

**GREAT LESSONS FROM**

# **ACTS**

**Andrew M. Connally**

*Lessons • Sermons • Commentary  
Devotional Materials • Study Guide*





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## **DEDICATION**

**This volume is dedicated to all those men and women who have faithfully served as missionaries to plant the cause of Christ in apostolic purity on foreign fields.**

**May their tribe increase!**

# **FOREWARD**

The greatest work in this earth, is proclaiming and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ! This was the work of Jesus himself! He came, "to seek and save the lost" (Lk. 19:10). God has only one Son and that Son was a preacher! We believe the preaching of the word of God is the greatest challenge the world has ever known.

In the Old Testament God raised up Prophets to warn his people and the Prophets said over and over again, "Hear the word of the Lord." The message is the same to this generation, "Hear the word of the Lord!"

Satan is clever, (cf., 2 Cor. 11:3), he is the Deceiver of the whole world, (cf., Rev. 12:9). He has caused all mankind to be lost. He is at work each day, but so is Jesus Christ! God is not willing that any should perish," (2 Pet. 3:9). God has given us his word. "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall abide forever," (Matt. 24:35); therefore, "Preach the Word."

Our job on this earth is to proclaim to every person in every village in every nation the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, (cf., Acts 4:12), before it is too late.

God is with the men and women who love, preach, and teach His word, (cf., Matt. 28:20). Our task is great, but God is greater! Our work shall be bitter, but our reward will be sweet. God, himself, will help us, so preach the word! Do not allow anything or anybody to stand in your way, because your work is the greatest on earth. Men must hear "the good news" and "how shall they hear without a preacher?" (cf., Rom. 10:45-15).

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# THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are four divisions of the New Testament. They are arranged in logical order. God knew man was a sinner. He knew man's mind and heart. He knew what man needed to help him understand. So God gave us the New Testament. He helped men to prepare it so we could read and understand. The Bible is not an accident, it did not just happen. God gave it and God preserved it.

## **The first division of the New Testament is *Biography*:**

The first four books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John show that Jesus is the Son of God. They were given to prove Jesus is the Christ, (John 20:30,31).

1. Matthew proves from the Old Testament that Jesus is the promised Messiah. More than forty Old Testament prophecies are found in Matthew to convince us Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures.

2. Mark shows Jesus as a miracle worker. He has power and authority. Thus, by demonstration he proves Jesus is the Son of God. Because of this great power and authority no man should doubt, but believe in Jesus.

3. Luke shows Jesus came to save all men. Not just the Jews, but *all* men everywhere. Jesus is the universal Savior. Salvation is not based on Race or Color, but Jesus will save any man who hears his voice and obeys his word.

4. John wrote to appeal to the Spiritual side of every man, woman, and child. John deals with the great questions of life. He writes of light and darkness, The Bread and Water of life, life, and death. Jesus is the Way, The Truth and The Life. John says, "these are written that you may believe," (John 20:30-31).

Every one of these four books tell us of Jesus in a different way. Each of them adds new understanding to our picture of Christ. If one book was missing we would lose so much! They show Jesus among men. Jesus knows man. Jesus knows us! He knows our needs, he sees our sins. But more than this Jesus knows God and completely revealed Him? Man's sins have separated him from God, but Jesus has come to take man back to God. He has come to show us the way.

## **The second division of the New Testament is *History*:**

Now that the sinner realizes his sin and lost condition "what must he do to be saved?" The Book of Acts answers this question. Many cases of conversion are found in this book. It is

the history of the early church. It shows the early church in action. Jesus promised "to build his church," (Matt. 16:18), and in Acts he does this very thing! Jesus promised his Apostles the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13). In the book of Acts the Holy Spirit does this very thing.

You can read the book of Acts and see the Holy Spirit at work. He answers the question, "What must the sinner do to be saved?" He shows us *how* to become Christians. He shows us *how* and *what* to do to be Christians. He shows congregations established and working. He shows how the gospel spreads and how persecution comes. He also shows Christians how to act under persecution and how to live in the world and yet remain Christians.

The **Third** division of the New Testament is to show Christians *how to live the Christian life*. Twenty-one letters to churches and individuals give great knowledge of how to serve and worship God and how to live with our fellow man. They are full of doctrine, reproof, instruction, all in righteousness, "that the man of God might be furnished unto every good work." They are God's plan for complete happiness here and in life after death.

The **Fourth** division of the New Testament is *Prophecy*. The Book of Revelation shows the great fight between the church—God's people and the forces of evil—Satan's helpers. Five great enemies are pictured trying to destroy God's people. Finally the Judgment comes and God's wrath is poured out on Satan and all his helpers. The church goes home to be with God forever. It is a book of great hope and trust. God still sits on the throne and rules the universe including all the nations on earth.

What a wonderful book the New Testament is! It shows man's need for a Savior, for man is lost in sin. It shows God's answer to man's need, which is Jesus Christ—"The lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The New Testament gives the way for man to come back to God. It shows the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ—the only anointed of God, the world's *only* Savior. It pictures God's people at work and worship. It shows them how to live and how to die and finally shows them at home in heaven with God, so their hope grows brighter each passing day.

Such a book can only come from God. When you compare it with other books in the world it puts them to shame! When Christ is compared with any other, only Christ and his claims can come from God! No other god but Jehovah, and no other savior but Christ, and no other book but the New Testament can take man back to God! This we believe and affirm!

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30-31). They attest to Jesus' birth, life, work, suffering, and death. They prove His divinity by showing He fulfilled the Old Testament scriptures by His virgin birth, miracles, holy and perfect life, teaching, and finally by his resurrection. As the four gospels close there is great expectation; something is going to happen (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-20; Lk. 24:45-49; John 16:7-13; 17:20-21). The Holy Spirit is going to come; the Apostles will be given supernatural power (Acts 1:8). Baptism for the remission of sins will go forth, beginning from Jerusalem to the end of the earth! From all this we are eager to learn *when* and *how* all this is to be done. But, we must leave the gospels and go to the book of Acts for these answers. We go to Acts, the book of history in the New Testament, to find it all recorded there.

## Value of The Book of Acts

The book of Acts is sadly neglected by religionists in our day. They find few divine examples to follow and they omit the acts of obedience in becoming a Christian. While most meet on Sunday, the Lord's day, they forget the purpose of meeting—to take the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).

The book of Acts bridges the gap between God's dealing with the Jews in the Old Testament and God's welcoming of all nations in the New. The difference in the old institution and the New Testament church is found in Acts. The ending of the old law and the giving of the new is found in Acts. Throughout the Old Testament God has promised a Messiah, a Savior of men; Acts reveals who it is and how man may come to Him. So the book of Acts answers many questions concerning the salvation, life, and worship of men as it relates to God.

## Authorship of Acts

Both the internal and external evidence point to Luke. The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are addressed to the same person, Theophilus. Luke was Paul's companion and often mentions it. Luke uses many medical terms in both books and Luke was a physician (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phil. 24). The Gospel of Luke sets forth the "Acts" of Christ, and this book sets forth the "Acts" of the Apostles. So the book of Acts is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke.

## **Outstanding Facts of Acts**

There are many miracles performed by the Apostles in Acts:

1. Lame man at the temple (3:2).
2. Death of Ananias (5:5).
3. Death of Sapphira (5:10).
4. Healing of the sick (5:16).
5. Deliverance from prison (5:19).
6. Miracles of Stephen (6:8).
7. Miracles of Philip (8:6).
8. Saul's blindness (9:3).
9. Restoration of Saul's sight (9:17).
10. Healing of Aeneas (9:34).
11. Dorcas restored to life (9:40).
12. Peter delivered from prison (12:6).
13. Blindness of Elymas (13:11).
14. The cripple of Lystra (14:8).
15. Girl with spirit of divination (16:16).
16. Special miracles through Paul (19:11).
17. Eutycus restored to life (20:10).
18. Bite of the viper harmless (23:5).
19. Father of Publius healed (28:8).

The Great Prophecy of Joel concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled in Acts 2. The Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and power and preached and did great things.

The first gospel sermon was preached and for the first time salvation in the name of Christ was announced to the world, through Faith, Repentance, and Baptism for the Remission of sins.

The New Testament church began on Pentecost and 3,000 were added in one day! The first persecution of the early Christians began in Jerusalem. The Conversion of the Great Apostle Paul is told in the book of Acts. The work of Peter and Paul predominates the entire book (Peter 2-12; Paul 13-28). The name "Christian" was given, by God, to the disciples (Acts 11:26). The first missionary journey is recorded in Acts 13, and on and on we might go to see the early history of the church recorded in the book of Acts.

## **Five Great Truths Found in Acts**

1. Jesus is pictured as the Messiah, the *only* Savior of all mankind (Acts 4:12).

2. The Holy Spirit which came on Pentecost is God's source of revelation and guidance to the Apostles. Thus, we can study



their life and teaching and be assured we are following the Spirit.

3. The old law has been completely done away. It was fulfilled at the death of Christ and superseded by the law of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We live under a new law, the law of the New Testament.

4. And salvation through Christ is accomplished by the new birth, (John 3:1-5), when the sinner believes, repents, and is baptised in the name of Christ for the Remission of Sins (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 22:16; also Rom. 6:3-9; 6:17-18; Gal. 3:26-27). Hence Christianity is "the way" (Acts 18:26; 24:22). It is the way of peace, and reconciliation to God.

5. There is no racial distinction in Christ. Neither Jew or Gentile, neither black nor white: all who obey the gospel will receive the Remission of Sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:34-35; 11:18; Gal. 3:28).

Thus, the Book of Acts is a divine guide for the church of Christ through all the ages! Therefore, its importance cannot be overemphasized if we seek to make the Church today after the New Testament pattern (Heb. 8:5).

May God bless your study and use of these lessons to the upbuilding of His Church and the salvation of your Soul and those that hear you,

*Amen!*

# OUTLINE OF THE ACTS

## **Jerusalem The Center**

- I. Christ and His Disciples, 1:1-11.
  - A. Farewell instructions.
  - B. His ascension into glory.
- II. Waiting for the Holy Spirit, 1:12-26.
  - A. The ten days of waiting.
  - B. Days of prayer for days of power.
- III. Day of Pentecost, Acts 2.
  - A. Advent of the Spirit.
  - B. The first sermon. Peter's testimony, arraignment of the people and appeal to the scriptures.
  - C. First converts — 3,000 baptized — first use of Christian baptism.
- IV. The first miracle, 3-4:31.
  - A. The miracle and the sermon.
  - B. The effect — interference by the authorities.
- VI. Power and Protection, 5:12-42.
  - A. Miraculous power. (Over infirmities; releasing from imprisonment.)
  - B. The advice of Gamaliel. President of the council. Note his position.
- VII. Persecution and Dispersion, 6-7.
  - A. Selection of deacons — Stephen.
  - B. Stephen on trial. The charge, defense, first Christian martyr.
  - C. Introduction of Saul of Tarsus.

## **From The Dispersion To The Commission Of Saul**

- I. The labors of Philip, the evangelist, 8:1-40.
  - A. In Samaria. Assisted by Peter and John.
  - B. The eunuch's conversion. Philip's interpretation of Isaiah 53.
  - C. Philip's extensive evangelism. The dispersion overruled for good.
- II. The miraculous conversion of Saul of Tarsus, 9:1-31.
  - A. The pupil of Gamaliel.
  - B. The persecutor of the church.
- III. Extension of the church, 9:32-12:23.
  - A. Peter at Lydda and Joppa. The vision of Peter and Cornelius — the door opened to the Gentiles.

**B. Persecution of Herod Agrippa I. Grandson of Herod the Great.**

1. Martyrdom of James — first martyr of the apostolic band.
2. Imprisonment of Peter. Released by the angel.
3. Death of Herod — smitten by the angel.

**Antioch The Center**

**First Missionary Journey:**

- I. The commission of Paul and Barnabas, 13:1-3.
- II. From Seleucia to Antioch in Pisidia, 13:4-52. (Cyprus, Salamis, and Paphos, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia.)
- III. From Antioch to Antioch in Syria, 14. (Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, Attalia and return to Antioch in Syria).
- IV. The Council at Jerusalem — Chapter 15:1-35.

**Second Missionary Journey:**

- I. The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, 15:36-40.
- II. From Antioch to Philippi, 16. (Through Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Phrygia, Galatia, Troas and the Macedonian call, Philippi and imprisonment.)
- III. From Troas to Jerusalem. Arrest at Jerusalem, Sent to Caesarea and imprisoned.

**Third Missionary Journey:**

- I. At Ephesus, 18:23-28:19.
- II. From Ephesus To Troas, 20:1-12.
- III. From Troas to Jerusalem. Arrested at Jerusalem, Sent to Caesarea and imprisoned.

**Journey to Rome:**

- I. Arrested at Jerusalem, 21:17-23:24.
- II. Sent to Caesarea, 23:25-26:32.
- III. From Caesarea to Rome, 27-28. (**The New Analytical Bible**, Chicago: John A. Dickson Publishing Company, 1950).

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS AND THE BASIC ISSUES TODAY**

## **PROPOSITION**

The book of Acts graphically and thoroughly deals with the basic issues facing the Christian today.

## **OBJECTIVE**

To show that the book of Acts deals with five of the basic issues facing the Christian today.

## **BRIEF OUTLINE**

- I. The Book of Acts Describes the Holy Spirit's Work Today.
- II. The Book of Acts Depicts the Divinity of the Church Today.
- III. The Book of Acts Destroys Denominationalism Today.
- IV. The Book of Acts Demands World-Wide Evangelism Today.
- V. The Book of Acts Decries Racial Discrimination Today.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The book of Acts is divinely inspired and pictures for men the work of the apostles and the early church as the New Testament church was established and spread throughout the entire world. It is a "pattern book" in that it shows what action the Holy Spirit led men to do and what teaching God wanted men to hear. The book of Acts is fundamental to understanding the establishment and spread of New Testament Christianity. Therefore, it is essential to the work of God on this earth today.

It would be hard to overemphasize the importance of this book. It is God's bridge from the old covenant to the new. It is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to guide the apostles into all the truth (John 16:13). Without this book a terrible gap would exist in the history of the church and we would be lost on a sea of uncertainty concerning so much that is essential to the ongoing of the gospel.

Therefore, its truths are paramount. It becomes the foundation of apostolic action and teaching. It truly is "...my witness both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It has great significance in meeting the issues troubling the church today. It holds the key to so many problems and becomes the solution to those who "walk after the spirit." May God grant us the courage to defend its blessed teaching and the wisdom to be guided by its precepts and the spirit to be limited by its authority.

# THE BOOK OF ACTS DESCRIBES THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY

- I. The work of the Holy Spirit is a fascinating Bible subject. This is evidenced by the widespread interest found both in and out of the church today. The Holy Spirit is deity, He is eternal (Heb. 9:14). He is omnipresent (Psa. 139:7). He is omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10). He is omnipotent (Gen. 1:1-3). He is omniprovident (Heb. 11:40). Therefore, when we turn to the Christian dispensation and its beginning in the book of Acts, it begins with the person and work of the Holy Spirit.
  - A. With the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel in the second chapter of Acts we have the confirmation of a new era in the work of the Holy Spirit. John had recorded this in John 7:39; the spirit was to come in a different measure *after* Jesus was glorified. Such took place in Acts 2.
  - B. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise from God.
    1. The "promise" first came from John (Matt. 3:11)
    2. The "promise" then came from Christ (Luke 24:48-49).
      - a. They were to "wait in Jerusalem."
      - b. They were to receive "power from on high."
      - c. They were then "to witness."
    3. This "charge" was given again, or repeated (Acts 1:2-4).
    4. The "promise" of power was again given (Acts 1:5).
  - C. While you may not be able to ascertain from John's statement in Matthew 3:11 who is meant to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jesus in repeating and explaining the promise to the apostles clearly shows the "apostles only" were the ones involved.
  - D. Those who were to receive the "promise" were to receive "power." Now, who received the "power?" Acts 2:1-4 shows only the apostles received the "power" to speak in "tongues" (Acts 2:13). From a study of the pronoun "they" in Acts 1:26 to Acts 2:1, it is evident the apostles were the only ones involved.
  - E. The apostles were special witnesses (Acts 1:22), this they claimed (Acts 2:32). Audiences, upon hearing the apostles witness, appealed to the witnesses in asking, "What must I do to be saved?" This fulfills Jesus' command to "wait," to "receive power," to "bear witness," which they did, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- II. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was from heaven and was both



seen and heard.

- A. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was directly from heaven and was *not* bestowed through human instrumentality.
  - 1. "God hath poured forth"
  - 2. "That which you see"
  - 3. "And hear" (Acts 2:33).
- B. It was an audible demonstration (Acts 2:2). Something was *done*, "...they began to speak in languages" (Acts 2:7-12).
  - 1. All who were baptized in the Holy Spirit *did* speak in tongues (Acts 2:1-4; 2:6; 2:8; 2:11; 10:44-47).
  - 2. But there were *others* who spoke in tongues who were *not* baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6; I Cor. 12).
  - 3. Therefore, we conclude the baptism of the Holy Spirit was always accompanied by the miraculous and inspiration, ie. they always spoke in tongues.
- C. The household of Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit.
  - 1. This was called a "like gift" (Acts 11:17) but this was different from anything except what had taken place "at the beginning" (Acts 11:15) and on "us" (meaning the apostles only).
    - a. Cornelius' baptism in the Holy Spirit came *before* his conversion. Peter argues this, for in Acts 11:4 we have the account expounded "in order" of sequence; so the spirit fell "as he began to speak." Repentance was urged *after* this (Acts 11:15). Baptism was urged *after* this (Acts 10:44); therefore, the Holy Spirit came *before* faith, as they could not believe until after the preaching, which produces faith (Rom. 10:17) took place. Therefore, the faith, repentance and baptism all took place after the reception of the Holy Spirit.
    - b. Since the baptism in water (Acts 10:48), was "for the remission of sins" (Acts 10:44), then the reception of the Holy Spirit by Cornelius and his household did not show their sins were remitted; therefore, the reception was not evidence of salvation.
  - 2. Why then did they receive the miraculous baptism of the Holy Spirit?
    - a. To show that God had accepted the Gentiles as well as Jews (Acts 11:17-18).
    - b. To integrate the church of Christ (Cf. Acts 11:19-

26). God waited approximately ten years to call his people Christians after the gospel dispensation came. It was done only after the Jew and Gentile worshipped together in one congregation.

3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a marvelous, miraculous manifestation of God! It was the beginning of a wonderful era in the kingdom of God, and as such has much meaning to God's people. Its effects are still being felt, but no one today can claim such power, proofs or demonstrations. May God help us to rightly divide the word (2 Tim. 2:15).

### III. The universal gift of the Holy Spirit is for all Christians today.

#### A. What is the "gift of the Holy Spirit" of Acts 2:38?

1. "The gift consists in the Holy Spirit (genitive of identification)." We believe the Holy Spirit Himself is the "gift" spoken of in Acts 2:38.
2. Is "salvation" the gift of the Holy Spirit? We do not believe this. Peter did *not* say, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and you shall be saved." Salvation is inherent in remission of sins; something else is promised. Then what? The Holy Spirit, as such.
3. Is the "word" the gift of the Holy Spirit? No, for the word is not so stated. In fact, the word was received *before* they were baptized; they were "cut" and as "many as received the word were baptized." Still something is to be received *after* baptism—the Holy Spirit. The "word" and the "gift" are not identical.

- B. This was a universal promise: the promise was to the Jews, their children and all those afar off (the Gentiles) as many as God should call (Acts 2:39). As long as men can hear the gospel and obey, so long God shall send the Holy Spirit into their hearts (Gal. 4:6), that long God will fulfill the promise of the Holy Spirit.

