of the Church in Antioch laid hands on Paul and Barnabas and sent them out in the authority and spiritual covering of the Church.
- D. Paul and Barnabas received their specific giftings through taking the right courses at their local synagogue.

4. Which of the following is NOT true concerning the first missionary journey:

- A. Covered a period of approximately 2 years, 46-48 AD.
- B. This gives the primary formula for people being sent into ministry. The Holy Spirit separates them. The church sends them.
- C. The pro-counsel of Paphos comes to faith in Christ after meeting these men.
- D. Bar-Jesus, a false prophet, is struck deaf after resisting Paul and the Gospel.

5. **T or F** In the new church at Iconium, signs and wonders came due to the missionaries boldness and refusal to leave the city when persecution arose.

6. **T or F** In Lystra, a man lame from birth is miraculously healed and Paul is stoned by Jews from Antioch and Iconium.

#### BEGIN LESSON 24

##### G. The return to Antioch – 14:21-28

**Acts 14:21-28 KJV** And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 14:23 **And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.** 14:24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 14:25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 14:26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 14:28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

1. The purpose of their return trip by retracing their steps was to strengthen the believers and churches that were established.
2. V 22. Here Paul exhorts to continue in the faith through many tribulations. 2 Tim 2:12, 3:12.
3. Vs 23. He appointed elders in every church. He stayed, prayed and fasted with them, committing them to the Lord.

#### **H. Summary of first journey**

1. Preached in three Roman provinces: Cyprus, Pamphilia, Galatia.
2. Four churches established: Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.
3. John Mark deserted the team.
4. Paul assumes leadership for the team.
5. Expelled from Pisidian Antioch, fled Iconium after plot was revealed that he would be stoned. Stoned and left for dead in Lystra.
6. Finally, notice their missions strategy:
  - a. They preached in great centers of population, cities of influence.
  - b. They sought out a synagogue first to preach in because they would more readily understand the message.
  - c. They took great care to preserve the fruit of their work through encouragement, instruction and organization.

## **XVII. The Jerusalem Conference – Acts 15**

Following their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch and “stayed there a long time” (Acts 14:28). It was during this time that contention arose among the believers as certain men from Judea came to Antioch and began teaching that you must be circumcised in order to be saved. This caused a great stir, and Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to the apostles to get a ruling on this matter that resulted in the Jerusalem Council. This section can be divided into four sections.

- The occasion for the conference, v 1-3
- The deliberations of the conference, v 4-21
- The decision of the conference, v 22-29
- The report to Antioch, v 30-35

### **A. The occasion for the conference 15:1-3**

**Acts 15:1-3 KJV** And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 15:3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

1. Judaizers came and preached that in order to be saved the Gentile converts had to embrace the Law of Moses by being circumcised. It is implied that these men did not have the approval of the apostles. Acts 15:24
2. Paul and Barnabas were convinced that salvation was open to the Gentiles by faith alone. However, they understood that if this issue wasn't dealt with, opposition from the Jerusalem church would be disastrous for their mission. A split between Jewish believers and Gentile believers would also be disastrous.

### **B. The deliberations of the conference – 15:4-21**

**Acts 15:4-21 KJV** And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 15:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 15:7 And

when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 15:8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 15:13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 15:14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15:15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 15:16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 15:17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

1. There were apparently three meetings between the delegation from Antioch and the brethren at Jerusalem.
  - a. The public reception upon their arrival, v 4-5. Upon their arrival Paul and Barnabas gave a report of all the things God had done with them.
  - b. A private meeting between Paul and Barnabas and the pillars of the Jerusalem church, Gal 2:1-10. In this private meeting we see that the apostolic leaders all agreed that God was with Paul and Barnabas and they embraced their mission and ministry Gal 2:7-9.
  - c. The public conference at which a solemn decision was reached, v 6-21. The conference follows the private meeting discussed in Gal 2:1-10. Present at the conference were the apostles, Paul, Barnabas, elders and the (v 6) multitude, v 12.
2. The Pharisees who were believers made protest. They insisted that the Gentiles be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses.

**3. The elements of Peter's speech, (vs. 7-11)**

- a. Here Peter testifies how God had already shown that the Gentiles should hear the word and after believing he gave them the Holy Spirit just as they received.
- b. That there are no distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, all are purified by faith, v 9.
- c. Why require the yoke (or burden) of the law that even the Jews are not able to keep?
- d. That the Gentiles are saved just as we are saved by faith.
- e. After Peter's speech Paul and Barnabas gave testimony of all that God had done through signs and wonders
- f. The miracles gave confirmation of the acceptance of the Gentile converts by God.

**4. The speech of James, (vs. 13-21)**

- a. James, the half-brother of our Lord.
- b. James went to the Old Testament to prove that admission of the Gentiles was in agreement with scripture. He quotes Amos 9:11, 12.
- c. Don't trouble the Gentile converts with heavy burdens. James makes it a sociological issue. Since there are Jewish congregations in every city, the Gentile converts should abstain from those things that would bring offense to the Jews in their cities.
- d. Vs. 21 gives the key to the reason. These restrictions were not made as divine ordinances to gain acceptance before God, but rather as a means of protecting the more sensitive beliefs of others for the sake of harmony within the church and the continuance of the Jewish Christian mission.
- e. Here is where the principles of Christian liberty come into play. (Rom 14:12-23). Be willing to sacrifice for the sake of the gospel, and be sensitive to other brothers and sisters in the faith. (I Cor 9:19-23).

**C. The decision of the conference, 15:22-29**

**Acts 15:22-29 KJV** Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 15:23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 15:25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 15:26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15:27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 15:29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

1. Send chief representatives back to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas – Judas/Barsabas and Silas. Silas would later accompany Paul on his second missionary journey.
2. Send a letter that expressed the decision of the conference. The main contents of the letter being: A vote of confidence for Paul and Barnabas, validating their ministry, (v 25-26) and the requirement that for the sake of fellowship between Gentile and Jewish converts the Gentile converts should “abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.”
3. The leaders were seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit and their prayers were being answered, v 28.

#### **D. The report to Antioch, 15:30-35**

**Acts 15:30-35 KJV** So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 15:31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. 15:32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. 15:33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 15:34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. 15:35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

1. Paul and Barnabas, along with Judas and Silas, returned to Antioch with the letter from James. They gathered the church together and read the letter and they rejoiced at this vote of confidence. Judas and Silas were prophets in the NT fashion. Notice their ministry as prophets, v 32. They exhorted the brethren and strengthened them. Judas returned to Jerusalem and Silas remained in Antioch.
2. Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch teaching and preaching.

**E. Summary: What did the Jerusalem Conference accomplish?**

1. Confirmed salvation by grace.
2. It affirmed Christians' freedom from Jewish legalism, and thereby showed that Christianity by its very nature transcends racial, national, social and cultural bounds.
3. It demonstrated a practical method of settling church problems, namely by open discussion and then guidance from the Holy Spirit.

**END LESSON 24**

**QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 24**

1. **T or F** The purpose of their return trip by retracing their steps was to strengthen the believers and churches that were established.
2. Which of the following statements concerning the first missionary journey is **NOT** true:
  - A. Paul is stoned and left for dead in Pisidian Antioch.
  - B. Preached in three Roman provinces: Cyprus, Pamphilia, Galatia
  - C. Paul assumes leadership of the team.
  - D. John Mark deserted the team.
3. **T or F** The Jerusalem Conference came about as a result of the ongoing debate that an individual must convert to Judaism in order to be saved.
4. **T or F** Paul and Barnabas recognized that a split between the Jewish and Gentile believers would be disastrous.
5. Which of the following issues were **NOT** part of what Peter and James said before the Jerusalem conference:
  - A. It was God who determined the Gentiles should be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit.



**B. The Gentiles give much richer collections than the Jews.**

**C. There are no distinctions between Jew and Gentile. All are purified by faith.**

**D. The wonderful signs and wonders during Paul and Barnabas travels among the Gentiles.**

**E. Miracles confirm God's acceptance of the Gentiles. (Outside of Judaism).**

**F. The Old Testament proves that the admission of Gentiles was in agreement with Scripture.**

**G. Be sensitive and willing to sacrifice your freedoms for the sake of others in the faith.**

**6. T or F Christianity by its very nature transcends racial, national, social and cultural bounds.**

## **BEGIN LESSON 25**

### **XVIII. Paul's Second Missionary Journey – Acts 15:36 – 18:22**

With the conference at Jerusalem, the way was prepared for a great leap forward in the missionary enterprise. The second missionary journey will take the gospel into the Hellenic world to the great cities of Greece. This journey spanned 3-4 years, somewhere between 48-52 AD. The purpose was to visit the churches already established, to see how they were doing. Paul's companions were Silas, who started out from Antioch with Paul; Timothy, who joined him at Lystra; Luke, who joined him at Troas.

In this passage we will see:

- The contention between Paul and Barnabas, 15:36-40
- The work in Syro-Cilicia, 15:41
- The work in Lystra and Derbe, 16:1-5
- Troas, 16:6-10
- Phillipi; 16:11-40
- Thessalonica; 17:1-9
- Berea, 17:10-14
- Athens; 17:15-34
- Corinth; 18:1-17
- The return to Antioch, 18:18-22

#### **A. The contention between Paul and Barnabas, 15:36-40**

**Acts 15:36-40 KJV** And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. 15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 15:38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 15:39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

1. Paul suggested that Barnabas and he return to the churches to see how they were doing, v 36. Barnabas agreed and resolved to take John Mark with them. Paul refused, due to the fact that he deserted them on their first journey. The contention caused a split between them.
2. The result: two missionary teams. Barnabas and John Mark sailed to Cyprus. Paul and Silas traveled by land to Asia Minor. Neither, Barnabas or John Mark were mentioned again in Acts.
3. 2 Tim 4:11; there was a healing in Paul & John Mark's relationship, forgiveness and reconciliation.

#### **B. The work in Syria and Cilicia, , 15:41**

**Acts 15:41 KJV** And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

In summary: the work here was a visit to those churches which were probably established by Paul in his early days at Antioch before Barnabas came and enlisted him for services. His presence and teaching strengthened them.

#### **C. The work at Derbe and Lystra, 16:1-5. Four things to note:**

**Acts 16:1-5** Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 16:2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 16:3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. 16:4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

1. Timothy joins the team at Lystra.
2. The decrees of the Jerusalem conference were delivered.
3. The churches grew in faith and in numbers
4. The circumcision of Timothy is noted in verse 3. It was done not for appeasement of Judaizers, but rather to open the door for Timothy to come into and minister in the Jewish synagogues. Without being circumcised he wouldn't have been able to enter the synagogue because they knew his father was Greek. He plays a major role in Paul's life. His name is mentioned 17 times in 10 different epistles of Paul's. Two of Paul's 13 epistles are addressed to him.

#### **D. The work at Troas, 16:6-10**

**Acts 16:6-10 KJV** Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 16:10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately **we** endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

1. The apostle Paul's missionary journey will reveal that he used excellent strategy in going to large centers of population. But even more important than his use of missionary strategy is his sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In this passage we see clearly that Paul was sensitive and submissive to the Holy Spirit.
2. He was forbidden to teach in Asia and Bithynia by the Holy Spirit, v 6
3. Somehow the Holy Spirit made it clear that He had other plans. Possibly spoke through Silas who was a prophet, 15:32.
4. (vs 9-10) A vision of a Macedonian man pleading for help was the positive sign of the Spirit's direction. Notice Paul's reaction to the vision. He acted immediately. It is here that Luke joins the missionary team; see **"we"** in verse 10.

### E. The work in Philippi, 16:11-40.

**Acts 16:11-12 KJV** Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; 16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

1. Luke devotes more space to the work in Philippi than any other city on the second and third missionary journeys.
  - a. Philippi: v 11-12; gateway between Asia and the west. A city of the Roman province of Macedonia. In an earlier period it was called Crenides. In 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Phillip II of Macedonia, Alexander the Great's father, enlarged and fortified it and named it after himself.
  - b. In 168 BC, Macedonia fell into the hands of the Romans. In 42 BC, Octavius (Augustus) and Mark Anthony defeated Cassius and Brutus in the valley where Philippi was located. Augustus, as a memorial to his victory, made Philippi a Roman colony. He peopled it with Roman soldiers. Endowed it with special privileges. Made it a military outpost.
  - c. In vs 12 it is called the foremost or chief city of Macedonia. It was not the capital, as Thessalonica was. It was a city of chief importance in that part of Macedonia. As a Roman colony it had a form of government that was independent of the provincial capital, Thessalonica. There were two chief magistrates, like a mayor or city leader. Today it is the scene of ruins. **Four important events take place here:**
    - a. #1 (vs. 13-15) The conversion of Lydia and her household,

**Acts 16:13-15** And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 16:15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

- (I) In Jewish law, a congregation was made up of heads of ten households. At this point a synagogue was to be formed.
- (II) Failing this, a place of prayer under the open sky and near a river or sea was to be arranged
- (III) Philippi did not have a quorum of men apparently so it was without a synagogue
- (IV) On the Sabbath, Paul and his party walked outside the city to locate a Jewish place of prayer. If there were any Jews in the city they would come upon them.
- (V) Lydia was a follower of God. She apparently embraced Judaism in some sense. She read the prophets, and prayed.
- (VI) 14 – “**the Lord opened her heart**”. Here is the key point to remember. No man comes to the Father unless the Spirit draws him. It is God who opens the hearts of people to receive the message.
- (VII) The whole household is saved. Relatives and servants all turned to Jesus and were baptized that day. The Philippian church was born.

**b. #2 (vs. 16-18)** The deliverance of a demon-possessed girl,

**Acts 16:16-18** And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 16:17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation. 16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

- (I) Spirit of divination (Greek, Pneuma Pythona). The python was a mystical serpent that guarded the temple of Apollo. Later the demon that spoke through it supposedly killed it. A ventriloquist was considered possessed by a spirit.
- (II) The people who knew this girl did not regard her as insane or fraudulent, simply demon-possessed. She had the ability to foretell the future. That’s how she earned her master’s money, v 16.

- (III) She distracted the people and annoyed Paul, v 17-18a
  - (A) Notice what she is saying is completely true. What she is saying is also praise to God. So what is the problem? She is distracting the people from the messenger and the message, drawing attention to herself. This is a great tool of the enemy in a fellowship.
  - (B) Immediate deliverance in the name of Jesus, v 18.

c. #3 (vs. 19-34) The arrest of Paul and Silas

**Acts 16:19-34** And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, 16:20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 16:21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. 16:22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 16:26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. 16:27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 16:28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 16:29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 16:32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 16:34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

- (I) The conversion of the jailor is a direct outcome of Paul and Silas' arrest. Once again, we see God's divine providence, the guiding of footsteps of His servants to accomplish His will. The charges, v 20-21
- (II) Stirring up the city, "exceedingly trouble our city" the gospel message preached in boldness will often have this affect – riot or revival! Things just won't be the same!

- (III) The charges included that they were **teaching customs that are not lawful for us, being Romans**, to receive or observe, v 20b. Accusing Paul and Silas that they taught an illegal religion. This charge Paul would later refute in his trial before Festus, 25:8.
- (IV) The real motivation behind the charges. Greed, v 19 AND Prejudice, v 20. **“These men being Jews”**. Anti-semitism was very prevalent in the Roman Empire. Notice Luke and Timothy weren’t imprisoned. They probably looked and acted Greek.
- (V) The punishment, v 22-24. Beaten with rods. Imprisonment – inner cell with stocks on their feet.
- (VI) Paul and Silas’ reaction, v 25. Prayer and praise. Often circumstances can be so overwhelming that we cannot see God’s hand in them or His ability to use them for His glory. But if we believe we are in God’s hands then we can praise Him in the midst of difficulty.
- (VII) The results of a right attitude. Supernatural deliverance, v 26. Deliverance can come in two forms:
  - (A) Physical deliverance. Circumstances change.
  - (B) Mental, emotional deliverance. Circumstances don’t change physically but the power to walk through them is supernaturally given;
- (VIII) Instead of fleeing they see the opportunity to share the gospel, 25-30
- (IX) Seeing doors opened, the jailer prepared to kill himself. According to Roman law, if a prisoner escaped the jailer was subject to the same punishment the prisoner was facing. The conversion of the jailer. The jailer believes, v 28-31
- (X) The roles are reversed. Whereas Paul was the prisoner, notice how the jailer bowed at his feet. It is the power of the gospel quickened by the Spirit of God that brings enemies to their knees.

(XI) Vs. 30. What must I do to be saved? Faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(XII) The jailer ministers to Paul and Silas, (vs. 32-34)

- (A) Paul preaches to jailer's household. All believed and were baptized.
- (B) Jailer now ministers to the physical needs of Paul and Silas.
- (C) Here the principle of receiving material help after ministering to spiritual needs is shown. I Cor 9:1-14, Rom 15:27.
- (D) Keep this attitude in mind. Go expecting to receive nothing and you will never be disappointed.
- (E) After being ministered to at the jailer's house, they returned to jail. This was for the protection of the jailer.

d. #4 (vs. 35-40) Paul reveals his Roman citizenship

**Acts 16:35-40** And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. 16:36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. 16:37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, **being Romans**, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. 16:38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. 16:39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. 16:40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

- (I) When Paul revealed that he was a Roman citizen it struck great fear in the hearts of the magistrates. It was against Roman law to imprison a Roman citizen without a trial. A Roman citizen had the right to travel anywhere within the territory of Rome under the protection of Rome. A Roman citizen was not subject to the laws of local governments unless he consented. He could appeal to Rome and be tried there instead of by local officials. Even Roman governors or procurators could not punish a Roman citizen if they appealed to Rome. The right of a Roman citizen



also extended to being escorted out of a jail by the magistrates if imprisoned, v 39.

- (II)** Vs. 40 Before leaving Paul stops to strengthen the infant church; a true sign of apostleship and a pastor's heart is the earnest concern for the flock. Personal sacrifice and safety are often discounted for the sake of the church.

## END LESSON 25

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 25

1. **T or F** Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement and went their separate ways over the addition of Silas to the team.
2. **T or F** It was in Lystra where Paul meets and enlists the aid of the young Timothy.
3. Which of the following statements about Paul's second missionary journey is **NOT** true:
  - A. Paul was sensitive and submissive to the Holy Spirit.
  - B. Through a vision of a Macedonian man pleading for help, Paul immediately responds by sending Luke ahead to the area.
  - C. Lydia was converted along with her household in Philippi.
  - D. God opened the heart of Lydia to receive the message of salvation.
4. **T or F** A great tool of the enemy in a fellowship is to provide a distraction to the message and the messenger, as was the girl with a spirit of divination.
5. Which of the following statements about the riot, jailing and supernatural release of Paul and Silas from the Philippian jail cell is **NOT** true:
  - A. Preaching the Gospel will often have the affect of riot or revival.
  - B. Those against the preaching of Jesus Christ called it an illegal religion.
  - C. Luke and Timothy were probably not imprisoned because they were not Jewish.
  - D. "When they had laid many stripes on them" refers to the punishment by whip.
  - E. As a result of them staying, the jailer and his entire household believed the words of Paul and were baptized.
  - F. A Roman citizen was not subject to the laws of local governments unless he consented.
6. **T or F** Paul, upon his release, stops to encourage the infant church in Philippi, a true sign of a pastor's heart to have earnest concern for the flock.

## BEGIN LESSON 26

### F. The work at Thessalonica, 17:1-9

**Acts 17:1 KJV** Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

1. After leaving Philippi (vs 1) they traveled through Amphipolis, 30 miles from Philippi, then through Apollonia, 30 miles from Amphipolis, on to Thessalonica, another 40 miles. Total 100+ miles from Philippi. Capital city of province of Macedonia. 200,000 population. Seat of Roman government.
2. Founded in 315 BC by Cassandra, King of Macedonia, named for his wife who was Alexander the Great's half sister. Conquered in 168 BC by Romans, Macedonia was divided into four districts. Thessalonica was the capital of its district. 146 BC, four districts merged into one.
3. Thessalonica was the capital. It was made a free city in 42 BC because it sided with Marc Anthony and Octavias Augustus vs Casius and Brutus in Roman civil war. Free city had limited self rule, board of 5-6 magistrates
4. vs. 2-4 show Paul's ministry in the city,

**Acts 17:2-4** And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 17:3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. 17:4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

- a. Went to the synagogue on each of three consecutive Sabbaths (meaning he was there 3 weeks). Ready-made audience, those who would be receptive to Messianic message. Reasoned with them (v 2b) indicates discussion by questions, answers, discussion about scriptures. 3-fold argument from Scripture:

- (I) that the Messiah had to suffer. This was a fulfillment of prophecy, Isa 50:6, 53:5, Zech 12:10
- (II) that he was to rise from the dead
- (III) Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment of these prophecies.

- b. Those who responded, v 4. Some Jews, Great multitude of the devout Greeks, “chief women” denotes wives of prominent citizens

## 5. Opposition to Paul’s work, (vs. 5-9)

**Acts 17:5-9** But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 17:6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 17:7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 17:8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 17:9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

- a. Unbelieving Jews were motivated by envy, remember it is God who gives the increase.
- b. Side note: be careful not to fall into the same trap as these Jews did. They saw God’s anointing and blessing on Paul’s ministry. They saw the converts and they became envious. This is an easy sin to fall into when you are pastoring or working on the field. You see someone’s successes and compare it to your work then you become jealous. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ. If you are faithful and preach God’s Word with boldness and not compromise, God will bless and take care of the numbers.
- c. V 5b. took some of the evil men and gathered a mob. Unbelieving Jews stirred up the crowds. Here once again we see the actions of unbelievers stirring up the crowds to cause a riot. This same tactic would also be a weapon the enemy would use against Paul often (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and now in Thessalonica and later in Berea)
- d. The charges: Here their claim was that Paul and Silas were proclaiming another king and kingdom.
- e. The outcome, v 9. The crowd could not find Paul and Silas so they dragged Jason, Paul’s host, and some of the new believers to the magistrates

- f. Probably due to scanty charges and their inability to find Paul and Silas, they let them go after they posted a bond or security. This was an undesignated amount of money that was to guarantee there would be no more trouble.

### G. The work in Berea, 17:10-14

**Acts 17:10-14 KJV** And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 17:11 These were **more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.** 17:12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. 17:13 But **when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.** 17:14 And then immediately **the brethren sent away Paul** to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

1. Being sent out by the brethren to Berea, 50 miles SW of Thessalonica. Of little importance historically or politically. Had large population in NT times.
2. Mission strategy continues: they preached first in the synagogue, 10c
3. The Bereans, v 11. More fair-minded, more noble Jews, as compared to those in Thessalonica. These tested the truth, v 11b. The Bereans are famous for their openness to hear the word and then put it to the test.
4. The Word of God is the only valid source of reference for testing preaching and teaching. Does it line up with the Word of God?
5. What kind of reaction should you have when you find something being taught that you believe is contrary to the Word? Be prayerful. Pray for true revelation for the one teaching. Be understanding.
6. The result of Paul's preaching. V 12. Many Jews as well as Greek men and women believe.
7. The opposition: Jews from Thessalonica, v 13. Once again unbelieving Jews came to stir up the crowds. Typical of Paul's ministry: revival, riot, and then leave. Paul is sent out of the city. Timothy and Silas remain back. Apparently they were not in as much danger as Paul.

## H. The work in Athens, 17:15-34

**Acts 17:15-34 KJV** And **they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens:** and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. 17:16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, **his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.** 17:17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. 17:18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. 17:19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? 17:20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. 17:21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.) 17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. 17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. 17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. 17:32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. 17:33 So Paul departed from among them. 17:34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

1. Athens was the most illustrious city of Ancient Greece. 5 miles from the Saronic Gulf, an arm of the Aegean Sea. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC the Persians tried to conquer Greece and Athens played a prominent role in their defense. However, the city was completely destroyed at that time.

2. Athens recovered quickly. From 495-429 BC Pericles brought Athens to its zenith. He built the Pantheon and many temples. It was the cultural center of Greece. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Zeno lived there.
3. In 338 BC, Philip of Macedonia conquered Athens. He did not destroy its culture but rather spread it throughout Macedonia.
4. The Romans conquered Athens 146 BC. They were lovers of everything Greek. The Romans left Athens a free city to be self-governed.
5. By NT times it had lost much of its population. It was on the decline, population 10,000. Remained a center of culture and idol worship
6. Paul was alone or with Luke, v 15. Paul was taken out of Berea while Silas and Timothy remained behind. When Paul arrived in Athens, he told those who escorted him from Berea to send Silas and Timothy back to him.
7. Paul was provoked in his spirit, v 16. Seeing the city full of idols grieved Paul deep within his spirit.
8. Athens was full of idols. It was said that it was easier to meet an idol or a god than a man in Athens. Here you can observe the deep concern for lost souls that motivated Paul.
9. This concern motivated Paul. He could not sit still in the midst of a city where everyone was going to hell. He could see the futility of their search for truth and fulfillment. God can give us the same kind of heart.
10. The audience – v 17-18a. Jew and Gentile worshippers. Once again Paul maintains his mission strategy reasoning with Jew and Gentile worshippers in the synagogue.
11. Epicureans: Greek school of philosophers founded by Epicurus in 306 BC. Their chief aim in life was pleasure. They believed that they could achieve happiness in life by that which brought physical and mental pleasure.
12. Stoics: A philosophy originating in Greece about 280 B.C. They were Pantheistic, believing that matter and force were the ultimate principles of the universe. The “force”, was looked at in many forms (reason, providence, fire...) is called “god”. They believe this force began in a

fiery form to create the universe and will eventually destroy the universe by fire and the process will begin again. Their “god” is impersonal, not involved in the everyday lives of humans, and the human soul is simply a “spark” of the original “god” that lives for a brief time and then when the body dies it is simply re-absorbed into the cosmic force. For them a virtuous life was one conformed to nature, being resigned to one’s fate. Thus human feelings were to be held under control at all times in order to be in harmony with nature. The word “stoic” often refers to a non-emotional, cool, non-reacting personality. On the surface it seemed to teach principles of morality similar to Christianity, but in reality Stoicism had a humanistic base: Stoic morality was based on human PRIDE; Christian morality is based on HUMILITY. Stoics believe in the individual independence of the human being; Christians believe in absolute faith in the one true living God. Stoics see life as a product of fate; Christians see life as a product of God’s providence (working in our lives). Stoics see man’s end coming at the mercy of eventual cosmic ruin; Christians see man’s eventual glorification through personal resurrection as the result of faith in Christ.

13. Paul seeing an altar dedicated “To the Unknown God” uses this as an opportunity to tell the people who the “unknown God” really is. In the course of his message he tells them that God does not dwell in temples made with man’s hands nor is He likened to anything fashioned of gold, silver, stone or graven by man’s hands. Thus surrounded by idol temples Paul explains that God is not found in any of those places or idols. He goes on to say that God has called men to repent from such beliefs as He will one day judge the world by the one whom He has raised from the dead. The idea of resurrection from the dead brought immediate mixed reaction with some mocking, others putting off a decision but indicating their desire to hear more, and finally a small group of those who believed. Here we see what is often the pattern for those who hear the gospel: some will mock, some will put off a decision thinking they have time wanting to hear more later, and then there are those who respond immediately to the Word of God. One can only hope that those who waited will have another opportunity. Paul departs.

#### **I. The campaign in Corinth Acts 18:1-17**

**Acts 18:1-17 KJV** After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 18:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome;) and came unto them. 18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them,

and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 18:6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 18:7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 18:8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 18:11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. 18:12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, 18:13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. 18:14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: 18:15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. 18:16 And he drave them from the judgment seat. 18:17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

1. His first stop is the synagogue and preaches that Jesus is the Christ.
2. Silas and Timothy arrived from Berea after Paul sent for them from Athens
3. Paul may have sent them back out to check on the other churches from Athens because we see that Paul asked them to send offerings to help him which indicates they were not with Paul 2 Cor. 11:9, 4:14-15
4. They brought good news from Thessalonica, 1Thes. 3:6-7. The indication in other translations is that because of this gift he was able to stop tent making and preach full time
5. Opposition is raised in the synagogue and they reject the message (vs. 6) They don't just reject Paul, but blaspheme against Jesus.
6. The shaking off of his garment means he was severing his responsibility. He did his part and now it's up to them and God. The watchman's



responsibility is sound the warning and if they don't heed the warning their blood isn't on your hands.

7. Because of their blasphemy Paul turns to the Gentiles. This is a great discouragement to Paul, but through it God moves his ministry from the synagogue to the house next door that becomes the first meeting place for the Corinthian church.
8. The ruler of the synagogue and his house along with many Corinthians believed and were baptized (vs. 8). The church begins and Paul breaks through the darkness he's been in.
9. (vs. 9-10) Evidently from what is said in these verses Paul must have been somewhat discouraged with all the struggles and disappointments, but praise the Lord, God speaks to him in the night to reassure him that God is with him.
10. There will be seasons in the ministry that feel like a night season, but we need to remember that God will speak to us in the night. If we are to hear we must listen for His voice in the night. He is the glory and the lifter of our heads.
11. (vs. 11) Paul stays there a year and a half.
12. (vs. 12-13) Paul goes before the pro-council, Gallio. Paul is brought before the judgment seat of the Roman governor and is charged with preaching an illegal religion.
13. (vs. 14-17) Before Paul could make his defense God gave him grace and favor as Gallio has no desire to get involved.
14. (vs. 17) The Greeks (most likely sympathetic to Paul) seized Sosthenes, who was a Jewish ruler of the synagogue and probably the leading opposition against Paul, and beat him.

## END LESSON 26

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 26

1. **T or F** Paul, upon his arrival in Thessalonica, spent three Sabbath's reasoning with the local Jews in the synagogue.

2. **T or F** As a result of the successes of Paul's preaching and the Holy Spirit's increase, envious Jews stirred up the city and claimed they preached another king and kingdom.

3. Paul leaves Thessalonica for Berea after the city riots. Which statement is NOT true:

- A. The Bereans are famous for their openness to hear the word and then put it to the test.
- B. The events in Berea were very typical of Paul's ministry: revival, riot, and then leave.
- C. The results of Paul's preaching in Berea were many Jews and Greek men and women come to believe in Jesus.
- D. Jews from Thessalonica, hearing of Paul's work in Berea, sent letters to the Bereans accusing Paul and stirring up trouble.

4. **T or F** When Paul arrived in Athens, his spirit was grieved from the abundance of idol worship.

5. What statement below is NOT true of Paul's ministry in Athens:

- A. Athens was the cultural center of Greece although it was on the decline during Paul's time.
  - B. Paul recognized the futility of their search for truth and fulfillment.
  - C. One group there, the Stoics, believed they could achieve happiness in life by that which brought physical and mental pleasure.
  - D. Paul saw a temple dedicated to 'an unknown god' and proceeded to tell the Athenians who that 'unknown god' was.
  - E. The Romans conquered Athens in 146 BC but left it as a free city to be self-governed, being lovers of everything Greek.
6. **T or F** The Corinthian Jews not only rejected Paul but blasphemed against Jesus as well.
7. Paul's time with the Corinthian church did NOT include which of the following:
- A. Because of a gift from Thessalonica, Paul was able to stop tent making and preach full time.
  - B. Paul, by shaking off his garment, was symbolically trying to get the incense smell from the synagogue out of his clothes.
  - C. The house next door to the synagogue becomes the first meeting place for the newly birthed church in Corinth.
  - D. The Greeks seize Sosthenes and beat him because of his probable opposition to Paul.

**BEGIN LESSON 27**

## **J. Paul's return to Antioch 18:18-22**

**Acts 18:18-22 KJV** And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 18:20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 18:21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 18:22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

1. Not only was Timothy, Luke, and Silas with him, but now Aquila and Priscilla. They leave Corinth and sail to Ephesus where they try to reason with those in the synagogue, and then left Priscilla and Aquila there. They stayed there for four to five years, and would host the congregation in their home.
2. People must have gotten saved because they ask him to please stay longer, but he couldn't he had to keep the feast day
  - a. Before he went to Ephesus he stopped in Cenchrea, and took a Nazirite vow and cut of his hair  
Num. 6:1-21
    - (I) It's a vow of separation for a period of time
    - (II) They will drink no wine, eat no grapes or raisins or vinegar made from wine, they can't be defiled by a dead body
    - (III) After the time is up they would bring back the hair they cut off and burn at the alter before the Lord as a burnt offering
    - (IV) This would signify an answer to their prayer
  - b. This is like a fast to us. Prayer and fasting is our most powerful tools if were seeking the Lord for an answer to an important decision or battle
    - (I) There are many ways to fast. Not eating is dieting unless seeking the Lord and prayer is involved
    - (II) No one enjoys fasting it's beating down the flesh

3. He reports to the home church staying accountable to the body and in particular those who sent him.

#### **XIX. Paul's third missionary journey Acts 18:23-21:17**

- He set out on this journey in about 52 or 53 AD
- This journey will last 4 to 5 years and will concentrate on Ephesus and the providence of Asia
- We don't know if he started alone but it looks as if he did

##### **A. The motivation was to strengthen the disciples and the churches that he planted on the earlier journey's 18:23**

**Acts 18:23 KJV** And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

##### **B. The meeting of Apollos with Priscilla and Aquila 18:24-28**

**Acts 18:24-28 KJV** And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 18:25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 18:26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 18:27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: 18:28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

1. Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria. It was the second largest city in the Roman Empire, only smaller than Rome. It was the seat of the Egyptian government and had a population of one million people
2. Apollos knew only the baptism of John. Repent and prepare the way for the Lord the kingdom is at hand
3. Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos more accurately the ways of the Lord. He had a teachable spirit as they instructed him.

4. He was gifted and willing to be sent. When you see someone that is gifted and is willing to go out it is important to open the door for them in ministry. When a person goes out others will ask for letters of recommendation to see if your well spoken of vs. 27. Are your skills well proven, what is the fruit of your ministry. This is very important to show your character and it builds strength in your ministry for others to see. Others will feel more comfortable receiving you, and let you have more room to minister. As a pastor you can't just hand your sheep over to anyone's teachings.
5. He helped the believers that believed through grace and convinced the Jews that Jesus was the Christ vs. 28

### **C. Paul begins ministry in Ephesus Acts 19:1-10**

**Acts 19:1-10 KJV** And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 19:7 And all the men were about twelve. 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

1. Ephesus is on the western coast of the province of Asia Minor. It was founded in the twelfth or eleventh century BC, and became the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It was the center for trade and at one time a great seaport, but because of the striping of the land of its timber the erosion of the land clogged the seaport, making it hard for shipping. Thus it began to decline.
2. The city had another thing going for it and that was the temple of Artemis. Artemis was the Greek God of fertility. This temple was one of the seven

wonders of the ancient world, and became a main tourist attraction. It brought in money from all over the land as people came to see it.

3. Ephesus was a center for black magic and sorcery. Paul would have his greatest battles there 1 Cor. 15:32, 2 Cor. 1:8-10
4. Paul would stay there two to three years. Paul works among twelve disciples that he finds there Acts 19:1-7
5. These were disciples of John the Baptist, and they were waiting on the Messiah to come. Paul tells them that He did come, and His name is Jesus.
6. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit that comes when you receive Jesus. They had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit. Thus Paul evidently explained, they were baptized in water in the name of Jesus received the Holy Spirit with the evidenced of speaking in tongues.
7. Paul begins his work in the synagogue vs. 8
  - a. Reasoned boldly and persuading them for three months. They were waiting for the Kingdom of God and he reasoned with them that it was already established through Christ. The Kingdom of God is already established in your heart and around you as you live it in your life.
  - b. Christ will come back to deal with the evil in the world but the kingdom is here. The Kingdom is fellowship with man like in the garden of Eden, and Christ will also come and establish his earthly kingdom here again.
  - c. Some hardened their hearts and spoke evil. Paul leaves and sets up camp somewhere else in the city. God will remove the message and without the message the people will have no hope. This is God's judgment on the people.
  - d. Hard times aren't the reason to leave a city; it's the prompting of the Holy Spirit that makes us leave.
8. Paul teaches in the school of Tyrannus vs. 9-10
  - a. This continued for two years
  - b. All heard the Word
  - c. The School of Tyrannus was a school of philosophy where people would share their thought

- d. Some say that Paul had use of the building from 11am—4pm, and this time was called the time of the mid-day rest. They would get up early in the morning and work until eleven, then rest until the heat went down, then go back to work around four o'clock.

#### **D. Miraculous confirmation of the Word of God 19:11-12**

**Acts 19:11-12 KJV** And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

There were special miracles that God worked through Paul. People were healed and delivered from even a piece of clothing belonging to Paul. Ephesus was the center of Black magic and sorcery and these special miracles got their attention as these miracles were above anything they had seen.

#### **E. The seven sons of Sceva 19: 13-20**

**Acts 19:13-20 KJV** Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 19:14 **And there were seven sons of one Sceva**, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 19:16 **And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them**, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 19:17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and **fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.** 19:18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. 19:19 **Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men:** and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

1. A vagabond Jewish exorcist was a man that traveled around and delivered people from demons, and they believed they had spells to cast demons out of people.
2. This seven son's were the son's of the Jewish chief priest named Sceva.
3. They must have had contact with Paul's ministry knowing the power in the name of Jesus vs. 15. Trying to use the name of Jesus for their own purpose did not work as they expected, as the demon having respect for Jesus and Paul had no respect for these foolish men. These men were not

followers of Jesus, nor did they act in the power of the Holy Spirit. The fact that these men could not do what Jesus and Paul had done was a clear statement as to the power of the living God.

**(RevC)** This is a good example of those who are not “in Christ” trying to use the name of Jesus as though they were. The demon was quick to point out that very fact in the words, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but WHO ARE YOU?” After which he promptly gave them a good beating. The result is that conviction came upon those who had come to faith in Christ but were still holding onto some degree of their mystical attractions. The resulting conviction, as the scriptures point out, caused an ongoing public display of repentance from these false practices that was equivalent to the yearly salaries of 150 men. Naturally, such a display brought even more growth to the church. **(RevC)**

4. All believers have power and authority in the name of Jesus, and all believers have authority over demons Eph. 1:15-23
5. Godly fear brought true repentance vs. 17-18
  - a. The fear of God fell on them all
  - b. Fear of God will always bring confession and repentance
  - c. Those that believed brought their books of charms and sorcery burning them before the Lord vs. 18
6. **(RevC)** Some would teach that the time of Godly miracles has passed and we who walk in the Spirit of God should not expect to see such displays of power. I’m sorry but I don’t see anywhere in scripture that Jesus, Paul, Peter, or any of the Apostles ever taught such nonsense. In fact, Jesus even declared that we would do greater works than Him. Though the number of miracles recorded in the Bible is only around 100 it is important to remember that the Bible only records a small fraction of the miracle working power of God **(John 20:30, 21:5)**.

When miracles were manifested the motive usually had to do with:

- a demonstration of God compassion and mercy



- a need to teach the people a spiritual principal or truth
- a need to confront the work of Satan
- a desire to show himself as the Messiah

The miracles that Paul was performing took place in an area that had been a stronghold for Satan and center of occultic practices.

We do well to remember that Satan loves to counterfeit the work of God and thus we should be wise enough to test the spirit behind any miracle as whether it is of God or not. **(1John 4:1)**  
(RevC)

#### END LESSON 27

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 27

1. **T or F** Paul concludes his second missionary journey leaving Corinth, traveling through Cenchrea, Ephesus, Caesarea, and concluding back home in Antioch.
2. **T or F** Paul sets out on his third missionary journey which lasts 4 to 5 years around 52 or 53 AD.
3. **T or F** The motivation for this trip was to unite the earlier church plants under one church name and logo, allowing Paul greater control over the individual church leaderships .
4. Mark the following statement that is NOT true about Paul's stay in Ephesus:
  - A. The temple of Artemis, the Greek god of fertility, one of the seven wonders of the world, was found in Ephesus. It was also a center for black magic and sorcery.
  - B. Paul found 12 disciples of John the Baptist waiting on the Messiah there and ministered to and through them.
  - C. These disciples had not heard of nor received the Holy Spirit. Paul shared with them, baptized them in water in Jesus name, and they received the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues.
  - D. The school of Tyrannus, where Paul taught, was a school of philosophy where Paul met the seven sons of Sceva.
5. **T or F** Vagabond Jewish exorcists believed they had spells to cast demons out of people.
6. Mark the following statement that is NOT true concerning God's dealings with the seven sons of Sceva:
  - A. Demons respect the name of Jesus and Paul but not these seven brothers.
  - B. These brothers tried to exert power in the name of Jesus without being his followers.

**C. This event brought conviction to the people who were still involved in sorcery and demonic activity and magnified the name of Jesus even more.**

**D. The many people who responded from this event destroyed valuable articles of sorcery equal to 250 men working for a whole year.**

**7. T or F The miracles that God allowed Paul to perform was demonstrating God's power right in the middle of Satan's occult territory.**

## **BEGIN LESSON 28**

### **F. Paul plans for his future 19:21-22**

**Acts 19:21-22 KJV** After these things were ended, **Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.** 19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

1. Paul looks back at all the work that God has done. He makes a plan to go back through the churches and then to Rome, and then possibly to the outer parts of the world which would be Spain as we see in Romans 15.
2. We have to evaluate, plan and pray before we do anything to avoid fruitless labor in ministry. Evaluate the fruit of your labors, what impact am I having, are people being saved, are disciples being made and what are the things that are fruitless.
3. Sometimes the Lord chops the tree down to start new life. One mistake that is often made in ministry is that we equate being busy with being effective. Consider mapping out your week, and see how you spend your time. Then evaluate your effectiveness; you may be surprised that much of what you spent time on yielded little if any fruit. If so, try to delegate items that really don't need your attention.
4. Pray for guidance, ask God to guide your footsteps. Lay out a plan and ask other spiritually sensitive individuals to pray with you. See if others bare witness to what you feel led to do. Having a plan helps us to know where were going, how we are going to get there, and when we have arrived. A plan keeps you on the right road.

5. Make tangible steps (how your going to do it) to reach each stage of your plan.

### G. The riot in Ephesus 19: 23-41

**Acts 19:23-41 KJV** And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 19:24 For a certain man named **Demetrius, a silversmith**, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 19:25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, **ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.** 19:26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this **Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people**, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 19:27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 19:28 And when they heard these sayings, **they were full of wrath**, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 19:29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and **having caught** Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, **Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.** 19:30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 19:31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. 19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: **for the assembly was confused;** and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 19:34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 19:35 And **when the townclerk had appeased the people**, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? 19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. 19:37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. 19:38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, **the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.** 19:39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. 19:40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. 19:41 **And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.**

1. This is how Paul left Ephesus. The riot was due to all that was changing in the lives of people. And there was much concern from those who derived their lively-hood from the false worship of Diana. vs. 23

2. It wasn't the messenger but the message. It was what he represented. It was the truth among the heathens that caused this uproar. It was brought about by Demetrius, and the silversmiths. They probably had a big profit margin and made a good living, and then Paul came in town and it hurt their finances. You take out of a man's pocket or take away his control and you'll get a reaction.
3. Paul said these aren't Gods there just hunks of wood vs. 26. The tourist trade dwindled because Ephesus depended on idol worship.
4. The riot takes place vs. 28-41. They looked for Paul and couldn't find him so they grabbed Gaius and Aristar vs. 29. They were identified with Paul's ministry. The Theater seated 24,000 people it was a mob scene. Many didn't even know why they were there. People will often follow others, and never even know why, placing their trust in a falsehood.
5. Alexander held up his hand trying to dis-associate himself with Paul by saying he was a Jew vs. 33. Then they found out that Paul was a Jew, and they went back in an uproar vs. 34. People shouted for two hours about a stone image.
6. The city clerk calms the people vs. 35. He fears that Rome would send in soldiers to clear the mobs.

## XX. Paul's Journey back home to Jerusalem Acts 20 – 21:17

### A. 20:1-2 Paul leaves for Macedonia

**Acts 20:1-3 KJV** And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. 20:2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, 20:3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

1. Paul leaves Ephesus and sails to Philippi in Macedonia. While in Macedonia he stops in Illyricum, a Roman province, and preaches the gospel Rom. 15:19. Paul stays for about a year and then sends Timothy there.
2. Paul then leaves and goes to Corinth in Greece, and stays there for three months and writes the letter to the Romans. He hoped to sail to Rome

from Macedonia, but he learned of a plot to kill him  
1Cor. 16:1-4, Rom. 15:21-29 and decided to travel by foot.

3. In the first letter given to the Corinthians by Titus from Paul he asked them to prepare an offering for Jerusalem. So Paul decided to bring this offering from the Corinthians to Jerusalem himself.

**B. 20:4-6 A group goes ahead of Paul to Troaz, Luke remains with Paul**

**Acts 20:4-6 KJV** And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. 20:5 These going before tarried for us at Troas. 20:6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

While he was in Corinth he wrote the letter to the Romans. Paul sends all the others ahead to Troas while he and Luke go to Philippi for the feast of unleavened bread, and after that they sail to Troas and meets the other group.

**C. 20:7-12 Paul preaches for hours**

**Acts 20:7-12 KJV** And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. 20:8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. 20:9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. 20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. 20:11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 20:12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

Here we see the words “we” and “us” meaning Luke joins them. Paul preaches until midnight, and Eutychus falls out of the third floor window and is believed to be dead. Paul falls on him and he comes to life. Paul gets up and continues to preach until morning. Note: This didn’t stop the service. This is the first reference of believers gathering together on the first day of the week.

**D. 20:13-16 Paul desires to return to Jerusalem by Pentecost**

**Acts 20:13-16 KJV** And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot. 20:14 And when he

met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 20:15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus. 20:16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

This section is a travel log to Miletus before reaching Jerusalem. Paul doesn't want to stop in Ephesus because he knows that the believers will want him to stay, and he will never get to Jerusalem in time for the feast.

**E. 20:17-38 Paul is determined to finish his course with joy**

**Acts 20:17-38 KJV** And from Miletus **he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders** of the church. 20:18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 20:19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20:20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 20:22 And now, behold, **I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 20:23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself,** so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 20:31 **Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.** 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. 20:33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 20:35 I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. 20:36 And **when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 20:37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's**

**neck, and kissed him, 20:38** Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

1. Paul's farewell from Miletus. We see that Paul expected some opposition to Paul's ministry after he departed. They were telling them that everyone had to embrace Judaism just like in the Antioch church. Instead of going to Ephesus Paul had the church leaders meet with him in Miletus.
2. (vs. 23-24) Paul was determined to finish the course. Knowing hardships awaited him. God wants to see if we will run from hardship or still press on to fulfill the call. We must realize there is a cost involved in ministry. The ministry is much more than preaching the word.
3. (vs. 25-31) Paul said his hands are clean, he felt released, and also gives his farewell vs. 25-26, Ezk. 3:19. Beware to the elders, take heed Acts 20:28-31.
4. Having given them the counsel of God (vs. 27) Paul now commits them to God (vs. 32).
5. (Vs. 33-35) Paul makes note that he has set himself as an example. This is the requirement of a minister that he/she be an example to others. There is a higher responsibility that comes with the acceptance of a calling to serve God. As Christ has provided our example so are we to walk in Him that others might see Him in us. Paul had not only provided for his own needs but also the needs of others. This as an example to others to be selfless in their giving and the meetings of the needs of the less fortunate.
6. (Vs. 36-38) As Paul now prepares to leave he does so in prayer with these converts knowing that he is not likely to ever see them again. We see that there was mutual love and respect for each other.

#### **F. Chapter 21:1-4**

**Acts 21:1-4 KJV** And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: 21:2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. 21:3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her

burden. 21:4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

Paul journeys to Tyre where he finds other followers of Jesus. Here he tarries 7 days as the Spirit of God spoke evidently through the disciples there that he should not yet go to Jerusalem. Paul had already been warned of the Spirit that trouble awaited him in Jerusalem 20:22-23.

## END LESSON 28

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 28

1. **T or F** Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia to minister to the young churches there. His heart was always to encourage and monitor the work taking place to confirm it was of the Holy Spirit.
2. **T or F** It is important to continually monitor and seek guidance in the spiritual work we are called to so as not to be ineffective in the spiritual fruit from our efforts.
3. Once again, there is a riot in Ephesus as the work of the Spirit conflicts with the work of the devil; which of the following is NOT true:
  - A. Many were angry because their livelihood was affected by the work of the Spirit.
  - B. Paul pointed out that the idols were not gods, just made by hands.
  - C. There was a riot because Paul stood before them and cursed the silversmiths.
  - D. The city clerk feared that if the crowd wasn't controlled, the Romans would put down the disruption by force.
  - E. Many in the mob did not even know why they were there, following others and placing their trust in a falsehood.
4. **T or F** At this point in Paul's journeys, he begins to focus his travels on a return to Jerusalem, even as he continued to stop and preach or visit already established churches.
5. **T or F** Paul wrote the letter to the Romans after he left Corinth and while in Troas.
6. What is true about Paul's experiences after leaving Corinth—choose the one best answer:
  - A. During a late night of teaching, a young man, Eutychus, fell asleep and fell out of the window and Paul brought him back to life.
  - B. After raising the dead youth, Paul speaks until morning.
  - C. Paul and the leaders of the Ephesus had a mutual love and respect for each other.
  - D. All of the above



7. T or F Paul waits to return to Jerusalem after disciples in Tyre counsel him to wait after receiving a warning from the Holy Spirit.

## BEGIN LESSON 29

### G. 21:5-9 They enter the house of Philip, the evangelist

**Acts 21:5-9 KJV** And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. 21:6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again. 21:7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 21:9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

Note again that as Paul leaves the company of the disciples in Tyre that they knelt in prayer for one another. Paul and those journeying with him make their way to Caesarea and the house of Philip. Philip had 4 daughters who prophesied. Here we see that the Spirit of God is truly “no respecter of persons” as these women were used of God to speak forth edification, exhortation, and comfort.

### H. 21:10-14 Paul is warned

**Acts 21:10-14 KJV** And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 21:11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. 21:12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 21:13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 21:14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

Here the prophet, Agabus, who was among the first prophets of the NT church (11:28), is used of God to warn Paul of the sufferings that awaited him in Jerusalem. There is a great lesson here in that as Christians we are not always to expect our road to be without hardship and suffering. Paul did not know exactly

what awaited him but he was determined to face what ever lied ahead for the sake of Christ even to the forsaking of his own life. Paul was more interested in the name of Jesus being lifted up before men than his own interest. Paul knew well that as a member of the redeemed he had been bought with a price and therefore no longer held any rights to his own life other than to live it for God (Gal. 2:20).

## **I. 21:15-17 Journey ends**

**Acts 21:15-17 KJV** And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. 21:16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. 21:17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

Here Paul ends his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey as he arrives in Jerusalem. This third journey began in Acts 18:23. Here Paul takes lodging with a disciple named Mnason who evidently lived in Jerusalem. Again Paul is well received by his brothers in Christ.

## **XXI. Paul's Missionary Report 21:18-26**

**Acts 21:18-26 KJV** And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. 21:19 And when he had saluted them, **he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.** 21:20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 21:22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 21:23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 21:24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 21:25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

Here we see Paul give his missionary report to the elders in Jerusalem proclaiming all the great things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. Also we see

Paul's willingness to submit to the counsel of the elders. Though being used mightily of God, Paul did not consider himself to be above the others, and heeded their advice to take a vow (most likely a Nazarite vow) to appease the many Jews who though converts to Christianity were slow to move away from their practice of the law. God tolerated this practice of observance of the law until with the destruction of Jerusalem it became impossible for the Jews to continue to observe the rituals of the Mosaic law. The elders here were misinformed concerning Paul's teaching in that they contended with him on 3 fronts:

- A. **Teaching Jews to renounce their religious faith vs. 21.** The fact is that Paul never taught this to the Jews, but that they should turn back to God by accepting the person of Jesus Christ that Moses and the prophets said would come. He also taught concerning the Gentiles that they **not** be brought under the Jewish law. Acts 13:16-41
- B. **Teaching the Jews not to be circumcised vs. 21.** Paul did not do this as he even had Timothy circumcised to please the Jews (16:2). He did teach that the Gentiles should not have to be, and that for the Jews they needed to realize that circumcision did not save a person as through the deeds of the law no flesh is justified Rom. 3:24-31.
- C. **Teaching the Jews to forsake the customs vs. 21.** Paul never advocated that the Jews should no longer observe their religious customs, but rather that one could not depend on them for salvation. Eph. 2:8-9

## **XXII. Paul arrest in Jerusalem Acts 21:27-40**

**Acts 21:27-40 KJV** And when the seven days were almost ended, **the Jews which were of Asia**, when **they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him**, 21:28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 21:29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) 21:30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and **they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple**: and forthwith the doors were shut. 21:31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto **the chief captain** of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 21:32 Who **immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them**: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, **they left beating of Paul**. 21:33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. 21:34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

21:35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. 21:36 For **the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.** 21:37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, **he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee?** Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? 21:38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? 21:39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, **suffer me to speak unto the people.** 21:40 And **when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs,** and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when **there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew** tongue, saying,

- A. The Jews from Asia were the ones accusing Paul. They were from Ephesus because they recognized Trophimus vs. 29. Another charge was defiling the temple by assuming that Trophimus was with him in the temple because they saw him with Paul. The first charge was in verse 28.
- B. People will try to stop you when preaching the gospel, you have to be careful what you do avoiding all appearance of evil. Avoid situations that could bring compromise. This is why the Lord sent out disciples two by two, there is safety in pairs. Unbelievers will look for inconsistency in our walk. Give the Devil no occasion to bring accusation.
- C. The penalty for a Gentile to go beyond the court of Gentiles was death and was written on the wall in the temple. The Romans allowed the Jews to do this even to a Roman citizen if they violated the Jewish temple law.
- D. Paul is accused of teaching against the Jews, the law, the temple, and bringing a Gentile into the holy place. The whole city becomes a mob, and Paul is saved by being arrested vs. 31-32.
- E. Now this became a Roman problem because the peace was being disturbed. The shouting of the people became the problem as so many shouted they couldn't distinguish the nature of the problem because of the noise. So they took Paul up to the Roman fortification and Paul asked to speak vs. 37-39.
- F. Paul speaks to the people in Hebrew, which silenced the crowd. The first miracle was that they let him speak, and the other is that he could silence the crowd.

### XXIII. Paul's addresses the mob & the Roman Commander Acts 22

- A. **22:1-5 Paul speaks in Hebrew**

**Acts 22:1-5 KJV** Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. 22:2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 22:5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

1. By speaking in the Hebrew tongue Paul gets their attention and says that he also was a zealous Jew. He tells them he was raised and trained a Jew under Gamaliel one of the most note worthy teachers of the day. He told that he persecuted those that were “of the way”, and went even as far as Damascus to bring back the Jews of Jerusalem to punish them.
2. This lesson is good for us today, don’t start out judging people but seek to identify with their concerns or they will not listen to your message. Bring people to the word of God

#### **B. 22:6-9 Paul begins his testimony**

**Acts 22:6-9 KJV** And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 22:7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 22:8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 22:9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

Paul talks about his encounter with Christ. It’s only an encounter with the risen Christ that changes a person. You can counsel people, but it is only the life changing experience that comes with encountering Christ that will bring lasting change.

#### **C. 22:10-21 Paul’s testimony continues**

**Acts 22:10-21 KJV** And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 22:11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. 22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 22:13

Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. 22:17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 22:20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

1. Paul explains how he was blinded by his encounter with the Lord and led by hand to Damascus where the Lord spoke to him through a devoted Jewish man named Ananias, and how he restored Paul's sight and told him to arise and be baptized.
2. Paul relates his second encounter with the risen Christ vs. 17-21. The first time was to go into Damascus and this time to get out of Jerusalem as the Lord was sending him to the Gentiles.

#### **D. 22:22-23 The audience is against Paul**

**Acts 22:22-23 KJV** And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. 22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

The crowd's reaction vs. 22-23. Their reaction was against Paul's theology. Paul knew that he received revelation of who the Messiah was and that the Jews would not receive him so he was sent to the Gentiles. His message that they should bypass the traditions of Judaism and go directly to God was to them unacceptable thus they ripped their clothes and through dust into the air.