### IV. Today, throughout our brotherhood, men and women from all walks of life have perverted God's word concerning the Holy Spirit and His work.

- A. Men like Pat Boone, and a host of others, have claimed the miraculous gifts for themselves.
- B. Yet, it is evident from their claims that much is lacking.
- C. Either all the spiritual gifts are available or none are!
- D. All the people who claim miraculous gifts teach error doctrinally! Yet, all the miraculous gifts involved the revelation of the truth or the confirmation of truth.

- E. The exponents of "tongues" today reject the facts that "tongues" were "languages" and not "ecstatic utterances."
- F. After the establishment of the church no miracle worker ever failed—not one!

For these and a host of other reasons we believe the book of Acts clearly meets the issues concerning the Holy Spirit today.

# THE BOOK OF ACTS DEPICTS THE DIVINITY OF THE CHURCH TODAY

I. The Lord had promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18). The book of Acts shows the fulfillment of this promise. The church is divine in its establishment.

A. When the first gospel sermon was preached (Acts 2), the call was clearly set forth, "Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him" (Acts 2:38-39). This shows how God separates His people from the world and becomes the key of salvation to all men.

B. When they received these words—God added "these being saved" (Acts 2:47), to those apostles who were already saved; hence the church came into existence on that day.

C. It was founded on the deity of Christ (Acts 2:36-37) as prophesied by the Lord (Matt. 16:18). This grand truth became the drawing power of God wherever and whenever it was preached (Acts 3; 4; 5; etc.).

D. It became the *only* means of salvation (Acts 4:12), and caused great opposition to "the way" (Acts 19:23).

E. It became "the sect everywhere spoken against" (Acts 28:22). The reasons are clear. They brooked no compromise (Acts 5:28), their message was distinctive (Acts 4:12), and they were zealously militant (Acts 8:4). People did not wonder where they stood—they knew (Acts 26:28). People were confronted with the gospel and changes took place.

1. The city of Jerusalem was turned upside down for Christ (Acts 4:32-35).

2. The Jewish law was dealt a severe blow by "great numbers of priests becoming obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

3. Finally, Stephen was stoned, so great became the opposition to the church (Acts 7-8).

4. But this served only to plant churches in Judea, Samaria, Antioch, Asia, Corinth, and Europe (Acts 13-28).

II. The church was divine in its organization.

- A. The apostles laid the foundation of Christ as the chief cornerstone (Acts 4:11). The death, burial and resurrection of Christ was the heart of their preaching (Acts 3:11-28:31).
  - B. They ordained "...elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). These elders were charged to "...take heed unto themselves and the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28). These elders were spiritual overseers with all that it implied.
  - C. There were special servants in the church to aid in the physical ministrations of the local congregations (Acts 6).
  - D. The members willingly and lovingly carried out the divine directives (Acts 2:42; etc.) all carried the "good news" wherever they went (Acts 8:2-4).
  - E. The apostolic teaching was always the final authority in all matters of faith and practice (Acts 8 and 15).
  - F. The elders of the local congregations were severely warned not to allow men to arise who might speak perverse things (Acts 20:28-32). So elders were responsible for what was and is taught in the church! May God have mercy on some of them!
- III. The church was divine in its worship:
- A. From the beginning the spirit-filled apostles guided the worship of the church.
  - B. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).
  - C. Teaching the truth was paramount to every congregation. For without this proclamation the "Good news" could not be known. Everywhere the disciples went, the gospel went too.
  - D. The "fellowship" always included the poor (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37). They were concerned with widows (Acts 6). They were concerned when drought struck the brethren (Acts 11:27-30). This spirit of love and sharing caused unbelievers to marvel at the generosity of the church. The spirit of Christ was magnified in them at every opportunity. Homes were opened (Acts 12:12) and lives were often endangered for the sake of the brethren (Acts 8:1-4), and the cause of truth.
  - E. The brethren "broke bread" each first day of each week (Acts 20:7). It was not an "optional expedient," but was an "essential ingredient" to acceptable worship before God.
  - F. They never neglected to pray. Whether it was for the coming Kingdom (Acts 1:14), or for boldness to speak



the word (Acts 4:29), or for deliverance of the saints from evil men (Acts 12), the "...continued steadfastly in prayer" (Acts 2:42).

G. Their singing cheered them in their darkest hours (Acts 16:25). Their praise to God rose continually and was the heartfelt expression of their joy of being Christians.

IV. And finally, the church was divine in its mission (Acts 1:8). We shall develop this under the heading of world evangelism.

# THE BOOK OF ACTS DESTROYS DENOMINATIONALISM TODAY

## I The early Christians were unified, not divided.

- A. "These all with one accord continued steadfastly...(Acts 1:14). The early church exemplified our Lord's prayer for unity (John 17:17-21). They did not parade a "unity in diversity," but rather with "one heart and one soul" (Acts 2:32), they were striving for the faith of the gospel.
- B. They preached a unity of doctrine. From the facts of the resurrection to the practicality of the Christian life. It was one message known as the "one faith." It was not a "consensus of opinion," but rather a "thus saith the Lord."
- C. This alone destroys the foundation of denominationalism. For theirs is nothing more than diversity of opinion in all matters of faith and life. They rejoice in the "church of your choice" and are broadminded and tolerant enough to include everyone in "Christendom."

## II. The early church demanded baptism for the remission of sins.

- A. The first gospel sermon separated sinners from saints by "baptism for the remission of sins."
- B. "Baptism in the name of Christ was demanded of all penitent believers" (Acts 10:48). It was not done to show a *previous* salvation, nor was it done to get into a denominational fellowship, but rather it was commanded "...to wash away sins" (Acts 22:16). It was an expression of faith, it was the *first* work of faith and always preceded the joy of salvation (Acts 7:39).
- C. Bible belief always included obedience from the heart to the command of "immersion in water for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38-46). Men who rejected this were rejecting the council of God! Conversion was obedience to the gospel. This demanded a change of heart that results in a change of life. Such is true repentance (Acts 2:38).
- D. Whenever Christ was preached, baptism into His name was the inevitable result (Acts 8:5; 8:12; 8:35-38). The same pattern was always followed: there was the preaching, the believing, the repentance, the confession all culminating in baptism; then and only then did men receive the remission of sins (Acts 16:31-34). Such teaching destroys the foundation of denominationalism which preaches a "faith only" salvation.

III. The early church recognized the Kingdom as being established on Pentecost.

A. The Old Testament prophecies were all fulfilled on Pentecost.

1. It was in "the days of those kings" of Daniel 2.
2. It was the "time fulfilled," (Matt. 3:1-3; Mark 1:15; etc.). The "kingdom was at hand."
3. The "Holy Spirit came with power" (Mark 9:1), as was evidenced by the apostles' speaking other languages (Acts 2:6).
4. Jesus was preached as the King (Acts 2:22-35). He was preached as sitting upon David's throne (Acts 2:30).
5. Jesus was preached as God's prophet (Acts 4:22-26).
6. He was preached as the blood offering of God for all men's sins (Acts 20:28); therefore, the only one through which salvation comes (Acts 4:12).

B. Therefore, Premillennialism is as false as night and seeks to dethrone our Lord. It is a baseless lie that robs men of the true hope of heaven.

IV. The early church gave as they were prospered according to the needs of the Kingdom and partook of the Lord's Supper every first day of each week, (Acts 20:7).

A. Tithing was relegated to the law of Moses from which it came and had no place in the New Testament church.

1. It was a fact that no apostle ever bound anything from the law of Moses on the church.
2. People were called upon each Lord's day to give cheerfully, generously, "...as they were prospered" to meet the pressing needs of the church (Acts 2:42; 4:32-35; 11:27-30).

B. The apostolic church met each Lord's day for communion even if it meant staying an extra week in order to be with the brethren on the Lord's day (Acts 20:1-7).

1. The communion was not a church ordinance, but a communion of the body and blood of our Lord, (1 Cor. 11).
2. It had no magical powers, but was the heart of the Christian's worship (Acts 20:7).
3. Such faithful adherence to God's word had never produced nor supported a single denominational concept anywhere in the entire world. In fact, it will destroy each one.

# THE BOOK OF ACTS DEMANDS WORLD-WIDE EVANGELISM TODAY

- I. Propagation is the law of life. Each generation must reproduce itself or cease to exist. Such is true of New Testament Christianity.
  - A. The Lord, Himself, recognized this at the beginning of the book of Acts (Acts 1:8). The word was to go forth to fulfill prophecy (Luke 24:44-49).
  - B. This began to be fulfilled when the church was established in Acts 2. On that day "three thousand" souls became obedient to the faith (Acts 2:41).
  - C. They taught "...publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). They "...taught in the temple and at home" (Acts 5:43).
  - D. As a result of such teaching "...much disciples were added to the Lord and their numbers multiplied both men and women."
- II. Men and women were active in the spread of the word (Acts 18:24-26). Some were inspired (Acts 21:9), and some were not, but all felt a burning compulsion to speak of the Christ!
  - A. Wherever they went, they fought the battle for the Lord. They challenged the false religion of their day—Judaism. They destroyed the people's belief in the magical arts (Acts 18:19). They destroyed the economic structure of their pagan society (Acts 19:23-29). They liberated those who were demon-possessed even though it cost their masters hard cash (Acts 16:16-21). The early church hit them in their pocketbook where it hurts men most. They counted not their life dear that they might carry the word to a lost and dying world (Acts 20:17-25). Such devotion turned their world "upside down" for the cause of Christ (Acts 17:6). It will again!
- III. Such results demanded the overruling providence of God.
  - A. When Jesus commissioned the apostles in Matthew 28:18-20, He said, "...Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This they understood. This they believed, therefore, they went!
  - B. It was God's working in them that "opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27). They recognized the power and providence of God in their lives. They made room for God to work in them, and God used them mightily for the saving of the many. God constantly guided them, taught

them and opened the doors of opportunity for the ongoing of the gospel. The entire picture is "of God," "by God," and "for God."—May it ever be so! For God will and can do things that no man can ever accomplish alone (Acts 15:7).

# THE BOOK OF ACTS DECRIES RACIAL DISCRIMINATION TODAY

- I. God chose to integrate the church of Christ.
  - A. The burning issue of race relations was the great issue of the Jew/Gentile world. Each hated the other with a consuming passion. Each held the other to be barbarians. Into such a world God thrust the church.
  - B. God revealed that "in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him" (Acts 10:35).
  - C. This great truth was enforced by a miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius (Acts 10). For the first time in human history God saw fit to remove all racial barriers between His followers.
  - D. Jesus had abolished the law which formerly divided the Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14-17). Therefore, now in Christ "there is no respect of persons." What a glorious day for mankind!
- II. God reserved the name Christian until both Jew and Gentile were united in one congregation (Acts 11:26-27).
  - A. Both Jewish and Gentile congregations had existed, but this was the first integrated congregation of which we have a record.
  - B. When this happened, the name Christian was "called by God" for His children, (Isa 62:2).
  - C. What a wonderful and fearful responsibility abides upon each of us to make this world-shaking and glorious news known in every land—Christ died for all! All are acceptable by Him. It matters not where you were born, whether rich or poor, black or white, male or female, young or old—the Lord receives sinful men! There is a savior for you; there is a savior for me. No wonder the early church grew in such leaps and bounds! No wonder it is such welcome news everywhere today! Christ died for all!

## CONCLUSION

The riches found in the book of Acts have guarded and guided the church throughout all generations. In this book we find the will of God expressed through the Holy Spirit, through the apostles, through the early church. It is a book of beginnings and to those of us who respect God's authority, it is the end of all matters of faith and practice. It shows the transition from the

period of law, under Moses, to the freedom found in Christ. It bespeaks an aura of dedication and consecration that clears the air of doubt, indecision and despondency so often encountered in our day. It possesses the answers to the religious confusion found on every side. It battles the errors so prevalent in our world. It stirs the heart and fires the imagination. Thank God for the book of Acts!

*Amen!*





# **Great Lessons From Acts**



# BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM

Luke 24:45; Acts 1:8

## PROPOSITION

The church began on Pentecost after the Resurrection of Jesus according to Prophecy.

## OBJECTIVE

1. To show the importance of Jerusalem in the Scheme of Redemption.
2. To establish the New Testament in Jerusalem according to the Scriptures.

## INTRODUCTION

Christ's command for the Apostles was to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5); then they should be his witnesses beginning there (Acts 1:8). After his ascension they returned to Jerusalem (Acts 1:12).

In this lesson we are going to see the importance of this beginning at Jerusalem and its significance for us today.

- I. In Israel's history Jerusalem had played an important role.
  - A. Where God records his name He blesses his people (Exodus 20:24).
  - B. God recorded it in Jerusalem (II Chron. 6:6; 6:12-13). He recorded it in the temple built for Him (I Kings 9:3).
  - C. It was from Jerusalem the new law was to go forth (Isa. 2:2-3).
  - D. In Zion, a part of Jerusalem the foundation stone should be laid for a refuge and a landmark (Isa. 28:16-17).
  - E. Out of Jerusalem a fountain of waters for sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13-14:8). From this we can lay out a true and safe course for us today.
- II. Jerusalem—its role in the life of Jesus.
  - A. Jesus must go there to be crucified (Matt. 16:21).
  - B. A prophet could not perish outside Jerusalem (Luke 13:33-34).
  - C. Jesus' journey there and the end was near (Matt. 20:17-18). His trial and death there. Then his Resurrection in Jerusalem.
  - D. The new message of salvation in His name to begin in Jerusalem (Lk. 24:45-49).
  - E. The Apostles were to wait there for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5), and begin their witnessing of

Jesus from there (Acts 1:8).

III. Jerusalem—day of Pentecost—fulfillment of prophecy—a day of beginnings.

- A. Beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles baptized in the Holy Spirit and in their guidance into truth they preached (Acts 2:1-5; 2:4-21)—(fulfills Joel 2:28-30).
- B. Beginning of the preaching of the gospel, Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus (2:28-30).
- C. Beginning of the terms of salvation in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38-39).
- D. Beginning of the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18). Foundation laid, individuals added to the church (Acts 2:47). From this time on the church is in existence.
- E. Beginning of the Kingdom, foretold by the prophets (Mk. 1:14-15; 9:9; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).

### **CONCLUSION**

Jerusalem, the glorious city. But, she has fulfilled her mission, now she is neglected of God. The Jerusalem from above, the holy city of God in heaven, is where we are going. But we had to begin at Jerusalem in Palestine to understand these things. To fail to begin there is to fail to begin as God has directed. Only from there can we know how to go and where we are going.

# **DAWN OF THE GOSPEL DAY**

## **Acts 1:1-11**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Gospel Day Dawned according to the work and promise of Jesus in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show the work, words of Jesus and promise of the Angels introduced the establishment of the church.

### **INTRODUCTION**

While Jesus was on earth he began his work. Now that he is in heaven he continues what he began. In the gospel of Luke, Luke shows what Jesus continued to do through the Apostles. What he began "to do" and "to teach" both action and message. His preparation for departure and his departure and what he began to do is found in these eleven verses of this chapter.

#### **I. Jesus' Preparation For Departure.**

A. Jesus had been with them; he had revealed God, suffered, been put to death and then raised, and now was ready to depart. He spent forty days preparing for his departure.

#### **B. The Preparation:**

1. By manifesting himself in a risen body "many proofs vs. 3," to prepare the Apostles as witnesses. There are eleven appearances of Christ recorded after his resurrection. The Resurrection of Christ would not be questionable to the Apostles; they knew he had come forth from the dead (Lk. 24:36-43; John 20:27-29; 1 John 1:1-3).
2. By special instruction "speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God," (vs. 3). The only thing recorded that Jesus spoke in this forty day period is the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:36-43; John 20:21-23). What Jesus had begun the Apostles were to continue.
3. By a special charge "wait for the Holy Spirit" (vs. 4-5). They needed to be prepared by God before beginning this great work. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised only to the Apostles.

#### **II. Jesus' Last Words.**

A. The Apostles' question (vs. 6) which shows they did not

- yet understand that Jesus' Kingdom was to be Spiritual.
- B. Jesus' reply shows the Kingdom was to come, but man did not know when it would come.
  - C. Jesus commanded the Apostles to be his witnesses (vs. 8). Remember Mark 1:9. The Kingdom would come with power.
  - D. When the Kingdom was to come it was to come with power, but the Holy Spirit was to come with power, so when the Holy Spirit came the Kingdom came. Why do men still wait for the Kingdom to come when it came with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4?
- III. The Ascension And The Promise of The Angels.
- A. The ascension, its importance.
    - 1. This was necessary to complete the work begun. The Holy Spirit had yet to come and could not come until Jesus had gone away (John 16:7; Acts 2:33). Jesus had to go to enter his glory (John 17:4-5; Acts 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:21).
    - 2. The ascension of Jesus was necessary for him to receive authority by sitting at God's right hand, in order to carry on his work (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 12:1).
    - 3. To Jesus in heaven, the Christian now looks as he waits (1 Thess. 1:9-11). We set our mind on him (Col. 3:1-4) and on Jesus we depend for intercession in prayer (Rom. 8:34).
  - B. The cloud, this meant they could see him clearly so they could not be mistaken. They knew they had seen him go back to God.
  - C. The Angels' words—how sad they must have been to see their Master go away, but the Angel's words comforted them—he will come again! They had hope! When we see a loved one go away, if he promises to come again, we have hope to encourage us! They had joy to help them, but their hope is our hope today. Jesus is coming again at the judgment to reward us (1 Thess. 4:16-18; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Rev. 1:7).

### **CONCLUSION**

Jesus began his work while here; he gave the continuing work to the Apostles and they have passed it on to all Christians. We all have the to do, and even though the work is hard we have our hope to give us strength—"Jesus is coming again."

# THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## Acts 2:1-4

### PROPOSITION

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was sent from God in heaven and fell on the Apostles and the household of Cornelius.

### OBJECTIVE

To help man understand for whom the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was for and the purpose of the Holy Spirit Baptism.

### INTRODUCTION

God is responsible for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It came from Heaven and not from man. A great deal of confusion is found today in many religions concerning this very important subject. May we study the Bible with an open mind to find the truth.

#### I. The Baptism of The Holy Spirit.

- A. There was a "promise" from John the Baptist (Matt. 3:11).
- B. There was a "promise" from Christ (Lk. 24:48-49).
  - 1. Jesus told the Apostles to wait in Jerusalem.
  - 2. They were to receive "power" from on high.
  - 3. They were to "witness" of Christ.
- C. The same charge is repeated in Acts 1:2-4.
- D. The "power" is repeated in Acts 1:5.

#### OBSERVATION:

- 1. While we may not be able to know from John's statement in Matthew 3:11 who would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jesus in repeating and explaining the baptismal promise of the Holy Spirit, clearly shows it was for the *Apostles only*.
- 2. Those who were to receive the "promise" were to receive "power." Who received the "power?" Acts 2:1-4 shows *only* the Apostles received the "power" to speak in tongues (Acts 2:13). Peter and the eleven (Acts 2:14). You can see the "they" of Acts 2:1 and Acts 1:26 refers to the Apostles and not all disciples. *Only* the Apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4.
- 3. Only the Apostles worked miracles until "they laid hands" on others. The miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit belonged to the Apostles *only*, until they "laid their hands" on someone else (Acts 2:43; 3:3; 3:6; 4:33; 5:12; 5:15-16; 6:6,8).

4. The Apostles were special witnesses (Acts 1:22, also 1:26) "numbered with the eleven," "We are witnesses" (Acts 2:32); the audience appealed to the Apostles when they asked "what to do" (Acts 2:37). This fulfills Jesus' command to "wait," "receive power" to bear witness."

## II. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit Was From Heaven And Was Both Seen And Heard.

- A. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was directly from heaven and did not come through man.
  1. "God hath poured forth"
  2. "That which you see"
  3. And "hear" (Acts 2:33).