#### **E. 22:24-30 Paul gives his defense before the Roman commander**

**Acts 22:24-30 KJV** The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. 22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, **Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?** 22:26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain,

saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 22:27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 22:28 **And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.** 22:29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. 22:30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

1. The reason why the Roman soldier let Paul talk to the crowd was to see what all the confusion was about, and of what crime he was being accused. He hoped by listening to Paul that Paul would reveal what he had done so he could condemn him. Paul wisely spoke to the Roman Commander in Greek and to the mob in Hebrew. Therefore the Commander didn't know what he was saying.
2. When a Roman was accused of something they had to go through three Steps:
  - a. Formulation of charges and the penalty for those charges.
  - b. Formal accusations by three or four others.
  - c. Then a formal hearing.
3. Paul claimed to be a Roman citizen. Roman citizenship was given in a few different ways:
  - a. One was being born in Rome
  - b. It was also given by high social standing
  - c. If they did great things for Rome then their name would go on the list for citizenship or if they paid enough money.
  - d. Citizenship would make your children and your children's children Roman citizens also.
4. As a Roman citizen, it was a very serious offense for some authority other than Rome to examine or bind him in chains.
5. They still weren't sure what Paul did so they set him before the Chief priest and the Sanhedrin vs. 30. Here God opens the doors for Paul to testify about Jesus.

**END LESSON 29**

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 29

1. **T or F** Paul met and stayed with Phillip the evangelist on the way to Jerusalem, when he stopped in Phillipi.
2. **T or F** Paul is warned of upcoming danger in Jerusalem, and decides to go very reluctantly after being persuaded by the brethren.
3. Paul returns to Jerusalem at the conclusion of his third missionary journey. Which of the following statements is NOT true:
  - A. He speaks privately with Peter and Jesus mother about the hardships of the mission field.
  - B. He gives a report to the elders in Jerusalem of all that God has done among the Gentiles.
  - C. The Jews accused him of teaching Jews to renounce their religious faith.
  - D. The Jews accused him of teaching Jews not to be circumcised.
  - E. The Jews accused him of teaching Jews to forsake their religious customs.
4. **T or F** The Jews from Phillipi who stirred up trouble for Paul there, saw him in Jerusalem and accused him before the temple and started a riot directed at Paul among the people.
5. Mark the following true statements about Paul's arrest and its details:
  - A. He was accused of bringing a Gentile into the inner area of the temple open only to Jews.
  - B. It is through his arrest that Paul is saved from the mob's intention to do him harm.
  - C. Keeping the peace was the responsibility of the Romans.
  - D. In his defense before the crowd, Paul uses the opportunity to share his encounter with Jesus Christ.
  - E. As a Roman citizen, it was a very serious offence to examine or bind Paul in chains.
  - F. All of the above
6. **T or F** Paul was able to avoid accusations by the Romans by speaking to the crowd in Greek and to the Roman authorities in Hebrew.

### BEGIN LESSON 30

#### XXIV. Paul's defense Acts 23

- A. 23:1-2 Paul is smitten



**Acts 23:1-2 KJV** And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. 23:2 And **the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.**

He has a clear conscience before the Lord. Ananias was the high priest from 48-58 AD. He was known for his violence, and tradition tells us that he confiscated the tithe given to ordinary priest, and gave bribes to Roman and Jewish officials. He was known as a robber and glutton, and was hated by the Jewish nationalist. He was later killed during a Jewish uprising against Rome in 66 AD. Jewish nationalist did this when he was found hiding with his brother.

#### **B. 23:3-5 Paul speaks harshly not knowing it was the High Priest**

**Acts 23:3-5 KJV** Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 23:4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 23:5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

1. Paul replies vs. 3-5. A white washed wall is what they painted tombs with, it was like watered down paint. Touching a tomb defiled you, causing you to have to go through a process to be cleansed.
2. Also this meant that there were dead man's bones within, and this Paul directed toward him. Paul was saying that in the same way these tombs were to be avoided so was Ananias.
3. Paul repents of his act indicating he was not aware that this was the High Priest, but he shows respect for the office. The scripture says that all authority is of God and to go against them is to go against God. If you can't honor the person honor the position they hold. In ministry we may find authorities who are against us. When this happens we must be careful what we say and how we act toward them. Even if we cannot have respect for the person we need to respect the office they hold as that position of authority is God ordained.

#### **C. 23:6-11 Paul divides the council and is jailed, and God reassures him**

**Acts 23:6-11 KJV** But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. 23:7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees

and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 23:9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God. 23:10 **And when there arose a great dissension**, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. 23:11 **And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.**

1. Paul turns the table against themselves vs. 6-9. The Sadducees verses the Pharisees. This is an old strategy, divide and conquer. Paul cries out to the Pharisees who believe in the resurrection of the dead unlike the Sadducees thus dividing the house. Paul is saved again by being arrested vs. 10
2. Paul is a little discouraged and wondering if he will ever get to Rome, but is comforted by Christ. vs. 11. This encouragement helps Paul continue. God knows what our real needs are even before we do.

#### **D. 23:12-22 40+ conspire to kill Paul**

**Acts 23:12-22 KJV** And when it was day, **certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.** 23:13 And **they were more than forty** which had made this conspiracy. 23:14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. 23:15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. 23:16 And when **Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.** 23:17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 23:18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. 23:19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? 23:20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly. 23:21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed

him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. 23:22 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me.

40+ men plot to kill Paul taking a vow that they would not eat or drink until he was dead vs. 12-22. We see God's intervention to reveal the plot to kill Paul through Paul's sister's son. Paul is getting great favor from both the Lord and those in charge of him. The soldiers listen to Paul and the chief captain is alerted.

#### E. 23:23-35 470 soldiers leave to escort Paul to Caesarea

**Acts 23:23-35 KJV** And he called unto him two centurions, saying, **Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;** 23:24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and **bring him safe unto Felix the governor.** 23:25 And he wrote a letter after this manner: 23:26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. 23:27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. 23:28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: 23:29 Whom **I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.** 23:30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell. 23:31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. 23:32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: 23:33 Who, **when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.** 23:34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia; 23:35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

Half of the troops escorted Paul to the Roman governor vs. 23-35. The third hour was about nine at night. The governor sends a letter saying the Jews have brought charges against Paul, but he can't find anything wrong with Paul.

#### XXV. Paul's trial before Felix Acts 24

##### A. 24:1-9 The accusers hire a speaker

**Acts 24:1-9 KJV** And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor

**against Paul.** 24:2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 24:3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. 24:4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words. 24:5 For **we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world,** and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 24:6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 24:7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 24:8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. 24:9 **And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.**

1. Felix was governor of Judah between 52-59 AD. When there were uprisings among the Jews he would bring in troops and crush them so he wasn't popular with the Jews. He was married three times and each time to a princess. In 59 AD Nero who was the emperor recalled him.
2. Tertullus was like an attorney for the prosecution vs. 2-8. He was a Hellenist Jew hired by the chief priest to communicate their pumped up charges. He was informed in Roman law and knew how to say the right things in a Roman court.
3. They were saying that Paul stirs up the people disturbing the peace of Rome, and this was a serious offense. He also accuses him of being a ringleader of a sect of Nazarenes. This meant that he was part of this messianic movement of the Nazarenes. Felix dealt brutally against these messianic uprisings. He accuses Paul as being a defiler of the temple. This would justify putting him to death by the Jews, and this was already established as part of their law with the Romans. They bring in false witnesses to say this is true.

#### **B. 24:10-23 Paul's defense before Felix**

**Acts 24:10-23 KJV** Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: 24:11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. 24:12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: 24:13 **Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.** 24:14 **But this I confess unto thee,** that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which

are written in the law and in the prophets: 24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. 24:17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 24:18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. 24:19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. 24:20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, 24:21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day. 24:22 And when **Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them,** and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. 24:23 And **he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty,** and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

1. Paul's defense vs. 10-21. Paul says that they can't prove what they say. Basically he says he is a Christian, and if you follow the way it leads to Christ. When he says he believes in the resurrection of the dead he is saying I'm being judged for my theology. He made this statement for Felix's benefit.
2. Felix's decision was not to decide vs. 22. He decides to wait for Lysias. As far as we know he never came and reported on the case.
3. Paul was put on house arrest and was given liberty vs. 23.

### C. 24:24-27 Paul's words bring conviction to Felix

**Acts 24:24-27 KJV** And after certain days, **when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.** 24:25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, **Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time;** when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. 24:26 **He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him:** wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. 24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

1. Drusilla was married to the king Emesa, a small state in Syria, and Felix persuaded her to marry him vs. 24-25. So when Drusilla came around, Felix brought Paul out to show her his prize. Paul talks to them about righteousness and self-control. Felix comes under conviction and fear not wanting to hear this.

2. Paul refused to pay him a bribe, and stays under house arrest for two years vs. 26-27. Felix was recalled by Nero to Rome, because of his brutal handling of an uprising where one thousand Jews were killed, and the houses of the wealthiest Jews were ransacked so a new governor was to come and take his place. It was customary for a departed governor to release any un-convicted prisoner, but he left Paul in prison to gain favor among the Jews. In these two years of Paul's imprisonment Luke was able to get the background of the gospel of Luke and Acts written; Rom. 8:28.

## XXVI. Paul's trials continue Chapter 25

Festus reigned for two years from 60-62 AD. He was a considered a just man and a welcome change from Felix.

### A. 25:1-5 The Jews still desire to see Paul put to death

**Acts 25:1-5 KJV** Now when **Festus was come into the province**, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 25:2 Then **the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul**, and besought him, 25:3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. 25:4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. 25:5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

1. We see another group after Paul, this must be a new group. If we remember the last group that was after Paul wasn't going to eat until they killed him. Which was more than two years ago so we might assume they are dead!
2. Again we see God's favor for Paul when Festus denies the request of the Jews to bring Paul to Jerusalem to judge him vs. 5.

**END LESSON 30**

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 30

1. T or F Paul was hit in the face for cursing the man who ordered it, the chief captain.

2. **T or F** Paul divides the council by speaking of the resurrection of the dead, which the Saducees and Pharisees were in disagreement over.

3. While being held by the Romans in Jerusalem, which of the following did NOT take place:

- A. The chief captain removed Paul from the council because of the uproar caused by his words.
- B. 20 men take a vow to not eat meat or drink wine until they killed Paul.
- C. The Lord appears before Paul and reassures him and tells Paul he will testify of Jesus in Rome.
- D. The chief captain sends Paul, with a letter of introduction and 470 soldiers as protection, to Felix, the Roman Governor, in Caesarea.

4. **T or F** Stirring up the people and disturbing the peace was a serious offense to Rome.

5. Paul was brought before Felix and others concerning the charges brought by the High Priest and other accusers. Which of the following is NOT true:

- A. Tertullus, a Hellenist Jew, was hired because of his knowledge of Roman law.
- B. Paul's defense was that he was being wrongly accused and judged for his theology.
- C. Paul was put under house arrest and allowed visitors.
- D. Felix was removed as governor and replaced by Festus because he was too lenient on the Jews.
- E. Felix and his wife Drusilla were convicted because their marriage was wrong in the sight of God.

6. **T or F** The Jews tried to convince Festus to bring Paul back to Jerusalem so a new group of men could lay in wait and kill him.

## BEGIN LESSON 31

### B. 25:6-12 Paul on trail in Caesarea before Festus

**Acts 25:6-12 KJV** And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought. 25:7 And when he was come, **the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul**, which they could not prove. 25:8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all. 25:9 But **Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?** 25:10 **Then**

**said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged:** to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. 25:11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. 25:12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? **unto Caesar shalt thou go.**

Another trial vs. 6-12. These Jews bring the same charges against Paul, but couldn't prove anything. Then Festus tries to get favor with the Jews by asking if Paul would go to Jerusalem to be judged. It was a Roman's right to appeal and go to Caesar's judgment seat if they felt they weren't getting proper treatment. When God told Paul he was going to go to Rome Paul probably didn't think this was how he was going to go. He probably thought he would go as a free man.

#### C. 25:13-27 Festus explains his problem to Agrippa II

Before Paul goes to Rome He has another trial before AGRIPPA II.

**Acts 25:13-27 KJV** And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus. 25:14 And when they had been there many days, **Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king**, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: 25:15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. 25:16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. 25:17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. 25:18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: 25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 25:20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. 25:21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar. 25:22 Then **Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.** 25:23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. 25:24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25:25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. 25:26 Of whom I have no certain



thing to write unto my lord. **Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. 25:27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.**

Agrippa II was brought up in Rome and favored by the emperor. Agrippa II was considered an expert of Jewish customs and ways. Festus was hoping that Agrippa II could put his finger on the charges against Paul because he had to have a letter of the charges to send with Paul to Caesar, and he couldn't find anything against Paul.

## **XXVII. Paul's defense before Agrippa II Acts 26 (WW commentary)**

Paul's defense with Agrippa II. This one is a little different then the rest that he has made. Paul tailors his comments to the audience. We have to know how to direct our messages to different audiences while keeping the same message. Paul says he is happy, and that he is in Gods will. Agrippa II tells Festus to send Paul to Rome.

### **A. "I lived a Pharisee" 26:1-11.**

**Acts 26:1-11 KJV** Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: 26:2 **I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:** 26:3 **Especially because I know thee to be expert** in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to **hear me patiently.** 26:4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; 26:5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 26:6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: 26:7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. 26:8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? 26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 26:10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 26:11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

1. Paul's early life in Jerusalem was known to the Jews, so there was no need to go into great detail. He was a devout Pharisee (Phil. 3:5) and

the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6), and his peers had likely realized he would accomplish great things as a rabbi. It was because of his convictions about the Resurrection and “**the hope of Israel**,” (the Messiah) that he was now a prisoner (see Acts 23:6; 24:15). Once again, Paul appealed to Jewish orthodoxy and loyalty to the Hebrew tradition.

2. The pronoun you in Acts 26:8 is plural, so Paul must have looked around at the entire audience as he spoke. The Greeks and Romans, of course, would not believe in the doctrine of the Resurrection (Acts 17:31-32), nor would the Sadducees who were present (Acts 23:8). To Paul, this was a crucial doctrine, for if there is no Resurrection, then Jesus Christ was not raised and Paul had no Gospel to preach. (For Paul’s argument about the Resurrection and the Gospel, see 1 Cor. 15).
3. Paul was not only a Pharisee, but he had also been a zealous persecutor of the church. He had punished the believers and tried to force them to deny Jesus Christ, and some of them he had helped send to their death. The phrase “**gave my voice**” (Acts 26:10) literally means “registered my vote.” This suggests that Paul had been an official member of the Sanhedrin, but surely if that were true, seemingly he would have mentioned it in one of his speeches. The phrase probably means nothing more than he “voted against them” as a special representative of the high priest (Acts 9:2, 14).
4. In the early days of the church, the Jewish believers continued to meet in the synagogues, and that was where Paul found them and punished them (Matt. 10:17; 23:34). Like a wild animal, he had “**made havoc of the church**” (Acts 8:3), “**breathing out threatenings and slaughter**” (Acts 9:1).

#### **B. “I saw a light” 26:12-13**

**Acts 26:12-13 KJV** Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 26:13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

1. Not content to limit his work to Jerusalem, Paul had asked for authority to visit the synagogues in distant cities. His zeal had driven out many of the believers and they had taken their message to Jews in other communities (Acts 8:4).

2. The light that Paul saw was supernatural, for to Paul it was the glory of God revealed from heaven. It actually had blinded Paul for three days (Acts 9:8-9), but his spiritual eyes had been opened to behold the living Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-6). But seeing a light was not enough; he also had to hear the Word of God.

### C. “I heard a voice” 26:14-18

**Acts 26:14-18 KJV** And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

1. Paul’s companions had seen the light, but not the Lord; and they had heard a sound, but they could not understand the words. They all fell to the earth, but only Paul remained there (Acts 9:7). Jesus Christ spoke to Paul in the familiar Aramaic tongue of the Jews, called him by name, and told him it was futile for him to continue fighting the Lord. In that moment, Paul had made two surprising discoveries: Jesus of Nazareth was alive, and He was so united to His people that their suffering was His suffering! Paul was persecuting not only the church, but also his own Messiah!
2. The word **minister** in Acts 26:16 means “an under-rower” and refers to a lowly servant on a galley ship. Paul had been accustomed to being an honored leader, but after his conversion he became a subordinate worker; and Jesus Christ became his Master. The Lord had promised to be with Paul and protect him; and He also promised to reveal Himself to him. Paul saw the Lord on the Damascus road, and again three years later while in the temple (Acts 22:17-21). Later, the Lord appeared to him in Corinth (Acts 18:9) and in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11), and He would appear to him again.
3. No doubt it was a surprise to Paul after his conversion to hear that the Lord was sending him to the Gentiles. He had a great love for his own

people and would gladly have lived and died to win them to Christ (Rom. 9:1-3), but that was not God's plan. Paul would always be "the apostle to the Gentiles." God does not always give us what we think we want or need. But when we are obedient His desire becomes ours, and thus the desire of our heart is fulfilled. Though Paul was sent to the Gentiles much of his ministry began in the Jewish synagogues of each city.

4. Acts 26:18 describes both the spiritual condition of the lost and the gracious provision of Christ for those who will believe. The lost sinner is like a blind prisoner in a dark dungeon, and only Christ can open his eyes and give him light and freedom (2 Cor. 4:3-6). But even after he is set free, what about his court record and his guilt? The Lord forgives his sins and wipes the record clean! He then takes him into His own family as His own child and shares His inheritance with him! What must the sinner do? He must trust Jesus Christ ("faith that is in Me"—Acts 26:18).

**D. "I was not disobedient" 26:19-21**

**Acts 26:19-21 KJV** Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 26:20 But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

1. When Paul had asked, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) he meant it sincerely; and when the Lord told him, he obeyed orders immediately. He began right at Damascus and it almost cost him his life (Acts 9:20-25). Likewise, when he had witnessed to the Jews in Jerusalem, they attempted to kill him (Acts 9:29-30). In spite of repeated discouragements and dangers, Paul had remained obedient to the call and the vision that Jesus Christ gave him. Nothing moved him because he no longer placed value in his own life—he belong to Jesus! (Acts 20:24)
2. In Acts 26:21, Paul clearly explained to Agrippa and Festus what had really happened in the temple and why it had happened. It was "**on account of these things**" that Paul had been attacked and almost killed: his declaration that Jesus of Nazareth was alive and was Israel's Messiah, his ministry to the Gentiles, and his offer of God's covenant blessings to both Jews and Gentiles on the same terms of repentance

and faith. The proud nationalistic Israelites would have nothing to do with a Jew who treated Gentiles like Jews!

**E. “I continue unto this day” 26:22-32**

**Acts 26:22-32 KJV** Having therefore obtained help of God, **I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:** 26:23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. 26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, **Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.** 26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. 26:26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. 26:27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. 26:28 **Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.** 26:29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. 26:30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: 26:31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, **This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.** 26:32 **Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.**

1. The one word that best summarizes Paul’s life and ministry is “witnessing” (see Acts 26:16). He simply shared with others what he had learned and experienced as a follower of Jesus Christ. His message was not something he manufactured, for it was based solidly on the Old Testament Scriptures. We must remind ourselves that Paul and the other apostles did not have the New Testament, but used the Old Testament to lead sinners to Christ and to nurture the new believers.
2. Acts 26:23 is a summary of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4), and each part can be backed up from the Old Testament. See, for example, Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and Psalm 16:8-11. Paul could even defend his call to the Gentiles from Isaiah 49:6 (see also Acts 13:47). Jesus was not the first person to be raised from the dead, but He was the first one to be raised and never die again. He is “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20).

3. In his message in the temple, when Paul got to the word Gentiles, the crowd exploded (Acts 22:21-22). That is the word Paul spoke when Festus responded and loudly accused Paul of being mad.
4. Paul had been addressing King Agrippa, but the emotional interruption of the governor forced him to reply. He reminded Festus that the facts about the ministry of Jesus Christ, including His death and resurrection, were public knowledge and “**not done in a corner.**” The Jewish Sanhedrin was involved and so was the Roman governor, Pilate. Jesus of Nazareth had been a famous public figure for at least three years, and huge crowds had followed Him. How then could the governor plead ignorance?
5. Festus had not interrupted because he really thought Paul was mad. Had that been the case, he would have treated Paul gently and ordered some of his guards to escort him to a place of rest and safety. Furthermore, what official would send a raving madman to be tried before the emperor? No, the governor was only giving evidence of conviction in his heart. Paul’s words had found their mark, and Festus was trying to escape.
6. But Paul did not forget King Agrippa, a Jew who was an expert in these matters. When Paul asked if Agrippa believed the prophets, he was forcing him to take a stand. Certainly the king would not repudiate what every Jew believed! But Agrippa knew that if he affirmed his faith in the prophets, he must then face the question, “Is Jesus of Nazareth the one about whom the prophets wrote?”
7. Festus avoided decision by accusing Paul of being mad. King Agrippa eluded Paul’s question by adopting a superior attitude and belittling Paul’s witness. His reply in Acts 26:28 can be stated, “**Do you think that in such a short time, with such few words, you can persuade me to become a Christian?**” Perhaps he spoke with a smirk on his face and a sneer in his voice. But he certainly spoke his own death warrant.
8. Paul was polite in his reply. “**I would to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains**”. Festus and Agrippa knew that their prisoner had a compassionate concern for them, and they could not easily escape his challenge. The best thing to do was to

end the hearing, so the king stood up; and this told everybody that the audience was over.

9. Both Agrippa and Festus declared that Paul was innocent of any crime deserving of death. Luke continues to accumulate these official statements so that his readers will understand that Paul was an innocent man. In fact, Paul might have been set free, had he not appealed to Caesar. Was he foolish in making his appeal? No, he was not, for it was the appeal to Caesar that finally ended the repeated accusations of the Jewish leaders. They knew they could not successfully fight against Rome.
10. What Agrippa and Festus did not understand was that Paul had been the judge and they had been the prisoners on trial. They had been shown the light and the way to freedom, but they had deliberately closed their eyes and returned to their sins. Perhaps they felt relieved that Paul would go to Rome and trouble them no more. The trial was over, but their sentence was still to come; and come it would.

#### END LESSON 31

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 31

1. **T or F** Festus tries to gain favor with the Jewish leaders by transferring Paul to Jerusalem to be tried there under the laws of the Jews.
2. **T or F** Festus was unable to articulate to Caesar in Rome about the specific charges and accusations against Paul. He asked Agrippa I if he could help to articulate these charges.
3. Which of the following points that Paul made before King Agrippa, who was an expert on Jewish customs and ways is NOT true:
  - A. He was a prisoner because of his beliefs on the Resurrection and the Messiah.
  - B. Paul was speaking to the entire audience, even though there were some there that had different beliefs in these doctrinal foundations to the Christian faith.
  - C. Paul's zeal for the Law and the unerring truth of Judaism caused him to hunt down and persecute the early church of Christ.
  - D. Paul told the King that he hunted heretics as his father, a Pharisee as well, taught him to do.
4. **T or F** Paul testifies that he saw a light and heard a voice, and had a life-changing encounter with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

5. Paul continues with King Agrippa in testimony of his conversion. Which of the following points is NOT true:

- A. Those with Paul could hear the voice but couldn't discern what was said.
- B. Jesus tells Paul that when His people suffers, Jesus suffers!
- C. The Gospel promises light from darkness, forgiveness instead of guilt and inheritance shared as a favored child!
- D. The uniqueness of Jesus resurrection is that He did not die again.
- E. Festus accuses Paul of being mad and Agrippa belittles Paul's witness and adopts a superior attitude.

6. **T or F** By ending the hearing and sending Paul to Rome, both Festus and Agrippa lost the possible last chance to hear and respond to the Gospel of Jesus' saving grace.

## BEGIN LESSON 32

XXVIII. The journey to Rome Acts 27 (WW commentary)

**This journey would begin in the autumn of 60 AD and concluded in 61 AD**

### **A. The Contrary Wind 27:1-20**

**Acts 27:1-20 KJV** And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. 27:2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. 27:3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. 27:4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 27:5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. 27:6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. 27:7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; 27:8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. 27:9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 27:10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. 27:11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which



were spoken by Paul. 27:12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west. 27:13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. 27:14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. 27:15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. 27:16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: 27:17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, struck sail, and so were driven. 27:18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; 27:19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. 27:20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

1. Luke had not included himself since Acts 21:18, but now he joined Paul and Aristarchus for the voyage to Rome. It is possible that Luke was allowed to go as Paul's physician and Aristarchus as Paul's personal attendant. How Paul must have thanked God for his faithful friends who gave up their liberty, and even risked their lives, that he might have the help he needed. There is no evidence that either of these men had been arrested, yet Paul referred to Aristarchus as a "fellow prisoner" (Col. 4:10). This could refer to a voluntary imprisonment on his part in order to assist Paul.
2. Paul was not the only prisoner that Julius and his men were taking to Rome, for there were "certain other prisoners" with them. The Greek word means "others of a different kind" and may suggest that, unlike Paul, these men were going to Rome to die, and not to stand trial. What mercy that they met Paul who could tell them how to go to heaven when they died!
3. The centurion found a coastal ship leaving Caesarea, so they embarked and covered the eighty miles from Caesarea to Sidon in one day. In Sidon, Paul was permitted to visit his friends and put together the things needed for the long trip. Luke records the kindness of a Roman officer to the Apostle Paul (Acts 24:23), as well as the encouragement of the anonymous believers in Sidon.

4. From Sidon to Myra, the voyage became difficult because of the westerly winds. At Myra, Julius, a Roman officer, found a ship going to Italy; so he abandoned the slower coastal ship and put Paul and the others on board this large grain ship from Egypt that carried 276 passengers (Acts 27:37-38). Rome depended on Egypt for much of its grain supply, and the Roman government gave special consideration to those who ran these ships.
5. The strong winds again hindered their progress so that “many days” were required to cover the 130 miles from Myra to Cnidus. The pilot then steered south-southwest to Crete, passing Salmone and finally struggling into Fair Havens. It had been a most difficult voyage.
6. The centurion now had to decide whether to winter at Fair Havens or set sail and try to reach the port of Phoenix (Phoenicia, Acts 27:12) on the southern coast of Crete, about forty miles away. His approach to making this decision is a classic illustration of how **not** to determine the will of God.
7. Paul admonished them to stay in Fair Havens. They had already encountered adverse winds, and it was now the start of the stormy season. “The fast” refers to the Day of Atonement, which fell in September/October; and every sailor knew that sailing was difficult from mid-September to mid-November, and impossible from mid-November to February.
8. Acts 27:10 sounds so much like a prophecy that we are prone to believe God gave Paul a premonition of danger. Paul had already experienced three shipwrecks, so he was certainly speaking from experience. (The Greek word translated “perceive” in Acts 27:10 means “to perceive from past experience.”) However, the men in charge gave little value to Paul’s warning, an attitude they lived to regret.
9. What were the factors that governed Julius’ decision? To begin with, Fair Havens was not a comfortable place to settle down because it was too open to the winter storms. Phoenix had a more sheltered harbor. Julius also listened to the “expert advice” of the pilot and captain (“master and owner”) of the ship. They advised that the ship head for Phoenix as fast as possible. Surely they could cover forty miles safely, and already they had lost too much time (Acts 27:9). When Julius added

up the votes, it was three to one that the ship set sail. After all, the majority cannot be wrong, especially when it includes the experts!

10. But the clinching argument came with an encouraging change in the weather, for the south wind began to blow gently, and that was just what they needed. However, it was not long before Paul was proved right, for the “soft wind” became a stormy wind. The word translated “tempestuous” gives us the English word “typhoon.” Sailors called this special wind Euroclydon, a hybrid Greek and Latin word that means “a northeasterner.” The crew had to let the ship drift because it was impossible to steer it, and the wind drove it twenty-three miles to the south, to the island of Cauda. Here the sailors pulled in the small boat that was towed behind larger ships, lest they lose it or it be driven against the ship and cause damage.
11. As the storm grew worse, the crew did all it could to keep the ship afloat. They wrapped ropes (or chains) around the hull so the boat would not come apart, and they took down some of the sails. The second day, they started throwing some of the wheat overboard, and the third day they jettisoned the furnishings. (Note Luke’s use of “we” in Acts 27:19.) Because of the storm, they could not see the sun or the stars, so it was impossible to determine their position. The situation seemed hopeless, and it all happened because one man would not listen to God’s messenger.
12. Sometimes we get ourselves into storms for the same reasons: impatience (Acts 27:9), accepting expert advice that is contrary to God’s will, following the majority, and trusting “ideal” conditions (Acts 27:13). “He that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16). It pays to listen to God’s Word.

#### **B. He shared God’s Word with them 27:22-26**

**Acts 27:22-26 KJV** And now I exhort you to **be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.** 27:23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 27:25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for **I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.** 27:26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

A messenger from the Lord had visited Paul and told him that the ship and cargo would be lost, but that all the passengers would be spared and cast on an island. Once again, the Lord gave him a special word of encouragement at the right time. It was for Paul's sake that God did this, and it was Paul's faith that God honored.