### OBSERVATION:

1. It was something men "heard," (Acts 2:2) also it was "seen" (2:3). Something was done, they began to speak in other languages (Acts 2:7-12) "how hear we every man in his own language."
2. This is the fulfillment of John's and Jesus' "promise" to all believers. For all did not have the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10; 12:30); hence, two different "promises" are involved, the "promise" of John and Jesus and the "promise" of Acts 2:38. Read also 1 Corinthians 12:24-31.
3. All who were "baptised in the Holy Spirit" did speak in other languages (Acts 2:1-4; 2:6; 2:8; 2:11; 10:44-47). But there were others who spoke in tongues or languages who were not baptised in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6; 1 Cor. 12) Therefore, Acts 2:38 does not refer to Holy Spirit Baptism, for if it did all would speak in tongues, but as Paul said "do all speak in tongues?" Clearly showing all do not! Yet all are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, so it is evident the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) does not mean a Baptism of the Holy Spirit nor the gift of tongues.
- B. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a "promise" not a "command."
- C. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by the miraculous and by inspiration.
- D. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was not for the "remission of sins" nor to "put on Christ."

## III. The Household of Cornelius Was Baptised In The Holy Spirit.

- A. Cornelius was "baptised" in the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15-16).
- B. This was called a "like gift" (Acts 11:17), but this was different from anything except what had taken place "at the beginning" (Acts 11:15), and on "us" meaning the Apostles only.



#### **OBSERVATION:**

It is evident this "like gift" was not the ordinary "gift of the Holy Spirit of Acts 2:38 which is promised to all believers, for if it was why make such a big matter of it?

- C. Cornelius' baptism of the Holy Spirit came *before* his conversion, before he received the remission of sins, read Acts 10:44, now read Acts 11:4 in order. The Holy Spirit came before faith, repentance or Baptism in water for remission of sins! Yet the "promise" of the "gift of the Holy Spirit" to all believers comes after "baptism for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38-39).

#### **OBSERVATION:**

1. The reception of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius' household did not show he was already a child of God.
2. The word "gift" can and does have two different meanings in different passages. An example to show this to be true are the words "Apostle" in Galatians 1:1 and Philippians 2:25. In the first passage "Apostle" means "one of the twelve" the second passage "Apostle" means "one sent from a congregation." Two uses of the same word in different passages!
3. After the reception of the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit Cornelius and his household were commanded to be baptised (Acts 10:48) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:39). This proves there were two different "promises" of the Holy Spirit!
- D. Why did Cornelius' household receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit like the Apostles?
  1. They were the first Gentiles to be brought into the church and God showed by this miracle he had accepted Gentiles as well as Jews (see Acts 11:17-18).
  2. This integrated the church of Christ once and for all (Acts 11:19-26).

#### **OBSERVATION:**

God waited approximately ten years after the establishment of the church to call his people "Christians." It was done only after the Jews recognized the Gentiles as fellow-heirs of eternal life and after Jew and Gentile worshipped together in one congregation.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a marvelous, miraculous manifestation of God! It was the beginning of a wonderful era in the Kingdom of God, it has much meaning for God's people. It

effects are still being seen, but no one today can claim such power, proofs or demonstrations. Yet every child of God receives the "promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit" of Acts 2:38.

# THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON

## Acts 2:14-47

### PROPOSITION

The first Gospel Sermon contained facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed and promises to be received by all men in all succeeding ages.

### OBJECTIVE

To convince the audience they must believe, repent and be baptised for the Remission of sins to be saved.

### INTRODUCTION

This first gospel sermon is marvelous in that the authority of Christ is preached for the first time. Also for the first time the law of pardon for all men throughout the entire Christian age is announced and about three thousand souls were baptised into Christ.

#### I. Jesus Is Preached As The Savior of All Mankind.

A. Jesus has all authority and power (Matt. 28:18-20).

1. He instructed the Apostles to use the keys of the Kingdom (Matt. 16:19).

2. The gospel was to be for *all* mankind (Matt. 28:18-20).

B. Peter and the eleven were filled with the Holy Spirit which enabled them to preach the truth (Acts 2:1-4; 2:14).

C. Peter shows Jesus is the answer to the promise of the Old Testament prophecies (Joel, Acts 2:16-21).

D. He shows God Approved of Jesus by allowing him to work miracles (Acts 2:22).

E. He preaches the death, burial and Resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:23-24).

F. Jesus was the one of whom David spoke (Acts 2:25-31). And Jesus God raised up to sit on David's throne (Acts 2:30-32).

G. Peter says the Apostles are witnesses of these things (Acts 2:32).

H. Therefore, Jesus sat at God's right hand and poured forth the Holy Spirit which they "saw and heard" (Acts 2:33).

I. Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 2:34-36), the Lord and anointed of God!

#### II. The Gospel Plan of Salvation.

A. The men believed what Peter said about the Christ for "they were cut in their hearts and cried out" (Acts 2:37).

B. They wanted to know "what to do?" This is the first time

believers in Christ have asked the question.

C. Peter's answer is *all* important (Acts 2:38).

1. "Repent," Jesus had taught this (Lk. 13:3-5). He also said from "Jerusalem Repentance must be preached in his name" (Lk. 24:47).
2. "Be Baptised for the remission of sins." They had sins, for Peter accused them of crucifying Jesus (Acts 2:36). Jesus had told Nicodemus "you must be born again" (John 3:1-5). Jesus had said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mk. 16:15-16). For those outside of Christ there is no other way to have remission of sins. This is the way Paul was saved later (Acts 22:16). All this is in the name of Christ, by his authority.
3. Then Peter promised them the Holy Spirit as a gift. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 3:2. This promise had first been made to Abraham (Gen. 22:15-18), and all Jews knew of it, but it was to "your children and to the Gentiles, those afar off" "even as many as our Lord shall call" and God calls through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14).

III. The Results of The First Gospel Sermon.

- A. "As many as received his word were baptised" (Act 2:41).
- B. "And there were added in that day 3,000 souls" (Acts 2:41).
- C. "They were added to the church" (Acts 2:47). Jesus had promised to build his church (Matt. 16:18). Now his church is here. From this time on in the New Testament the church is always in existence. It is a fact that *God* adds to the church, not man. This is done in heaven (Heb. 12:33). You cannot join the Lord's church; only God can add you to it!
- D. Conversion is the process whereby men turn to God. Faith changes a man's mind, repentance changes man's heart and baptism changes one's state, from out of Christ into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27). Whereby God adds him to the church, the saved. Pardon is not something done in us, but rather God does it in heaven for us.

**CONCLUSION**

Note how simple all of this is yet men and their churches have changed it so much. Today men refuse to hear the first gospel sermon as preached by Peter and the Apostles. But those who will hear, believe, repent and be baptised will be added by God to the church. Why don't you do that right now?

# **THE LORD'S CALL**

## **Acts 2:37-42**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Lord calls men through the Gospel to be saved.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To convince the Lord only calls through the word to men to obey the gospel.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Peter has just accused the Jews of crucifying the Messiah and God raised him from the dead. The Jews were convicted to their sins and cried out asking, "what must we do" Peter said, "repent and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for unto you is the promise and unto your children and unto those that are afar off as many as our Lord God shall call unto Him." Now what does Peter mean by the Lord's call? Much foolishness and false doctrine is taught about the Lord's calling someone. What does the Bible say?

- I. It Is God That Calls Everyone To Be Saved.
  - A. Peter declares it is God that calls (Acts 2:39; 1 Pet. 5:10; 1 Cor. 1:9).
  - B. Jesus taught that it is the Father that draws men unto Him (John 6:44-45).
- II. How Does The Lord Call Men Unto Salvation!
  - A. The matter of "how" the Lord calls men unto Himself has been of great concern and debate in times past. In His parable Jesus showed God would call men through His Servants (Matt. 22:1-14; Lk. 14:16-24).
  - B. He calls men through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14); this is God's drawing power (John 12:32); His power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16-17).
  - C. Therefore, He gave the Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
- III. Whom Does The Lord Call—Every Man!
  - A. Jesus came to save the Lost (Lk. 19:10); He came "to call sinners unto repentance" (Lk. 5:32).
  - B. In Peter's expression, "unto them that are afar off" (Acts 2:39), the Apostles had reference to the Gentiles (Eph. 2:13-17).
  - C. The Gentiles had been specifically called when Peter was

sent to the household of Cornelius (Acts 15:7-9; 10:1; 11:15).

- D. Today God would have all come to Repentance and be saved (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 TIm. 2:3-4).

#### IV. Unto What Is The Lord Calling Men and Women?

- A. From darkness unto light (1 Pet. 2:9).
- B. To be saints (1 Cor. 1:2) [discuss what a saint is, according to the New Testament].
- C. Into fellowship with Christ (1 Cor. 1:9).
- D. To follow the steps of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21).
- E. For freedom (Gal. 5:13), a freedom and liberty from sin (John 8:31-32).
- F. To peace (Col. 3:15).
- G. To receive a blessing (1 Pet. 3:9); unto eternal glory (1 Pet. 5:10).

#### V. The Calling Is From God And Heaven

- A. It is a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1).
- B. It is a high calling (Phil. 3:14).
- C. It is a worthy calling (Eph. 4:1).
- D. The Christian should realize the calling is such as to cause him to live in such a way as to glorify God!

### **CONCLUSION**

God is still calling today. He is calling through the Gospel of His Son. "To you is the promise," why not answer the heavenly calling? Today is the day of grace, "Despise not him that calleth."

# STEADFAST BELIEVERS

Acts 2:41-47

## PROPOSITION

A steadfast believer is one who has obeyed the gospel and continues in the "Apostles' doctrine, fellowship and breaking of bread and prayers."

## OBJECTIVE

To show what a Steadfast Believer must do to be saved.

## INTRODUCTION

The Jerusalem church will always be the model church for all New Testament Churches through all ages. They were taught by the Apostles who were guided by the Holy Spirit. Let us note their steadfast devotion to Christ.

- I. "All That Believed"—The Believers.
  - A. Men quibble over who is a believer, but the Bible easily shows us.
  - B. Peter and the Apostles had preached the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:22-36).
  - C. The people heard, they had repented then been baptised in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. Those that were baptised were added by God to the Church.
  - D. Then the Holy Spirit calls them Believers (Acts 2:44). It takes *all* to be a Bible believer.
- II. They Continued Steadfastly (Acts 2:42).
  - A. "Steadfastly" means to give constant attention to something, as of prayer (Acts 1:14; 6:4; Rom. 12:13; Col. 4:2).
  - B. "Apostles' doctrine"—their teaching.
    1. The Apostles' teaching was that given them by Christ (John 17:18; Matt. 16:18-19; 19:18); all things he had commanded them (Matt. 28:19-20).
    2. Christ's teaching was of the Father (John 7:16-17); God's word (1 Thess. 2:13); the doctrine of God (Tit. 2:10).
    3. Doctrines of men are vain (Matt. 15:8); of demons seduce (1 Tim. 4:2); to go onward in these is to leave Christ and thus reject him (2 John 9).
  - C. Fellowship—a unity and sharing implies togetherness, a bond which unites believers, that intimate bond of Christians is through fellowship with God (1 John 1:3-5); with Christ (1 Cor. 1:9); and the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14), and finally Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 10:16). Fellowship is

the sharing of goods (Acts 2:44) and this is also called a communion (2 Cor. 9:13).

D. Breaking of Bread—the Lord's Supper.

1. Its institution (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:25-26).
2. Its purpose, to show forth, a memorial, commemoration (1 Cor. 11:25-26). A communion, a fellowship (1 Cor. 10:16).
3. Time—upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). To forsake is to commit spiritual suicide (Heb. 10:25; 2:3).

E. Prayer.

1. Necessity, note how *steadfast* is associated with prayer (Acts 1:14; 6:4; Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2).
2. Prayer solves the problem of anxiety (Phil. 4:4-7; 1 Thess. 5:16-20).
3. Through it our souls are kept in communion with God and made submissive to His will (Lk. 18:1; Matt. 26:41).

III. One Result—"One Accord" (Vs. 46).

- A. "One accord"—one mind, unity of spirit and purpose (1 Cor. 1:10).
- B. "Gladness," singleness of heart, praising God for there was joy among them.
- C. "Favour with the people"—respect of those who saw them. It will produce respect today.

**CONCLUSION**

Here is the ideal—believers in every sense of the word, continuing steadfastly with the fruits of joy, gladness, fellowship and respect among the people.



# **SUCH AS I HAVE**

## **Acts 3:1-10**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Christian is required by God to use all at his disposal to glorify God.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To convince the audience we must use faithfully all that God has given us for his glory.

### **INTRODUCTION**

People often say they wish they had more money to use in the Lord's work. Most of us do not give what we are able to give, but money is not the most needed thing! The thing most needed is that which money cannot buy, time and our own personal dedication, if you have no money at all then you are in a good company, the company of Peter and John!

#### **I. A Sad Contrast—Then And Today.**

- A. Something sad about the condition presented, a beautiful temple, and expensive gate, this reflected the pride of the Jewish nation.
- B. But in contrast a poor beggar. Physically lame through life. Financially, seeking food, clothes, a home; where shall it come from? Mentally, probably very discouraged, having to beg just to live.
- C. This condition shows the failure of the state and the Jewish religion. The state was rich, so was the Jewish religion, but the beggar was hungry—laid before an expensive building!
- D. This reflects the world's needs today. They seek the material things, yet the need is much deeper, it is a spiritual need! The world is lost and needs salvation from sin (1 John 5:17). It needs God (Jer. 10:23). It needs faith in God and in humanity (Matt. 17:20; Phil 4:13). The world needs hope that looks beyond the material to the eternal (Tit. 2:11; Heb. 6:19-20; Rom. 8:24-25). The world needs courage, to face life, war, and disease (Rom. 8:28).

#### **II. The Personal Wealth of Peter And John And of The Christian Today.**

- A. Silver and gold none (Vs. 4-6). Because Jesus had never promised us wealth (Matt. 6:33). But others will help us (Matt. 19:27-30) (Read Matthew 20:1; Mark 10:29-31.)

- B. But Christ had promised them greater riches (John 10:10; 14:12; 16:7-14); with peace and joy (John 14:27; 15:11).
  - C. Consider the Christian's great possessions today: The gospel, God's power to save (Phil. 2:15-16; 2 Cor. 4:7; Jude 3). God does not promise a sudden wealth of outward circumstances or bodily cures for immunity from disease. It offers one essential thing, remission of sins. God promises to use the individual for great things (Eph. 3:20-21). Consider such men as: Abraham, father of a nation, father of the faithful, who could have dreamed of such? Children of Israel, received the promised land as an inheritance, how unbelievable! Paul, as he established churches, wrote most of the New Testament and spear-headed Christianity among the Gentiles, who could ask for more? So you and other Christians God can and will use. So Christ's joy and peace are ours (John 14:27; 15:11; Phil. 4:4-6).
- III. What Peter and John Did—They Took Him By The Hand and Raised Him Up.
- A. Peter used the power God had given him, he used what he had! He got down where the lame man was.
  - B. So must the Christian today. He must use all he has, his money, his time, his talents. Extend a hand and lift up!
  - C. There is great power in the church today, we can be of great help to the lost all about us and everywhere. (Read Eph. 3:20-21; Phil. 2:13-14) but the secret is every person must use his own power! God will greatly multiply our efforts if we try!

### **CONCLUSION**

To those lost God extends his saving hand; to the needy, in every way, the Christian must reach and help. If we do then great blessings will result (Lk. 6:38).

# MIRACLES AND TODAY

## Acts 3:1-11

### PROPOSITION

The miracles in the Bible were for a definite purpose and have ceased today.

### OBJECTIVE

To show the purpose of miracles and to contrast them with false miracle workers of today.

### INTRODUCTION

In these passages we have the first account of a miracle performed by an Apostle. We wish to look at the place of miracles in the Christian dispensation. Miracles were performed; we can accept this by faith based on the evidence of their purpose.

#### I. A Miracle—What Is It?

A. Three terms are used in the Bible to describe miracles, Powers (Mighty works), wonders and signs (Acts 2:22).

1. Power—divine power, greater than man can do, source is from God.

2. Wonders—this is the effect, astonishment produced.

3. Signs—tokens of God's presence, sanction of what is taught, its purpose.

B. Definition of a miracle, a deed impossible to the forces ordinarily working in that situation. A transcendence of nature, a direct intervention by high, heavenly power.

C. You cannot explain a miracle; to try and do so makes it ridiculous. You either believe or reject, but you do not explain it!

D. Miracles have a moral purpose and an ethical value.

#### II. The Purpose of Miracles In The Bible.

A. To demonstrate and confirm a claim to an appointment by God. Whom God sends with a special message he gives the sufficient power and authority to do the job.

1. Moses is a good example (Ex. 4:1-9).

2. Jesus is another example (Matt. 9:2-6; John 11:42-44; 20:30-31).

3. And so is Paul, as an Apostle (Acts 26:16; 2 Cor. 12:12).

B. Miracles were used to confirm the message; therefore, a companion to a demonstration to prove the speaker is from God, as when the Apostles went forth (Mk. 16:15-16; Heb. 2:2).

- C. Miracles demonstrated the power and glory of God.
    - 1. Jesus and the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:40).
    - 2. Peter and John (Acts 3:12,16).
    - 3. So all things should be done to his glory (1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 4:11).
  - D. When the purpose of a thing has been accomplished, or fulfilled, there is no need for continued repetition.
    - 1. The creation of the world and man began by a miracle, then natural order took over.
    - 2. Those whom God sent, they fulfilled their mission, their claims were confirmed by God. It is written in the Bible so we can read and believe.
    - 3. Word has been confirmed, God has been confirmed. We can study to see its truth; therefore, miracles have ceased for the present.
- III. The Accomplishing of The Purpose of Miracles.
- A. Everything in God's plan began as a miracle. In nature, the exodus from Egypt—the prophets, all began with miracles.
  - B. The Christian dispensation began with miracles—the Virgin birth, Life of Christ—Resurrection—The coming of the Holy Spirit.
    - 1. The Apostles' power began by a miracle, the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4). This power to bring about such miracles was imparted to others by laying on of the Apostles' hands (Acts 8:13-17).
    - 2. When the purpose of miracles was fulfilled, Paul said, the miraculous gifts would cease (1 Cor. 13:8-10).
    - 3. Miracles were not used to save people, ever! They always accompanied the claims of God-inspired men to confirm their words. Now the message of salvation has been confirmed. It is through this message of salvation that mighty works are done (Rom. 1:16-17; John 14:12).

### **CONCLUSION**

"Such as I have"—That Peter used. So let us. We have everything necessary to send the gospel—we no longer need the miracles. We need to only use that which God has given us. If we do God will grant us great success!

# **PETER'S SECOND SERMON**

## **Acts 3:11-22**

### **PROPOSITION**

Peter's second sermon was in essence the first sermon preached and makes the same demands on people today.

### **OBJECTION**

To show the very preaching of the Apostles constitutes the same gospel message today.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Peter and John had just performed the first recorded miracle since Pentecost: A lame man, lame from his mother's womb, had been healed. This brought a multitude together in astonishment, wondering and marveling at what had taken place.

#### **I. The Message of The Sermon.**

##### **A. The explanation of the miracle (Vs. 11-14).**

1. "Why marvel ye at this man?"
2. "Why look at us?" They should have recognized the power as being from God.
3. God had glorified his servant, this was evident from the miracle.

##### **B. The undeniable accusation (Vs. 13-15).**

1. "Whom you delivered up," in contrast to God's part.
2. "Denied before Pilate," a heathen ruler sought to release him (Matt. 27).
3. "You denied" and asked for a murderer to be released, they knew one was a murderer and the other was Holy!
4. You "killed the Prince of Life."