### C. He warned them 27:27-32

**Acts 27:27-32 KJV** But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; 27:28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. 27:29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. 27:30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, 27:31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, **Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. 27:32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.**

1. During the two weeks they had been at sea, the ship had been driven over 500 miles off course and was now adrift in the Adrian Sea. (It is now called the Ionian Sea and must not be confused with the Adriatic Sea.) As the crew took soundings, they discovered that the water was getting shallower (from 120 feet to 90 feet), indicating that land was near. From the roar of the waves, it appeared that the ship was headed for the rocks.
2. In order to keep the boat headed toward shore, some of the crew dropped four anchors from the stern. But others of the crew tried to escape from the ship in the dinghy that had been brought on board (Acts 27:16). This was not only an act of selfishness and revolt on their part, but it was also an act of unbelief. Paul had told everybody God's promise that He would keep everyone safe who sailed with him on the voyage (Acts 27:24). For the men to abandon ship was to take their lives in their own hands and threaten the lives of others. The soldiers cut the small boat free.

### D. He set a good example before them 27:33-38

**Acts 27:33-38 KJV** And while the day was coming on, **Paul besought them all to take meat**, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting,

having taken nothing. 27:34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 27:35 And when he had thus spoken, **he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.** 27:36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. 27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. 27:38 And when they had eaten enough, **they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.**

1. What a difference it makes when a person has faith in God! Instead of vainly wishing for a change or selfishly trying to escape, Paul got ready for the demands that would come at daybreak. It is not difficult to understand why everyone had fasted those two weeks, but now it was time to eat. Caring for one's health is an important part of the Christian life, and even an apostle must not abuse his body.
2. Paul took the bread and openly prayed and gave thanks to God. His example encouraged the others to join him, and before long, everybody felt better. There are times when one dedicated believer can change the whole atmosphere of a situation simply by trusting God and making that faith visible.

E. **He rescued them 27:39-44**

**Acts 27:39-44 KJV** And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. 27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. 27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, **they ran the ship aground;** and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. 27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. 27:43 **But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose;** and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: 27:44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so **it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.**

1. When it was day, the pilot saw where they were and made every effort to get the ship to shore. But as Paul said the ship was lost being grounded and the waves began to beat the stern into pieces. The only

thing the passengers could do was jump into the water and make for land.

2. The soldiers, of course, were concerned about their prisoners; for if a prisoner escaped, the soldier was held accountable and could be killed. Once again, it was Paul whose presence saved their lives. Often unbelievers are blessed because of the presence of a believer. Just as the Lord promised, all of them made it safely to shore, and not one was lost. I have a feeling that Paul had been sharing the Gospel with his fellow passengers and that some of them had trusted in the Lord as a result of this experience.
3. Storms often come when we disobey the will of God. (Jonah is a good example of this truth.) However, it was not Paul who was at fault, but the centurion in charge of the ship. We sometimes suffer because of the unbelief of others.
4. **Second**, storms have a way of revealing character. Some of the sailors selfishly tried to escape, others could only hope for the best; but Paul trusted God and obeyed His will.
5. **Third**, even the worst storms cannot hide the face of God or hinder the purposes of God. Paul received the word of assurance that they needed, and God overruled so that His servant arrived safely in Rome.
6. **Finally**, storms can give us opportunities to serve others and bear witness to Jesus Christ. Paul was the most valuable man on that ship! He knew how to pray, he had faith in God, and he was in touch with the Almighty.

END LESSON 32

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 32

1. **T or F** Luke joins Paul and Silas on the perilous trip to Rome.
2. **T or F** The Roman Centurion had to decide whether to winter in Fair Havens on the island of Crete or continue south to the port of Phoenix which had more comfortable accommodations for a long-term winter stay.
3. Which of the following statements about the perilous journey by sea to Rome is NOT true:

- A. Paul told the centurion, owner and pilot that the boat needed to stay in Fair Havens.
  - B. Sailing in that area was difficult from mid September to mid-November and impossible from mid November to February.
  - C. God gave Paul a premonition of danger if they stayed in Fair Havens.
  - D. The short trip to Phoenix was only 40 miles and a favorable wind began to blow.
4. **T or F** As the storm grew worse, the men on the boat did all they could to stay afloat, they did not know where they were due to the clouds covering the sun and stars.
5. After 2 weeks at sea, which of the following statements about their journey are true—pick the best answer:
- A. They had drifted over 500 miles off course and were dangerously close to washing ashore on rocky land.
  - B. Paul's faith in God and assurance that they would survive encouraged the 276 on board.
  - C. Once it was day, the pilot saw a refuge and grounded the ship, allowing all to escape though the ship itself was destroyed in the surf.
  - D. The soldiers wanted to execute the prisoners, if they escaped, the soldiers could be held accountable and pay with their lives.
  - E. All of the above
  - F. None of the above
6. **T or F** The storm revealed God's character in Paul. He had the faith and assurance that he would go to Rome and testify there of Christ and all on the ship would survive as well.

### BEGIN LESSON 33

#### XXIX. From Melita to Rome Acts 28 (WW commentary)

##### A. Paul the Helper 28:1-10

**Acts 28:1-10 KJV** And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. 28:2 And **the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one,** because of the present rain, and because of the cold. 28:3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 28:4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, **No doubt this man is a murderer,** whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance

suffereth not to live. 28:5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. 28:6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, **they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.** 28:7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. 28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom **Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.** 28:9 So when this was done, **others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:** 28:10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

1. God had brought them to the Isle of Malta (which means “refuge”), where the native people welcomed all 276 of them and did their best to make them comfortable. To the Greeks, anybody who did not speak Greek was a “barbarian.” These people proved to be kind and sympathetic. The storm abated, but the weather was cold; so the natives built a fire.
2. After all he had done for the passengers, Paul could well have requested a throne and insisted that everybody serve him! Instead, he did his share of the work and helped gather fuel for the fire. No task is too small for the servant of God who has “the mind of Christ”.
3. The episode of the viper reminds us of Paul’s experience in Lystra (Acts 14:6-18). First, the people thought that Justice, one of their goddesses, had caught up with this notorious prisoner who was supposed to drown in the sea but had somehow escaped. When Paul failed to swell up and die, they decided that he must be a god himself! Such are the reasonings of people who judge by appearances.
4. Paul and the party remained on Malta for three months; and, thanks to Paul, they were treated graciously and sent on their way with generous gifts. Since they had lost everything in the shipwreck, the passengers were grateful to have their needs supplied. Luke says nothing about evangelism on the island, but we must believe that Paul shared the Gospel with anybody who would listen. His miraculous deliverance from the sea and from the viper, and his power to heal, would certainly arouse the interest of the people.



**B. Paul the Preacher 28:11-31**

**Acts 28:11-31** And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. 28:12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. 28:13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 28:14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. 28:15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. 28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but **Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.** 28:17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 28:18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. 28:19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. 28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: **because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.** 28:21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee. 28:22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. 28:23 And when they had **appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.** 28:24 **And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.** 28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 28:26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 28:27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. 28:29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. 28:30 And **Paul**

**dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,** 28:31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

1. Whether all 276 people boarded the Alexandrian ship, or just Julius and his guard and prisoners, we do not know; nor do we know why Luke took such care to identify the ship. In Greek mythology, “**Castor and Pollux**” (vs.11) were the names of the twin sons of Zeus and were revered as the protectors of men on the sea. Many Roman ships bore their image as a plea for safety. It was 80 miles to Syracuse, another 70 to Rhegium, and about 180 to Puteoli, the port of Naples. This time the “**south wind**” was exactly what they needed in order to make the voyage quickly and safely.
2. In Puteoli, Paul and his friends, along with Julius and the other prisoners and guards, were urged by the believers to stay and rest for a week; and Julius gave his consent. The centurion knew that Paul had saved their lives, and perhaps he was even getting interested in what these Christians had to offer.
3. Word had gotten to Rome that Paul was coming; how, we do not know. Perhaps Aristarchus did not go with Paul and Luke on the grain ship, but made his way instead overland to Rome where he met Paul’s friends. Or, perhaps a delegation from Caesarea headed for Rome as soon as Paul appealed to Caesar.
4. Julius and his party took the famous Appian Way and traveled 125 miles from Puteoli to Rome. The first group of Christians met Paul at the Forum of Appius, about 43 miles from Rome; and the second group met him at the Three Taverns, 10 miles nearer to the city. Paul was greatly encouraged when he met them, as well he might be. Now he could fellowship with the saints and they could be a blessing to one another.
5. Paul’s greatest concern was his witness to the Jews in Rome. They had received no special word about Paul, but they did know that the “Christian sect” was being spoken against in many places. When you read Paul’s letter to the Romans, you get the impression that the Jews in Rome had misunderstood some of his teachings. The apostle made it

clear that his appeal to Caesar must not be interpreted as an indictment against his nation.

6. On the day appointed, Paul spent “**from morning till evening**” explaining the Scriptures and revealing Christ in the Law and the Prophets. He had “dialogued” this way with the Jews in one synagogue after another, and now he was sharing the Word with the leaders of many synagogues in Rome.
7. The result? Some were persuaded and some were not. When the Jewish leaders left Paul’s house, they were still arguing among themselves! But Paul had faithfully given his witness to the Jews in Rome, and now he would turn to the Gentiles.
8. Paul quoted the words of Isaiah to these men (Isa. 6:9-10), words that described their tragic spiritual condition. Jesus had used this passage in connection with His parables of the kingdom. If anybody should have possessed spiritual understanding, it was these Jewish leaders, but their hearts were dull and hard.
9. But their unbelief did not put an end to Paul’s ministry of the Gospel! He announced that the Gospel some of the Jews had rejected would be proclaimed to the Gentiles, “**and they will hear it!**” This is one of the major themes of Acts, how the Gospel moved from the Jews to the Gentiles and from Jerusalem to Rome. Without the Book of Acts, we would turn in the New Testament from the Gospel of John to Romans and ask, “How did the Gospel ever get from the Jews in Jerusalem to the Gentiles in Rome?”
10. Paul kept “**open house**” and received anybody who wanted to discuss the things of the kingdom of God. He was chained to a guard who was relieved every six hours, but who was forced to listen as Paul preached and taught and prayed. No wonder so many members of the Roman guard were saved! (Phil. 1:12-14; 4:22).
11. During these two years in Rome, Paul wrote Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. He expected to be released and most students agree that he was. During this time, he had Timothy with him, as well as John Mark, Luke, Aristarchus, Epaphras, Justus, and Demas. He also met Philemon’s runaway slave Onesimus and led him to faith in

Christ (Phile. 10-21). Epaphroditus brought a gift to him from the Philippian church and almost died ministering to Paul (Phil. 2:25-30; 4:18). Tychicus was Paul's "mailman" who delivered Ephesians (Eph. 6:21), Colossians, and Philemon (Col. 4:7-9).

- 12.** Dr. Luke ended his book before Paul's case had been heard, so he could not give us the results of the trial. We have every reason to believe that Paul was indeed released and that he resumed his ministry, probably traveling as far as Spain (Rom. 15:24, 28). During this period (A.D. 63-66/67), he wrote letters to Timothy and Titus. He left Titus in Crete (Titus 1:5), Trophimus sick in Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20), and Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3). He planned to meet some of his helpers at Nicopolis (Titus 3:12-13) after he had visited some of the churches he had established. Wherever he went, he sought to bring Jews and Gentiles to faith in Jesus Christ.
- 13.** He was arrested again, probably about the year 67AD, and this time his situation was changed drastically. He did not live in a house, but was chained in a prison and treated like a criminal (2 Tim. 1:16; 2:9). Winter was coming, and he asked Timothy to bring him his cloak (2 Tim. 4:13). But the saddest thing about this second imprisonment was his being forsaken by the believers in Rome (2 Tim. 4:16-17). The great apostle to the Gentiles was abandoned by the very people he came to assist.
- 14.** Even Demas forsook him, and only Luke was with him (2 Tim. 4:10-11). The family of Onesiphorus ministered to his needs (2 Tim. 1:16-18), but he longed for Timothy and Mark to come to be at his side (2 Tim. 1:4; 4:9, 21). Paul knew that the end was coming (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Tradition tells us that he was beheaded at Rome in A.D. 67/68.
- 15.** Luke did not write his book simply to record ancient history. He wrote to encourage the church in every age to be faithful to the Lord and carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth.
- 16.** This is the only book that doesn't end with an Amen. This is because we continue to write the end to this book until the Lord returns.

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 33

1. **T or F** The island where the prisoners landed and the ship was grounded was Malta. The local people were very accommodating until Paul was bitten by a viper, when they turned on him and wanted to try him for murder.
2. **T or F** After having lost everything in the shipwreck, the group was provided all they needed by the locals after many of them were healed and miracles were performed.
3. As the group is on their way to Rome, which of the following statements is NOT true:
  - A. Paul had an opportunity to explain the Scriptures to many synagogue leaders in Rome.
  - B. Paul and the group was met by fellow believers in two different locations on the way to Rome.
  - C. The favorable 'north wind' returns and the group was able to continue their travels.
  - D. Paul tells the Jews that he will now share the Gospel with the Gentiles and that 'they will hear it'.
4. **T or F** Luke wrote the book of Acts more than to simply record ancient history, but to encourage the future church to be faithful to the Lord and carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

### BEGIN LESSON 34

**THIS CONCLUDES THE SCRIPTURAL STUDY. THE FOLLOWING IS EXTRA MATERIAL (XXX.) ON CHURCH HISTORY AND (XXXI.) ON CROSS CULTURAL MISSIONS.**

- XXX. Overview of the continued growth of the Church of Jesus Christ from the close of the apostolic age to present day. The following material is a continuation from the beginning of our study. See Roman numeral "I." Letter "H." page # 5.**
- A. Additional Information on the period from the Apostles to Constantine**
1. "For the first three centuries Christianity was placed in the most unfavorable circumstances, that it might display its moral power, and gain its victory over the world by spiritual weapons alone. Until the reign of Constantine it had not even a legal existence in the Roman Empire, but was first ignored as a Jewish sect, then slandered, proscribed, and persecuted, as a treasonable innovation, and the adoption of it made punishable with

confiscation and death. Besides, it offered not the slightest favor, as Mohammedanism afterwards did, to the corrupt inclinations of the heart, but against the current ideas of Jews and heathen it so presented its inexorable demand of repentance and conversion, renunciation of self and the world, that more, according to Tertullian, were kept out of the new sect by love of pleasure than by love of life. The Jewish origin of Christianity also, and the poverty and obscurity of a majority of its professors particularly offended the pride of the Greeks, and Romans.” [The History of the Christian Church by Philip Schaff (HCC)]

2. But in spite of these extraordinary difficulties Christianity made a progress, which furnished striking evidence of its divine origin and adaptation to the deeper wants of man, and was employed as such by Irenaeus, Justin, Tertullian, and other fathers of that day. Nay, the very hindrances became, in the hands of Providence, means of promotion. Persecution led to martyrdom, and martyrdom had not terrors alone, but also attractions, and stimulated the noblest and most unselfish form of ambition. Every genuine martyr was a living proof of the truth and holiness of the Christian religion. Tertullian could exclaim to the heathen: “All your ingenious cruelties can accomplish nothing; they are only a lure to this sect. Our number increases the more you destroy us. The blood of the Christians is their seed.” The moral earnestness of the Christians contrasted powerfully with the prevailing corruption of the age...(HCC)
3. It is a remarkable fact that after the days of the Apostles no names of great missionaries are mentioned till the opening of the middle ages... To understand this astonishing fact, we must remember that the foundation was laid strong and deep by the apostles themselves. The seed scattered by them from Jerusalem to Rome, and fertilized by their blood, sprung up as a bountiful harvest. The word of our Lord was again fulfilled on a larger scale: “One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye have not labored; others have labored, and ye are entered into their labor” ([John 4:38](#)).

Christianity once established was its own best missionary. It grew naturally from within. It attracted people by its very presence. It was a light shining in darkness and illuminating the darkness. And while there were no professional missionaries devoting their whole life to this specific work, every congregation was a missionary society, and every Christian believer a missionary, inflamed by the love of Christ to convert his fellow-men. The example had been set by Jerusalem and Antioch, and by those brethren

who, after the martyrdom of Stephen, “were scattered abroad and went about preaching the Word.” ([Acts 8:4](#); [11:19](#)) Justin Martyr was converted by a venerable old man whom he met “walking on the shore of the sea.” (HCC)

4. It may be fairly asserted, that about the end of the third century the name of Christ was known, revered, and persecuted in every province and every city of the empire. Maximian, in one of his edicts, says that “almost all” had abandoned the worship of their ancestors for the new sect.

In the absence of statistics, the number of the Christians must be purely a matter of conjecture. In all probability it amounted at the close of the third and the beginning of the fourth century to nearly one-tenth or one-twelfth of the subjects of Rome, that is to about ten millions of souls. (HCC)

5. The transfer of the seat of power from Rome to Constantinople, and the founding of the East Roman empire under Constantine I. gave to Asia Minor, and especially to Constantinople, a commanding importance in the history of the Church for several centuries. The seven Ecumenical Councils from 325 to 787 were all held in that city or its neighborhood, and the doctrinal controversies on the Trinity and the person of Christ were carried on chiefly in Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt.

In the mysterious providence of God those lands of the Bible and the early church have been conquered by the prophet of Mecca, the Bible replaced by the Koran, and the Greek Church reduced to a condition of bondage and stagnation... (HCC)

6. During the period from the Apostles to Constantine the church went through many waves of persecution. But perhaps the worst was the last under the reign of Diocletian.
7. (HCC) Diocletian (284-305) was one of the most judicious and able emperors who, in a trying period, preserved the sinking state from dissolution. He was the son of a slave or of obscure parentage, and worked himself up to supreme power. He converted the Roman republican empire into an Oriental despotism, and prepared the way for Constantine and Constantinople. He associated with himself three subordinate co-regents, Maximian (who committed suicide, 310), Galerius (d. 311), and Constantius Chlorus (d. 306, the father of Constantine the Great), and

divided with them the government of the immense empire; thereby quadrupling the personality of the sovereign, and imparting vigor to provincial administration, but also sowing the seed of discord and civil war.

In the first twenty years of his reign Diocletian respected the toleration edict of Gallienus. His own wife Prisca, his daughter Valeria, and most of his eunuchs and court officers, besides many of the most prominent public functionaries, were Christians, or at least favorable to the Christian religion. He himself was a superstitious heathen and an oriental despot. ...He claimed divine honors, as the vicar of Jupiter Capitolinus. He was called, as the Lord and Master of the world, *Sacratissimus Dominus Noster*; he guarded his Sacred Majesty with many circles of soldiers and eunuchs, and allowed no one to approach him except on bended knees, and with the forehead touching the ground, while he was seated on the throne in rich vestments from the far East.

The chief instigator of the renewal of hostility toward Christians, according to the account of Lactantius, was Diocletian's co-regent and son-in-law, Galerius, a cruel and fanatical heathen. He prevailed at last on Diocletian, in his old age, to authorize the persecution, which gave to his glorious reign a disgraceful end.

In 303 Diocletian issued in rapid succession three edicts, each more severe than its predecessor. Maximian issued the fourth, the worst of all, April 30, 304. Christian churches were to be destroyed; all copies of the Bible were to be burned; all Christians were to be deprived of public office and civil rights; and at last all, without exception, were to sacrifice to the gods upon pain of death. It was strengthened by the tearing down of the first edict by an imprudent Christian (celebrated in the Greek Church under the name of John), who vented in that way his abhorrence of such "godless and tyrannical rulers," and was gradually roasted to death... The persecution began on the twenty-third day of February, 303,... with the destruction of the magnificent church in Nicomedia, and soon spread over the whole Roman empire, except Gaul, Britain, and Spain, where the co-regent Constantius Chlorus, and especially his son, Constantine the Great (from 306), were disposed, as far as possible, to spare the Christians. But even here the churches were destroyed, and many martyrs of Spain, ...and of Britain are assigned by later tradition to this age.

The persecution raged longest and most fiercely in the East under the rule of Galerius and his barbarous nephew Maximin Daza, who was entrusted by



Diocletian before his retirement with the dignity of Caesar and the extreme command of Egypt and Syria. He issued in the autumn of 308, a fifth edict of persecution, which commanded that all males with their wives and servants, and even their children, should sacrifice and actually taste the accursed offerings, and that all provisions in the markets should be sprinkled with sacrificial wine. This monstrous law introduced a reign of terror for two years, and left the Christians no alternative but apostasy or starvation. All the pains, which iron and steel, fire and sword, rack and cross, wild beasts and beastly men could inflict, were employed to gain the useless end.

Eusebius was a witness of this persecution in Caesura, Tyre, and Egypt, and saw, with his own eyes, as he tells us, the houses of prayer razed to the ground, the Holy Scriptures committed to the flames on the market places, the pastors hunted, tortured, and torn to pieces in the amphitheatre.

Diocletian retired into private life in 305, under the curse of the Christians; he found greater pleasure in planting cabbages at Salona in his native Dalmatia, than in governing a vast empire, but his peace was disturbed by the tragic misfortunes of his wife and daughter, and in 313, when all the achievements of his reign were destroyed, he destroyed himself.

Galerius, the real author of the persecution, brought to reflection by a terrible disease, put an end to the slaughter shortly before his death, by a remarkable edict of toleration, which he issued from Nicomedia in 311, in connection with Constantine and Licinius. In that document he declared, that the purpose of reclaiming the Christians from their wilful innovation and the multitude of their sects to the laws and discipline of the Roman state, was not accomplished; and that he would now grant them permission to hold their religious assemblies provided they disturbed not the order of the state. To this he added in conclusion the significant instruction that the Christians, “after this manifestation of grace, should pray *to their God* for the welfare of the emperors, of the state, and of themselves, that the state might prosper in every respect, and that they might live quietly in their homes.” This edict virtually closes the period of persecution in the Roman empire.

Constantine, who hailed from the far West, had already, in 306, become emperor of Gaul, Spain, and Britain. He had been brought up at the court of Diocletian at Nicomedia (like Moses at the court of Pharaoh) and destined to be his successor, but fled from the intrigues of Galerius to Britain, and was appointed by his father and proclaimed by the army as his successor. He crossed the Alps, and under the banner of the cross, he conquered

Maxentius..., who perished with his army of veterans in the waters of the Tiber, Oct. 27, 312. A few months afterwards Constantine met at Milan with his co-regent and brother-in-law, Licinius, and issued a new edict of toleration (313), to which Maximin also, shortly before his suicide (313), was compelled to give his consent at Nicomedia. The second edict went beyond the first of 311; it was a decisive step from hostile neutrality to friendly neutrality and protection, and prepared the way for the legal recognition of Christianity, as the religion of the empire. It ordered the full restoration of all confiscated church property to the *Corpus Christianorum*, at the expense of the imperial treasury, and directed the provincial magistrates to execute this order at once with all energy, so that peace may be fully established and the continuance of the Divine favor secured to the emperors and their subjects.

This was the first proclamation of the great principle that every man had a right to choose his religion according to the dictates of his own conscience and honest conviction, without compulsion and interference from the government. Religion is worth nothing except as an act of freedom. A forced religion is no religion at all. Unfortunately, the successors of Constantine from the time of Theodosius the Great (383-395) enforced the Christian religion to the exclusion of every other; and not only so, but they enforced orthodoxy to the exclusion of every form of dissent, which was punished as a crime against the state.

Paganism made another spasmodic effort. Licinius fell out with Constantine and renewed the persecution for a short time in the East, but he was defeated in 323, and Constantine became sole ruler of the empire. He openly protected and favored the church, without forbidding idolatry, and upon the whole remained true to his policy of protective toleration till his death (337). This was enough for the success of the church, which had all the vitality and energy of a victorious power; while heathenism was fast decaying at its root.

With Constantine, therefore, the last of the heathen, the first of the Christian, emperors, a new period begins. The church ascends the throne of the Caesars under the banner of the once despised, now honored and triumphant cross...(HCC)

#### END LESSON 34

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 34

1. **T or F** For the first three centuries Christianity was placed in the most unfavorable circumstances, that it might display its moral power, and gain its victory over the world by spiritual weapons alone.
2. **T or F** Justin Martyr could exclaim to the heathen: “All your ingenious cruelties can accomplish nothing; they are only a lure to this sect. Our number increases the more you destroy us. The blood of the Christians is their seed.
3. During the first 3 centuries after the age of the Apostles, which of the following statements is **NOT** true:
  - A. Christianity once established was its own best missionary.
  - B. It was only through persecution, bloodshed and the threat of the sword that people were converted.
  - C. By the end of the third century, it is estimated that up to 10 million subjects of Rome were converted to Christ.
  - D. Every early congregation was a missionary society, and every Christian believer a missionary, inflamed by the love of Christ to convert his fellow-men.
4. **T or F** During the period from the Apostles to Constantine the church went through many waves of persecution. But perhaps the worst was the last under the reign of Diocletian.
5. Diocletian's son in law, Galerius, encouraged the elder emperor to authorize the persecutions. Which of the following is **NOT** true:
  - A. 4 Edicts were issued between 303 AD and 304 AD, each more severe than its predecessor.
  - B. Galerius was a cruel and fanatical heathen
  - C. His barbarous nephew, Maximin Daza, expanded the persecution in 308 AD with a fifth edict against the Christian church.
  - D. Maximin Daza was known as 'Max the Terrible' throughout his tenure.
  - E. Galerius, suffering from a terrible disease, put together an edict in 311 AD stopping the persecution and instructed the Christians to pray for their leaders.
6. **T or F** Constantine, in 313 AD, issued his second edict which changed his governments standing on the Christian church from hostile neutrality to friendly neutrality and protection.

#### **BEGIN LESSON 35**

### **B. THE STATE CHURCH (Nicene and Post-Nicene Era) A.D. 313—590**

The Roman Emperor Constantine would today be classified as a pragmatist. He wanted to do what worked even if it went against what he felt. Because of this he was politically wise. He realized that idolatry in Rome and all the provinces had outlived its usefulness and he began to look for something better to shore up the immense weakness of his army and the decadent society.

Those Christians who died fearlessly and with nobility in the Coliseum and that lived with moral values were all that was left that could breathe new life into the Roman Empire. The Holy Spirit, according to the legends, may have given him a dream or vision in the night, or sent an angel.

He cited that experience and led his armies to victory. Flags carried the cross as their symbol. From A.D. 313 he associated closely with the bishops and hierarchy of the church and applied the word *catholic*, meaning universal, to the church in official documents.

There was rapid exultation of Christians and their church leaders coupled with the putting down of pagan religions and Judaism with the result that entire divisions of soldiers were baptized in water and the Western Empire was suddenly looked upon to be Christian at least in title and name.

However, many did not leave their old religions and philosophies. This led to a mixing of many different doctrines, worldviews, pantheons of gods, etc. Typically the pagan would accept some Christian ideas along with his previous religious ideas that formed a mixing pot of beliefs.

The Roman Empire was now looking to the Christians to provide the religion for the Empire. However it was happening far too fast to be genuine faith and receiving Christ, Christianity found itself not fighting in the Coliseum but desperately trying to keep afloat in a tidal wave of pagan ideas and cultures.

This onrush of conflicting religious ideas and heresies caused the church to defend itself, to nail down basic beliefs that define what it means to be a real Believer. Boundaries were clarified. Though actions and councils could be viewed as human undertakings to protect the faith, it seems that the Holy Spirit was at work, illuminating their understanding, guiding those most sensitive to the Holy Spirit to generate adequate understandings and boundaries for the times they were in. The same Spirit who breathed the scriptures now guided councils.

Meanwhile the Holy Spirit guided his genuinely Spirit-led people to more clearly define what the true Gospel and the religious truths defining our Christian belief and faith should be.

The words of Jesus to baptize in the name of Father, Son, Holy Spirit opened the door for defining an in-definable mystery, the Trinity, an understanding of a God who is One God, yet in three distinct Holy, Godly Persons. The Church realized they needed an accurate definition of the essentials of the faith, a creed statement that people would pledge to and thus separate the real Christians from the pagan look-alikes.