##### **C. The challenge and claim, whom God raised from the dead. This must be proved.**

1. "We are witnesses," (Vs. 15).
2. The miracle, by faith in his name (Vs. 16). The faith was on Peter's part not the man healed!
3. The Prophets (Vs. 17-18), had foretold all this. The Jews knew the prophets.

#### **II. Conclusion and Command Drawn From The Argument.**

- A. Apparently a change came over them (Vs. 17). Hence, they believed or had faith manifested, otherwise Peter could not have proceeded as he did.
- B. Repentance based on godly sorrow for that is the basis of

repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). It is the change of mind between godly sorrow and bearing of the fruits of repentance [Read Matthew 3:8]. Repentance is a change of mind that then results in a change of life. The order is godly sorrow, Repentance, the fruit.

C. Turn, or "be converted." This is not passive but active, something man has to do [Read Acts 2:40]. It is the conversion itself the whole thing in values.

1. Change of mind equals faith, belief.
2. Change of attitude, repentance.
3. Change of relationship, turn, action.

Parallels to this are seen in:

1. Repent and be baptised (Acts 2:38).
2. Repent and turn (Acts 2:17).
3. Believe and turned (Acts 11:21).
4. Believed and baptised (Acts 18:8; Mk. 16:15-16).
5. Turn from idols to God, to serve and wait (1 Thess. 1:9).
6. The "Turning" is baptism for the remission of sins.

### III. The Parallel Between The First and Second Sermon.

- A. Miracles, both introduced by a miracle, which produced similar effects. The people were confounded, amazed, caused the people to marvel, brought people together and a preacher then taught them.
- B. Sermons: Jesus is the Christ whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.
- C. Proof of the resurrection: The Apostles' witness, the miracles the people saw, the Old Testament Prophets. Conclusion is the same, God raised Jesus from the dead.
- D. Terms of salvation the same: Repentance, Baptism, then the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Repentance, turn and then the remission of sins (Acts 3:19).

### CONCLUSION

We today need make no apology for preaching the same thing, because it is true. There is no excuse for being lost, you have heard the same message, you can obey the same commands and be saved by Christ on his terms of the Gospel.

# FRUITS OF PERSECUTION

Acts 4:23-35

## PROPOSITION

The fruits of persecution move us to God in prayer, to plead for boldness and result in Unity and Sacrifice.

## OBJECTIVE

To show the blessings and grace of persecution.

## INTRODUCTION

Pentecost had come—the church had been established and was growing. This growth was arousing the opposition of the enemies.

The miracle on the lame man and Peter's sermon had caused the Apostles to be arrested and imprisoned. They were rebuked threatened, released and came to their own followers.

In this lesson we shall consider the fruits of persecution.

### I. They Were Driven To God In Prayer.

- A. They were "driven" as Jesus was "driven" by the Holy Spirit (Mk. 1:14; cf. Matt. 4:11).
- B. In this they revealed their trust in him for strength (Prov. 3:5-6).
- C. God is accomplishing his purpose, it is God's work, God's purpose must be fulfilled. Earth's powers cannot defeat this purpose (Psa. 2:1-2).
- D. They refuse to avenge themselves, but commit their cause to him (Rom. 12:19).

### II. Boldness—Their Cry And Need Was For Boldness.

- A. Prayer is a source of divine encouragement. In it the heart finds its closest intimacy with God (Phil. 4:4-7).
- B. No one can expect miracles today; but he can expect God's presence (Heb. 13:5-6).
- C. Christians must still pray for boldness to face all our enemies unafraid.

### III. Unity—They Were Bound Together By Their Common Faith And The Persecution.

- A. They were of "one heart and soul" (Vs. 32).
- B. It was not only a "united front" but they had a united heart—one faith, one hope, one purpose (Eph. 4:4-6).
- C. The Prayer of Jesus (John 17:20) was answered in this congregation in Jerusalem and should be answered in every congregation of God's people everywhere (Eph. 4:1-3).

**IV. Their Unselfish Sacrifice—This Unity of Faith And Purpose Was Demonstrated.**

- A. They recognized themselves as stewards of goods belonging to God (Vs. 32)
- B. For centuries this lesson had been taught (Lev. 25:23).
- C. There is a sense in which one's goods are his own (Acts 5:4), but as we are Christ's and all is his, we are stewards (1 Cor. 3:21-23).
- D. Here is an example for the church in all places and all times, and example of unselfish sacrifice (Matt. 16:24).

**V. Great Grace Was Upon Them All.**

- A. Grace—God's favour and favour with the people (cf. Acts 2:47).
- B. God is glorified in the eyes of the people when a congregation so demonstrates its love and zeal (1 Pet. 2:12; 4:11).

**CONCLUSION**

Since the days of the Apostles, Christians have stressed the plan of salvation and the plan of worship. Let us never leave it, but also add the stressing of the New Testament zeal, faith, unity and sacrifice. When this is done the church will extend its borders and God will be glorified.



# **THE FIRST CASE OF DISCIPLINE IN THE FIRST CONGREGATION**

**Acts 5:1-14**

## **PROPOSITION**

Church discipline is ordained of God and no church is a New Testament church who refuses to practice it.

## **OBJECTIVE**

To persuade the church of the essentiality of Church discipline and to show God's purpose in it.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The first case of church discipline in the New Testament church was Ananias and Sapphira. Church discipline is commanded by God and great good will be done when it is carried out according to the Scriptures. But if refused and ignored terrible results will be forth coming.

- I. In The New Testament Church God Carried Out The First Discipline of The Ungodly.
  - A. God has always disciplined his people; Genesis 3 is a good example. Throughout Israel's history God punished them for disobedience.
  - B. Moses, a great man of God was denied the right to enter the promised land because he disobeyed (Num. 20:8-13).
  - C. God commanded the Israelite parents to discipline their children (Deut. 21:18-21).
  - D. God disciplined Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-5).
- II. God's Method of Discipline Does Work.
  - A. If the sin of Ananias and Sapphira had been ignored the entire church could have perished!
  - B. But God's punishment brought great fear upon all who heard and "believers the more were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women" (5:11-14).
  - C. Here is proof positive God's way works! Even though men reject church discipline and fight against it—it will work today!
- III. God's Purpose In Corrective Church Discipline.
  - A. The first aim is to restore the sinner (Heb. 12:11; 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; Matt. 18:17).
  - B. The next reason in importance in exercising corrective

discipline is to maintain the purity of the church and the glory of Christ before the world that the world might be saved (Matt. 5:13-16; 1 Cor. 5:7).

- C. The discipline exercised in the first century church upheld the fear of God before believers and unbelievers alike (Acts 5:11-14).
- D. Exercising corrective discipline is proof of love for the erring as well as the love of God (Prov. 13:24; Heb. 12:6).

#### IV. Who Should Be Disciplined By The Church?

- A. Those guilty of offending a brother (Matt. 18:15-18).
- B. The fornicator, covetous, whoremonger, the unclean (Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 5:11).
- C. Blasphemers (1 Tim. 1:20).
- D. False Teachers (Rom. 16:17).
- E. Heretics (Tit. 3:10).
- F. Hypocrites (1 Cor. 16:22).
- G. Liars, murders, unbelieving, sorcerers, fearful (Rev. 21:8).
- H. Sex perverts, thieves, drunkards, extortioners, revilers, covetous (1 Cor. 6:9-10).
- I. Elders, who continue in sin (1 Tim. 5:19-20).
- J. Those who walk disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6).
- K. Those who forsake the assembly (Heb. 10:25-31).

### CONCLUSION

Church discipline is very serious. But no greater respect for God's law can be shown than exercising church discipline, "that I may know the proof of you, whether you be obedient in all things," (2 Cor. 2:7-9). May God help us to return to his pattern for the New Testament church in all things and this certainly includes church discipline!

# **THE OFFICE AND WORK OF DEACONS**

**Acts 6:1-6; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8**

## **PROPOSITION**

A New Testament Church needs qualified Deacons to serve the interests of the congregation.

## **OBJECTIVE**

To show the office and work of Deacons are scriptural and necessary.

## **INTRODUCTION**

That there is an office or group designated as Deacons to do the work of special servants in the church cannot be successfully denied.

This subject is important for the following reasons:

1. It has to do with Apostolic Christianity and the New Testament Church. This is especially important to us who are trying to follow the New Testament pattern.
  2. There is always the constant danger in departing from the New Testament pattern.
  3. We must always instruct the new converts in what the Bible teaches in all realms.
  4. We need to bring to our own remembrance these great truths.
  5. Now study to learn new truths or to correct misunderstandings we have concerning these men and their duties.
- I. Deacons and Their Work.

What the duties of this office are, must be learned from the words "servant" and "to serve." There is no specific teaching as to their duties, as there is of elders.

A. The name and its significance.

1. Diakonos: (Greek) "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister; neuter in gender, either male or female.
2. Universally of the servant of a King (Matt. 22:13); of one who does what promotes the welfare and prosperity of the church (Col. 1:25); those through whom God carries on his administration on earth as magistrates (Rom. 13:4); teacher of Christian religion (1 Cor. 3:5); of Christ who laboured for salvation of

Jews (Rom. 15:8).

3. A deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of the money and distributes the money collected for their use (Acts 6:1-6).
4. A deaconess, a woman to whom the care of either poor or sick women was entrusted (Rom. 16:1).  
Thayer's-Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament.

**B. The Work of Deacons:**

1. Diakoneo; (Greek) "to be a servant, attendant domestic; to serve, wait upon....to minister, supply food and the necessities of life (Matt. 25:44); to relieve one's necessities (Rom. 15:25; Heb. 6:10); to provide take care or distribute, the things necessary to sustain life" (Acts 6:2)—Thayer.
2. After considering their qualifications we notice they are not required to teach, hence their "ministering" is not primarily in "the word," neither are they to "oversee," "rule" or "shepherd," the very things required of elders. Therefore, after considering the passages in the New Testament relative to their work and service, they are to:
  - (a) Look after the material needs of those supported by the church.
  - (b) Look after the material needs of the church building—clean it, make and keep it ready for worship.
  - (c) Act as assistants and helpers to the elders in any way the elders may see fit to use them.

**CONCLUSION**

There is great dignity and responsibility attached to such an office. It certainly calls for talented and dedicated men. The congregation who has Deacons, these special servants, who do their jobs as they should, is a fortunate congregation.

# **THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

## **Acts 8:5-22; Mark 16:15-20**

### **PROPOSITION**

The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit came by the laying on of the Apostles hands only.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show what passes for miraculous gifts of the Spirit is false and contrary to the Bible's teaching.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The promise of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit was made to the Apostles only. [Read Vs. 14 of Mark 16]. In this lesson we wish to learn the use, impartation and limitation of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit.

#### **I. The Holy Spirit By Measure.**

- A. To Jesus the Holy Spirit was without measure, hence He had all the power (John 3:34; Col. 1:19).
- B. Then there was the Baptismal measure to the Apostles, in fulfillment of Jesus' promise (Acts 1:5; 2:1).
- C. Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the subject of the present study.
- D. Regular gift received by faith and obedience (Acts 2:38-39).
- E. All of these passages speak of "gifts" (Acts 11:17; 1 Cor. 12:4-9; Acts 2:38).

#### **II. The Use of The Gifts And Contrast of The Gifts And Modern So-Called "Miraculous Gifts" Philip In Samaria Acts 8:5-22.**

- A. Philip's preaching and its results (8:5,12). Philip was an evangelist, not an Apostle.
- B. The nature and use of the miracles wrought by this extraordinary power (8:6-9).
- C. Contrast between the miracles of Philip and the sorceries of Simon.
  - 1. Simon's estimate of himself.
  - 2. The people's estimate (8:10).
  - 3. God's estimate, a *sorcerer* (8:11).
- D. But when the contrast was drawn and the people believed Philip and Simon believed and was baptised and amazed (8:12-13).
- E. A contrast between the so-called miracles of today and Philip's miracles would be about the same difference

**between Philip and Simon!**

**III. The Impartiation? The Limitation? And Termination of These Special Powers.**

- A. The gifts were given by the laying on of the Apostles' hands only (8:14-21). Philip, an evangelist, could perform the miracles because the Apostles had already laid hands on him (Acts 6:5). But Philip, not being an Apostle could not pass the gift on! Peter and John were sent to impart miracles.**
- B. Paul was an Apostle so he could pass the gift to others (Acts 19:1-7).**
- C. These gifts were not used for personal advantage nor used indiscriminately (cf. 2 Tim. 4:20).**
- D. These gifts were to cease (1 Cor. 13:8-10), and they did cease!**

**CONCLUSION**

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised to and received by the Apostles. The miraculous gifts were given by the Apostles through their laying on of hands. Whatever we receive is by hearing of the word and obedience to it. Obey the gospel and all that God promised you will receive.**

# **GOD'S TWO LAWS OF PARDON**

## **Acts 8:1-22**

### **PROPOSITION**

God has two laws of pardon, one to the unsaved sinner and one to the saved sinner.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show God's two laws of pardon and their differences and to show a child of God can be lost.

### **INTRODUCTION**

When Jesus told his Apostles to be his witnesses they were to begin in Jerusalem, then Judea, and then Samaria (Acts 1:8). Now they had been nearly 2½ years in Jerusalem.

Samaria, a section northwest of Jerusalem; they had been long time enemies of the Jews. Jesus had laid the ground work for the gospel.

Two classes need pardon: the alien sinner and the Christian who falls away. In this lesson we have pardon offered to both classes.

#### **I. The First Gospel Meeting Outside Jerusalem: The law of Pardon To The Alien Sinner.**

##### **A. The persecution and its accomplishment (8:1-3). It proved a blessing for they went everywhere preaching the word (Vs. 4; Rom. 8:28; Phil. 1:12).**

1. All (except two men), "Evangelizing" telling of Christ; this is evidence to show how complete the work was in Jerusalem.
2. Philip, not the Apostle, but previously one of the deacons (Acts 6:16); later called the "evangelist" (Acts 21:8).

##### **B. The message: "The Christ"**

1. To "preach Christ" is to preach "the Word" (Vs. 4-5). "Christ" and "the gospel" is the same (1 Cor. 15:1; 2:2); "The word of God" (Acts 18:11).
2. This would be to preach Christ as Prophet (Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 1:1); Priest (Rev. 1:5; Heb. 4:14); King (Rev. 17:14).
3. It would be to preach the facts of the gospel, Faith, Repentance, Baptism, the promises of the gospel: Remission of sins, gift of Holy Spirit, resurrection from the dead and eternal life.
4. It would be to preach the Kingdom of God, the name

of Jesus Christ and baptism (Vs. 12).

C. The Results of The Preaching.

1. Multitudes gave heed with one accord (Vs. 6).
2. There was much joy in that city (Vs. 8).
3. The people believed and were baptised (Vs. 12); therefore, they were saved (Mk. 16:15-16).
4. Simon also believed and was baptised (Vs. 13). Therefore, he was saved!

II. The Reception of The Holy Spirit.

- A. Peter and John came from Jerusalem (Vs. 14-15). But why had Philip not passed on the Holy Spirit? He couldn't; he was not an Apostle? Also if Peter was Pope, who had the authority to "send" him? He was "sent!"
- B. The Samaritans were baptised in the "name of the Lord Jesus," but they had not received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit so baptism in the "name of the Lord" is not Holy Spirit baptism!
- C. The Apostles' hands (Vs. 17), the Apostles only could impart the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, check every case and see! (Acts 19:6).
- D. The purpose of the Apostles' imparting the miraculous gifts was that the Samaritans might be able to carry on the work of preaching and teaching.

III. Simon's Sin—The Law of Pardon To the Erring Child of God.

- A. Simon believed and was baptised (Vs. 13); therefore he was saved (John 3:16; Mk. 16:15-16; Gal. 3:26-27).
- B. Overcome of his old sin, Simon slid back into sin (Vs. 18-19). Now in a perishing condition (Vs. 20-21). Peter did not say "you are yet in your sins"—he had been forgiven but he returned to them again!
- C. To be forgiven he must now:
  1. Repent, (Vs. 22). So must all who sin (Lk. 13:3).
  2. Confess, which should be as broad as the sin and its influence (Jas. 5:16).
  3. Pray, (Vs. 22; Jas. 5:16). One must then continue to pray (Lk. 18:1-2).
- D. Sectarians always ask, "why not baptise him again, if baptism is for remission of sins?" God never told a man to be baptised but once, if a Christian sins he must do as Peter told Simon. God nowhere ever taught you should baptise a Christian, but all Denominational churches do that very thing! They teach you believe and become a Christian, then be baptised. God's teachings and man's are far, far apart!



## **CONCLUSION**

God has two laws of Pardon (Acts 2:38; 8:22). Let the alien and the backslider each do what God commanded: To the alien he must believe, repent and be Baptized for the remission of sins. But to the Christian who sins he must repent, confess, and pray. God is ready to receive all who will come. Are you ready to come?

# **MODERN DAY SORCERERS**

## **Acts 8:1-24**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Modern Day Sorcerers are a vastly different kind of miracle worker, from those found in the New Testament.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show the Bible's teaching of miracles and the difference between them and modern day faith healers.

### **INTRODUCTION**

At this time we wish to show the difference in New Testament miracles and modern "so-called" miracles. There is a vast difference in the two classes.

While the church was still in Jerusalem, Stephen was persecuted and slain. The persecution of the Saints caused a dispersion of the church. As they went they preached the word of God, and those upon whom the Apostles laid hands worked miracles and confirmed the word. Philip came north to Samaria and preached and worked signs to confirm his preaching.

#### **I. The Preaching In Samaria And The Results.**

- A. The message preached (Vs. 5). This was not anything but a positive declaration of the facts of the gospel with commands to be obeyed (Vs. 12).
- B. The Response to the message Preached—"They gave heed" (Vs. 12). The emphasis on hearing and seeing (Rom. 10:13-15; 3:6; 3:22). There was great "joy" in the city (Vs. 8).
- C. Simon himself, believed and obeyed (Vs. 13). According to Jesus' statement in Mark 16:1-16, Simon was a saved man! By even the reasoning of Baptist he was saved for he "believed" (cf. John 3:16).

#### **II. The Signs of Philip And The Sorceries of Simon.**

- A. Consider the purpose of miracles (Mk. 16:14-21; Heb. 2:3-4).
- B. Phillip's miracles, cast out unclean spirits, healed the lame and palsied, not waiting, all healed, no lacking of faith or anything! No hoax—everyone recognized the miracle!
- C. Simon (Vs. 9). Not given to humility! Just like modern day faith healers! Simon said he was "great," people said "power of God." They were wrong just as people are

today! God said he was a sorcerer. In New Testament days the signs confirmed the word, now, today, the words of the so-called healer confirm the sign! A great difference!

- B. People's response—they saw great difference. If you are honest and compare today's miracles with those of New Testament times you will see a great difference as well. The New Testament miracles were not used for advertisement as these today are used.

### III. The Imparting of The Holy Spirit To Work Miracles Were By The Hands of The Apostles Only (Vs. 14-17).

- A. Exclusive power of the Apostles (Vs. 18). Since the Apostles are all dead then this could not be done today.
- B. People had already received baptism in obeying the gospel (Vs. 12). Therefore, it was not Holy Spirit Baptism, for they had not received miraculous power of Holy Spirit; therefore, the one Baptism of the gospel (Eph. 4:4) is not Holy Spirit Baptism.
- C. Simon's reaction and Peter's instructions.
  - 1. Simon's error, covetousness, he was lost!
  - 2. Peter's instruction—"Repent and Pray."
  - 3. Simon's request—a noble request!

### CONCLUSION

God's power worked miracles to confirm his word in days gone by. Today's miracles are not of God, for they confirm nothing. The only way to be saved is to obey the one Baptism of the gospel, which is water baptism, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:38. This is not a miraculous thing but the gift of the Spirit promised to all baptised believers (Acts 2:39).

# **WHY THE NOBLEMAN REJOICED**

## **Acts 8:26-40**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Nobleman went on his way rejoicing because of what he learned, because of what he had done, because of what he was and because of the blessing he received.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To help all to understand that for these same reasons one can rejoice now.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Read Acts 8:26-40. Notice regarding the text:

1. This is the Bible record of the conversion of the Nobleman of Ethiopia.
  2. This record sets before us in marvelous detail how this man, this honest man, this good man, this religious man, this studious man, this sincere man, this conscientious man, became a Christian.
  3. It is not my purpose at this time to study the details of his conversion, but rather...
  4. It is my purpose to consider the significance of the last part of verse 39... "...for he went on his way rejoicing." Why was it possible for this man to go on his way rejoicing? It shall be our purpose to answer this question: Why did the Nobleman rejoice?
- I. The Nobleman Rejoiced because of What He Had Learned
- A. Philip had "preached unto him Jesus" (Vs. 23).
    1. To preach "Jesus" is to preach the Son of God with particular emphasis upon his being the "Savior" of the world (Cf. Matt. 1:21; Jn. 1:29).
    2. The Nobleman learned about sin, its nature, its consequences, the means of deliverance (Cf. Rom 3:23; 6:23; 5:1).
  - B. This same preacher, in Samaria, had preached "Christ" (Acts 8:5).
    1. To preach "Christ" is to preach the Son of God with particular emphasis upon his being "the anointed one." The entire Old Testament story was preparation for the coming of "the anointed one"—the one who would combine the offices of Prophet, Priest and King.
    2. When Philip preached Christ in Samaria, according to

Verse 13 he preached:

- a. The Kingdom of God (an established fact) (Col. 1:13).
  - b. The name of Jesus Christ (salvation in it) (Acts 4:12).
  - c. Baptism (for the remission of sins) (Acts 2:38).
- C. Thus, we have a great deal of information about what the Nobleman learned.
- D. It is imperative that one learn these things now.

II. The Nobleman Rejoiced Because of What He Had Done

- A. He had listened earnestly. He was a teachable person (Cf. Jn. 8:32).
- B. He had been brought to believe in Jesus Christ (Cf. Acts 4:12).
- C. He had requested to be baptized (Cf. Acts 2:37-38).
- D. He had stated plainly his faith in Jesus Christ (Cf. Rom. 10:9-10).
- E. He had been baptised into Christ (Cf. Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27).
- F. It is imperative that one do these things now.

III. The Nobleman Rejoiced Because of What He was

- A. It is good to ask the question: What was this man when he did what he did?
- B. He was not:
  1. What voting makes one for there was no voting.
  2. What relating a religious experience makes one for he related no religious experience.
  3. What sprinkling makes one for there was no sprinkling.
  4. What the doctrine of "faith only" makes one for there is more here than "faith only."
  5. What the doctrine of "grace only" makes one, for there is more here than "grace only."
  6. A member of any denomination for there was no denomination in existence.
- C. He was:
  1. A simple New Testament Christian (1 Pet. 4:16).
  2. A child of God (Rom. 8:14).
  3. A member of the Lord's Church (1 Cor. 12:13).
- D. It is imperative that one be the same thing now.

IV. The Nobleman Rejoiced Because of the Blessings That Were His

- A. Remission of sins (Acts 22:16).
- B. Membership in the Lord's Church (Acts 20:28).

- C. Citizenship in the Kingdom of God (Col. 1:13).
- D. Every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
- E. The blessed hope of eternal life (1 Pet. 1:3).
- F. The privilege and obligation of laboring as the Lord's servant (Mk. 13:34).
- G. It is wonderful that one can have these same blessings now.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Nobleman rejoiced:

1. Because of what he had learned.
2. Because of what he had done.
3. Because of what he was.
4. Because of the blessings that were his.

For these same wonderful reasons the same joy can be yours today.

*(Thanks to brother Roy Deaver for the main points of this lesson. AMC)*

# FROM CHIEF OF SINNERS TO CHIEF OF MISSIONARIES

Acts 9:22; 1 Timothy 1:15

## PROPOSITION

Saul of Tarsus, because of the resurrection of Christ went from chief of sinners to chief of Missionaries.

## OBJECTIVE

1. To show no sinner is too great for Christ to save.
2. A conscience is not a safe guide in religion.
3. Saul's conversion is a monument to the resurrection of Christ.
4. Saul's transformed life is a monument to the power of the gospel.

## INTRODUCTION

Saul, chief of sinners became the chiefest of missionaries. Saul, son of Kish, the first King of Israel, was of the tribe of Benjamin, he stood head and shoulders higher than others. So Saul of Tarsus of the tribe of Benjamin stood head and shoulders above others as a Christian.

There are four lessons to be learned by Saul's conversion.

1. No sinner is too great for Christ to save.
  2. A conscience is not a safe guide in religion.
  3. Saul's conversion is a monument to the resurrection of Christ.
  4. Saul's transformed life is a monument to the power of the gospel.
- I. Saul of Tarsus—Chief of Sinners (1 Tim. 1:15).
- A. Saul in the flesh (Phil. 3:4-6).
1. "Circumcised—Hebrews," custom, language etc. Not a Hellenistic Jew, but one so born (Acts 21:39; 22:3; 26:4).
  3. "Zeal—persecuting the church" (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 22:4).
  4. "Righteousness—blameless," of good conscience always" (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2 Tim. 1:3).
- B. Lesson learned, conscience is a safe guide only when the mind of man has been properly taught! Paul was of a "good conscience," but Paul was wrong! A conscience must be taught God's way, then you know it is right.
- II. The Conversion of Paul—Where Did It Take Place?

A. The conversion:

1. The journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, 137 miles. Notice the spirit of Paul as he leaves, his purpose in going (Acts 22:4).
2. The light, the voice,—the message of instruction given him (Acts 9:1-16).
3. The vision to Ananias and the instruction given him (Acts 9:10-16).
4. The response: baptised, took food and begun to preach (Acts 22:16; 9:17-22).

B. Salvation:

1. By faith (Rom. 5:1-2) but when?
2. By baptism (Rom. 6:3-5). Here he reached Christ's blood and found peace (Rom. 6:3-4).
3. By law of the spirit (Rom. 8:1-2).

C. The lesson we learn—No sinner too great for God to save, if the sinner is honest!

D. The purpose of the Lord's appearance to him:

1. A chosen vessel unto the Lord (Acts 9:15-16). But Paul had to know His will (Acts 22:14-15).
2. To appoint him as such a vessel (Acts 22:16-20), this was essential for Paul to be an Apostle (Acts 1:21-22). His revelation was direct from the Lord (Gal. 1:11,12,17).

E. Lessons we learn: Paul's conversion stands as a monument to the resurrection of Jesus. Because all he did was as a result of his seeing the Lord, risen, on the road to Damascus.

III. Paul The Christian—Chief of Missionaries.

- A. Immediately he began to preach (Acts 9:20). Then he went to Jerusalem, Tarsus, Antioch, he went on three missionary journeys. He went to Prison in Caesarea, then in Rome for two years.
- B. He wrote letters to the Churches he started. He sent preachers to them, he was concerned over their welfare and he prayed for them.
- C. He was terribly persecuted (2 Cor. 11:23-28). But all his energies were turned to Christ.

IV. The Secret of Paul As A Christian.

- A. Through the cross he was crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20; 6:14). Christ now ruled his heart by faith (1 Cor. 15:10; Phil. 4:13).
- B. He believed his message to be the power of God, God's only power to save (Rom. 1:16-17); he taught that those



who did not obey it would be lost (2 Tim. 1:7-8; 1 Cor. 9:16-17).

- C. He realized the value of the soul, that it is worth more than all the world (Matt. 16:26; Rom. 9:3; 10:1).
- D. He looked to next world for his reward (Phil. 3:8-11; 2 Tim. 4:7-8).
- E. Lesson we learn: His transformed life is a monument to the gospel.

### **CONCLUSION**

His conversion is your evidence of the resurrection; The gospel he taught, is God's power to save; His obedience is your example; his transformed life becomes your challenge; Why not say as did Paul, "Lord what will thou have me to do?"

# **SAUL'S CONVERSION**

## **Acts 9:22**

### **PROPOSITION**

Paul's conversion was due to a divine revelation; therefore, the Christian religion is due to divine revelation.

### **OBJECTIVE**

An appeal to the intellect and emotions that Christ was raised from the dead by God, even as stated by Paul, and is, therefore, worthy of your emulation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the conversion of Saul of Tarsus we see conclusive evidence to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the divine origin of Christianity.

Before the Agnostic who says, "I don't know," before the Skeptic and the general believer, we place Saul's conversion before you as a challenge to your honesty, and as an appeal to your intellect and love. Will you not believe and obey? When you weigh the evidence it is overwhelming. Why not become a Christian, a follower of Jesus who was raised from the dead?

#### **I. The General Facts Concerning Paul's Conversion.**

- A. Acts 9, on way to Damascus to imprison Christians, great light, Lord's instructions to Paul and Ananias, Paul goes to Damascus and obeys the gospel (is baptised) and begins to preach.
- B. Acts 22, Saul's account to the Jews. Same things happened recorded in Acts 9.
- C. Acts 26, before Agrippa, account of what he was to do, his conversion, he was to witness, to open hearts (26:18); his faithfulness to his duty (26:22-24).
- D. Galatians 1:11-17, persecuted the church, zealous, God called him, his trip to Arabia.
- E. Phillipians 3:4-8, Paul's opportunity to glory in the flesh, all counted as refuse, to gain Christ.
- F. 1 Timothy 1:12-12, his former life; Christ's mercy, purpose.
- G. 1 Corinthians 15:8, Christ's personal appearance, his explanation.
- H. 2 Corinthians 1:1, Apostle through the will of God.

#### **II. The Proposition Stated And Proved.**

- A. Either Paul was an imposter and said what he knew to be

false with intent to deceive; or—

- B. He was a fanatic, who imposed himself by the force of an overheated imagination; or—
- C. He was deceived by the fraud of others; or—
- D. What he declared to be the cause of his conversion did all really happen, and therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation.

### III. Paul Was Not An Imposter.

- A. What could have been the motive of his change? What about wealth?
  - 1. Was it wealth? Wealth was on the side he left. Poverty was on the side he joined! They were so poor he refused to accept anything from them (1 Cor. 4:11-12; 2 Cor. 12:14; Acts 20:33-34).
  - 2. His closing picture to us is that of an old man, shivering in a Roman prison, asking for a cloak to be brought him (2 Timothy 4:13); awaiting execution.
- B. Was it reputation?
  - 1. Reputation lay on the side of the Pharisees.
  - 2. Only contempt was found for the Christians (1 Cor. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 4:13).
- C. Was it power he was after?
  - 1. He had no eye for the worldly ambition. No temporal sought.
  - 2. He addressed his brethren as "co-labourers" "fellow-workers." He did not "lord it" over the church he established (1 Cor. 1:13; 2 Cor. 4:5).
  - 3. He preached Christ as head (Eph. 1:23), and hid himself behind the cross. He rebuked Churches that sinned.
- D. Was his motive the gratification of any other passion?
  - 1. Some claim revelation to engage in loose morals and conduct.
  - 2. But Paul preached and lived the highest morals and challenged others to show his life contrary (1 Thess. 2:1-9; 2 Cor. 7:2).
- E. Was he a pious fraud? Did he pretend in order to spread Christ?
  - 1. Could he have gloried in the cross if a fraud? Could he have suffered all he did if a fraud? If a fraud where did he learn so much and how could he be in complete agreement with all the other Apostles?
  - 2. Whence came his power in performing miracles, with which to convince others, and upon the churches he established.

#### IV. Was Paul Self Deceived?

- A. Though Paul was fervent, he was always governed by discretion and reason. No matter his audience, Jews, Gentiles or Government he always tried to reach them with the Gospel. No great outburst of temper.
- B. Melancholy—this is a mark of misguided zeal, but not found in Paul. No brooding over past sins, no self-imposed penance. Always rejoicing, always trying to win men to Christ.
- C. Vanity or self-conceit, vanity and fanaticism usually go together, Paul was always modest, considered himself a servant, gives God all praise.
- D. Suppose he was swept away; men always see what they want to see, but Paul was not looking for Jesus! Only a way to persecute His followers! He had never dreamed of even becoming a follower!

#### V. Paul Was Not Deceived By Others.

- A. It was totally impossible that the other disciples could have planned or carried out such deception at midday on Paul while he was so bitter against them.
- B. Physically impossible to produce blindness, light and voice even if they had thought of it. The light was brighter than the Sun!
- C. No fraud could have produced the miracles Paul later did! He was not deceived.

#### VI. Therefore Christianity Is A Divine Revelation

- A. This is sufficient evidence to show:
  - 1. Paul was not an imposter.
  - 2. Paul was not deceived by others.
  - 3. Paul did not have an overheated imagination.
- B. Therefore,
  - 1. His conversion was a reality.
  - 2. The resurrected Christ appeared to him.
  - 3. Christianity is true! A divine Revelation.

### CONCLUSION

The great influence of Paul's life is evidence also. He checked the tide of Judaism, making possible your obedience to the pure gospel. Will you be as honest as was Paul? Will you "rise and be baptised, washing away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord?"

# **CORNELIUS—HIS CONVERSION**

## **Acts 10,11**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius was a divine witness to prove God accepts the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and did not save Cornelius.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show what the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius taught. And to prove Cornelius had to obey the word to be saved.

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are some seeming difficulties in this case of conversion; the greatest being that of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the assembled group. But this seeming difficulty goes away when considered in the light of New Testament teaching.

Some claim since Cornelius was a Gentile then this baptism of the Holy Spirit is still necessary today. In this lesson we plan to show God's law of pardon is the same to all.

- I. After Pentecost Salvation Is In Christ Only.
  - A. Every spiritual blessing is in Christ (Eph. 1:1-3).
    1. Salvation is in His name (Acts 4:8-12), in Him (2 Tim. 2:10).
    2. Reconciliation (Col. 1:19-20; Eph. 2:14-16).
    3. Redemption from our sins (Eph. 1:7).
    4. Eternal life (1 John 5:11-12).
    5. The New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
  - B. Till the conversion of Cornelius only Jews and Jewish proselytes had been baptised; no Gentiles.
  - C. Since salvation was in Christ (Acts 4:11-12), and since Cornelius was not in Christ, Cornelius was unsaved; therefore, he was lost!
- II. Cornelius The First Gentile Convert.
  - A. The man was a soldier stationed forty-seven miles north-west of Jerusalem.
    1. A devout man.
    2. Feared God.
    3. Gave much alms.
    4. Prayed to God always, (Acts 10:1,2). Could any man be a better man than Cornelius? Of course not! Yet he was still lost!

- B. The means to bring him to the Gospel.
  - 1. The Angel, his appearance and instruction.
  - 2. The vision of Peter, its significance.
  - 3. The Holy Spirit "SPEAKS," it is not a feeling (Acts 10:19).
  - 4. The meeting, Cornelius falls down to worship, but Peter forbids it. It is evident Peter is not a Pope!
- C. The Sermon:
  - 1. God is no respecter of persons.
  - 2. Works of Jesus and His witnesses.
  - 3. Death and Resurrection of Jesus.
  - 4. Judgment and witness of prophet.

### III. The Outpouring of The Holy Spirit.

- A. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jesus' promise to the Apostles (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:1)). There is a difference in the measure and purpose to the household of Cornelius and the Apostles (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:1).
- B. This was a miracle extraordinary and not common to all conversions, this is shown by Peter's statement (Acts 11:15-18). It took place as "Peter began to speak" (Acts 11:15), so it fell *before* they could even believe (Cf. Rom. 10:19).
- C. This was not to save Cornelius (Acts 11:14; Jas. 1:21).
  - 1. To reborn him (1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Cor. 4:15).
  - 2. It was not to give him faith (Acts 15:7).
  - 3. It was not for remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
  - 4. It was not to purify his soul (1 Pet. 1:22).
  - 5. It was not to cleanse their hearts (Acts 15:9).
  - 6. It was not to convert them (Psa. 19:7).
  - 7. It was not to sanctify (Eph. 5:25; Rom. 15:16).
  - 8. It was not to show they were already saved (Rom. 6:17-18).
- D. What was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for?
  - 1. The purpose can be learned in two ways: by being told, or by observing its use. We are not told so we must learn by the use it is put to.
  - 2. Peter's use when he returned to Jerusalem, to convince Jewish Christians of God's purpose to save Gentiles same as Jews (Acts 11:15-16).
  - 3. It was to bear witness (Acts 15:8; Eph. 3:5-6), as used by Peter (Acts 11:15-16; Acts 10:48).
  - 4. Those present were then commanded to be baptised in the name of Jesus (Acts 10:47-48). Why? (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27), because in Christ are all Spiritual Blessings.

## **CONCLUSION**

Once the purpose of the miracle is understood. It is seen that this case of conversion is like all the others. They heard the gospel, they believed, they repented and were baptised in water, which is the one Baptism of Ephesians 4:4, for the remission of sins, in the name of Christ. God commands the same for all men today.

# **SHEAVES OF A SPIRITUAL SOWING**

## **Acts 11:19-26; Psalm 126:6**

### **PROPOSITION**

Persecution paves the way for proclamation.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show Weepers come sowing and reapers come rejoicing.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The tribulations, the scattering of the church, the preaching and the harvest after Stephen's death illustrates the truth of the Psalm: "Weepers sowing, reapers rejoicing."

Three points attract our attention in this lesson: Preaching and results; exhortation of Barnabas and results; teaching of Paul and Barnabas and the results.

#### **I. The Preaching of Those Scattered And Its Results.**

##### **A. The message—Their message was "the Lord Jesus."**

1. This message was learned from the Apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 2; 3; 4; 5; etc.).
2. Jesus was the only Savior, so declared before his birth (Matt. 1:21); so declared at his birth (Lk. 2:11); so declared by John the Baptist (John 1:29); Declared by Jesus himself (Lk. 19:10); also declared by the Apostles (Acts 13:23).
3. Lord Jesus exalted, the conclusion of Peter's first sermon (Acts 2:36); also declared at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:36). This includes "all His Authority" (Matt. 28:18).

##### **B. The Results—"The hand of the Lord was with them."**

1. The Lord was keeping His promise (Matt. 20:28). A great number believed, turned.
2. They believed through the preaching (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7).
3. They turned—not all who believed turned but a great number did turn. This was true in Jesus' day (John 12:42).
4. Turning—a condition necessary for Remission of sins. Notice "Repent—Turn—Remission of sins, works" (Acts 26:18-19). But in order to receive remission of sins, "Repent and be baptised" (Acts 2:38).
5. "Believe and turn" "Believe and be baptised" (Mk. 16:15-16).



6. Turning is an act; baptism is the turning act.
  7. They turned "from," for to serve God (1 Thess. 1:9).
- II. The Exhortation of Barnabas And Its Results (Vs. 23).
- A. Exhortation: with "purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord."
    1. "Purpose of heart"—"set plan," this idea is used of God (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 8:28); so here of the Christian.
    2. "Cleave unto the Lord"—"Keep on being loyal." Not just enthusiasm when all goes well, but loyal even in adversity (1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 3:12-14).
    3. A much needed exhortation today when so many are tempted to sin worldliness, softness, compromise.
  - B. Results,
    1. Much people added as in Acts 2:47; 5:14.
    2. The fruits of right preaching and right behavior.
- III. The Work of Barnabas And Paul And Its Results.
- A. Paul, after leaving Damascus, had gone to Jerusalem, and from there to Troas, his old home. Barnabas now went with him and the two worked together in Antioch for one year and "much people were added to the Lord" (11:25-26).
  - B. Results: People were called Christians (11:27). A name designating a relationship to Christ. They are His, because they were bought with His blood (Acts 20:28). Now that Jews and Gentiles are integrated into one congregation the name "Christian" is given by God. Not before.
  - C. This is the name spoken of by the prophet (Isa. 62:2); endorsed by the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 4:11). All men should wear this name and this name only!