The following is a reprint of the “Apostle’s Creed” and the Nicene Creed of A.D. 325 and A.D. 381 (they are presented so that you can compare their similarities and differences):

<b>APOSTLE’S CREED</b> (as usually recited today)	<b>NICENE CREED (two releases years apart)</b>	
	<b>A.D. 325</b>	<b>A.D. 381</b>
I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:	We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.	We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

<p>And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;</p>	<p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father [THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN; THAT IS, OF THE ESSENCE OF THE FATHER, GOD OF GOD] Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made [BOTH IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH];</p> <p>This table continues on next page to correlate the topics between the different creeds:</p>	<p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only- begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God,  Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made;</p>
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<p>who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary,</p> <p>suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.</p> <p>I believe in the Holy Ghost;</p>	<p>who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate</p> <p>and was made man;</p> <p>He suffered,</p> <p>and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven;</p> <p>from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.</p> <p>And we believe in the Holy GHOST.</p>	<p>who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried,</p> <p>and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.</p> <p>And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.</p> <p>And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father {and the Son, }<sup>1</sup> who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.</p>
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the holy catholic church;		And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
the communion of saints;		We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;	Amen.	And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
and the life everlasting.		Amen.
Amen		

### Another early creed from the post-nicene period was the Anthanasian Creed: THE ATHANASIAN CREED

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic ("catholic" meaning all true believers the "body of Jesus Christ" the church universal, which is different from Roman Catholic) faith.
2. Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. But this is the catholic faith: That we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity;
4. For there is one person of the Father: another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost.
5. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty co-èternal.
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.
8. The Father is uncreated: the Son is uncreated: the Holy Ghost is uncreated.
9. The Father is immeasurable: the Son is immeasurable: the Holy Ghost is immeasurable.
10. The Father is eternal: the Son eternal: the Holy Ghost eternal.
11. And yet there are not three eternals; but one eternal.
12. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three immeasurable: but one uncreated, and one immeasurable.
13. So likewise the Father is almighty: the Son almighty: and the Holy Ghost almighty,
14. And yet there are not three almighties: but one almighty.
15. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God.
16. And yet there are not three Gods; but one God.
17. So the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.
18. And yet not three Lords; but one LORD
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person (*of the Godhead*) by himself to be God and LORD
20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords.

Commented [JC2]: Page: 15

[true Christian], lower case catholic means the faith of all those who are redeemed, the "universal church of the twice-born."



21. The Father is made of none; neither created; nor begotten.`
22. The Son is of the Father alone: not made; nor created; but begotten.
23. The Holy Ghost is of the Father *and the Son*; not made; neither created; nor begotten; but proceeding.
24. Thus there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, and not three Holy Ghosts.
25. And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another.
26. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal
27. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.
28. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

**Commented [JC3]:** Page: 16  
And the Son is the *filioque* insertion made by the West's Latin Church.

The origin of this remarkable production is veiled in mysterious darkness. Like the Apostles' Creed, it is not so much the work of any one person, as the production of the Spirit of the church. As the Apostles' Creed represents the faith of the ante-Nicene period, and the Nicene Creed the faith of the Nicene, so the Athanasian Creed gives formal expression to the post-Nicene faith in the mystery of the Trinity and the incarnation of God.

## END LESSON 35

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 35

1. **T or F** It was the Roman Emperor, Constantine who stopped the persecution of Christianity and embraced it as a way of breathing new life into the Roman Empire.
2. **T or F** From AD 313 forward, he associated closely with the church hierarchy and even had the cross carried as the official flag by his armies.
3. This rapid embracing of Christianity accounted for several problems. Which of the following was NOT a problem:
  - A. There was no coherent understanding of the basic tenants or boundaries for the Christian church to embrace.
  - B. Pagans would accept some Christian ideas along with their previous beliefs and form a 'mixing pot' of beliefs.
  - C. True Christianity found itself floundering in a tidal wave of pagan ideas and cultures.
  - D. Church leaders had no idea who or where to send the tithe and offerings.
4. **T or F** The Holy Spirit guided the true believers into what was the true Gospel and religious truths that should define our religious faith.
5. **T or F** The words of Jesus to baptize in his name only conflicted with the understanding of God being one God in three distinct Holy, Godly Persons.

## BEGIN LESSON 36

### C. THE PAPAL CHURCH OF THE DARK AGES A.D. 590—1517

England, Ireland and Scotland experienced conversions into Christian nations. That does not imply the countries were godly and exemplary Christians. But a large number in each country were converted and it was being recognized as the “main” religion in those countries. Sin abounded from the political leaders to the monasteries.

During this time the Mohammedan faith developed and began conquering most of the peoples in the 10-40 window.

Invasions of the Roman empire brought about a division within the empire. “The eastern portion still called itself the Roman Empire, and the people long spoke of themselves as Romans, though as a matter of fact their language was Greek. Latin was spoken in the West. For a time after the old Roman Empire broke up, the Church held together, but in the course of the centuries the division of the Empire split the Church into a Latin branch, and a Greek branch. The Latin part called itself the Catholic Church and the Greek called itself the Orthodox, which means the Church with the right teaching.” (quoted from “The Church of Our Fathers” by Roland H. Bainton; published by The Westminster Press in Philadelphia copyright 1950).

**Commented [JC4]:** Page: 19  
Mohammed, 570?—632, Arabian founder and prophet of Islam whose revelations are collected in the Koran.

**Commented [JC5]:** Page: 19  
The ten-forty window is a term to denote the Eastern Hemisphere's Muslim countries that lie largely within 10 degrees north latitude and 40 degrees north latitude from West Africa to Malaysia and Southeast Asia.

David S. Schaff's book: *HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH* reports that:

“Upon the whole the people were more religious than moral. Piety was often made a substitute or atonement for virtue. Belief in the supernatural and miraculous was universal; skepticism and unbelief were almost unknown. Men feared purgatory and hell, and made great sacrifices to gain heaven by founding churches, convents, and charitable institutions. And yet there was a frightful amount of immorality among the rulers and the people. The church was unfavorably affected by the state of surrounding society, and often drawn into the current of prevailing immorality.

Yet, upon the whole, she was a powerful barrier against vice, and the chief, if not the only promoter of education, virtue and piety in the dark ages. From barbaric and semi-barbaric material she had to build up the temple of a Christian civilization.

She taught the new converts the Apostles' Creed, the LORD's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments the best popular summaries of faith, piety, and duty.”

## **D. THE CHURCHES OF THE MIDDLE AGES**

### **A.D. 1049 — 1294**

In the Western Church the Middle Ages saw the Catholic papacy rise from weakness and corruption to their highest levels of power and influence over Europe's nations. There were great orders of begging monks and a religious revival. It was the period of chivalry, knights and maidens, crusades. They sought to conquer the Holy Land and make it Christian, and deliver the land from the Saracens (today's Arabs). But the conquest quickly failed. It was also the time great universities were founded, like those in Bologna, Paris, and Oxford. And a program with good intentions became one of the darkest in church history – the Inquisition. The Church reasoned that the persecution of Jews and heretics was a divine right, to redeem the poor misguided wretches.

Extremes prevailed. Piety put to death the deeds of the body as in monasticism. At the same time the Church sought worldly dominion in the excuse of using religious power to save sinners. A powerful papacy lost its direction, promoted greed and fleshly excesses until it became the focus of protests and a cry for thorough reformation.

At this time the separation between the East and West in the Church was completed. Further attempts to come back into agreement only widened the gulf.

Probably reciting the Creeds caused the Holy Spirit to be spoken of, but not often considered as the living manifestation of God provided for a close personal relationship with the Believer. There were holy people during these hundreds of years but they were immersed in errors, and superstitions as much as a living relationship with God himself. Few and far between were saints and those that were probably emphasized the Father and the Son with little understanding or relationship with the Holy Spirit. Yet they "had the Spirit of Christ" or they would not be Christians. It was a powerless and occasional relationship for most Christians.

The Holy Spirit *was* working, convicting, even doing miracles in answer to prayers and fasting, but it also seems evident that few realized that it was the Holy Spirit's working. They just identified it as God, the Godhead, the Father or the Son, but most often the Virgin Mary.

## **E. THE EASTERN CHURCH OF THE MIDDLE AGES**

### **A.D. 1049 — 1294**

In the summer of 1054 three papal legates entered the Hagia Sophia, the beautiful Eastern Church's home in Constantinople to get support for the *filioque* from the Patriarch (sort of equivalent to the Pope). The *filioque* was the phrase inserted by Rome into the Nicene Creed to state that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father *and the Son*. The Western church slipped it in after the Nicene Creed had been approved, and the Eastern Church never believed the *filioque* was scriptural.

When the Patriarch snubbed the envoy they left the papal letter, formally called a "bull", on the altar of Hagia Sophia and declared the Patriarch excommunicated. That meant he could not take communion, officiate, or be considered a Christian. The Eastern Church considered this to be an affront to the entire Eastern Church and the door was finally closed between the two halves of the Christian Church.

This was the last straw. The Greeks had always granted the Roman bishop, the pope, a primary place of honor but they never considered him to be the supreme bishop above even their own Orthodox Patriarch. They certainly didn't hold that the Western pope is infallible. The Eastern Church looked to church councils for guidance in difficult issues. In fact the Eastern Christians have always claimed to be the church of the seven ecumenical councils, with each council representing all of the bishops of the whole Church.

## **F. CHANGE AND CORRECTION IN THE TRUE CHURCH**

### **The MIDDLE AGES      A.D. 1294 — 1517**

The two centuries between 1294 and 1517, between Boniface VIII and the nailing of Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses against the church door in Wittenberg, marked a gradual transition from the middle Ages to modern times. The universal acceptance of papal theocracy in Western Europe is being replaced by national independence. The supreme authority of the priesthood is giving way to the intellectual and spiritual freedom of the individual.

Old things are passing away; a new order is increasingly evident. The old established institutions are breaking up. Reform on the basis of Scripture and the well being of mankind is called for after the abuses of the earlier middle Ages. The Church seeks to express new forms of piety and charitable deeds.

The papacy, which had asserted infallibility of judgment and dominion over all departments of human life, was undermined by the mistakes, pretensions, and worldliness of the papacy itself. For nearly half a century it gave Europe two, and at

times three, popes reigning at the same time and all professing to be the representative of God on earth.

The free spirit of nationality, which awakened during the crusades grew strong and succeeded against the papal authority, first in France and then in other parts of Europe.

In the last years of the period, 1460–1517, ecclesiastical Rome was a spectacle of moral corruption and spiritual failure much like the corrupt age of the Roman Empire. The conditions encouraged leaders like Wyclif, Huss, and others to restore biblical standards and people followed them. The way for the Reformation was being prepared. Meantime, in secular society, the Renaissance was reviving the classical culture of ancient Greece and elsewhere which unshackled the minds of many to try new things. In 1453 Constantinople fell to the Turks and the Christian empire of the east fell apart.

## **G. RENAISSANCE and REFORMED CHURCH A.D. 1517— 1790**

From 1409 to 1450 Reformatory councils were conducted that provided a platform for ecclesiastical and religious discussion. They didn't fix the disorders of the Church but they did provide a forum for free speech. They moved toward the Eastern Church's longtime view that the church's authority, under God, did not rest in a select hierarchy but in the body of the church.

**Cahill's** book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, will give you not only insights into how the Irish scattered like "missionaries" all over the European continent and beyond, with a love for books, writing, words, and copying ancient documents but they also provided the culture that fired the Renaissance. Over several hundred years their influence provided the Greek and Roman and other literature, wisdom and science that had been suppressed until the Renaissance Era popularized it.

The invention of the printing press about 1440 opened the work of long dead humans to be circulated widely and read avidly. Opening their minds lead to religious changes and encouraged solid thinking and intellectual pursuits. This was also the era of exploration, the New World, battles for claiming territory offered the intellect even further growth.

In Europe society was moving away from hundreds of years old customs and church dogmas, including the infallibility of the visible Church, while at the same time holding fast to some of the most harmful beliefs and practices. The Renaissance had not yet produced the genius needed to develop new theologies.

The times that we label the *Renaissance* were larger and more successful than the Reformation. It saw human intellect awaken to new ways of thinking and seeing things. Individuals who had been subject to the theology and hierarchy of the Church began to see other vistas in the areas of science, literature, art, music, medicine and mathematics, among many others.

While the Renaissance brought freedom and enlightenment it also exposed a host of unholy and very secular people who all but did away with the idea of God. There was a new awakening of philosophies and religious concepts that had lain dormant and asleep for years. Many of these awakenings were not to the glory of God.

**H. THE REFORMATION** Nestled within the Renaissance but, like John the Baptist, it prepared the way for Christ's favored church  
**A.D. 1517 --- 1564**

**Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.—2 Cor. 3:17**

The doctrines relating to the Holy Spirit await the next phase of church history after the Reformation. But the breakthroughs made by the Reformation cannot be passed over. It bears a resemblance to the first century, with its great men, important insights and permanent results. But because of its near blindness to the role of the Holy Spirit in the church it resembles to some extent the Church in Samaria before Peter and John brought them the knowledge and power of the Holy Spirit; or the situation prior to the incident with Peter's bringing the Holy Spirit's and saving faith in God to the first Gentile Church.

The Protestant Reformation took the liberal tendencies and movements of the renaissance and directed them into the channel of Christian life, saving the world from a disastrous revolution. The Reformation was neither a revolution nor a restoration to the full power of the first century church, but it had elements of a revolution and restoration. Hence the title, reformation – reforming the church and society.

The Church in the dark ages did not express the spiritual power of the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts and minds of most individuals, including church leaders as He did in the first century.

There were great individuals, often posthumously elevated by the Roman Church to sainthood. There were many more that lived quiet, self-denying lives that God was

pleased with. Yet the official church, the “visible church” did not look or behave very much like Christ or the Christians of the Apostolic era.

With the Renaissance, civilization began to bloom and the visible church moved back toward its roots in the first few centuries. But the resurrection of spiritual power and dependence upon the presence of the Holy Spirit in one’s life was still a couple of centuries away. At the time of the Renaissance, and later in the Reformation, the church was still trying to be intellectual, drawing the boundaries, defining words and marking off increasingly large numbers of Christians into different denominations. Were these the sheep that Jesus said **“I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd”?** John 10:16

**David S. Schaff states:**

Romanism and orthodox Protestantism believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in one divine-human Lord and Saviour of the race. They accept in common the Holy Scriptures and the ecumenical faith. They agree in every article of the Apostles’ Creed. What unites them is far deeper, stronger and more important than what divides them.

But Romanism holds also a large number of "traditions of the elders," which Protestantism rejects as extra-scriptural or anti-scriptural; such are the papacy, the worship of saints and relics, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, prayers and masses for the dead, purgatory, indulgences, the system of monasticism with its perpetual vows and ascetic practices, besides other superstitious rites and ceremonies.

Protestantism, on the other hand, revived and developed the Augustinian doctrines of sin and grace; it proclaimed the sovereignty of divine mercy in man’s salvation, the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, and the sufficiency of Christ’s merit as a source of justification; it asserted the right of direct access to the Word of God and the throne of grace, without human mediators; it secured Christian freedom from bondage; replaced the life style of the monks with a social morality for the masses, and a simple form of worship by the individual in place of the impersonal ceremonial form of worship.

It is not accidental that the Roman Church professes to be built on Peter and regards him as the first pope; while the Reformers appealed chiefly to Paul and found in his epistles to the Galatians and Romans the bulwark of their doctrine of Christian freedom. The collision between Paul and Peter was only temporary; and so the war between Protestantism and Romanism will ultimately pass away in God’s own good time.

The unhappy divisions of Christendom, while they are the source of many evils, have also the good effect of multiplying the agencies for the conversion of the world and facilitating the free growth of every phase of religious life.

The evil lies not so much in the multiplicity of Christian denominations, which have a mission to fulfill, as their tendency toward believing they alone have the key to spiritual life which denies the rights and virtues of others.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century is not a finale, but a movement still in progress. It was a return to first principles, and for this very reason also a great advance.

It was a revival of primitive Christianity, and at the same time a deeper apprehension and application of it than had been known before.

**There are three fundamental principles of the Reformation:**

- the supremacy of the *Scriptures* over tradition,
- the supremacy of *faith* over works, and
- the supremacy of the Christian *people* over an exclusive priesthood.

— David S. Schaff, D.D., Late 1800s or early 1900s.

**END LESSON 36**

**QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 36**

1. **T or F** During the Dark Ages, countries such as England, Ireland and Scotland experienced great conversions and Godly living was apparent, from the political leaders through the Church and to the people as a whole.
2. **T or F** The Church split between the Eastern, Latin, Roman Catholic Church and the Western, Greek, Orthodox Church.
3. Which of the following statements are NOT true concerning the people in general during this time:
  - A. More religious than moral with piety being a substitute or atonement for virtue.
  - B. Fearful of purgatory and hell, giving great amounts for Church building projects.
  - C. Barbaric and semi-barbaric without the influence of the Church.
  - D. Very cultured and refined, discussing great moral and philosophical ideas.
4. **T or F** The Church taught the new converts the Apostles Creed, Ten Commandments and the Rosary as the best popular summaries of faith, piety and duty.
5. During the Middle Ages which of the following statements is NOT true:



**A. The Papacy rises from weakness and corruption to its highest levels of power and influence over Europe's nations.**

**B. The Crusades occurred where conquerors attempted to deliver the Holy Land from the Jews.**

**C. Great universities were founded, like those in Bologna, Paris and Oxford.**

**D. The Inquisition occurred, where the Church believed it was their divine right to persecute Jews and heretics for the cause of Christ.**

**E. The Church sought worldly power and domination under the excuse of saving sinners.**

**6. T or F In the summer of 1044, the final split occurred between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.**

## **BEGIN LESSON 37**

### **I. THE SWISS REFORMATION--JOHN CALVIN A.D. 1516 — 1605**

The Swiss Reformation may be divided into three acts and periods,

- I. The Zwinglian Reformation in the German cantons from 1516 to Zwingli's death and the peace of Cappel, 1531.
- II. The Calvinistic Reformation in French Switzerland from 1531 to the death of Calvin, 1564.
- III. The labors of Bullinger in Zurich (d. 1575), and Beza in Geneva (d. 1605) for the consolidation of the work of their older friends and predecessors.

In England the second or Puritan Reformation gave birth to a number of new denominations, which, after the Toleration Act of 1689, were organized into distinct Churches.

In the eighteenth century (1700 – 1800) arose the Wesleyan revival movement, which grew into one of the largest and most active churches in the English-speaking world.

Thus the Reformation of the sixteenth century (1500-1600) is the mother or grandmother of at least half a dozen families of evangelical denominations, not counting the subdivisions.

The Swiss and the German Reformers agreed in opposition to Romanism, but the Swiss departed further from it. The Swiss were zealous for the sovereign

glory of God, and, in strict interpretation of the first and second commandments, abolished the heathen elements of creature worship; while the German reformer Martin Luther, in the interest of free grace and the peace of conscience, aimed his strongest blows at the Jewish element of monkish legalism and self-righteousness.

The Swiss theology proceeds from God's grace to man's needs; the Lutheran, from man's needs to God's grace.

Both agree in the three fundamental principles of Protestantism:

- the absolute supremacy of the Divine Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice;
- justification by free grace through faith;
- the general priesthood of the laity.

Both opposed the idea of a special priesthood and hierarchical rule; but the Swiss Reformers gave larger scope to the popular lay element, and set in motion the principle of congregational and synodical (representative group) self-government and self-support.

The Reformed Church excels in self-discipline, liberality, energy, and enterprise; it carries the gospel to all heathen lands and new colonies; it builds up a God-fearing, manly, independent, heroic type of character, such as we find among the French Huguenots, the English Puritans, the Scotch Covenanters; and sent in times of persecution a noble army of martyrs to the prison and the stake.

#### **HALLER AND ZWINGLI "CREED"** **STRESSES CHRIST, SCRIPTURE, NOT THE FATHER OR SPIRIT**

The following ten Theses or Conclusions, drawn up by Haller and revised by Zwingli, were fully discussed, and adopted as a sort of confession of faith for the Reformed Church of Berne. They are as follows: —

- 1. The holy Christian Church, whose only Head is Christ, is born of the Word of God, and abides in the same, and listens not to the voice of a stranger.**
- 2. The Church of Christ makes no laws and commandments without the Word of God. Hence human traditions are no more binding on us than as far as they are founded in the Word of God.**
- 3. Christ is the only wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Hence it is a denial of Christ when we confess another ground of salvation and satisfaction.**
- 4. The essential and corporal presence of the body and blood of Christ cannot be demonstrated from the Holy Scripture.**

**Commented [JC6]:** Page: 34

[ NOTE: Right here is the right place for the Holy Spirit to be declared as our paraclete teacher, guide and enabler of holy power in our lives. They had no comprehension of the place and power of the Holy Spirit in the Church by means of his indwelling His saints. ]

**Commented [JC7]:** Page: 34

NOTE: Right here is the right place for the Holy Spirit to be declared as our paraclete teacher, guide and enabler of holy power in our lives. They had no comprehension of the place and power of the Holy Spirit in the Church by means of his indwelling His saints. ]

**Commented [JC8]:** Page: 34

[ NOTE: Transsubstantiation in the Mass by the Catholic priests does not cause the physical blood of Christ to be shed again or the body materialized in the bread. Christ died once, on the Cross, and the work is done. ]

5. The mass as now in use, in which Christ is offered to God the Father for the sins of the living and the dead, is contrary to the Scripture, a blasphemy against the most holy sacrifice, passion, and death of Christ, and on account of its abuses an abomination before God.

6. As Christ alone died for us, so he is also to be adored as the only Mediator and Advocate between God the Father and the believers. Therefore it is contrary to the Word of God to propose and invoke other mediators.

7. Scripture knows nothing of a purgatory after this life. Hence all masses and other offices for the dead are useless.

8. The worship of images is contrary to Scripture. Therefore images should be abolished when they are set up as objects of adoration.

9. Matrimony is not forbidden in the Scripture to any class of men; but fornication and unchastity are forbidden to all.

10. Since, according to the Scripture, an open fornicator must be excommunicated, it follows that unchastity and impure celibacy are more pernicious to the clergy than to any other class.

The year 1530 marks the height of the Zwinglian Reformation. It was firmly established in the leading cities and cantons of Zürich, Bern, and Basel.

## CALVIN AND HIS VIEWS

Calvin was twenty-five years younger than Luther and Zwingli, and had the great advantage of building on their foundation. He had less genius, but more talent. He was inferior to them as a man of action, but superior as a thinker and organizer. They cut the stones in the quarries, he polished them in the workshop. They produced the new ideas, he constructed them into a system. His was the work of Apollos rather than of Paul: to water rather than to plant, with God giving the increase.

Calvin's character is less attractive, and his life less dramatic than Luther's or Zwingli's, but he left his Church in a much better condition. He lacked the genial element of humor and pleasantry; he was a Christian stoic: stern, severe, unbending, yet with fires of passion and affection glowing beneath the marble surface. — David S. Schaff, D.D.

He made little Geneva, Switzerland for a hundred years the Protestant Rome and the best-disciplined Church in Christendom.

History furnishes no more striking example of a man of so little personal popularity, and yet such great influence upon the people; of such natural timidity and bashfulness combined with such strength of intellect and character, and such control over his and future generations. He was by nature and taste a retiring scholar, but Providence made him an organizer and ruler of churches. Calvin, a native Frenchman, studied law as well as theology, and by his legal and judicial mind was admirably qualified to build up a new Christian commonwealth.

Calvin, in his theology, mediated between Zwingli and Luther.

The Calvinistic system is popularly (though not quite correctly) identified with the

Commented [JC9]: Page: 34

[ NOTE: I am disturbed by their lack of awareness of the third person of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit intercedes for us with groaning to the Father. The Church is still coming up out of darkness – the Dark Ages – and the Reformation was a giant step though not the end to understanding the Trinity. ]

Commented [JC10]: Page: 35

[NOTE: I would categorize his legal and judicial mind as inventing a thoroughly consistent and understandable system of Christian religion. At least parts of it, to my mind, were not the gift of the Holy Spirit but the result of his analytic and dogmatic mind. Logic is a wonderful thing but logic does not define or discover truth.

Logic unveils the implications of the starting assumptions. More correction was needed in the future from thinkers more Holy Spirit oriented, who sought understanding of the scriptures in the presence of the Holy Spirit who accurately wrote it down through inspired generations of human beings.

It amazes me how patient God is in allowing his children to learn for themselves. When they miss a beat He helps spiritually sensitive later generations to ferret out the human from the revealed doctrines. We are still not through with this process.]

Augustinian system, and shares its merit as a profound exposition of the Pauline doctrines of sin and grace, but also its fundamental defect of confining the saving grace of God and the atoning work of Christ to a small circle of the elect, and ignoring the general love of God to all mankind (John 3:16). It is a theology of Divine sovereignty rather than of Divine love; and yet the love of God in Christ is the true key to his character and works, and offers the only satisfactory solution to the dark mystery of sin.

**Commented [JC11]:** Page: 36  
Right on! David S. Schaff states well the Achilles Heel of Calvinism.

The Calvinistic system was adopted by a large portion of the Reformed Church, and still has many earnest advocates. Calvin himself is now better understood, and more highly respected by scholars (French and German) than ever before; but his teaching on predestination has been effectively opposed by the Arminians, the Quakers, and the Methodists, and is undergoing a serious revision in the Presbyterian and Calvinistic Churches of Europe and America.

## **J. MISSIONARY CHURCH**

### **ARMINIANS, METHODISTS, QUAKERS, CHARISMATICS**

#### **A.D. 1790 — 1900**

Arminianism, and its primary expression among Wesleyans, Methodists, Nazarenes, Salvation Army, Quakers and related denominations, is a reaction to the intellectualized Calvinism apart from the balance of the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer. Someone has labeled these groups the left wing of the Reformation, with the right wing consisting of the Lutheran and Calvinist Reformation.

The term Arminian refers to the man Jacobus Arminius, A.D. 1560—1609, born in South Holland. He was orphaned twice by the age of 15 and his whole family was later murdered by the Spaniards in the Netherlands while he was getting an education.

There was very little tolerance in the Netherlands for anyone but Calvinists. Yet most of the church wanted more tolerance and preferred their religion to have less emphasis on legalistic doctrine (a memorized set of appropriate words, creeds, and interpretations of the biblical revelations one had to subscribe to).

Many favored a State religion so all would read off the same page, so to speak. Arminius felt the state should tolerate all religions. But the most troubling doubts Arminius had was with the doctrine of unconditional predestination. He felt that scripture supported God giving man the freedom to choose or reject the blood-bought eternal life with God forever. And in fact God holds each individual responsible with what he does with what he knows of God's grace. That was the thought that Calvinists and Puritans rejected as

they believed God's sovereignty was shrunken if man had any part whatsoever in his being saved.

In spite of the conflicts, Arminius later studied theology in Geneva under the man that succeeded John Calvin, Theodore Beza. Beza ardently held to the doctrine of predestination and took it a step further than Calvin. He theorized about which came first in the creation, did God first select who would be elected and who would be reprobate before He decreed that the human race would fall into sin? Or the opposite order? Beza believed that God chose the elect before dictating the occurrence of the Fall. In Latin that is *supra lapsum*, literally before the Fall. People holding his view would be called *supralapsarians*.

By then Arminius was a noted scholar, a strict Calvinist and he taught it at the university. He was called to defend the *supralapsarian* position against a man who believed the opposite. In preparing for the debate, and in meditation and study, Arminius saw through the Calvinist exclusivism, intolerance and what he considered false doctrines of Calvin that did not agree with scripture. He began to doubt the whole idea of unconditional predestination and finally rejected it. He realized that the Calvinism he had grown up with and studied was "a tyrant and an executioner."

Jacobus Arminius didn't deny predestination entirely, but he did deny that predestination was unconditional. He realized that the Spirit enlightened spiritual mind will accept predestination on the basis that God's foreknowledge knew before he was born that he would reach out and receive the free gift of Grace. God elected him because Arminius had not rejected the Holy Spirit on His day of visitation. That was the basis of the election. God elected those he foreknew would follow the Spirit's leading, and he elected to listen to the Spirit and seek for God's will above his own.

The missing part in the Calvinist formulation was the Holy Spirit wooing every person who comes into the world with hints, insights, and a still small inner voice that at some points call for a decision. On the basis of the decision, the elect receive, the blood is applied, and God is just in receiving them to eternal life. For those who reject, put off, deny the voice of the Spirit and pursue their own lives they have been approached and by not receiving, have condemned themselves to eternal judgment and God will be fair in sentencing them accordingly.