### **CONCLUSION**

They went forth weeping, scattering seed, but reaped a harvest in joy. So may we today. The message of Christ is the only message of salvation (Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 1:6-8); the name of Christ is the only name (Acts 4:11-12). Turning to Christ the only way (John 14:6; Acts 2:38; 26:18; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 11:23); the name Christian, the only distinctive name (1 Pet. 4:11; 4:16).

# **THE CHURCH AND ITS BENEVOLENT WORK**

## **Acts 11:27-30**

### **PROPOSITION**

The church has a definite benevolent work to perform.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show the proper function of the church in benevolent work and to exhort us to fulfill that function of the church.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Evangelism, benevolent work, and the development of the Christian character challenge our interest as we study the Book of Acts. Thus far we have emphasized evangelism—how they went, what they preached and the response of the hearers.

In this study we plan to consider benevolent work, its place and method, in the work of the Church as a challenge and guide to us today.

#### **I. Men Today Have Various Ideas About The Rightful Function of The Church.**

- A. To some the church is only a social club, an association of people and ideals. Certainly we know there is a social hand in worship, work, mutual job, but the church is much more than this.
- B. To some the church is only a benevolent society, satisfying the desires to get something out of it, and to others the church is a way to satisfy conscience by being an institution through which one gives. We give through the church, but the church is much more than this.
- C., To some the church is a means of sending others to evangelize. Certainly the church evangelizes, but it is not a society of "senders" but "doers," "they went."
- D. The church is more than all of these things. It is God's body of redeemed in which each grows and develops (Eph. 4:11-16); through that which each supplies (2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 6:3).
- E. In benevolence it meets the needs of the people, some financially, others by teaching, others to pray and depend on God, others to help themselves.

#### **II. The Benevolent Work of The Church At Antioch.**

- A. For the past year the Teaching of Paul and Barnabas in Antioch, now it is time for it to bear fruit.

- B. The occasion, prophet, famine predicted through the world (Acts 11:27-28).
- C. The response: every man—according to ability, determined to send relief (Vs. 29).
- D. Method, sent to the elders (Vs. 30).
- E. Jerusalem had helped herself when the church was young (Acts 2:44-45); but now the whole of Judea suffered, needed help from others.

### III. The Benevolent Work of The Church Today.

- A. Two situations to be considered, the emergencies, and the regular order or arrangements.
  - 1. Emergency, as in Jerusalem (Acts 2:44-45); Judea (Acts 11); then Paul collecting funds for Jerusalem the second time (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15:26-27).
  - 2. Regular order of work (1 Tim. 5:3-16).
- B. There are two fields of work: At home and afar.
  - 1. Jerusalem—local.
  - 2. Antioch and Macedonia—helping afar.
- C. There are ways in which to do the work.
  - 1. Individuals, helping those nearby (Matt. 25:31-46; 10:42; Jas. 2:14-20; Jno. 3:17-18).
  - 2. Congregational, as Paul's collection for the poor saints (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

### CONCLUSION

Antioch did not wait until the people were dying from the famine, but began as soon as they learned the famine was coming. Then it was *every man, according to his ability* administered through the *elders*.

Let the congregation begin now to strive to follow God's pattern of benevolence as well as His pattern of evangelism.

# **HOW THEY WENT IN THE FIRST CENTURY**

## **Acts 13:2-3**

### **PROPOSITION**

How the early church went evangelizing for God, contains great lessons for us today.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show the early church went in the first century and how they believed their message.

The greatest challenge the world has ever known is the Great Commission of Christ as He sent the Apostles and they in turn sent their converts (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:44-49). "How they went in the first century" is an interesting study.

#### **I. They Went As Individual Christians:**

##### **A. There was a great persecution (Acts 8:1-3).**

1. They scattered to Judea and Samaria (8:4).
2. All Christians felt the need to spread the good news (8:4).
3. They all willing to do something no matter where they went.

##### **B. They recognized the great commission was every individual's responsibility (Matt. 28:19-20).**

1. This becomes our challenge and responsibility to establish the church wherever we go.
2. Churches need to educate their members to this sacred duty and privilege.

#### **II. They Went Systematically:**

##### **A. The Lord's work grew in Samaria and Judea.**

1. The Holy Spirit selected Paul and Barnabas for a particular work in a specific place (Acts 13:2).
2. The Holy Spirit selected the men best qualified for the job.
3. Work in new fields needs qualified men. Younger men need to go with older men, as Paul took and trained Timothy and Titus.

##### **B. Wherever Paul and Barnabas went they established churches.**

1. Younger men were then sent to assist new churches.
2. Paul later returned and strengthened them. Often wrote letters to help them.

- III. They Went Believing Their Message And The Promises of God.**
- A. They were not ashamed of Christ and His word (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18-25).**
  - B. They recognized individual responsibility (Rom. 1:14-15). Must live for Christ (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).**
  - C. They believed the church was a divine institution, the fulness of Christ (Eph. 1:23; 3:20-21; 1 Tim. 3:15).**
  - D. They believed their needs would be supplied (Matt. 6:33). They did not ask for an abundance only needs!**
  - E. They believed in suffering for Christ, imprisoned, beaten, stripped, etc. (2 Cor. 11:22-29).**
  - F. They believed and God gave them great results (Acts 21:20; 17:6; Col. 1:23).**

### **CONCLUSION**

The plan of evangelism was simple but effective. They Went! They labored and trusted. There is no problem with God's plan, the only trouble is so few will do it. Go, preach, teach, baptise, strengthen and leave the results with God!

# **THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK IN EVANGELISM**

## **Acts 13:1-12**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Holy Spirit has a definite work in evangelism, but it is a far cry from what the Denominationalists teach.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show the part the Holy Spirit plays in evangelism and how he works through human instrumentality.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Book of Acts could well be called "Acts of God" or "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." It is the history of the Holy Spirit's work in the scheme of Redemption. In this lesson we consider His work among the apostles as they evangelized "unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

Much confusion exists concerning the work of the Holy Spirit. All kinds of untrue and weird actions, and beliefs are attributed to the Holy Spirit. We are only interested in the truth and that truth is found only in the Bible, never from one's own thinking or experience.

- I. The Promise And The Reception of The Holy Spirit.
  - A. After Jesus' Resurrection a charge through the Holy Spirit that the Apostles should wait for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:1-5).
  - B. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised to the Apostles only (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:1-5; Jno. 14:16).
  - C. Just before Jesus' death He had told the Apostles the work of the Holy Spirit would be through them (Jno. 14:16-17; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-14).
  - D. The reception of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was "seen and heard" (Acts 2:1-4; 2:33).
  - E. There is also the promise of the Holy Spirit to those who obey the truth, not miracle working power, but still the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal. 4:6-7; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- II. The Work of The Holy Spirit In Evangelism Converting As He Directed The Apostles And Evangelists.
  - A. In Jerusalem, through the Apostles the Holy Spirit was converting and witnessing (Acts 2:38; 5:32).
  - B. In Samaria, Philip preached to them the Christ (Acts 8:5).

They believed and were Baptised (Acts 8:12; Mk. 16:15-16); but the imparting of the spiritual gifts was by the laying on of the Apostles' hands only (Acts 8:14-23); so also at Ephesus (19:6).

- C. Philip was directed in his preaching by the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit spoke to Philip *not the sinner!* (Acts 8:29).
- D. The case of Cornelius, not the same measure or purpose as on the Apostles, but to convince the Jewish Christians that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-18; 15:7-9).
- E. "Unto the uttermost parts of the earth," the Holy Spirit selected and sent them (13:1-4).
- F. But it was through the word, the thing preached that men were saved, the miracles and the "teaching of the Lord" (Acts 13:8-12; 1 Cor. 1:21).

### **CONCLUSION**

The Baptismal measure was for the Apostles, and guided them into the truth and preaching; the gift of the Holy Spirit was to all who obey the gospel; the gift as a miraculous measure came through the laying on of the Apostles' hands. Today the Holy Spirit is guiding and doing His work as we obey the word which is the Holy Spirit's instructions.

Why not obey the gospel and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and study His instructions in the word.

# THE OFFICE AND DUTIES OF ELDERS

## Acts 14:23; 20:28

### PROPOSITION

God made a plurality of elders, the Spiritual Shepherds of each congregation.

### OBJECTIVE

To show the office and duties of elders.

### INTRODUCTION

That there is such a group to fill the office and do such a work in the New Testament church cannot be successfully denied by anyone (consider, Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:1).

The office and work of elders is extremely important for the following reasons:

1. God ordained elders should be appointed in every congregation as soon as men meet the qualifications (Acts 14:23).
2. The work of elders cannot be done by anyone else in the congregation. At best it is only partially done.
3. They hold the highest office in the New Testament Church today.
4. Being shepherds they are like the shepherd Christ (1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- I. The Elders Their Office And Work—1 Timothy 3:1.
  - A. Work, duties and Responsibilities from names and their significance.
    1. Presbyter—Elder (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1).
      - (a) Age—elder, one who is older (Cf. 1 Tim. 5:1; 1 Pet. 5:5.)
      - (b) Those who preside over assemblies, used interchangeably (Acts 20:17,28; Tit. 1:5,7) (Bishop or Overseer denotes function, Presbyter denotes dignity).
    2. Bishop—Overseer (Acts 20:28; Tit. 1:2; Phil. 1:1); an overseer a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done right, any curator, guardian or superintendent.
    3. Pastor—Shepherd—a Herdsman, especially a shepherd.
      - (a) Properly a shepherd (Matt. 9:36; Jno. 10:2).
      - (b) Metaphorically, the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly, Christ (Heb. 13:20)



[head of the church].

(c) Of the overseer of Christian assemblies (Acts 20:28) [Thayer].

**B. Their Work From Direct Commands.**

1. "Take heed to yourselves," (Acts 20:28; cf. 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Pet. 5:3; 10:4). A shepherd never directed a flock in a place he didn't first go, they would only follow him anyway!
2. How to be examples to the flock.
  - (a) "Support the weak"—exemplify the blessedness of giving, (Acts 20:33-35).
  - (b) Elders must enforce discipline on covetous persons, (1 Cor. 5:10). This is impossible unless they give liberally themselves.
  - (c) Elders are required to maintain a blameless reputation (1 Tim. 3:2).
3. Not "self-willed" for this causes "self-will" in those he deals with.
4. Not "soon angry" for the same reason, also when one becomes angry he loses all moral power over those whom he is trying to influence.
5. Not "given to wine," for he cannot change those who do drink.
6. "Sober," lest he be thought foolish and a clown.
7. "Just," lest suspected of being partial.
8. "Holy," lest he be thought to be a hypocrite.

Observation: If an elder sees himself in a bad light after studying this he should either change his ways and conform or resign!

**C. "Tend the flock of God among you," (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:3). The words "feed and tend" are from the same original word. This means "to rule or govern of the overseers (pastors) of the church" (Thayer, Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament).**

1. All the literal duties of a shepherd are included in this term:
  - (a) Keep sheep from straying; utmost care to keep this from happening. When it does happen then bring them back.
  - (b) To lead them to proper pasture, by being a proper example and by furnishing proper food.
  - (c) By protecting the flock from dangers, within, (Rev. 2:2) and without.
2. "Rule exercise the oversight," (1 Pet. 5:2; Heb. 13:17; 13:24). The elder is a ruler as a leader not a "lord" or

**"Tyrant." To superintend, preside over.**

- (a) "do all things decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40).
- (b) "do all things unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26).
- (c) "Withdraw from disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6).

Observation: When a sheep refuse to be restored then the elders must lead in the discipline.

- D. "A watchman for souls" (Heb. 13:17 cf. Ezek. 3:16-21; 34:1-6); an elder is a steward of God's heritage (Eph. 1:18; cf. Tit. 1:7; 1 Cor. 4:1-2); elders shall give account to God!
- E. Teachers of God's word (Tit. 1:9-13); first prerequisite is the possession of knowledge. Unless a man knows something to teach his students he cannot be a teacher! Must "exhort" and "convict." In many churches elders make no attempt to teach in anyway. Such is an intolerable neglect of duty, for which they must eventually be called to give account. If the neglect results from indifference it is a great sin, if from incapacity then a resignation should take place immediately!

### **CONCLUSION**

Many feel the only work an elder is to do is to hire and fire the preacher and have a business meeting now and then to argue over where to locate a sign or how high the fountain should squirt! Sure, the eldership deserves the best a congregation can produce! And then the elders should realize their work is the responsibility of nurturing souls to present unto the Lord. May God help and bless His elders and may all of us live so as to bring joy, honor, and respect unto them.

# **ACTS OF GOD**

## **"WHAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM"**

### **Acts 14:27-28**

#### **PROPOSITION**

Evangelism is the work of God done through human instrumentality.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To show that whatever accomplishments are achieved in the work of God, all glory goes to God, for because of Him it was all made possible.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

A question often asked is, "Why does not God intervene and do this or that?" A lesson we all need today is one the Apostles learned long ago: Whatever He does and can do for man He must do it through the instrumentality of man.

For instance, world evangelism is essentially and effort of God. Christ, whom God sent, speaking for the Father, commissioned the Apostles (Matt. 28:18-20), promising them He would be with them to the end of the world (Vs. 20).

Usually we think of the book of Acts as "Acts of the Apostles." It might as appropriately be called the "Acts of God," for it is God carrying out His purpose through the Apostles.

Here is something the church needs; a realization that whatever one does for God it is God working in and through them, such a conception of one's life adds power in every experience. Such a life cannot fail.

#### **I. The Apostles: "They Rehearsed All Things That God Had Done With Them."**

##### **A. Paul and Barnabas.**

1. "What God had done *with* (for) them;" nor what they had done for God (14:27). They were fellow-workers with God (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 5:18-21).
2. How God had opened a door, of faith unto the Gentiles (14:27). A door, is opportunity God-given, as at Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:9). Far too often we are so frightened by the Adversaries to see the open door!
3. Signs and wonders wrought (15:21). These were their credentials, (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4). In everything it

# **THE MACEDONIAN CALL**

## **Acts 16:6-10**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Christian religion is a "Missionary" religion as illustrated by the Macedonian Call.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show the importance of answering the Macedonian Calls of today.

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Christian religion is its evangelistic spirit. It is a "Missionary" religion. This spirit began with Jesus, continued with the Apostles, and must characterize the church of all ages.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost, (Lk. 19:10) to teach (Jno. 6:44-45); The "great commission" (Matt. 28:10-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 1:8). Today this spirit is finding frontiers throughout the world. We must have a part.

#### **I. Paul's Attitude Toward His Ministry.**

- A. Paul felt a debtor to all men (Rom. 1:14); must preach the gospel (1 Cor. 9:16-17); he must open the eyes of all (Acts 26:18).
- B. He was ready (Rom. 1:15). From his first attitude he never deviated, (Acts 22:10). Whether in Damascus or Rome he was preaching.
- C. He was not ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16). What the gospel had done for him it would do for others. This is still true today.

#### **II. The Call From Macedonia.**

- A. God is the author of the mission enterprise of the church; from the beginning God had directed the work; Peter (Acts 2:10); Paul (22:19-20; 13:1-4; 14:27; 16:1-10).
- B. The vision to Paul; Paul's decision, their departure. Yet the people of Macedonia did not even know their needs! No one met Paul and Luke.
- C. Macedonia did not call them. God directed them. He knew what was the best.
- D. They did not wait until all converted a home—can't wait today!
- E. Where the help was needed most—there God directed them. While much was to be done in Asia, Bithynia, Mysia,

even Ephesus, had not been touched, yet God sent Paul to Macedonia. It was "help" they needed. Today it may be across the street, or across the sea. Jesus said, "into all the world," "to every creature."

### **III. The Present-Day "Macedonian Call."**

- A. Right where you are there is much to be done—there always will be.
- B. There are needs in every country on earth. Some have never heard a single gospel lesson!
- C. Make a choice. Choose some place to help, encourage a congregation to begin a specific work in a new place to heed the "Macedonian Call." Start today!

### **CONCLUSION**

No matter if it is little or much. let us begin today to have a part in such a worthy work.

Let congregations work out long range plans for worthy efforts—goals—to accomplish. World evangelism is the Lord's work, His to command, His to direct, ours to obey.

# WASHING THE STRIPES

## Acts 16:29-34

### PROPOSITION

Repentance demands a "Washing of Stripes" as far as humanly possible.

### OBJECTIVE

To show the true nature of repentance in conversion.

### INTRODUCTION

A universal command of God is that all sinners repent. It was the command of the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-2; Lk. 3:7-9). Jesus' preaching was the same (Matt. 4:17; Lk. 13:1-5; Lk. 25:47) parables stressed repentance (Acts 2:38; 17:30-31; Acts 26:18-19).

Godly sorrow works repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). The action of the Philippian jailor, after having been taught by Paul and Silas, presents a wonderful example of the behavior of repentance.

#### I. The Conversion Of The Jailor (Acts 16:6-34).

- A. The trip to and from the place of prayer, the maiden and the spirit of divination, the casting of it out (Vs. 16-18).
- B. The arrest and treatment of Paul and Silas: accused, beaten, cast into the inner prison, stocks (Vs. 19-24).
- C. Midnight: Singing, praying and the prisoners listening, earthquake, jailor's actions and questions (Vs. 25-30).
- D. The preacher's reply, preached the word of the Lord, then jailor washed the stripes, baptized, brought food, rejoicing (Vs. 31-34).
- E. This is the simple story of another case of conversion, identical with all others in points of law of pardon. It differs only in circumstances surrounding it. Our special interest is the change of the jailor.

#### II. Washing The Stripes.

- A. Sin always leaves its stripes. Like the jailor, one cannot undo what he has done, but he can wash the stripes. Such is the expression of repentance (Lk. 3:8; Acts 26:18-19).
- B. Murder—When one has killed he cannot undo what is done: but like Paul, by the gospel, one can devote his life to making others live (Acts 22:19-20; 26:10; 26:19-20).
- C. Some divorces—you cannot remake them into holy marriage—it is too late, but you can remain alone and teach the truth so others will not make the same mistake

(Matt. 5:32; 19:3-9).

- D. In business—Zacchaeus (Lk. 19) offered to restore four-fold (cf. the law, Ex. 22:1). Restitution must be made.
- E. Disobedient children or rebellious children, who by their conduct bring stripes to the hearts of parents. Prodigal son and his example in Luke 15.
- F. Gossip or lying—one who has hurt another by tongue or pen, cutting speech (Eph. 4:25-29; Col. 4:6; Jas. 5:16).
- G. Deny the Lord—turn and establish others. Peter did this very thing (Lk. 22:31-32). One should be strong, and wash the stripes imposed on the Lord and others.

### III. Back To The Jailor—His Future Conduct.

- A. What did he do thereafter? Did he continue as a jailor and persecute Christians or give up his job?
- B. The future of the church at Philippi answers the question, "as ye saw in me" (Phil. 1:27-30). Could the jailor inflict punishment on Christians that he had on Paul? If not, then he had ceased as jailor!

### **CONCLUSION**

The Lord is calling all to repentance. He expects everyone who turns to wash the stripes he may have inflicted on others.

# **"THEY THAT HAVE TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN HAVE COME HERE ALSO"**

**Acts 17:6**

## **PROPOSITION**

The gospel of Christ turns the "world upside down" wherever it goes.