**John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."**

In this, the most well known verses dealing with our salvation (and “election” in Calvinist terms) we see that God did not love only the elect but the whole world and opened his arms to receive *whomsoever believes*. Of course he pre-knew which individuals that would be but he let each of us make our own choice freely.

**John 3:18-19** *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

**John 3:20-21** *Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”*

No believer can save himself, but he can believe when the Holy Spirit speaks to his heart and he asks repentantly for forgiveness for his sins. God will receive him and not condemn him. God judges the hearts. Those who do not respond to the Holy Spirit’s wooing, pushing it aside and pursuing his own way are condemned already and God will not force them. They are not of the elect of God because he always knew they would reject Him by rejecting the light given, yet it did not stop his love and offering them opportunity.

Arminius died almost 10 years before the battle over his teachings came to a head at the Synod of Dort (1618-19) that was convened to combat the continuing “error” of Arminius. A group of Arminius’ followers issued a protest called the *Five Articles to the Reformed Church of Holland*. Here are the articles:

1. God has decreed to save through Jesus Christ those of the fallen and sinful race who through the grace of the Holy Spirit believe in him, but leaves in sin the incorrigible and unbelieving.
2. Christ died for all men (not just for the elect), but no one except the believer has remission of sin.
3. Man can neither of himself nor of his free will do anything truly good until he is born again of God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit.
4. All good deeds or movements in the regenerate must be ascribed to the grace of God but his grace is not irresistible.
5. Those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith have power given them through the assisting grace of the Holy Spirit to persevere in the faith. But it is possible for a believer to fall from grace.

The *Arminian Articles of Remonstrance* (correction) were condemned by the Synod of Dordt in 1619 and the reply was popularly called “the five points of Calvinism.” Hundreds of Arminians were removed from their pulpits and Arminian doctrine was called a deviant doctrine.

The Calvinist’s five points are a stark contrast to the Arminians:

1. Total Depravity or Total Inability (to have any input or choice in one’s salvation)
2. Unconditional Election (the election is totally in the control of the Sovereign God)
3. Limited Atonement (Christ died only for the elect not the reprobates)
4. Irresistible Grace (since God is Sovereign no one whom He chooses can resist his grace)
5. Perseverance and Preservation of the Saints (since God is Sovereign then nothing happens that is not His will and he has the power and will to keep all those whom he elects)

The loving and liberating view that Jesus has died for the whole world and not just for the elect is foreign to any Calvinist who also denies what Charismatic believers refer to as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, free-will, and salvation for all who are willing to accept **it**.

When John Wesley was converted God sent him to preach in the eighteenth century the free-will Arminian doctrine, but with refinements that placed a strong evangelical emphasis on justification by faith and in most denominations an emphasis on the converted believer placing his body and life as a living sacrifice for the Holy Spirit to bless, guide, gift and empower, for the purpose of bringing glory to God.

The Methodist movement, an era beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, peaking in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and continuing today, was built upon faith and relationship, which replaced logic and reason.

It has been said that it is not enough to introduce the gospel to a country or people group and consider them evangelized. The church must take the gospel to the world in every generation, and do it with love, for love will touch hearts while words only reach minds.

**END LESSON 37**

**QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 37**

**Commented [JC12]:** Page: 40

Credit for this material goes to a web site named Latter Rain: <http://www.latter-rain.com/theology/armen.htm>. I have interspersed my thoughts with theirs but also used much they provided.

1. **T or F** In the early history of both the Swiss and German Reformers, it can be said that The Swiss theology proceeds from man's needs to God's grace; the Lutheran, from God's grace to man's needs.

2. **T or F** The three fundamental principles of Protestantism are:

- A. the absolute supremacy of the Divine Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice;
- B. justification by free grace through faith;
- C. the general priesthood of the laity.

3. Mark the following true Theses or Conclusions adopted by the Reformed Church of Berne:

- A. Human traditions go hand in hand with God's Word in adopting laws and commandments.
- B. The actual presence of Christ in the Body and Blood is clearly demonstrated in Scripture.
- C. The mass is a daily reminder of Christ's sacrifice to God and is supported by Scripture.
- D. Purgatory is clearly defined and supported in the Holy Scripture.
- E. Marriage and the clergy should be separate and forbidden from mixing.
- F. All of the above
- G. None of the above

4. **T or F** Calvin made He made little Geneva, Switzerland for a hundred years the Protestant Rome and the best-disciplined Church in Christendom.

5. Mark the following that are NOT true of the Arminian doctrine:

- A. All good deeds or movements in the regenerate must be ascribed to the grace of God but his grace is not irresistible.
- B. Irresistible Grace (since God is Sovereign no one whom He chooses can resist his grace)
- C. Christ died for all men (not just for the elect), but no one except the believer has remission of sin.
- D. Those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith have power given them through the assisting grace of the Holy Spirit to persevere in the faith. But it is possible for a believer to fall from grace.
- E. None of the above

6. **T or F** Calvin was by nature timid and bashful but was able to be such a great influence on the people by his great strength of intellect and character.

**BEGIN LESSON 38**



## **K. Jewish Persecution then & now**

**The following section is from the book: Holy to Yahveh by Terry Goldblum Seedman; copyright 1966, published by Longwood Communications in DeBary, Florida for more information write P.O. Box 8453 Bloomington, Indiana 47407 and is being used by their kind permission.**

**Comments by RevC:** Before beginning Terry's presentation and her historical overview of the persecution faced by Jewish people, I would like to point out one difference in her theological view from my own. As you will read Terry holds to the view that early church fathers propagated the doctrine that the church has replaced Israel in the eyes of God, and therefore it is the church to whom the promises belong not Israel. Though I do not doubt that she is correct in her reporting what was taught by such early leaders it should be pointed out that the view taught by myself, and others is that due to the continued rejection of God, and the ultimate rejection of their Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Jewish people have indeed been set aside while the door of salvation is open to the Gentiles. It is also my belief that from the beginning the promises made to Israel were not made solely on the basis of being born Jewish, but to the person whether Jew or Gentile by natural birth who has come to faith in the Messiah. This are the true Israel and what I would refer to as the "true church" of God and heirs to the promises of God. This point was made very clear in our class on Covenant; a portion of that discussion follows:

- Quoting from our Covenant class: [“When John the Baptist spoke to the religious leaders of Israel saying to them that their heritage of birth was not sufficient. If they are true children of Abraham then they need to do the works of Abraham, namely walk in faith. Later on John calls them snakes and vipers, hardly descriptive of the children of Abraham, even though the blood of Abraham ran through their veins.

**Matthew 3:9** And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

- Jesus brought this point home again when he spoke to the Pharisees concerning the difference between their birth relationship to Abraham and their lack of true heart relationship to Abraham or God.

**John 8:33-44** They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 8:40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 8:41 **Ye do the deeds of your father.** Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 8:43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 8:44 **Ye are of your father the devil**, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

**Though these Pharisees were by birth-line part of Abraham's descendants, Jesus says here that not all of Abraham's natural descendants are considered by God to be Abraham's true descendants.**

- Then in **Luke 19** Jesus encounters Zacchaeus, a tax collector and sinner of the worst order considered a traitor as he was serving Rome, but when Zacchaeus believed on Jesus and demonstrated it by giving half of what he had to the poor and returning 4 fold to anyone he had wronged, Jesus knowing the change of heart said of Zacchaeus, **“...he also is a son of Abraham”**. Jesus was not using this to describe someone who was a natural descendant of Abraham, but to point out that Zacchaeus had the “heart of Abraham” in that he had faith in “the God of Abraham.”

- Paul reinforces this in his letter to the believers in Rome. When he says a real Jew is not someone who proclaims it outwardly, but is one who demonstrates it inwardly by having a heart after God. Circumcision, an outward sign was of no value if there was no circumcision of the heart. The true descendant of Abraham has experienced the circumcision of the heart, in his spirit, before God, not seeking the acknowledgment of man but God.

**Romans 2:28-29** For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 2:29 But **he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit,** and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

- Paul in his letter to the Galatians speaking to both Jew and Gentile says being a son of Abraham has little to do with the blood in your veins, but everything to do with the belief in your heart. It is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

**Galatians 3:6-7** Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," 3:7 so, you see, **those who believe are the descendants of Abraham.**

- He is writing to both Jew and Gentile who have come to Christ by faith, and says that no matter who you are, we are all one in Christ. If you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring, and heirs of the promise God made to Abraham.

**Galatians 3:26-29** for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 3:27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 3:28 There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for **all of you are one in Christ Jesus.** 3:29 **And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.**

- This is what many of the fights in the acts of the apostles were all about. This is why the Jewish people hated Paul, because **he proclaimed that the promises made to Abraham were not for the Jews alone, but for anyone who received Jesus Christ by faith.** We can see an example of this in Acts 28:20 where Paul was in chains because of his testimony that the "hope of Israel" the messiah, the one who would fulfill the Abrahamic covenant, had come and was given to whomever would call upon his name. The Jews said the covenant was theirs, but Paul said it was for all those in Christ.

**Acts 28:20** For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that **for the hope of Israel** I am bound with this chain.

- In Galatians chapter 3 beginning in verse 16 we hear Paul speak again concerning the “seed” of Abraham. When we speak of the “seed” we can be speaking of “seed” as either singular or plural. For example, I can have a “seed” in my hand or I can have a handful of “seed”. If I were to talk about my “offspring” you would not know whether I was speaking of one, three, or three hundred etc. because “offspring” is a singular/plural word. So Paul plays on that usage and says **that through Abraham’s seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.**

**Galatians 3:16-18** Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 3:17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 3:18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

- Paul in verse 16 says that the promises were made to Abraham and his offspring referring to many yet referring to one which is Christ. So does that mean through the Jewish people? No, it means **through Christ.** So the fulfillment of **the promise narrows down to one, Christ, and then everyone who is “in Christ” whether Jew or Gentile, become the true “seed of Abraham”, the “offspring of Abraham”, the “true Israel of God”, and the heirs to the covenant promises.**

**So the true Israel of God is not those who have the “blood of Abraham” but rather those who have the “faith of Abraham”.** They are the ones who receive the blessing of God. Because a person is Jewish does not mean they are automatically the chosen people any more than it means they receive the blessing of Abraham because to get the blessing I have to be “in Christ”.]

Thus from my view I agree with Terry that God will still deal with Israel as a nation of people, and that He will uphold the promises made to both Israel the nation and the “true Israel those who have the faith of Abraham whether Jew or Gentile by birth.” **End Comments by RevC**

**The following section is from the book: Holy to Yahveh by Terry Goldblum Seedman. Parts have been removed for the sake of brevity while seeking to maintain the author’s message. Terry’s footnotes are included for reference.**

### **The Darkness of Men’s Doctrines**

Beginning with Origen (185-254 CE), an erroneous foundation of biblical interpretation was laid through an allegorical view of Old Testament prophecy.<sup>1</sup> According to Origen's interpretation, Israel was rejected by the Almighty and His covenant with them nullified because of their rejection of Messiah. This lie bred another lie that is still advanced today—*that the church is now "true Israel" and has **replaced** the Jewish nation in God's sight.* According to this deceptive theology, all of Israel's promises, prophetic blessings, and covenants now belong solely to the church.

Noted author, Hal Lindsey states:

The consequences of this doctrine were subtle at first. The most serious consequence was that the protections provided by the clear Scriptural warnings of God against those who were harm His covenant people were snatched away. A feeling of contempt naturally followed, since, in the eyes of those who held this view, the Jews were clinging to a hope that now belonged only to the Church.... The Church leaders saw no justification for the Jews to remain a distinct people, since in their view, their hopes belonged exclusively to the church forever. ... when the church began to see itself as God's true Israel, the inheritor of the covenant promises made to Israel, then in the eyes of the Church, the Israelites ceased to have any legitimate purpose or right to exist as a people.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Lindsey continues:

These prophetic views were a complete departure from the original teachings of the Apostolic Fathers of the Church, whose period extended from 33 CE to shortly after 100 C.E... the early Christians ... recognize the Jews as a chosen people with whom God will yet fulfill His promises...<sup>3</sup>

#### **Infamous Words of the Famous Fathers**

...Chrysostom was praised as one of the most dynamic preachers of truth and divine love; even his name means "golden-mouthed." Because of his eloquent preaching, he was revered as one of the notable church fathers. Unfortunately and paradoxically, his exemplary compassion and sensitivity were not demonstrated in his attitudes toward the Jews. Chrysostom wrote:

The synagogue is worse than a brothel ... it is the den of scoundrels and the repair of wild beasts ... the temple of demons devoted to idolatrous cults ... the refuge of brigands and debauches, and the cavern of devils. [It is] a criminal assembly of Jews ... a place of

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<sup>1</sup> For an in-dept and sobering study, see Dr. Michael Brown's book, *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood*, and Hal Lindsey's book, *The Road to Holocaust*.

<sup>2</sup> Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

meeting for the assassins of Christ ... a house worse than a drinking shop ... a den of thieves; a house of ill fame, a dwelling of iniquity, the refuge of devils, gulf and abyss of perdition.

As for the Jewish people themselves Chrysostom commented, "I would say the same things about their souls." And so, "As for me, I hate the synagogue ... I hate the Jews for the same reason."<sup>4</sup>

St. Jerome attempted to *prove* that the Jews are incapable of understanding the Scriptures and that they should be assigned a place with the base and illiterate. It is nonsensical that the very ones through whom the Scriptures were written should be considered incapable of comprehending them. St. Jerome's teachings were aimed at the severe persecution of the Jews, forcing them to confess the faith of Christianity.

St. Augustine (354-425 CE) built on Origen's allegorical method of interpretation. Through Augustine's teaching came a strong theology that would become part of the man-made structure of organized Christianity over the next thousand years. This teaching strengthened the erroneous doctrine that the Christian church was now the inheritor of Israel's promises. Augustine accused the Jew of being the image of Judas Iscariot, who was forever guilty and spiritually ignorant....

Rual Hillberg, a noted scholar of the Holocaust, summarizes the essence of Satan's diabolical strategy to infect the church with anti-Semitism as follows:

Since the fourth century after Christ there have been three anti-Jewish policies: (forced) conversion, expulsion, annihilation. The second appeared as an alternative to the first, and the third emerged as an alternative to the second. ... The missionaries of Christianity had said in effect: You have no right to live among us. The Nazis at last decreed: You have no right to live.

The process began with the attempt to drive the Jews into Christianity. The development was continued in order to force the victims into exile. It was finished when the Jews were driven to their deaths. The German Nazis, then, did not discard the past; they built upon it. They did not begin a development; they completed it.<sup>5</sup>

## END LESSON 38

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 38

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<sup>4</sup> Michael L. Brown, *Our Hands are Stained with Blood* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1992), pp. 10-11. Dr. Brown, in his work cited here is quoting from the following: Raul Hillberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*—one volume edition (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), pp. 7ff. And 27-28.

1. **T or F** Early church fathers propagated the doctrine that the church has replaced Israel in the eyes of God, and therefore it is the church to whom the promises belong, not Israel.
2. **T or F** Jesus brought this point home again when he spoke to the Pharisees concerning the difference between their birth relationship to Abraham and their lack of true heart relationship to Abraham or God.
3. Mark the following true statement based on Scripture:
  - A. Jesus called Zacchaeus a 'son of Abraham' because he was an accomplished tax collector.
  - B. It is men of faith, who have true belief in their hearts, who are the sons of Abraham.
  - C. A heart change is only necessary for Gentiles, since Jews are sons of Abraham by their blood-line.
  - D. Through Abraham's 'seed', the Jews, all the nations would be blessed.
4. **T or F** So the true Israel of God is not those who have the “faith of Abraham” but rather those who have the “blood of Abraham”.
5. Which of the following statements concerning the early church's views concerning Israel is NOT true:
  - A. The church is now “true Israel” and has replaced the Jewish nation in God’s sight.
  - B. The protections provided by the clear Scriptural warnings of God against those who were harm His covenant people were snatched away.
  - C. The early church fathers, (33 to 100+CE), recognize the Jews as a chosen people with whom God will yet fulfill His promises
  - D. Israel was rejected by the Almighty because the Jews crucified Christ.
6. **T or F** According to Raul Hillberg, since the fourth century after Christ there have been three anti-Jewish policies: (forced) conversion, expulsion, annihilation.

## **BEGIN LESSON 39**

### **Anti-Jewish Atrocities**

In 313 CE the emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and made the Christian faith the official religion of the Roman Empire. Constantine’s conversion was a glorious turning point for the persecuted Christians. However, his policies proved destructive to the Jewish people and to the holy Hebrew roots of the Christian faith.

Constantine harbored Satan's ancient hostility toward Israel and labeled the Jews a wicked, villainous, and perverse sect. Hal Lindsey states:

... By the early fifth century, the Church believed that it was the sole possessor of Israel's covenant promises, including the ownership of the Promised Land. Acting from this false premise, the Church began to use its new political power to create and enforce anti-Jewish legislation—a practice that became usual in the Middle Ages. In many cases throughout the Middle Ages, the institutional Church either forced Jews to convert b political oppression and terror, or put them to the sword.

Once again, it was the false prophetic premises of the Church that were the basis of the Church's anti-Jewish attitudes and actions. The Church began to act in a way that was in diametric contradiction to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

... Persecution followed the Jews wherever they went in the centuries that followed Emperor Constantine.... Only two years after Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the empire, he initiated a series of repressive edicts, ... Prejudice against the Jews was guaranteed.<sup>6</sup>

...As new Christian doctrines and attitudes emerged, these undermined *YAHshua's* command for Gentile believers to love and bless His Jewish brethren.

Historian Ausubel reports another important milestone along the infamous road of anti-Semitism: "Two centuries later [i.e., after Constantine's reign], the Emperor Justinian (527-565 CE) issued his celebrated code which laid the legal groundwork for anti-Semitism as a PERMANENT CHRISTIAN STATE POLICY. One clause provided: "They (the Jews) shall enjoy no honors. Their statutes shall reflect the baseness which in their souls they have elected and desired" (emphasis in source).<sup>7</sup>

At times, the Jews were defamed and forced to wear special clothing that depicted humiliation. In the centuries following Augustine and Constantine, they were alienated from society, forced to live in ghettos, and massacred in diverse places.

Anti-Jewish atrocities reached a pinnacle with the Crusades of 1096 CE. During the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, European Christians sent military expeditions to the land of Israel. Determined to retrieve the Holy Land from its Jewish and Muslim inhabitants, these deceived Crusaders targeted the Jews and Muslims as the "enemies of Christianity."

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<sup>6</sup> Hal Lindsey, op. Cit., pp. 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.



According to the historical account of Solomon bar Samson regarding the Crusades, “All the Gentiles were gathered together against the Jews in the courtyard to blot out their name, and the strength of our people weakened when they saw the wicked Edomites overpowering them the Edomites were the traditional foes of the Jews...”<sup>8</sup>

The centuries of misguided sermons about the whole Jewish race being exclusively guilty of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, the long history of an official church policy of humiliating and persecuting them, and the clergy-cultivated image of the Jews as being obstinate impostors with no future as a people in God’s plan, all began to bear their murderous fruit among the lower class of the Crusaders.

Soon there were cries for the blood of the “Christ-killers” before going to Palestine to deal with the Muslims. There is nothing more dangerous or uncontrollable than a mob which has been deluded into thinking it is doing a religious deed by eliminating an enemy of God....

When the Crusaders, led by Godfrey, captured Jerusalem on July 15, 1099, they first entered the city through the Jewish quarter. A terrible slaughter took place. The surviving Jews were sold as slaves. The Jewish community of Jerusalem was obliterated. In all, tens of thousands of Jews were massacred in the name of Christianity as a consequence of the Crusade.<sup>9</sup>

With banners flying in the name of Jesus Christ and giant crucifixes held high, the Serpent’s envoys paraded as Christians to accomplish Satan’s diabolical schemes. The Crusaders stormed Jerusalem, rounded up the Jews in their great synagogue, locked the doors, and set it ablaze. As the screams of Messiah’s brethren pierced *YAHveh*’s heart, the deceived army marched proudly and mercilessly around this Jewish bonfire,<sup>10</sup> waving their Christian banners and singing “Christ We Adore Thee.”

The passionate mission of the Crusaders had been ignited through the erroneous doctrine of “replacement theology.” These Christians believed that Jerusalem no longer belonged to the Jews. The church had replaced Israel, and Jerusalem was to become a Christian city. A leader of the Crusade, Raymond Aguilers, led the army over a carpet of mutilated bodies in the height of satanic victory. As they marched, they sang Psalm 118:24: “This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Indeed, the ancient Serpent had won himself quite a victory! The dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile, which had been destroyed through the blood of the Messiah, was now resurrected and stained with the blood of His brethren, the Jews.

<sup>8</sup> Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in Medieval World* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 116.

<sup>9</sup> Hal Lindsey, op. Cit., pp. 14-15.

<sup>10</sup> *Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language*, s.v. “bonfire”—“[...lit., bone fire, fire for burning corpses]...”

### The Dark Ages

...The anti-Semitic Crusades ushered in a period of history called the Dark Ages... During the Dark Ages, a common Christian slogan caught on among the people like a catchy tune: “Kill a Jew and save your soul.” To the ancient Serpent, this morbid melody echoed like a victory cry from the mouths of thousands of misguided Christians.

### The Iniquitous Inquisitions

The infamous Inquisitions followed the cruel Crusades. Deep darkness was upon the church and the world. Most vestiges of love and mercy toward Messiah’s brethren had been buried with the thousands of Jews who were murdered as “Christ-killers.”

The Inquisitions lasted several hundred years and helped perpetuate Satan’s strategy against the Jews. From the reign of Constantine to the Middle Ages, every religious tradition that did not line up with the teachings of “the Church” was considered heresy. The Jewish people, in their tenacity to maintain their biblical Hebrew roots, were considered a threat to this tainted form of Christianity.

The European Inquisitions were aimed in part at the eradication of all that was Jewish and considered heresy. During these dark years, many Jews were threatened and massacred. If YAhshua, the Jew of all Jews, had lived during that time, the church leaders would have considered His uncompromised Hebraic nature a threat to their form of Christianity.

During the long dark years of the Middle Ages, Jews were frequently given the option of baptism or expulsion, baptism or torture, baptism or death. Every type of degrading law was passed against them: They were forbidden to work good jobs; after all, they were an accursed people, assassins of Christ, so how could they be allowed to prosper? They were forced to listen to humiliating public sermons aimed at their conversion—wasn’t this the holy obligation of the Church? Their children were kidnapped and baptized as “Christians,” thus saving them from the fires of hell. They were rounded up and beaten as a highlight of Easter celebrations, since they deserved it as murderers of the Lord.<sup>11</sup>

The following is an excerpt from a typical profession of faith that a Jewish baptismal candidate was forced to confess:

**I do here and now renounce every rite and observance of the Jewish religion, detesting all its most solemn ceremonies ... In the future I will practice no rite or celebration connected with it, ... I promise that I will never return to the vomit of Jewish superstition. Never again will I fulfill any of the offices of Jewish ceremonies to which I was addicted, nor ever more hold them dear. [I will] shun all intercourse with other Jews and have the circle of my friends only among Christians.**

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<sup>11</sup> Michael L. Brown, op.cit. p 11.

**[We will not] associate with the accursed Jews who remain unbaptized. ... We will not practice carnal circumcision, or celebrate the Passover, the Sabbath or the other feast days connected with the Jewish religion. ...**

**I renounce the whole worship of the Hebrews, ... And I absolutely renounce every custom and institution of the Jewish laws ... in one word, I renounce absolutely everything Jewish. ...**

**If I wander from the straight path in any way and defile the holy Faith, and try to observe any rites of the Jewish sect, or if I shall delude you in any way in the swearing of this oath ... then may all the curses of the law fall upon me. ... May there fall upon me and upon my house and all my children all the plagues which smote Egypt, and to the horror of others may I suffer in addition the fate of Dathan and Abiram, so that the earth shall swallow me alive, and after I am deprived of this life I shall be handed over to the eternal fire, in the company of the Devil and his Angels, sharing with the dwellers in Sodom and with Judas the punishment of burning; and when I arrive before the tribunal of the fearful and glorious Judge, or Lord Jesus Christ, may I be numbered in that company to whom the glorious and terrible Judge with threatening men will say, “Depart from Me, evil-doers, into the eternal fire that is prepared for the Devil and his Angels.”<sup>12</sup>**

In Spain during the fourteenth century (1300's), Jews were forced to convert to Christianity or be massacred and have their bodies dismembered. Seventy communities were destroyed. In Vienna during the fifteenth century (1400's) possessions of Jews were confiscated and their children forcibly converted. Several hundred were burned at the stake.

During the Middle Ages, the Jewish people were forced to wear distinctive clothing to mark them as separate and repulsive to the Gentile communities.

Early in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, whole cities of Jews were segregated from the general population into what were called **ghettos**. ...The worst part of the city was sectioned off, and a high wall was built around it. ... They were guarded by Christians whose salaries the Jews were compelled to pay. Ghettos were closed during all Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Those living in the area were required to listen to long sermons aimed at their conversion.<sup>13</sup>

### **Poison in a Pillar**

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 95-96.

<sup>13</sup> David Levy, "Anti-Semitism in the Middle Ages," *Israel My Glory*, vol. 51, no. 2 (April/May, 1993), p. 21.

Martin Luther is considered the great pillar of Protestantism—a man who many in Christendom respect. What did Martin Luther have to say about the Jews? Early in his life, he rallied to their cause. In 1523 he wrote a pamphlet entitled “Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew” in hopes of winning the Jews to Christianity. But toward the end of his life, Luther became frustrated with the Jews because they did not respond to his presentation of the Gospel.

Martin Luther, even with his prominent faith and noteworthy zeal, did not understand the Jews, nor did he understand *YAHveh*’s heart and purpose for His chosen people. He did not fully comprehend the sovereignty of the Abrahamic covenant (Ge 12:3) or the mandate for Gentiles to extend love and mercy to the Jews (Rom 11). Moreover, he presented a Savior stripped of His Jewish identity and distorted by Gentile characteristics...

Jacob R. Marcus, a notable Jewish historian, expounds on Luther: “His growing bitterness and sense of disillusionment finally vented itself in 1543 in a series of German anti-Jewish statements in all Christian literature than those who may be found in these writings of the disappointed rebel.”<sup>14</sup>

Martin Luther’s words have often been used as proof to the Jews that the beloved Savior of the Gentiles could not possibly be their friend, much less their long-awaited Messiah.

**What then shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected race of Jews? Since they live among us and we know about their lying and blasphemy and cursing, we cannot tolerate them if we do not wish to share in their lies, curses, and blasphemy. ... We must prayerfully and reverentially practice a merciful severity. ... Let me give you my honest advice:**

**First, to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our LORD and of Christendom. ...**

**Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed...**

**Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them.**

**Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb...**

**Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. ... Let them stay at home...**

**Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them, and put aside for safe keeping...**

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<sup>14</sup> Jacob R. Marcus, op. Cit., p. 165.

**Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hand of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow.<sup>15</sup>**

Noted author Erwin Lutzer gives this personal account of leading a tour group in Wittenberg:

**When we walk across the Town Square, we come to the Town Church where Luther preached the gospel to the common people of Wittenberg. But if you walk around to the back of the church and look up at the point where the roof and wall meet, you will see the sandstone relief of a pig, a sculpture perhaps three feet long and eighteen inches high.**

This pig, as I learned while leading a tour to the sites of the Reformation, is *Judensau* (a “Jewish sow”) erected to spite the Jews and commemorate their expulsion from Wittenberg in 1305. The Hebrew inscription reads *‘Rabine Schem Ha Mphoras,’* which means, “Great is the name of the one who is blessed.” This phrase was used by the Jews to refer to God since they believed that His name should not even be pronounced. Now these words sarcastically refer to them, contemptuously linking them to a pig, an animal regarded by them as being most unholy!

Our tour group looked up with disgust to think that such a symbol of hatred was placed on a Christian church. Our sadness dissipated slightly when we saw a memorial on the ground dated 1988 that was, in effect, an apology for what had happened so many centuries ago...

<sup>16</sup>

As someone has said, “How odd of God to choose the Jew, but not so odd as those who choose the Jewish God and hate the Jew.”