## **OBJECTIVE**

To show the world is turned upside down by the gospel.

## **INTRODUCTION**

New Testament Christianity is a religion that disturbs all error.

In the New Testament church people preached and lived in such a way so that all mankind felt the error of their own ways. Their peace was disturbed by Truth (Acts 5:28; 6:7; 13:44-51; 14:19; 19:23-29). Let us notice what the Truth can turn upside down today.

### **I. Modernism Can Be Turned Upside Down By Truth.**

- A. Many today deny the virgin birth of Christ, but the virgin birth is plainly taught in the Bible (Matt. 1:21-22). This is based on prophecy from the Old Testament (Isa. 7:14). You must reject both Old Testament and New Testament to reject the virgin birth.
- B. Inspiration is rejected by Modernists today, yet the Bible claims inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-20; Jno. 10:34-35). If you cannot accept what the Bible says on inspiration, then you cannot accept it on the moral teaching of Jesus!
- C. The resurrection is denied by Modernists today, yet the evidence of the resurrection is attested by witnesses who suffered and died for their testimony (Acts 2:24; 2:36)! You cannot believe anything the Apostles say if you cannot believe what they say about the resurrection.
- D. Many deny the coming judgment. But Paul said the judgment is based on the resurrection! (Acts 17:30-31). Therefore men everywhere must repent! Or perish!

### **II. Roman Catholicism Turned Upside Down By Truth.**

- A. Catholics say Peter was first Pope, yet read Acts 10:25-26. Paul was not a bit less than Peter (2 Cor. 11:5). Galatians



- 2:11 shows Peter sinned and was rebuked by Paul. Also Peter was married (1 Cor. 9:5).
- B. Catholics say Peter was head of the church, yet Jesus was head (Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:23; Eph. 1:23).
  - C. All the Apostles received the Holy Spirit and Peter had no more authority than did the other Apostles (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). All were sent under the same commission with the same authority (Matt. 28:18-20; Read Matt. 16:19 and Matt. 18:18). All the Apostles had the same authority!
  - D. Catholics call the priest their spiritual Father. To wear such title violates the plain teaching of Christ (Matt. 23:8-11).
  - E. Catholics teach sprinkling for baptism which is wrong (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12).
- III. Denominationalists Can Be Turned Upside Down By Truth.
- A. Denominations have no right to even exist, so say the Scriptures (Jno. 17:20-21; Eph. 4:3; 1 Cor. 1:10-13).
  - B. Denominations teach *all* roads lead to heaven, yet the Bible says differently (Matt. 7:13-14; 7:21; Jno. 8:32; 14:6; 2 Jno. 9; Prov. 14:12; Gal. 1:8-9).
  - C. Denominations teach sincerity saves, yet Paul lived in good conscience and was sincere even when persecuting Christians (Acts 23:1). Was he saved? Cornelius was all a man could want to be (Acts 10:1-2). Yet, he had to obey God's words to be saved (Acts 11:14).
  - D. Denominations say "faith only saves" yet the Bible says (Jas. 2:24; 2:19; Jno. 8:24; Rom. 5:1; Acts 17:30; Jno. 3:3-5). It takes obedience, too (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:8-9).
- IV. The World Can Be Turned Upside Down By Truth.
- A. The world must be saved by grace not while enjoying the fruits of sin (Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Jno. 5:19). The world is lost (Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 6:1-6; Eph. 5:23-24).
  - B. The world must be turned from sin and Truth can do it! (Rom. 6:1; Eph. 5:7-12; Col. 3:5-10; Rom. 8:12; 1 Pet. 2:11-12).

### **CONCLUSION**

"They are come hither also." Let's let every religious error feel the weight of Truth in love. Let us live so the world will know the Saints are among them! The world "would see Jesus." Let's show Him to them!

# **SUPERSTITIOUS RELIGIONS**

## **"TO AN UNKNOWN GOD"**

### **Acts 17:16-31**

#### **PROPOSITION**

All superstitious religions are lost, as they are contrary to the word of God.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To show the Christian is complete in Christ and to turn elsewhere is to reject Christ and the Bible.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

All superstitious religions are lost! The Christian is complete in Christ. He must be satisfied with this.

All Witchdoctors, Soothsayers, Fortune Tellers, Astrologers, Mediums, Spiritualists, Diviners, Practicers of Voodoo, Hindus, Buddhists, and Ancestor Worshippers follow superstitious religions which are not of God.

Superstitious religions are not new. They are as old as Moses and Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. God has always condemned them (Deut. 18:9-22; Isa. 47:13; Isa. 44:25; Jer. 10:2). The New Testament still condemns them (Matt. 15:9; 15:13-19; Acts 16:16-18; Acts 7:44-45; 19:19).

- I. We Must Remember The Christian Is Complete In Christ.
  - A. Christ is the fulness of God (Col. 2:9).
  - B. Christ is the fulness of the church (Eph. 1:23).
  - C. Christ is the fulness of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3).
  - D. Christ contains every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3; 1:7; 2 Jno. 5:10-11).
- II. To Look Anywhere Else Is To Reject God, Christ And God's Revelation, The Bible.
  - A. To seek salvation back under the Jewish law severs one from Christ (Gal. 5:4).
  - B. To seek the stars is to reject the purpose of God's natural revelation (Rom. 1:18-24).
  - C. To seek spiritualism is to reject the word of God (Lk. 16:27-31; 1 Sam. 28).
  - D. To seek fortune tellers is to reject the knowledge found in Christ (Col. 2:3; 2 Pet. 1:3; Deut. 29:29).
- III. To Reject Christianity In Any Way Is To Deny Personal Responsibility And To Reject Responsibility Is To Imperil

### **One's Immortal Soul And His Destiny.**

- A. God demands every person answer for His own soul and sins (Ezk. 18:20).**
- B. God demands everyone to give account for his attitude and action (Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 14:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 15:10)**
- C. God wills to work in us (Phil. 2:12); we are His image (2 Cor. 3:3); His light (Matt. 5:15-16; Phil. 2:14).**
- D. God says personal responsibility is the basis of all action and judgment (Matt. 25:31-46).**
- E. God sends delusions and lies to those who seem to have supernatural powers (2 Thess. 2:11-12).**

### **CONCLUSION**

**The Christian must avoid everything that is connected with superstitious religions. To do anything else is to sin. To flirt with the world is to commit spiritual adultery (Jas. 4:4). Rather than the Christian must (2 Tim. 3:15).**

# **PHILOSOPHY BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD**

## **Acts 17:17**

### **PROPOSITION**

All human philosophies fail before the throne of God.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show that all human philosophies are lacking and that Christ and Christianity furnishes us completely.

### **INTRODUCITON**

When Paul left Philippi he came to Thessalonica, where the Jews caused a great uproar in the city. From there he went to Berea. Here the people were "more noble" (Acts 17:11). With another persecution he departed for Athens.

In this lesson we consider the folly of human wisdom before the judgment bar of God.

#### **I. A Monument To The Folly Of Human Reason.**

A. Idolatry—The city was filled with art, beauty, schools, culture—but only idols.

1. Paul's spirit was provoked, for idolatry had been condemned in his teaching from his youth (Ex. 20:4-5).

2. The spectacle was a monument to the failure of human wisdom (Rom. 1:21-25).

B. Philosophy: Epicureanism, a philosophy from 300 B.C. It claimed matter is eternal, denying supreme power as its origin; Made pleasure the supreme object of life; Denied resurrection and another life.

C. Paul's teaching of Christ refuted it in every point:

1. Claimed God is the Creator (17:24; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3).

2. Makes righteousness the supreme test (Tit. 2:11-14).

3. And that life continues after death.

D. Stoicism, also from about 300 B.C., with Zeno as its founder. Had a high system of morals, but it was a failure.

1. Taught our fate was so fixed nothing can change it (same as Muslims teach today).

2. Man is to accept this and be completely indifferent to it, either to pain or pleasure.

3. They also taught there is no after life.

E. Again Christ's doctrine is opposed to this.

1. God rules over all (Vs. 24-25).
  2. Christians are to weep and rejoice (Rom. 12:15; Jas. 5:13; Rom. 8:28).
  3. There is a resurrection and a future life (Vs. 18).
- II. Over Against These Fruits Of Human Folly Is The Revelation Of The True God.
- A. Paul's introduction compliments their religious spirit. The same could be said of many cities today (17:22,23).
  - B. God—His relation to creation.
    1. The Creator made the world and all therein (Vs. 24).
    2. Sovereign—"Lord of heaven and earth" (Vs. 24).
    3. He rules—"leaves nothing to fate."
    4. Transcendent—is above His creation, dwells not in temples made with hands, nor served by man's hands (24,25). But He, Himself provides for man!
  - C. God—His relation to man:
    1. Creator, "of one," thus relates all men to each other and to Himself (Vs. 26,28-29).
    2. God is sustainer of man (Vs. 25).
    3. God is the true object of our search and devotion (Vs. 27); to know Him, and to become like Him, is our purpose (Jno. 17:3; Eph. 4:17-24).
    4. The Father of our spirits (Vs. 28-29; Heb. 12:9; Gen. 1:26; Jno. 4:24).
- III. God As Creator Has The Right To Judge And Demand Of His Creatures.
- A. The very nature of God, His relation to man and man's present condition demands of him that he repent (Vs. 30).
  - B. The reason for this universal command, the resurrection of Christ (Vs. 30).
  - C. No doubt Paul planned to offer proof of the resurrection, but the crowd scoffed (Vs. 32-33).
  - D. The result of the sermon, some procrastinated, some mocked, some believed. This is always the universal result (Vs. 32-34).

### **CONCLUSION**

What a masterpiece! Paul had showed them the folly of philosophy and human wisdom, the majesty of God and called them to repentance. So he is calling you now!

# **GOD'S CALL TO REPENTANCE**

## **Acts 17:30-31**

### **PROPOSITION**

God calls all men everywhere to repent or perish.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show what God means by repentance and why all men must repent.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The most difficult problem confronting the preacher of God, either under the old covenant economy or the present, is to persuade men and women to repent—to bring them to repentance. It is not so difficult to present such overwhelming evidence that people cannot but believe that Jesus is the Christ; nor is it difficult to show one what baptism is, and its purpose; but the difficult problem is to bring men and women to repentance.

Although men and women who have heard the gospel for years continue to turn a deaf ear to it, God still calls them to repent.

- I. God Commands All Men To "Repent." (Isa. 10:1-17; 55:7; Jer. 7:3; Ezk. 18:27-32; Mal. 3:7; Matt. 4:17; 3:12; Lk. 24:47).
  - A. The command is that men should "repent," which naturally raises the question, "Repent of what?"
  - B. Man must repent of *SIN* (Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 1 Jno. 3:4).
  - C. A classic example is Nineveh and Jonah. Nineveh was a "great" and "wicked" city (Jonah 1:1-2); Jonah preached to Nineveh (3:4); Nineveh changed (3:5-6); turned (3:8). Jesus said they "repented" (Matt. 12:41).
  - D. Another example are the "two sons" (Matt. 21:28-29).
    1. He did not go until he "repented."
    2. He did not go until he "changed his will." Change of mind results in a change of actions.
    3. Clearly his repentance was a change of will.
  - E. Repentance, therefore, is a change of will, preceded by "godly sorrow," which marks repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). (But repentance must be toward God) and followed by "works of repentance" (Matt. 3:8; Acts 26:19-20).
- II. God Commands Men That They Should "All" Everywhere Repent (Rom. 3:19).
  - A. Devout people, who may be zealously religious, but wrong (Acts 2:5; 2:38; Rom. 10:1-4). They were zealous men who in ignorance crucified Christ, yet called upon

God to repent (Acts 3:14-19). God is calling those in religious error today to repent (Matt. 7:21).

- B. Sinners, men and women living in moral rebellion against God (Lk. 5:32; 13:1-5). The world's supreme need today is to "repent" that God may shower His blessings upon the people. A billion years in hell will not start the punishment!!
- C. Gospel preaching may become as common a place to a people as did the miracles of Jesus, whom He rebuked because of wonder and excitement, but no "inward change" (Matt. 11:20-24).
- D. Sons of God, those who have believed and have been baptized, but who are overcome of sin (Acts 8:13; 8:22-23).
- E. The prodigal son came asking his father to "give" only to return asking him to "forgive" (Lk. 15).
- F. Churches that have left their first love, although many commendable things may be said in their favour, when they leave their first love, they must repent (Rev. 2:1-7).
- G. Churches that become satisfied, lukewarm, in their zeal toward the Lord, nothing good said for the church at Laodicea; but it is still called upon to repent (Rev. 3:14-21).

### III. "In As Much"—Motives Of Repentance.

- A. The goodness of God, which moved God to give His Son that people might be saved (Rom. 24:4; Jno. 3:16; 12:32). This should change every will and melt every heart of stone.
- B. The judgment of God, which faces every man, a judgment in righteousness (Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 2:5-8). It terrified Felix, but failed to bring him to repentance (Acts 24:25).
- C. The hope of heaven, the doom of hell (Matt. 25:41; 25:46). Heaven for the righteous, tears are wiped away (Rev. 22:1-5); Hell for the wicked, where the fires of Gehenna torment forever (Rev. 20:10; 20:14-15).

### CONCLUSION

God is calling upon all men everywhere to repent. The Spirit and the bride are saying, "Come" (Rev. 22:17); the demons of hades are saying, "do not come here" (Lk. 16:27-28); and now every person is hanging in the balance between heaven and hell; between God and the devil, making a decision. What will yours be?

# **PAUL AT CORINTH**

## **Acts 18:5-11**

### **PROPOSITION**

The establishment of the church at Corinth by the preaching of Paul becomes an example for all preaching today.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show the work and preaching of Paul in establishing the church at Corinth.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Our attention has been focused for some time on Paul and his labours: Antioch to Troas, to Philippi, to Thessalonica, to Berea, to Athens, to Corinth.

Corinth—a city of wealth and wickedness, but Paul remained 18 months establishing a congregation.

To the Jews—but they opposed and blasphemed, then to the Gentiles, home of Titus Justus (Vs. 7); many baptized; the Lord's word of encouragement to Paul (Vs. 9-11)

Our aim in this lesson is to consider the message, results, and the place ascribed to God in it all.

- I. Paul's Message In Corinth—A Model For All Preaching.
  - A. The gospel, which God sent him to preach (1 Cor. 1:17; 15:1-4).
  - B. The word of the cross, foolishness to some, a stumbling block to others—but God's power and wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18-25).
  - C. Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1-5).
- II. The Results—Heard—Believed And Baptized.
  - A. Many hearing, believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8); therefore, saved (Mk. 16:15-16).
  - B. But those saved were not from the wise of this world, the mighty, or noble (1 Cor. 1:26-27) that no flesh should glory (1 Cor. 1:29).
  - C. In preaching as he did, Paul laid a foundation (1 Cor. 3:10-11). The foundation upon which every congregation of the church should build (Matt. 16:16-18).
  - D. Upon which foundation was built a building of God, a Temple of God (1 Cor. 3:9; 3:16-17).
- III. Unto God Did Paul Give All The Praise—In Everything It Was God.



- A. When addressed, it was the "church of God" (1 Cor. 1:1-4); it was through God they had been called (1 Cor. 1:9).
- B. The preaching of Christ crucified was God's wisdom (1 Cor. 1:21; 3:18-21).
- C. This wisdom—these things revealed—of the Gospel were God revealed (1 Cor. 2:9-10).
- D. It was God who gave the increase. Paul and Apollos were only servants (1 Cor. 3:1-7).
- E. The ability of Paul as a builder was by God's grace (1 Cor. 3:10-11).
- F. When erected, it was God's building, God's Temple (1 Cor. 3:9; 3:16-17).
- G. And all to His glory; our glory is in Christ the Lord (1 Cor. 1:29-31; 3:21-23; 6:19-20).

### **CONCLUSION**

A point often overlooked in evangelism—it is God's work, God's power, God's servants. And, when accomplished, it is God's building and to God's glory.

Christ crucified is God's message. God has no other for man. Will you believe it?

Belief and baptism are God's conditions for remission of sins. Will you obey these? You then are God's and your mission is to glorify Him. Will you fulfill it?

# **THE WAY**

## **Acts 18:24-28**

### **PROPOSITION**

God's way of salvation in the New Testament is "The Way" and there is no other.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show what "The Way" consists of and to show its characteristics and the opposition that comes from teaching it.

### **INTRODUCTION**

From Corinth Paul went to Ephesus, then to Antioch. Apollos followed him at Ephesus, then went to Corinth. Paul went on to Jerusalem, then returned to Ephesus for nearly three years.

Apollos was eloquent, instructed in "The Way" of the Lord, but knew only the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquilla expound unto him the way of the Lord more perfectly.

In this lesson let us consider "The Way."

#### **I. The Way.**

- A. Way—a road or way of travel, came to mean a "matter of conduct" (Prov. 14:12; Isa. 55:6).
- B. John was sent to prepare the way of the Lord (Lk. 3:4).
- C. Jesus acknowledged Himself to be the Way. God's provision and standard summed up in Him (Jno. 14:6).
- D. The Way was designated as "the way of God" (Acts 18:26).
- E. Because of the character of the Christians and their following the way of Christ, Christians came to be called "The Way" (Acts 9:2; 24:22).

#### **II. Character Of The Way.**

- A. A new and living way (Heb. 10:19-22). New in relation to the old; living in that the author ever lives (Heb. 7:25).
- B. Way of holiness (Isa. 35:8).
- C. Way of truth (2 Pet. 2:2).
- D. Way of righteousness (1 Pet. 2:21).
- E. Way of salvation (Acts 16:16-18).
- F. Way that is narrow and straightened (Matt. 7:14), rigorous, strict, difficult, as respects morals.

#### **III. It Was Not Possible To Preach The Way Without Arousing Great Opposition. The Same Is True Today.**

- A. Religious reaction, disobedient, spake evil of the way.
  - 1. Paul left the synagogue for the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9).

2. Denominationalism and Roman Catholic reaction today—when they cannot meet the logic of the way—they ridicule and sneer at it.

**B. Moral Reaction.**

1. Those who had practiced magical arts and who believed, burned their books (19:18-19).
2. They got rid of the temptation. So must we today!
3. Mightily grew the word and prevailed. Great results from such conduct (Vs. 20).

**C. Economic Reaction.**

1. Business began to fall off. Demetrius and the silver smiths suffered (19:23-28).
2. Today business will fall off; bars will close; dance halls will close; dirty books and cinemas won't sell; gambling will cease, when men turn to the Way!

**CONCLUSION**

The Way when properly followed will change the life of the Christian and will affect the business of sin all about.

The Way is set before you. Come in faith, repenting of sins, turning away from all evil, be baptised into Christ and arise to follow Him in spirit and truth to the end.

If you do heaven and eternal life will be your home!

# **“WHO ARE YOU?”**

## **Acts 19:13-20**

### **PROPOSITION**

The authority of Christ is absolute and man must accept it and reject all pseudo authorities.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To contrast the teachings of Christ and the Apostles with false teachers of today.

### **INTRODUCTION**

People need to accept the authority of Christ and His Apostles in religion and reject all others. There is a principle in religion known as authority and it must be obeyed.

After studying the New Testament miracles we wonder how anyone could fail to obey the word they confirmed. Yet Simon and Peter in Acts 8 show men did turn away. Another case is Barnabas and Paul in Acts 13, then per text. Even so today men think that by using the name of Jesus Christ, it authorizes whatever they teach and practice. Read Text and Discuss. Now consider the application.