## END LESSON 39

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 39

1. **T or F** Jewish hostility started early with the Roman emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity and his anti-Semitic views.
2. **T or F** By the early fourth century, the Church believed that it was the sole possessor of Israel's covenant promises, including the ownership of the Promised Land.
3. **Which of the following statements concerning the early Jewish atrocities is NOT true:**

<sup>15</sup> Hal Lindsey, op. Cit., pp. 23-24 (Lindsey is quoting from *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies*. Luther's words can be found in other works, including Jacob R. Marcus' *The Jew in the Medieval World*, p. 167; and Erwin W. Lutzer's *Hitler's Cross*, p. 86).

<sup>16</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer, op. Cit., p. 85.

- A. As the Church's political power strengthened, she created and enforced anti-Jewish legislation.
  - B. These actions went against Jesus commands to love our fellow man.
  - C. Forced to wear humiliating clothing, live in ghettos and ultimately massacred for being Jews were some of the atrocities they faced from the Church of Christ.
  - D. The Church forced the Jews to practice Judaism in church-owned cathedrals.
  - E. Christian believers were misguided and deceived concerning the Jewish role in the early church through the gospels and Book of Acts.
4. **T or F** There is nothing more dangerous or uncontrollable than a mob which has been deluded into thinking it is doing a religious deed by eliminating an enemy of God.
5. The Inquisitions followed the cruel Crusades for the Jews. Which is the best TRUE answer:
- A. There was deep darkness in the church and the world.
  - B. The Jews, maintaining their biblical Hebrew roots, along with 'heretics', were considered a threat to Christianity at this time.
  - C. Every type of degrading law was passed against them.
  - D. They were forced to live in ghetto's with high walls around the perimeter keeping them in.
  - E. They were guarded by Christians whose salaries the Jews were forced to pay.
  - F. All of the above
  - G. None of the above
6. **T or F** Martin Luther wrote against these terrible injustices, being a light for Christ in the middle of this darkness.

#### BEGIN LESSON 40

##### **From Chapter 14 in Terry's book: Anti-Semitism Fanned into Flames**

Adolf Hitler, one of Satan's greatest hit men, was inspired by Martin Luther's anti-Semitic writings.

**Germany had a long history of "Christian" anti-Semitism, not only from within the Roman Catholic Church, but even from within the Protestant Church. It was Martin Luther, who in his latter years turned upon the**

Jews with a religious fury, thus paving the way for Adolf Hitler to consummate the Reformer's great desire for the elimination of the Jewish people. Is it any wonder that Hitler cited Martin Luther in *Mein Kampf* as one of the great heroes of the German people.<sup>1</sup>

Christianity did not create the Holocaust; indeed Nazism was anti-Christian, but it made it possible. Without Christian anti-Semitism, the Holocaust would have been inconceivable.... Hitler and the Nazis found in medieval Catholic anti-Jewish legislation a model for their own, and they read and reprinted Martin Luther's virulently anti-Semitic writings. It is instructive that the Holocaust was unleashed by the only major country in Europe having approximately equal numbers of Catholics and Protestants. BOTH TRADITIONS WERE SATURATED WITH JEW-HATRED.<sup>2</sup>

At the Nuremberg trials, the infamous Nazi war criminal Julius Streicher quoted Luther's anti-Semitic writings in defending the Nazi atrocities. Indeed, it was Luther's work that had provided Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany with Christian justification for their murderous "final solution" for the Jews. Hitler wrote, "Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the almighty Creator: by defending myself against the JEW, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."<sup>3</sup>

Most Jewish people have lost one or more relatives to anti-Semitism, which was fanned into flames by the writings of Martin Luther. Engraved on the memory of many holocaust survivors are the words which were written across the archways of certain death camps. "We kill you because you killed Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

### Harbored Hostility

The Nazis were entertained by the suffering and torment of their Jewish victims. Holocaust historian Elie Wiesel is quoted by Michael Brown: "...the chief rabbi of the town was forced by German officers to clean the pavement, to sweep it with his beard. And all around, proud soldiers, warriors puffed up with their victories, slapped their thighs in merriment. ...A distinguished officer, a man of good family, orders Jewish children to

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<sup>1</sup> Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, *Why the Jews? The Reason for Anti-Semitism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Sid Roth, *Time is Running Short* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1990), p. 31

run, like rabbits, and then he takes out his revolver and begins shooting at the terrified living targets, scattering them, mowing them down.”

When the Nazis murdered all the patients of the Lodz ghetto hospitals they threw *newborn babies* out of the upper story hospital windows. Precious Jewish infants were splattered on the pavement! But for one teenaged SS soldier this was not enough. He asked permission—and was granted permission—to catch the falling babes on his *bayonet*. Is there no limit to hell’s depravity? <sup>6</sup>

Many of these Nazis were considered good family men; many of them were supposed to be God-fearing Catholics and Protestants. With one hand they would clothe, feed, and nurture their families. With the other, they would viciously strip, starve, torture, and kill Jewish families.

These Nazi “shepherds” would herd the Jews into gas chambers. In cold blood, they would hear the tormented screams of Messiah” dying brethren. Many would change their blood-stained clothes to flock “as wolves in sheep’s clothing” into their churches. Safe within their Christian cathedrals, they would piously sing choruses such as “Silent Night, Holy Night” and “Christ We Adore Thee.”

Dr. Lutzer relates a chilling account of his personal observation in a former German army war ministry building, where “...the pictures that caught my attention were those of Protestant pastors and Catholic priests giving the Nazi salute. I was even more surprised at the pictures of swastika banners that adorned the Christian churches—swastika banners with the cross of Christ in the center!”<sup>7</sup>

Lutzer continues with another alarming story about a German man who had lived in Nazi Germany during the Nazi Holocaust:

I considered myself a Christian. We heard stories of what was happening to the Jews, but we tried to distance ourselves from it, because, what could anyone do to stop it?

A railroad track ran behind our small church and each Sunday morning we could hear the whistle in the distance and then the wheels coming over the tracks. We became disturbed when we heard the cries coming from the train as it passed by. We realized that it was carrying Jews like cattle in the cars!

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<sup>7</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer, op. Cit., p. 12



Week after week the whistle would blow. We dreaded to hear the sound of those wheels because we knew that we would hear the cries of the Jews en route to a death camp. Their screams tormented us.

We knew the time the train was coming and when we heard the whistle blow we began singing hymns. By the time the train came past our church we were singing at the top of our voices. If we heard the screams, we sang more loudly and soon we heard them no more.

Years have passed and no one talks about it anymore. But I still hear that train whistle in my sleep. God forgive me, forgive all of us who call ourselves Christians yet did nothing to intervene.<sup>8</sup>

...Today, is it any wonder that the majority of Jews in the world respond in horror and dread to the name Jesus Christ? The name that is above all names to Christians has become a curse word to them, reeking with the stench of torment and death, and never to be spoken in Jewish homes. **Dr. Brown again:**

**Let me translate for you the words of an Israeli writer who expresses the heart of many of his people:**

**“Instead of bringing redemption to the Jews. The false Christian messiah has brought down on us base libels and expulsions, oppressive restrictions and burning of [our] holy books, devastations and destructions. Christianity, which professes to infuse the sick world with love and compassion, has fixed a course directly opposed to this lofty rhetoric. The voice of the blood of millions of our brothers cries out to us from the ground: ‘No! Christianity is not a religion of love but a religion of unfathomable hate! All history, from ancient times to our own day, is one continuous proof of the total bankruptcy of this religion in all its segments.’”<sup>9</sup>**

**Dr. Brown continues, quoting Professor Eugene Bares: “We might be more inclined to give Christian claims some credence had we seen Christians through the ages behave as models of a redeemed humanity. Looking through the window of history we have found them in as much need of saving as the rest of humankind. If anything, their social failings are especially discrediting of their doctrine for they claim to be uniquely free of human sinfulness and freshly inspired by their faith to bring the world to a realm of love and peach. ... Until sinfulness ceases and well-being prevails, Jews know the Messiah has not come.”**

<sup>8</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer, op. Cit., pp. 99-100.

<sup>9</sup> Michael L. Brown, *Our Hands are Stained with Blood* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1992), pp. 88-90.

**“After nineteen centuries of Christianity, the extermination of six million Jews, among them one-and-a-half million children, carried out in cold blood in the very heart of Christian Europe, encouraged by the criminal silence of virtually all Christendom including that of an infallible Holy Father in Rome, was the natural culmination of this bankruptcy. A straight line leads from the first act of oppression against the Jews and Judaism in the fourth century to the holocaust in the twentieth.”<sup>11</sup>**

**The Holy One of Israel has not changed. The eternal words He spoke against the enemies of Israel are as appropriate today as they were in the days of Edom. In Scripture, Edom is symbolic of any individual or nation that harbors Satan’s enmity toward God’s chosen people YAHveh prophesied against Edom and all of Israel’s enemies. “Because you have had EVERLASTING ENMITY [an ancient hostility] and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword AT THE TIME OF THEIR CALAMITY, at the time of punishment of the end, therefore, as I live,” declares the Lord YAHveh, “I will give you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you...” (Eze 35:5-6)**

**Thus says the Lord YAHveh concerning Edom ... “THE ARROGANCE OF YOUR HEART [toward the Jewish people] HAS DECEIVED YOU ... “Though you build high like the eagle...I will bring you down...”(Ob 1-4)**

**“Will I not on that day,” declares YAHveh, “Destroy wise men from Edom...” “Because of violence TO YOUR BROTHER JACOB, You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever. “On the day that YOU STOOD ALOOF...” “DO NOT GLOAT OVER YOUR BROTHER’S DAY, THE DAY OF HIS MISFORTUNE.” (Ob 8-12)**

**Because the Serpent’s eggs hatched with Christian theology, the church became an enemy of Israel, causing the brethren of YAHshua to be driven far from the truth and love of their Messiah. The fullness of the Savior’s glorious presence and His promised blessings have been blocked by Christianity’s sins of omission and commission with regard to the Jews. The hands of corporate Christendom are stained with blood. The prophet Isaiah cries out:**

**“YOUR INIQUITIES HAVE SEPARATED YOU FROM YOUR GOD; YOUR SINS HAVE HIDDEN HIS FACE FROM YOU, so that he will not hear. For**

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

**YOUR HANDS ARE STAINED WITH BLOOD, your fingers with guild.  
YOUR LIPS HAVE SPOKEN LIES...No one calls for justice...THEY HATCH  
THE EGGS OF VIPERS ...WHOEVER EATS THEIR EGGS WILL DIE..." (Isa  
59:2-5 NIV)**

Those who call themselves children of God must stand in the gap and repent for the multitudes of Jews killed in the name of Jesus Christ and Christianity.

### **Do Not Stick Your Finger in His Eye**

The prophet Zechariah proclaimed: *"for he who touches you [Israel], touches the apple [pupil] of His eye. For behold, I will wave My hand over them, so that they will be plunder..."* (Zec 2:8-9)...

Concerning His Jewish brethren, Messiah emphatically said, *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me"* (Mt 25:40 NIV). He explained that nations and peoples will one day be judged—separated as sheep from goats to receive eternal blessings or curses. Their fate will ultimately be determined by their obedience to YAHveh's sovereign promise to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 12:3.

### **A slippery, Dark Path**

...Jews and Christians continue to sit in Darkness, apart from the full truth, light, and love of Messiah. By and large, the church has not reflected the bright light of the Son, YAHshua, but rather the dimness of man's doctrines and traditions. Multitudes languish in sin and wither in bondage. They are waiting for the truth to set them free. Messiah's purpose will soon be completed. The true redeemed body for which He died, including both Jews and Gentiles, must be reconciled into *one new man*. It is time for Jews and Gentiles to unite against our common enemy, to form a mighty army under whose feet Satan and all of his anti-Semitic venom will be crushed.

**END LESSON 40**

**QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 40**

1. **T or F** Adolf Hitler, arguably known as one of Satan's greatest hit men, was inspired by John Calvin's early anti-Semitic writings.
2. **T or F** Hitler and the Nazi's found in medieval Catholic anti-Jewish legislation a model for their own.
3. Which of the following statements about anti-Semitism in Europe and the Church is NOT true:
  - A. Germany had an equal number of Protestants and Catholics, both traditions saturated by Jew-hatred.
  - B. Hitler believed the 'final solution' was acting in accordance with the Creator.
  - C. The Pope regularly had Jews beheaded in St. Peter's square.
  - D. Anti-Semitic writings from church leaders were quoted at the Nuremberg trials in defending the Nazi atrocities.
4. **T or F** Certain archways of the death camps had engraved the following, "We kill you because you killed Jesus".
5. Which of the following statements is NOT true:
  - A. The majority of Jews today respond in horror & dread to the name Jesus Christ.
  - B. A straight line leads from the first act of oppression against the Jews and Judaism in the fourth century to the holocaust in the twentieth."
  - C. In Scripture, Eden is symbolic of any individual or nation that harbors Satan's enmity toward God's chosen people.
  - D. By and large, the church has not reflected the bright light of the Son, *YAHshua*, but rather the dimness of man's doctrines and traditions.
  - E. The true redeemed body for which He died, including both Jews and Gentiles, must be reconciled into *one new man*.
6. **T or F** Some Christians sang loudly in their churches to drown out the screams of the Jews as they passed outside in the railcars.

## BEGIN LESSON 41

### We Must Not keep Silent

Today throughout the world, we see the ancient Serpent rearing his ugly head and spewing out his anti-Semitism because he knows that his time is short. We must take heed and learn a lesson from historic Christianity's attitude toward the Jews. If many devout pillars of the faith fell prey to Satan's ancient venom, how much more could we?

A time is coming soon that is called *“Jacob’s trouble”* (Jer 30:7 NIV). Daniel prophesied that it will be *“a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time”* (Da 12:1).

During this time of great tribulation, the Serpent’s obsessive hatred for Israel will reach its culmination. At this ominous juncture in history, all of the world’s nations will unite together in the common bond of Jew-hatred. According to Scripture, two-thirds of the Jewish people are slated for destruction, and only a remnant will repent and *“call on the name of YAHveh”* and be *“delivered”* (Joel 2:32).

*“And it will come about in all the land,” Declares YAHveh, “That two parts [of the Israelites] in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it. ... THEY WILL CALL ON MY NAME, And I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ And they will say, ‘YAHveh is my God.’”* (Zec 13:8-9)

*“Now it will come about in that day THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL...will truly rely on YAHveh, the Holy One of Israel. A REMNANT WILL RETURN, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, ONLY A REMNANT WITHIN THEM WILL RETURN; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.”* (Isa 10:20-22)

...The Devil is planning his final attack on Messiah’s Jewish brethren. The Holy One of Israel commands us not to keep silent in regard to His chosen people and nation. He will sovereignly judge all who *stand aloof* and do not listen to His heart as expressed through His prophets. We are to *give Him no rest* as we cry out from merciful hearts, *“O YAHveh, SAVE THY PEOPLE, THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL.”* (Jer 31:7).

Scripture teaches that when we know the right thing to do and don’t do it, it is sin. Messiah said to His disciples, *“My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of YAHveh and do it”* (Lk 8:21).

Queen *Hadassah* (Esther) was divinely used to thwart the Serpent’s plot to destroy the Jews. The true body of Messiah, the holy remnant, should be as Queen *Hadassah*. If we *“remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place,...”* (Est 4:14 NIV). *“For such a time as this...”* (Est 4:14), the obedient remnant, like Esther, must go in humility before her King on Israel’s behalf. Because of her irresistible beauty, which will radiate

from a heart filled with love for her Jewish brethren, the eternal King will extend his “*golden scepter*” (Est 5:2) and welcome her into His glorious presence.

The apostle Paul admonished Gentiles to follow his example of love for his Jewish people:

***Brethren, my heart's desire  
And my prayer to YAHveh for them [the Israelites]  
Is for their salvation.  
(Rom 10:1)***

**L.** The Twentieth Century Church (The material in this section was compiled by Rev. Avis Stegemann from the book, “Church History in Plain Language” by Bruce L. Shelley published by Thomas Nelson Publishers copyright 1982, 1995. The material was taken from pages 394-490, and edited by Rev. Dick Christensen.)

**1. Beginnings of the Modern Industrial Era**

**a.** Liberalism--In the late 1800's a movement was beginning to spread from American ministers who studied in Germany or American seminaries where European thought and liberal religious convictions were taught.

**1.)** Every modern Protestant denomination reflects the impact of liberal theology.

**2.)** Liberalism's objective: they tried to lead the Protestant churches into modern science, modern philosophy, and modern history. Thus, making it possible for a person to consider themselves as modern and yet a serious Christian.

**3.)** Protestant liberalism, then, engaged a problem as old as Christianity itself: how do Christians make their faith meaningful in a new world of thought without distorting or destroying the gospel?

**a.)** Liberals believed that Christian theology must appeal to the intellect of modern men in terms of science and did not accept religious beliefs on the authority of the scriptures alone. They believed that religious beliefs must hold up to reason and logic, experience and human intuition. In other words, if it didn't make sense scientifically or experientially, it couldn't be true.

**b.)** They thought that Christians should be open to truth from any source.

**c.)** It aimed to reduce distinctions between:

- revelation and natural religion (belief based on man's understanding)
- Christianity and other religions
- Saved and lost

- Christ and other men
- Man and God

**d.)** Concerning nature, they believed that God had been working through nature to slowly create the world as we see it today—evolution.

**b. Evolution**

**1.)** Evolution is the theory that all complex living things have developed from simple forms through the operation of natural selection. Thus, no species is fixed and changeless. This view is contrary to the Word of God.

**2.)** Through the openness of liberal Christianity and claims from the world of science,

the stage was set for the introduction of the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin when he published the *Origin of Species*.

**a.)** Charles Darwin lived from 1809-1882. His name has become synonymous with the theory of evolution.

**b.)** From 1831 to 1836 he studied the specimens he had collected while on a surveying expedition along the coast of South America, and went on to do additional study on the Galapagos Islands where there are many animals that are not found anywhere else in the world.

**c.)** In 1871 he published *Descent of Man* which applied his natural selection theory to the development of Man which came to the conclusion that man is descended from apes. This theory attacked fundamental Christian beliefs such as man was made in the image and likeness of God. This statement in Genesis contradicts the theory of evolution by stating that we are not like the animals that God created.

**(1.)** Liberals accepted the theory of evolution, rationalizing that it supplemented rather than contradicted the basics of Christianity.

**(2.)** In 1892 Lyman Abbott, the pastor of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, published *The Evolution of Christianity*. This book was an attempt at compromise between scientific findings with scripture.

**3.) Biblical Criticism**

**a.)** As biblical criticism grew, the viewpoint that became dominant was that scripture was fallible and without authority.

**b.)** People who followed this way of thinking believed that God revealed himself gradually to man, and that he created the world, through an evolutionary process.

**4.) Liberal Change**

**a.) New Theology**

**(1.)** The New Theology was a protest against the “old theology” of evangelical Puritanism that was so deeply rooted in the scripture.

(2.) In 1881 Edwards Amasa Park resigned from his position as Professor of Theology at Andover, England. He was the last outstanding spokesman for the Puritan Theology.

(3.) Prior to 1880 ministers held to:

- the sovereignty of God
- to the innate depravity of mankind
- to the atonement of Jesus Christ
- to the Holy Spirit as essential to conversion
- to the eternal separation of the saved and lost in heaven or hell

(4.) After 1880 every one of these beliefs were attacked by liberalism.

**c. The Industrial Revolution**

The sudden growth of cities brought a new social system that again challenged Christianity. Personal wealth increased greatly among the few and better educated. But this wealth also brought many social problems such as a lowering of moral standards, hunger among the lower class, and general lack of care for our fellow man.

Laissez Faire was the theory concerning the social ills of the Industrial Revolution. It held that every individual should be left alone to pursue his own interests: then everything was supposed to work out for the good of the greatest number. However, the working force did not have access to wealth. It created a lower class of workers, and poverty and hunger plagued them.

a.) The first attack against the Laissez Faire thinking came from socialism.

(1.) Socialism did not have a negative connotation at first. It stood for public or worker ownership of business and condemned the concentration of wealth for the few.

(2.) It was an idealistic view that believed that in the nature of man was a natural love for one another. They believed it was capitalism that set men against men.

b.) As a result millions of people were stripped of all their possessions.

(1.) The church was not strong and could not address the social crisis.

(2.) The separation of church and state politically provided no platform for the church in governmental affairs.

(3.) Typically, the average worker regarded the church as a powerless entity.

**d. Marxism**



- 1.) A new form of socialism was beginning to spread that based itself on the violent overthrow of the ruling class. Warfare between the classes was urged and Christianity was rejected. (1848)
- 2.) Karl Marx (1818-1883) was born to German-Jewish parents who converted to Christianity. After earning his doctorate studying the philosophies of Georg Hegel, he made a scant living as a journalist. He went to Paris where he became interested in socialistic ideas and began his lifelong friendship with Friedrich Engels. In 1845 he was expelled from France and went to live in Brussels with Engels. Three years later Marx and Engels published the *Communist Manifesto*.

It proclaimed revolution against the middle class of Europe. This was a revolution to free the working man of his poverty and force the middle class and upper class business owners to share wealth. Marx spent the rest of his life in London where he wrote and published *Das Kapital*, which was one of the most influential books of modern times. In the twentieth century (1900 to 2000) nearly half of the world is organized on the basis of its teachings.

3.) Christians were on all sides of philosophy from socialism to capitalism. They were members of all the economic classes. The second half of the nineteenth century (1850 to 1900) many Christians worked diligently to better the conditions of the working class.

- a.) William Booth (1829-1912) founder of the Salvation Army.
  - (1.) he had much success with street witnessing in London's east End
  - (2.) Within 11 years he had 32 stations throughout London that evangelized, provided feeding stations, clothing, and temporary housing for the destitute.
  - (3.) The name "Salvation Army" came from the system of organization which was fashioned after the military. In twenty two years time he had 1,000 workers in London and had sent out workers to other countries.
  - (4.) The Salvation Army rose up to meet the spiritual need and basic human need of the people. Not so, the Church of England which was stuck in the past and couldn't keep up with the exploding population in England and all its woes.

#### END LESSON 41

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 41

1. T or F According to the book of Ezekiel, "Jacob's trouble" will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time.

2. **T or F** During the time of the great tribulation, the world will unite with the Devil in a common bond of Jew-hatred where two-thirds of the Jewish people are slated for destruction.
3. One of the goals of early liberal influence on the Church was its aim to reduce distinctions between: Which is NOT true?
- A. Men and women
  - B. Revelation and natural religion based upon man's understanding.
  - C. Christianity and other religions.
  - D. Jesus Christ and other men.
  - E. Man and God
4. **T or F** Liberalism's objective in the Church: to tried to lead the Protestant churches into modern science, modern philosophy, and modern history. Thus, making it possible for a person to consider themselves as modern and yet a serious Christian.
5. Which of the following theories and views did NOT become popular during this time:
- A. Socialism
  - B. Evolution
  - C. Colonialism
  - D. Marxism
  - E. Laissez Faire
6. **T or F** William Booth founded the Salvation Army in response to the Church of England's failure to meet the needs of London's poor and needy.

## BEGIN LESSON 42

- 2. The Twentieth Century (1900 to 2000)
  - a. The Rise of Nazism
    - 1.) The historian Arnold Toynbee said that the twentieth century marked the replacement of the great world religions by three post-Christian ideologies: nationalism, communism, individualism.
    - 2.) Each of these ideologies had assumed the character of religious faith.
    - 3.) The "new religion" of early twentieth-century Europe was nationalism.
    - 4.) Growing militarism, economic imperialism and power politics set the stage for war.
    - 5.) World War I began when the Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary was assassinated by a student who was driven by Serbian nationalism.
    - 6.) Before the end of the war 27 nations were involved in the war.

crusade.

7.) On both sides of the war people believed they were engaged in a righteous

8.) The Allied nations; France, Russia and Britain, America wanted a confession of guilt from Germany as well as crippling the nation.

a.) This vindictive attitude set the stage for Nazism.

b.) Definitions:

Totalitarianism

1. centralized control by an autocratic authority
2. The political concept that the citizen should be totally subject to an absolute state authority.

Autocrat

1. one who has undisputed influence or power
2. a person with unlimited authority.

Fascism

1. a political philosophy, movement or regime that exalts nation, and often race, above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition.
2. A tendency toward or actual exercise of strong autocratic or dictatorial control.

b. Fascist movements

1.) Goal is to glorify the nation—defining it in terms of its mission, racial uniqueness, or the state itself.

2.) Fascist rulers permit private property and capitalist enterprise, but they are tightly controlled.

3.) Right-wing governments: two examples of far right groups in the USA:

\*Ku Klux Klan and the \*Aryan Nation—a white supremacy group.

What is the driving force??? HATE

4.) Christians under Hitler

a.) While campaigning to gain power, he sought after the Christians support by emphasizing national pride and pretending to favor the churches' role in the state. After being defeated in WW I, German Christians were poised for a new birth of their beloved homeland.

b.) He gained Catholic support by signing an agreement in 1933 with the pope that guaranteed the freedom to practice the Catholic religion.

c.) The German Christians movement was formed to draw closer to the Nazi party. The German Christians wanted to unite the 28 regional Protestant bodies under a single bishop and elected Ludwig Muller, a staunch Nazi. They also adopted the Aryan paragraph in church government. This paragraph stated

that all church leaders of Jewish descent were dismissed from their positions. This movement claimed 3,000 out of 17,000 German protestants.

c.) There was a counter group formed, the Pastor's Emergency League which set up an alternative church government known as the Confessing Church. This also was a group of about 3,000. In 1934 this group formed the Barmen Declaration which called for the Protestants to come back to the central truths of Christianity and rejected totalitarianism. This group endured much persecution.

d.) The third group, the majority, were Christians that obeyed Hitler's demands without open protest, but did not agree with Nazism.

1.) In 1937, in response to Catholic Germans cry to the Vatican, the pope issued *Mit brennender Sorge* (With deep anxiety) and was critical of Nazism. It was smuggled into Germany and read from every Catholic pulpit on Palm Sunday. It called for catholic Christians to resist the idolatrous cult of race and state and maintain their loyalty to Christ and Rome.

2.) Hitler's response to this was silence and more pressure on the churches to squelch resistance.

c. The Russian Revolution: Russian Bolsheviks (Communists) created a left-wing government, another totalitarian government.

1.) same traits as Germany: dictatorial leadership, single centralized party, ruthless terror, propaganda, censorship, a controlled economy, and hostility to all organized religion.

2.) The difference: emphasis in the working class; and revolution for the purpose of social change, and for a classless society.

3.) Lenin was the leader of this movement (1870-1924) He believed that violence was the weapon of Marxism.

a.) His aim was to destroy capitalism and form the Communist party. He would overthrow all traditional institutions.

b.) When Lenin died in 1924 the Soviet leadership went to Stalin after a vigorous political fight with Leon Trotsky.

c.) Stalin took power by 1927.

d.) He was even more ruthless than Hitler.

e.) When the Bolsheviks took over they confiscated church lands and eventually determined the state church to be Russian Orthodox Church. This was controlled by the Communist government. All other church meetings were illegal and driven underground. Teaching children Christianity was forbidden, even in one's own home. No religious education was permitted at school.

f.) The orthodox church declared war on the state in response to the religious restrictions. Riots in almost every city ensued. In the first six years of the Revolution 28 bishops and 1,000 priests were killed. Many years of intense persecution continued. Thousands of clergymen were imprisoned or put to death. By 1939 Stalinist terror against the church brought it almost to destruction. There was virtually nothing left to the Protestant churches.

- g.) The pope came against Communism and took the side of the persecuted church.
- d. World War II broke out in Europe in 1939 when German forces invaded Poland.
  - 1.) Hitler had gained allies with Mussolini in Italy and a ruling group in Japan.
  - 2.) All three nations were driven by the desire for expansion.
  - 3.) Hitler had signed a pact with Stalin before Russia invaded Poland but within two years Hitler had turned on Russia.
  - 4.) Russia was then forced into alliance with France, Great Britain and the US.
  - 5.) During the war Christians had less patriotic zeal than previously during WWI.
  - 6.) The German churches resistance to Hitler was weak. In Germany pastors were stripped of all authority and privileges. Christianity was to suffer “a natural death.”
  - 7.) In Eastern Europe priests, pastors, and lay ministers were treated as criminals sent to concentration camps or executed.
  - 8.) Stalin allowed the churches to set up their organizations again because he knew that religion was good for the morale of the people. He once again allowed religious instruction to be taught to children. In 1945 the Orthodox Church regained status as a legal corporation but was governed by the Communist party.
  - 9.) Overall WW II had a devastating effect on Christianity.
    - a.) Thousands of churches were destroyed
    - b.) Clergymen were killed
    - c.) Faithful believers persecuted or uprooted from their homes
    - d.) World War II ravaged all of Europe
    - e.) Some said that Christian endorsement of the war led to its intensification.
- e. The Rise of Fundamentalism in the Modern Era of the Church
  - 1.) The dissatisfaction among believers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century brought them to congregate in homes and small groups for Bible study and prayer and led to a surrender of social concern.
    - a.) the emphasis was on personal holiness.
    - b.) The beginning of this movement was in July 1876 at Swampscott, Massachusetts. Evangelicals from many denominations gathered in summer Bible conferences to discuss the second coming of Christ.
      - 1.) Two large prophecy conferences were held in New York in 1878 and in Chicago in 1886 and were organized by Baptist minister A.J. Gordon. During these conferences the details of Christ’s return were hammered out.
      - 2.) During this same time period evangelicals were attending holiness conferences.
        - (a.) Concern for a second blessing, entire sanctification or Christian perfection was the emphasis of such meetings.
        - (b.) Holiness groups such as the Church of the Nazarene urged people to yield themselves to reliance on the Holy Spirit as a way to find the victorious Christian life.

(c.) In 1910-1915 twelve small books were published. 3,000 copies were distributed free of charge among pastors, theology students and missionaries all over the world.

(1.) Lyman Stewart was a wealthy oil man from southern California who believed that something was needed to reaffirm Christian truths in the face of biblical criticism and liberalism. With the financial help of his brother and the spiritual help of Rev. Amzi C. Dixon, pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago, Stewart initiated the project.

(2.) There were sixty-four contributing authors.

(3.) World War I delayed the outbreak of the “modernist-fundamentalist” controversy on the Protestant denominations. But shortly after the end of the war the conservative Christians launched their own war of words over the dangers of liberal theology in the churches.

(4.) Among Baptists of this time period, there was a new denomination formed; General Association of Regular Baptists. Among the Presbyterian denomination Princeton Theological Seminary was reorganized. Feeling that the reorganization of the school and the merger of boards strengthened the liberal influence in the school, Professor J. Gresham Machen and other professors of the fundamentalist persuasion formed a new university, Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

(5.) Professor Machen refused to break his ties with the Independent Board of Presbyterian Foreign Missions, he was brought to trial and found guilty of rebellion

Against superiors. As a result conservatives in the denomination founded the Orthodox Presbyterian and the Bible Presbyterian churches. We often see new groups merge out of differences among leaders within a particular movement.

f. The Renewal of Evangelical Christianity

After World War II evangelical Christianity returned to public prominence.

Billy Graham became a household name by preaching to thousands in every major stadium in the United States by radio.

g. The evangelical movement gained in momentum and in 1960 was reinforced by another source, Pentecostalism.

1.) Beginning in 1906 modern Pentecostalism began at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. Christians from all over the world came to Azusa Street to “carry the fire back home.”

a.) Pentecostal denominations followed the three year revival period at Azusa Street.

Assemblies of God, Church of God in Christ, the Church of God, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church. These churches were usually filled with economically depressed families.

- b.) However, in 1960 the Pentecostal movement was mainly toward the middle class.
  - (1.) The Pentecostal movement gave birth to the Charismatic movement and prayer groups were begun all over the country. This movement first impacted the Lutheran and Episcopal denominations and Presbyterian denominations and spread to every mainline denomination.
- h. Church Movements from 1960 to Present Day
  - 1.). Ecumenical Movement
    - a.) Leaders
      - a.) Willem Adolph Visser't Hooft —coined the phrase as description of the movement: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”
      - b.) John R. Mott (1865-1955) He was an American Methodist layman. At age 23 he was student secretary of the YMCA. Through his position, he came in contact with hundreds of church leaders and saw the need for a more unified work among the youth of the world. He formed the Student Federation and became chairman of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. In 1921 the International Missionary Council was created and he served twenty years as its first chairman. He worked toward unity based on the love of Christ.
      - c.) Charles Brent (1862-1929) was a Canadian Anglican. In contrast to Mott, more conscious of doctrinal differences among Christianity’s denominations. He saw Anglicanism as a way to bridge the differences and brought this idea to his constituents at a conference in Chicago. During the conference an invitation was proposed “all Churches which accept Jesus Christ as God and Saviour to join in conferences following the general method of the World’s Missionary Conference, for the consideration of all questions pertaining to Faith and Order of the Church of Christ.” In 1927 the first World Conference on Faith and Order met in Lausanne, Switzerland. 150 representatives from 69 denominations attended. This was the ground work for the World Council of Churches.
      - d.) Nathan Soderblom (1886-1931) he was a Lutheran bishop of Uppsala in Sweden. Was founder and chief promoter of Life and Work Movement. He was appointed by the king of Sweden to be archbishop in 1914 which stirred controversy concerning his Doctrinal beliefs, one of which promoted the idea that “True religion rests not in our conception of God but in our moral character”. Religion is what a man is or what he does, not what he believes. His hope was that unity would develop from each sharing their doctrinal concepts and gradually the one revelation to the human race would unfold

through successive ages of man. (evolution of Christianity??) He did unify the churches in a common cause: social morality. In 1937 the Conference on Faith and Order and the Conference on Life and Work joined in issuing a call for the formation of the World Council of Churches.

## END LESSON 42

### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 42

1. **T or F** The “new religion” of early twentieth-century Europe was nationalism.
2. **T or F** On both sides of World War 1, people believed they were engaged in a righteous crusade.
3. Which of the characteristics of fascist and communist governments is NOT true:
  - A. Permit private property and capitalist enterprise, but they are tightly controlled.
  - B. Dictatorial leadership, single centralized party, ruthless terror, propaganda, censorship, a controlled economy, and hostility to all organized religion.
  - C. Emphasis in the working class; and revolution for the purpose of social change, and for a classless society.
  - D. Both these governments rely on honesty and full disclosure in governing.
4. **T or F** By 1939, Stalinist terror in Russia against the church brought it almost to destruction. There was virtually nothing left to the Protestant churches.
5. Which of the following statements about the rise of Fundamentalism in the 1900's is NOT true:
  - A. Early in the movement, individual spiritual emphasis was on personal holiness.
  - B. There was a general disregard for the Bible and the person of Christ through this movement.
  - C. Shortly after the end of World War 1, the conservative Christians launched their own war of words over the dangers of liberal theology in the churches.
  - D. Beginning in 1906 modern Pentecostalism began at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. Christians from all over the world came to Azusa Street to “carry the fire back home.”
6. **T or F** The Charismatic movement gave birth to the Pentecostal movement and prayer groups were begun all over the country.

## BEGIN LESSON 43

- i. Denominational Mergers 1900-1970



- a.) United Methodists and United Presbyterians—these groups had previously split.
- b.) The Church of South India (1947) was formed from the Anglican Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, the South India Province of the Methodist Church, and the South India United Church, which was a union of the Presbyterian, Congregational and Dutch Reformed.
- c.) In 1961 the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Detroit met to discuss the proposal of the United Presbyterian Church. The proposal was unanimously accepted. The Consultation of Church Union was formed to plan for merger.

Over the course of twenty years the fervor subsided and the right formula for union difficult to form.

- d.) Groups of similar confessions of faith that formed were: International Congregational Council, Mennonite World Conference, World Methodist Conference, Baptist World Alliance, Lutheran World Federation, The World Alliance of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches.
- e.) The group that has been most opposed to such a union of churches is the conservative evangelicals. They are concerned about the political and social issues the Council has become involved in as well as inadequate doctrinal issues of the Council and lack of commitment to evangelism.
  - (1.) Evangelicals primary concern is the mission of the church: to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, making disciples in every nation.
  - (2.) In the 1940's two groups were formed: American Evangelicals and the American Council of Christian Churches. Internationally, a series of congresses were held to develop unity among evangelicals. World Congress on Evangelism was held in Berlin in 1966, inspired by Billy Graham's crusades.
  - (3.) In 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization met in Lausanne, Switzerland under the honorary chairmanship of Billy Graham. This congress Stressed world evangelization and 142 evangelical leaders were in attendance along with 2,700 participants.

j. What was happening in the Catholic Church

- 1.) Vatican II (1962-1965) it spoke of the church as a "Pilgrim People." This was a picture of the Church moving through the earth, caring for the weak and weary. This was a new image for the church.
- 2.) Pope John XXIII—His plan was for the church to turn from the rigid legalism of the past and turn to the pastoral concerns of the present. In his opening remarks, the pope said that the church must not rely on repression to exert its authority but to "rule with the medicine of mercy rather than with severity."
- 4.) There developed two groups of bishops: the conservatives and the progressives.
  - a.) The conservatives held to the old ways and thought, "those who see in the future a threat to the past."

- b.) The progressives were “those who see in the future the promise of the future.”
- 5.) Vatican III was a meeting that continued the debate between conservatives and progressives, but was focused on guidelines for the life and ministry of priests, the mission of laymen in the world, and missionary work in non-Christian areas. On Dec 7, 1965 the acceptance of a decree that stated that no state had the right to prevent through external pressure the preaching and acceptance of the gospel. It would also turn away from the assumption held since the time of Constantine that the church had the right to exercise public power to enforce its religious demands. This was a major turning point for the church, it was accepting the fact that it had no state power and must conduct its business within the realm of the Church only. This was turning away from 1500 year old practices.
- k. 1980’s—The Era of the Mega Church in the age of self-expression
  - 1.) Shedding a negative image of the traditional church, seeker-sensitive churches sought to appeal to popular tastes. They rose up in an era of privatization and used this cultural behavior to build churches by using mass produced expressions of concern and compassion and affection.
  - 2.) Characteristics of mega churches
    - a.) Did not identify themselves with any specific denomination. Most often the word, “chapel”, “center” or “community” was incorporated into the name of the church.
    - b.) Worship in mega churches is distinguished from the rest by up-beat, enthusiastic, an entertainment-style mode of music.
    - c.) Mega churches are built around the personality of a charismatic preacher. Sermons are motivational, and stress day-to-day application. Loyalty among the congregation is to the pastor instead of a denomination.
    - d.) Mega churches are designed with the state of the art technology, new buildings and up to date furnishings and well trained staff.
  - 3.) A 1978 Gallup pole showed that 80 percent of Americans believed that an individual should come to their own conclusions about religion without the influence of religious institutions. As a result, people attending church often have the attitude of, “What do I get out of this?”
- l. The Global Village
  - 1.) The Berlin Wall
    - a.) In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell and with it the cold war and Russian communism. Under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev the Soviet Union began to drastically change.
    - b.) Churches that had been closed were now open for church services and Christians from all over the world were going to Russia to assist in spreading the Gospel.
    - c.) Globalization.

- (1.) description: People all over the world were discovering each other in the midst of global cultural, political and religious changes.
- (2.) This was assisted by new technology which enhanced the information and communication age. We can have a conversation with someone on the other side of the world by phone or email. We can shop at an internet store in Japan or England. News from around the world is at our fingertips.
- (3.) International free trade agreements have increased global sharing of production and trade.
- d.) Globalization as a challenge to the Church: the body of Christ is more aware today than at any other time in history of the diversity of religion across the world. At no other time in history has the prospect of world evangelization been possible through modern technology. At no other time has it been more possible to fulfill the Great Commission, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age.” NIV Matt:28:19, 20

Information and quoted segments from the book, “Church History in Plain Language” by Bruce L. Shelley pages 394-490.

**A brief section on cross cultural missions follows—if your teaching time permits.**

## **XXXI. CULTURE AND CROSS CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

Part of the objective of this class on Acts and Missions is to broaden our world-view. This lecture is taken from an article written by Paul G. Hiebert, Professor of Anthropology and South Asian Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission in Pasadena, Calif. Hiebert served as a Missionary in India with the Mennonite Brethren Board and has also been a professor of Anthropology at the University of Washington in Seattle.

### **A. Introduction**

1. One of the first shocks a person experiences when he or she leaves their home country is that of a foreign people and their cultural differences.
2. Consider the kinds of differences you might experience that would cause culture shock? Such a list might include: language, dress, food, family structure, unintelligible beliefs and values, smells, sanitation habits.
3. Let's look at how these differences affect the communication of the gospel and the planting of churches in other societies.

### **B. The Concept Of Culture**

In the ordinary speech some use the term "culture" to refer to the behavior of the rich and elite. It's listening to Bach or Beethoven, having the proper taste for good clothes, and knowing which fork to use when at a banquet. "For our purposes we will define culture as the integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas and products characteristic of a society." We will expand on each area of this definition.

### **C. Patterns Of Behavior**

1. We begin learning about a culture by observing the behavior of the people and looking for patterns in the behavior.
2. For example: In America: 2 men greeting each other grasp each other's hand and shake it.
  - a. In Mexico: they embrace.
  - b. In India: Each puts his hands together and raises them towards his forehead with a slight bow. This is an efficient gesture, it permits a person to greet many people at the same time in 1 single motion. It is also clean which is important to the Indian society where the touch of an untouchable used to defile a high caste person and force him to take a purification bath.
  - c. Among the Siriano of South America: Men spit on each others chests in greeting.

- d. Among a Panamanian Tribe: A missionary observed the chief suck the mouths of His fellow tribesmen upon his departure. When asked about this strange custom the chief said he learned it from the white man who he observed doing this each time he left a plane, He sucked the mouths of His people (family) as magic to insure safe journey.
- e. Like most cultural patterns, Kissing is not universal. It is not practiced among most primitive tribesmen. It has been considered vulgar and revolting to the Chinese who thought it too suggestive of cannibalism.
- f. It is vital to the success of spreading the gospel to observe cultural patterns of behavior and understand their meanings and implications.

#### **D. Ideas**

- 1. "Culture is also the idea people have of their world." Through their experience of it, people form mental pictures or maps of this world.
- 2. For example: I live in Clearwater, Florida and in my mind I have a mental map of the streets around my home, the churches and my work place. However, there are many areas and streets in Clearwater that I don't have a mental picture for because I have no need of knowing them. So we can see that people develop conceptual schemes of their world based on our individual experience and understanding. This is much different than how others might view their world.
- 3. In one sense, then culture is a people's mental map of their world. How they view their world. It is not only a map of their world, but also for their world of everyday life. It provides them with a guide for their decisions and behavior.

#### **E. Products:**

- 1. "Human thought and actions lead to the production of material artifacts and tools."
- 2. We build houses, cars, roads, furniture.
- 3. We create pictures, clothes, jewelry, coins.
- 4. Our material culture has a great effect on our lives. This effect that material products and tools have on a culture is easily observed when you compare the American culture 200 years ago before cars and automation, with today's culture of computers and space shuttles.

#### **F. Form and Meaning**

- 1. "Behavior patterns and cultural products are generally linked to ideas or meanings.
- 2. For Example: Shaking hands means "hello".
- 3. Shaking our fists has a different meaning.

4. Frowning, crying, each have meaning.
5. Letters of the alphabet have meaning.
6. Crosses have meaning.
7. "Humans assign meaning to almost everything they do and make." It is this link between an experienced form and a mental meaning that constitutes a symbol.
  - a. For Example: We see a flag, and it carries the idea of a country, so much so that men will die in battle to preserve their flags.
  - b. A Culture can be viewed as the symbols systems, such as languages, rituals, gestures and objects that people create in order to think and communicate.

#### END LESSON 43

#### QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 43

1. **T or F** There were many Denominational Mergers that took place in the first seventy years of the twentieth century.
2. **T or F** Evangelicals primary concern is the mission of the church: to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, making disciples in every nation.
3. There were great changes in the Catholic Church in the twentieth century as well which of the following was NOT among them:
  - A. Vatican II showed the Church moving through the earth, caring for the weak and weary.
  - B. The church no longer had the right to exercise public power to enforce its religious demands.
  - C. The church must not rely on repression to exert its authority but to “rule with the medicine of mercy rather than with severity.”
  - D. Priests were given the freedom to marry if they desired so.
4. **T or F** Mega churches are built around the personality of a charismatic preacher. Sermons are motivational, and stress day-to-day application. Loyalty among the congregation is to the pastor instead of a denomination.
5. Which of the following statements about culture and cross cultural differences is NOT true:
  - A. Culture shock comes from moving from one culture to a drastically different culture without being prepared for the many changes that are to be experienced.
  - B. The most important thing when sharing the Gospel in another culture is to get the convert to understand and adapt to your culture.

C. Culture could be defined as: the integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas and products characteristic of a society.

D. What is acceptable and normal in one culture can be outrageous or offensive in another.

6. **T or F** A Culture can also be viewed as the symbols systems, such as languages, rituals, gestures and objects that people create in order to think and communicate.

**BEGIN LESSON 44**

## **G. Integration**

1. "Cultures are made up of a great many patterns of behavior, ideas and products. These patterns all integrated into larger cultural complexes, and into total cultural systems."
  - a. For Example: Observe American culture.
    - (1) An American walks into an auditorium to hear the symphony. All the seats are taken so he walks out saying the place is full. Even though there are a great many places to sit on the floor, it is culturally not acceptable in this environment.
    - (2) The American traveling aboard takes great care to insure that he has a room and bed to sleep in when he arrives at his destination. In comparison, people from most parts of the world know that all you need is a flat space and a blanket in order to spend the night.
    - (3) The American would rather crunch up on a chair in the airport instead of stretch out on the floor. He would rather be dignified than comfortable. What do you think the real reason is for this behavior? Basic to our culture is the belief that the floor is dirty. This explains various other behavior patterns.
      - (a) Wearing shoes in the house.
      - (b) Throwing away a potato chip after falling on the floor, even if the floor has just been washed.
  - b. In comparison: In Japan, the people believe that the floor is clean.
    - (1) They take off their shoes when entering the house.
    - (2) They sleep on mats on the floor.
    - (3) If someone walks on their floor with their shoes on, they would respond the same way we would if that same person walked on our furniture with shoes on.
2. At the center, then, of a culture are the basic assumptions the people have about the nature of reality and of right and wrong. Taken together, they are referred to as the people's worldview.
  - a. Worldview: The basic assumptions the people have about the nature and reality and of right and wrong.
  - b. This linkage between cultural traits and their integration into a larger system have important implications for those who seek to introduce change. When changes are made in one area of culture, changes will also occur in other areas of the culture, often in unpredictable ways. While the initial changes may be good, the side effects can be devastating if care is not taken.



## H. Cross Cultural Differences

In their study of various cultures, anthropologists have become aware of the profound differences between them. Not only are there differences in the ways people eat, dress, speak and act and in their values and beliefs, but also in the fundamental assumptions they make about their world. It has been pointed out that people in different cultures do not simply live in the same world with different labels attached, but in different conceptual worlds.

1. For Example: 2 Americans agree to meet at 10:00. They are on time if they arrive from 5 minutes before or after. If one is 15 minutes late he mumbles an unfinished apology and simply acknowledges he is late. If he is 30 minutes later, he should have a good apology. If he is an hour late, he may as well not show up because his offense is unpardonable.
2. In contrast, in certain parts of the world the concept of time is different. If the meeting is at 10:00 only a servant would show up at 10:00 in obedience to his master. For all others, from 10:45-11:15 is appropriate. This signifies their independence and equality. This works well with the 2 Arabs.
3. Problems arise when 1 is American and 1 is Arab. The American shows up at 10:00 right on time according to him. The Arab shows up at 10:45 right on time according to him. The American feels the Arab has no sense of time at all (which is false). The Arab feels like the Americans act like servants (which is also false). It is easy to see the importance of understanding the cross-cultural differences when attempting to communicate cross culturally.

## I. Culture Shock: the sense of confusion and disorientation we face when we move into another culture.

- Our first reaction to the prospect of going overseas is one of excitement and anticipation. The flight, the strange customs, the colorful marketplace with great bargains ... The village is fascinating ... Then reality begins to set in:
  - I wonder where the drug store is in the village (no where).
  - Rice and Beans again! They eat this twice a day!
  - No running water. No doctor. No English. How did I get into this anyway!
1. Our first confrontation with cultural differences is culture shock, the sense of confusion and disorganization we face when we move into another culture.
  2. It is not from a lack of sanitation or poverty because foreigners face the same culture shock when they come to the U.S.
  3. Culture shock comes from the fact that all cultural patterns we have learned are now meaningless.

4. It is the realization that you know less about living here than even the children, and we must learn again all the elementary things of life. Culture shock is never really entered into as a tourist or even on a week-long short-term mission trip.

**J. To Combat Culture Shock**

1. Avoid the temptation to withdraw into yourself, and your own house.
2. Avoid trying to recreate your home culture in your new environment.
3. Learn some of the language.
4. Make some friends
5. Find ways to adapt to the new culture-become a student of it.

**K. What is the Result Of Adapting To The New Culture...**

Become a bi-cultural people. You will know that you have become bicultural when you realize that your former attitude that there is really only one way to live, and it is our way, is shattered.

**L. The Result Of Becoming Bicultural**

1. Alienated from our kinsmen and friends in our homeland = due to our new attitudes and their old attitudes.
2. We have moved from a philosophy that assumes uniformity to one that has had to cope with variety, and our old friends don't understand us.
3. Bicultural people never fully adjust to one culture, their own or their adopted one.

**M. Cross Cultural Misunderstandings**

1. Some missionaries in Zaire had trouble in building a rapport with the people. Finally, one old man explained the people's hesitance to befriend the Missionaries. "When you came, you brought your strange ways" he said. You brought tins of food. On the can was a picture of meat, and inside was meat and you ate it. And when you had your baby, you brought some small tins. On the outside was a picture of babies, and you opened it and fed the inside to your child."
2. To us, the people's confusion sounds foolish, but it is all too logical. In the absence of other information, they must draw their own conclusions about our actions. And we do the same with their culture.
3. Cultural Misunderstanding leads to poor communication and poor relationships.
4. Cultural misunderstandings often arise out of subconscious actions.

- a. For Example: Physical space when standing and talking with someone. North Americans stand 4-5 feet apart when talking about general matters; 2-3 ft when discussing personal matters. Latin Americans stand 2-3 ft when discussing general discussion and closer when discussing personal matters.
- b. If the two should meet cultural misunderstandings will often arise.
- c. Misunderstandings are based on ignorance about another culture. This is a problem of knowledge.

#### **N. The Solution**

- 1. When first entering a new culture be a student of its ways.
- 2. **Ethnocentrism:** The belief in the inherent superiority of one's own group and culture accompanied by a feeling of contempt for other groups or cultures.
- 3. **Egocentric:** thinking, observing, or judging things in relation to the self, self-centered.
- 4. Early in life each of us grows up in the center of our own world. In other words, we are egocentric.
- 5. We also grow up in a culture and learn that it's ways are the right ways to do things. Any one who does it differently is not quite civilized.
- 6. This ethnocentrism is based on our natural tendency to judge the behavior of people in other cultures by the values and assumptions of our own.
- 7. Other cultures judge our culture by their values and assumptions. This leads to cultural misunderstandings.
  - a. For Example: Americans and Indians go to an Indian restaurant. They order curry and rice. The American eats with his fork. The Indian eats with his fingers. The American thinks the Indian uncivilized for eating with his fingers-judging him to be vulgar. The Indian thinks the American vulgar for putting into his mouth a utensil which has been in many other mouths, instead of using his fingers after a meticulous washing which would have only been in his own mouth.
  - b. Cross cultural misunderstands are based on our own knowledge of another culture, ethnocentrism is based on feeling and values.

#### **O. The Solution To Ethnocentrism:**

Acceptance and willingness to break down the cultural value system, which inhibits us from identifying with other cultures.

#### **P. Translation:**

- 1. How do you translate "Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29) into Eskimo in which there is no word for or any experience of, animals we call sheep? What do you do?

2. Do you make up a new word and add a footnote to describe the creature that has no meaning in their thinking?
3. Do you use a word such as "Seal" that has much the same meaning in their culture as lamb does in Palestine?
4. Cultural differences raise problems when we translate a message from one language and culture to another. Why? Because cultural symbols have both form and meaning.
5. Early translators failed to note this difference and assumed that when they translated the form, the people would understand the meaning correctly. In other words, if in one language we find the word "lamb" we need only find the word in another language for the same kind of animal and the people will understand what we mean. This is not true!
6. The same forms do not carry the same meanings in different languages.
  - a. For Example: In Palestine, shepherds were respected and devout men. In India, shepherds are the village drunkards, and in Christmas pageants in more than one instance, they have come onto the stage reeling drunk. Here the form was kept the same, but some of the meaning is lost.
  - b. Solution: Use a word with which the people are familiar, but then to teach them the meaning we are giving it. This process can take years before the true biblical world-view is understood.
7. While the process is essential and may take too long, it does not eradicate the salvation of those who simply receive the message. Their salvation is based on trust in Christ's salvation, regardless of their world-view.

**Q. Implications of Cultural Differences For Missions**

It is clear that cultural differences are important to a missionary who must go through culture shock, learn to overcome misunderstandings and ethnocentric feelings, and translate his message so that it is understood in the local language and culture. But there are a number of other important implications that need to be touched on.

**R. The Gospel and Culture**

1. We must distinguish between the gospel and culture.
2. Danger lies in making our culture the message (ie) democracy, capitalism, pews and pulpits, clothes.
3. An Indian Evangelist once said, "Do not bring us the gospel as a potted plant. Bring us the seed of the gospel and plant it in our soil."

4. The failure to differentiate between the biblical message and other messages leads to a confusion between cultural relativism and biblical absolutes. For example: Things once considered sin, wearing lipstick, and going to the movies are now acceptable. However, premarital sex, will never be accepted as not sinful, within a proper biblical perspective.

**S. Indigenization**

Indigenization is the careful preserving of the meaning of Gospel message expressed in native forms. This involves introducing new symbolic form, or the reinterpreting a native symbol.

For Example: Bridesmaids in Christian weddings were originally used by non-Christian ancestors to confuse demons who, they thought, had come to carry off the bride. Now new meaning is given to the form.

**T. Conversion and Unforeseen Side Effects**

1. Cultural traits are linked together into larger wholes. Changes in one often lead to unforeseen changes in other areas.
2. Important to remember is that cultural traits serve important functions in the lives of people. If we remove these without providing a substitute, the consequences can be tragic.
  - a. For example: In some places where husbands had more than one wife and had to give up all but one after they became Christians, no provisions were made for the wives who were put away. These often ended up in prostitution or slavery.

**U. Being Sent Or Being Brought?**

1. After considering all the difficulties and problems one faces with preaching the gospel in another culture such as:
  - a. Cultural Misunderstandings
  - b. Language and Cultural Barriers
  - c. Culture Shock
  - d. Breaking down the feelings of cultural superiority
  - e. Problems with translating the Message and Scripture
  - f. Effects on the Culture once Changes are Affected by the Gospel.
  - g. It can become easy to look at the great difficulties and problems, and wonder if they are too much to overcome. However the real issue is one of vocation verses calling. If we choose missions as a vocation, we may well find the obstacles to great. But, if God calls us, then He will provide whatever we need to accomplish His mission.

**THIS CONCLUDES OUR STUDY OF ACTS & MISSIONS.**

**END LESSON 44**

**QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 44**

1. **T or F** Cultures are made up of a great many patterns of behavior, ideas and products. These patterns all integrated into larger cultural complexes, and into total cultural systems.
2. **T or F** Culture can be defined as the basic assumptions the people have about the nature of reality and of right and wrong.
3. Cross cultural differences can be recognized and experienced in the following:
  - A. Greeting others in a specific fashion.
  - B. Meetings appointment times and actual start times.
  - C. Availability and use of specific food, clothing and other goods.
  - D. My experience of culture is meaningless when immersed in another's culture.
  - E. Confusion and disorientation from living in a different culture.
  - F. All of the above
4. **T or F** Indigenization is the careful preserving of the meaning of Gospel message expressed in native forms. This involves introducing new symbolic form, or the reinterpreting a native symbol.
5. Mark the following recognized difficulties and problems one faces with preaching the gospel in another culture such as:
  - A. Language and Cultural Barriers
  - B. Culture Shock
  - C. Cultural Misunderstandings
  - D. Problems with translating the message and Scripture.
  - E. Breaking down the feelings of cultural superiority
  - F. All of the above
6. **T or F** Cultural misunderstanding leads to poor communication and poor relationships and often arise out of subconscious actions.

**Lesson 45 is the final exam.**