#### **I. Consider The Teaching Of Faith And Faith Only.**

##### **A. The Bible teaches faith in Christ is essential to be saved.**

1. Jesus' teachings, I know (Jno. 3:16-18; 6:29; 6:40; 8:24; 11:25; 20:30-31).
2. Paul's teaching, I know (Acts 16:31; Rom. 1:16; 5:1; Eph. 2:8-9).
3. But "who are you?" who say no faith, like the universalists, or faith in anyone but Christ (Mohammedans, etc.).

##### **B. The Bible teaches against "faith only."**

1. Jesus' teaching, I know (Matt. 7:21; 7:23-27).
2. Paul's teaching, I know (Rom. 2:13).
3. But "who are you?" who say no work or work because you are already saved.

#### **II. Consider The Bible's Teaching Of Repentance And Those Who Will Not Change Their Life.**

##### **A. The Bible teaches repentance is essential to the forgiveness of sins.**

1. Jesus' teaching, I know (Lk. 5:32; 15:7,10; Lk. 13:3-5).
2. Paul's teaching, I know (Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10).
3. But "who are you?" who say just have godly sorrow or

just change your life. Repentance is a change of mind based on godly sorrow that results in a change of life.

**B. What about the unchanged life?**

1. Jesus' teaching, I know (Matt. 16:24-25; 22:37-39).
2. Paul's teaching, I know (Col. 3:5-15).
3. But "who are you" who say "don't be a fanatic" or "once saved always saved." Even after becoming a Christian a person must stay in a constant state of repentance.

**III. Consider The Essentiality Of Baptism And Those Who Say It Is Not Essential?**

**A. The Bible teaches baptism is essential for the forgiveness of sins:**

1. Jesus' teaching, I know (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Jno. 3:3-5).
2. Paul's teaching, I know (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:26-27).
3. But "who are you?" who say, "you do not have to be baptized to be saved" or "sprinkling or pouring is as good as immersion."

**B. The Bible teaches obedience is essential to be saved (you must be baptized).**

1. Jesus' teaching, I know (Lk. 7:30; 6:46).
2. Paul's teaching, I know (Heb. 5:3-9).
3. But "who are you?" "to be saved by faith or grace only?"

**IV. The Bible Teaches A True Worship Only—Vain Worshippers Will Be Lost.**

**A. The Bible says there must be true worship only.**

1. Jesus' teaching, I know (Jno. 4:23-24; 17:17).
2. Paul's teaching, I know (1 Cor. 11:20; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
3. But "who are you?" that say, "just be sincere, because it makes no difference?"

**B. The Bible teaches against vain worship.**

1. Jesus' teaching, I know (Matt. 15:8-9).
2. Paul's teaching, I know (Col. 3:17).
3. But "who are you?" who say, "all worshipping same God, the way is not important."

**CONCLUSION**

Tonight you need to ask yourself the question, "Just who are you?" Who have you been listening to? Jesus? Paul? or someone else?

# **THE DAY OF WORSHIP— SABBATH OR LORD'S DAY?**

**Acts 20:7**

## **PROPOSITION**

The day of worship for the Christian is the Lord's Day.

## **OBJECTIVE**

To show the Sabbath has been done away with the old law and that a new law and day of worship has been given.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For many years the Seventh Day Adventists have taught that Saturday is the Sabbath and should be the Christians day of worship. They have insisted the Ten Commandments were given by God for all men in all places at all times. They have said the Sabbath is a moral obligation. They had made a distinction in the "Law of Moses" and the "Law of God," claiming God gave the Ten Commandments and Moses gave the laws relating to animal sacrifice. They teach the Sabbath was given at the creation and has been binding on men ever since. But the New Testament flatly denies each of these Adventist claims. Let us study with an open mind and see what God says in the Bible.

- I. The Sabbath Was Not Given Except To The Jews At Mt. Sinai.
  - A. Moses gave the ten commandments to the Jews only (Ex. 20:1-2; Deut. 5:1-3).
  - B. The Sabbath was a sign and a memorial to the children of Israel (Ex. 31:13; 31:17). It was a memorial to signify God's deliverance of the Jews from Egypt (Deut. 5:15).
  - C. The Sabbath was made known as a command to be obeyed by the Jews at Mt. Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14).
  - D. No Jew ever observed the Sabbath until it was made known in Exodus 16:23, *after* the children of Israel left Egypt.
  - E. There is no command, example or penalty in the New Testament for a Christian to observe the Sabbath! Not one passage!
- II. The Ten Commandments Including The Sabbath Law Has Been Done Away.
  - A. The Adventists try and make a distinction between the "law of God" and the "law of Moses."
  - B. The Bible teaches they are both the same law—the "law of God" given through "Moses" (Ezra 7:6; 7:12; 2 Chron.

- 34:14). Again Jesus uses both interchangeably (Lk. 2:22-23). No distinction exists except in the Adventist's mind!
- C. All the Old Testament law has been done away.
1. The Sabbath was given to the Jews "throughout their generation" (Ex. 31:16-17).
  2. Yet God promised a *new* law to come (Jer. 31:31-34).
  3. Hebrews claim the old law passed away, so Christ could give a new law (Heb. 8:6-7) then quote Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Vs. 8-13 as proof!
  4. In 2 Corinthians 3:5-14 Paul expressly mentions the ten commandments showing it has been abolished. This did away with the Sabbath, one of the ten commandments!
  5. Those who would keep the old law, even the ten commandments have fallen from grace in Christ (Gal. 5:4).
  6. Romans 7:1-17 teaches the old law is gone.
  7. Ephesians 2:14-16 teaches Christ took away the old law.
- D. The Christian is forbidden to keep the Sabbath in Colossians 2:14-17. Christ nailed the old law containing the Sabbath to the cross. It is no more!
- III. Adventists Make Some Objections.
- A. Adventists say if you give up the ten commandments there is *no* law.
1. Christ's new law is binding today (Matt. 17:1-5; Matt. 18:18-20).
  2. Christ's new law forbids all sin, even of thought, which the ten commandments did not (Matt. 5:21-48).
- B. Adventists say God hallowed the Sabbath at creation (Gen. 2:2-3).
1. This does not say God gave it as a day of worship even for the Jews!
  2. The Sabbath was made known at Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14). Read Malachi 4:4.
- C. It is affirmed by Adventists that Paul and Jesus observed the Sabbath.
1. Christ observed the Sabbath because He was born and died under the old law.
  2. He did abolish it at His death (Col. 2:14-17).
  3. Paul went to the synagogue to preach to Jews still holding to the old law, but he worshipped God on the Lord's day and taught all men to do the same (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). He forbids men to neglect his assembly (Heb. 10:25).

- D. Adventists say "perpetual" and "forever" in Exodus 31:16-17 prove the Sabbath to be forever.
    - 1. Not so! The context shows it was for the Jews, "throughout their generation."
    - 2. Israel has no specific place in God's heart today. Read Romans 28:28-29; Galatians 3:28-29.
    - 3. Israel as God's favored people stopped! And so did the Sabbath covenant that was their law!
  - E. Adventists do not believe "perpetual" and "forever" and "eternal" mean this when applied to the passover (Ex. 30:8); burnt offerings (Ex. 29:42); the annual atonement (Ex. 30:10); and the priesthood of Aaron (Ex. 40:15). All these stopped when the old law, the law of Moses stopped; yet, they were "perpetual" and "throughout your generation."
- IV. The Christian Is Taught To Worship On The Lord's Day Every Week.
- A. Jesus commanded the Apostles to preach the Gospel, the new law, to every creature (Mk. 16:15-16).
  - B. The Apostles were led by the Holy Spirit into *all* truth (Jno. 16:13).
  - C. Their gospel was the last will and Testament of Christ (Heb. 1:1-2; 9:15-18).
  - D. Paul ordered the early church to partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26) upon the first day of every week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
  - E. There is no command or example of the Lord's Supper ever being observed upon the Sabbath!

### **CONCLUSION**

All the claims of the Adventists regarding the law, the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath fail! Christians must follow the law of Christ and worship on the first day of the week.



# **THE LORD'S SUPPER— "ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK"**

## **Acts 20:7**

### **PROPOSITION**

The Lord's Supper is to be taken every first day of the week and is limited to this day.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show why the first day of the week is the only acceptable time to partake of the Lord's Supper.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Lord's Supper is the very heart of the Christian worship on the Lord's Day. The very reason the early church met each first day of the week was to break bread, that is to partake of the Lord's Supper. Men of all denominations meet on Sunday, but they do not observe the purpose of the meeting—communion each Sunday. Men take it once a year, twice yearly, three times yearly or four times yearly, at any time that suits them. But the real Christian is trying to please God, so he obeys what the early Christians did. He has the Lord's Supper every first day of the week. There is no authority for it at any other time!

#### **I. The Day In Which The Lord's Supper Should Be Eaten.**

- A. Whatever day it should be taken is a matter of the authority of Christ, as are all matters of religion (Matt. 28:18-20; Jno. 16:13).
- B. The disciples were commanded: "This do in remembrance of me." "So often as you do it..." (1 Cor. 11:24; 1 Cor. 11:25). "Forsake not the assembly" (Heb. 10:25). The conscientious Christians will ask, "How often?" "When?"
- C. The early church had a regular designated time in which to meet (Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 11:20,33). This shows a *regular* time of assembly to eat the Lord's Supper.
- D. That day was the first day of every week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Consider the significance of the first day of the week: Christ arose and met with His disciples on that day. The Holy Spirit came on that day (Acts 2:1-4); it is the birth of the church; this was their meeting day!
- E. The purpose of that meeting was to break bread, to eat the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Where is the authority for it for any other time? What authority do you use for meeting on the first day of every week? Acts 20:7, of course. Then

why not obey the purpose of that assembly, to take the Lord's Supper?

- F. People object and say, "where does it say every first day?" The Lord told the Jews to keep the Sabbath. That meant every Sabbath! So they met for communion on every first day of every week.

## II. There Is A Danger Of Formalism And Abuse.

- A. There has been from the beginning a tendency for man to substitute formalism for heart devotion. Israel was guilty of this sin (Isa. 1:11-14). The New Testament writers were against this very thing (Rom. 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3).
- B. Yet in spite of the Old Testament example and the New Testament warnings, the early church succumbed to formalism and abuse (1 Cor. 11:20).
- C. In the church today who would make it an indulgence ticket? Others only taste. They do not understand the real meaning or receive the spiritual benefits. They never eat and drink of the Lord's real life as taught in John 6:35-55. The Catholic Mass is an abuse of the Lord's Supper. So is the Anglican "efficacy." This is not New Testament teaching.

## III. There Is A Remedy For Abuse And Formalism. "But Let A Man Examine Himself Then Eat And Drink."

- A. God has provided a divine mirror in which man may examine himself (Jno. 1:23-25; 2 Cor. 3:18). The word of God is a discernor of thoughts (Heb. 4:12). By it each is to be judged (2 Cor. 5:10; Jno. 12:48-49).
- B. Job thought himself righteous till God spoke. Then he repented himself in dust and ashes (Job 42:6).
- C. Peter was very bold until the Lord looked at him, then he wept bitterly (Lk. 22:61-62).
- D. So we must "examine ourselves and eat and drink in a worthy manner" (1 Cor. 11:27-30).
- E. This should be done carefully and prayerfully, asking God to forgive us and help us to forsake every false way (Psa. 139:23-24).

## CONCLUSION

The communion on the first day of every week is a joyous reunion of the Christian with the Lord's death and resurrection. It must be done with great reverence, awe, and care. It should be a time of great decision for both Christians and non-Christians. For the Christian to try harder to do better, and for the non-Christian to obey the gospel so he can have the fellowship of this communion which is enjoyed only by Christians.

# **THE CHURCH BOUGHT WITH BLOOD**

## **Acts 20:28**

### **PROPOSITION**

The church is a blood-bought institution and is essential to salvation.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show what the church is and to show some fundamental principles of identify.

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are hundreds of religious groups who call themselves "churches." The Bible knows only one; the Lord bought only one with His blood. Among all these human institutions the true church must be identified; the difference between the human and divine must be maintained.

The church of Christ maintains a position neither Protestant nor Catholic. Yet the church of the Lord protests against error and is universal for all mankind.

In this lesson we study a few fundamentals that are characteristic of the church. One, what the church is, and two, some ways to identify the church today.

#### **I. What The Church Is:**

##### **A. It is the body of Christ.**

1. In one figure it sustains a relation to Christ that the wife sustains to her husband—they are one (Eph. 5:22-23).
2. In another figure it is to the head what the physical body is to the head; a body of many members (1 Cor. 12:12-13; 12:20,27).
3. Every time the Bible affirms there is "one body," it affirms there is one church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:4).

##### **B. The kingdom of Christ.**

1. Christ appointed unto the disciples a kingdom (Lk. 22:29-30), which kingdom they received (Heb. 12:28).
2. The disciples had been called unto it (1 Thess. 2:11-12), and had been translated into it (Col. 1:13).
3. Jesus understood the church and kingdom to be one and the same (Matt. 16:18-19). So did Paul and John (Acts 20:28; Rev. 5:9-10; Eph. 2:19).

### C. The family of God.

1. The church is the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 16:34), and anyone who claims to be a child and not in the family is illegitimate (Heb. 12:8).
2. Since all God's children are in the family and the family of God is the church, those in the church are "Christians" and all Christians are in the church; one not in the church is not a Christian!

## II. A Few Simple Fundamental Principles Of Identity.

- A. Jesus declared He would establish His church (Matt. 16:18). That church was established (Acts 2:41; 2:47), and has never been destroyed (Dan. 2:39-44; Heb. 12:28), because it is perpetuated by living seed which should never be destroyed (Lk. 8:11; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; Matt. 24:35).
- B. Jesus enacted a law of induction into that church (Matt. 28:18-20). That law of induction has *never* been repealed (Matt. 16:18; 18:19; Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). Though some reject to calling it a law, God so calls it (Rom. 8:1-2; 3:27; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).
- C. That law when obeyed made Christians of those obeying it (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Acts 26:28). Since seed bears after its own kind (Gen. 1:11-12), and the word is the seed (Lk. 8:11; Matt. 13:19), the same seed will produce nothing else today!
- D. God added to the church those obeying the gospel; those being bought by the blood, who thereby were being saved (Acts 2:41,47; 20:28; Eph. 5:25). God has not altered this plan by telling men to get religion, join the church, or by promising them salvation outside of the church.
- E. The worship authorized by Him was and is spiritual, and is to be observed according to the ordinance delivered by the Apostles (Jno. 4:23; 1 Cor. 11:2). The word is not to be corrupted or gone beyond (2 Jno. 9).
- F. The Lord appointed the organization (Eph. 4:11), which organization recognizes Christ only as the "head" of the entire church, but with local elders and deacons, teachers and preachers for the work in the local congregation (Tit. 1:5; Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1). This order has never needed any improvement; it is all sufficient for all ages (Jude 3).

## CONCLUSION

The church of Christ is to be identified today by finding men and women who believe in Jesus as the Christ, confess their faith, repent and are baptized for the remission of sins, as in New Testament times. These God has added to the church bought

with Christ's blood.

Do you say, "I don't know what to do?" Just obey the gospel. Do you say, "I don't know which church to join?" Don't join any of them, but let God add you to the one bought with Christ's blood! "Where shall I learn?" The New Testament will teach you all you need to know; read the gospels to learn of Christ, read the Book of Acts to learn what to do, then worship in truth and live holy.

# **THE GREATER BLESSEDNESS**

## **Acts 20:35**

### **PROPOSITION**

The greater blessedness is to give rather than receive.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To show why giving is a greater blessing and to show giving is divine.

### **INTRODUCITON**

Everything about Christianity involves giving. "God so loved the world that He gave His Son" (Jno. 3:16). Christ so loved mankind He gave His life a ransom for many (1 Tim. 2:6). Everything about Christianity involves sacrifice. Christ taught the greatest blessing is not in receiving but giving. Today we consider The Greater Blessedness.

- I. "It Is More Blessed To Give Than Receive."
  - A. This is a statement by the Lord, but no where recorded in the Gospels, but preserved for us by the Apostle Paul.
  - B. God did not say it is more blessed to "get" or to "receive," but rather "to give."
  - C. God has designated things we "get" (Prov. 4:7; Jas. 1:3). But we must also learn "to give."
  - D. "Getting" has become a disease. Everyone wants someone else "to give" to them. They never want "to give of themselves."
- II. Giving Is A Divine Attribute.
  - A. Giving is God-like. Giving was the means God used for expressing His great love for man (Jno. 3:16; 1 Jno. 4:9; Jas. 1:17).
  - B. Giving is Christ-like. He revealed the divine love by emptying Himself (Phil. 2:5-8; Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Tit. 2:14).
  - C. Giving is Angel-like, for as they minister to the saints they give themselves in service (Heb. 1:14).
  - D. Giving is essential to the perfection God would see in all of us, who follow the Christ (Matt. 19:21).
  - E. This becomes easy when one has first given himself to Christ and His ideals (2 Cor. 8:5).
- III. Silver And Gold Are Not The Great Needs Of The Day, But Greater Values Which The Christian Has In His Possession.
  - A. When Jesus sent out His disciples under the first com-

mission, it was with instructions to give (Matt. 10:8).

- B. The Apostles had neither silver nor gold but they gave something of much greater value (Acts 3:1-6; 2 Cor. 8:1).
- C. Today the greater values are being swept away. We face bad conditions and flourish!
- D. The world's need for today:
  - 1. Faith in the true God, in His omnipotence, as Paul said (Acts 22:17-29). Faith in a risen Christ who has power to raise you from the dead (Rom. 10:9-10).
  - 2. Hope, which is an anchor for the soul in all stormy weather (Heb. 6:19). Look above the corruption and materialism of our day to see the hope that lives and assures us (1 Pet. 1:3-5).
  - 3. Salvation from sin, an ideal of life, both are found in Christ (Jno. 8:31-32; 14:6). This you can give to countless others if only you will. Christ is the ideal example and character, sinless (Jno. 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:22).
  - 4. A living example to follow in service (Gal. 6:2; Jno. 14:13-15). In kindness of word and deed, as light and salt (Matt. 5:13-16). Of sympathy, which Christ had for all. In obedience to the will of God.

#### IV. The Reward Of Such Giving.

- A. The joy and blessedness is returned (Lk. 6:38); it will be better than we can contain.
- B. The final and supreme reward will come from the Savior, also shall give us eternal life (Matt. 10:42; 25:34).
- C. Only eternity can determine the worth and far reaching influence of that which you can give, for it shall not return void.

### CONCLUSION

Giving is of God, the more you give the more like God you become. Isn't that reason enough to first give yourself to God and then all that you have to His service? Your time, your talent, your money all belong to God. Why not glorify Him by graciously growing in the grace of giving also? (Acts 20:32).

# **A TERRIFIED KING**

**Acts 24:24-27**

## **PROPOSITION**

The wicked of this world should be terrified by gospel preaching.

## **OBJECTIVE**

To show how the gospel hits at the very heart of sin.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is the story of one who heard the gospel but was not converted. He had the same opportunity as others who obeyed, but sought a convenient season.

We consider the involved, the sermon and the result. Let every sinner give heed to this divine example of rejection.

### **I. The Characters Involved.**

- A. Felix—Brought up as a slave at the court of Agrippa, mother of Claudius Caesar. Became a favorite of Claudius, who elevated him to place of governor of Judea. He held a king's place, but with the spirit of a slave, cruel, selfish, who got what he went for.
- B. Drusilla—young, beautiful, daughter of Herod, who put to death James. Sister of Agrippa, former wife of Azizua, King of Emasa, a small province. She had been enticed by Felix through a sorcerer to leave her husband and live with Felix, because he had more wealth, power, glory, etc.
- C. Paul—the Apostle of Christ returned from third journey. Seized in Jerusalem by the Jews and reserved by the soldiers (Acts 21). Paul made his defence from the stairs (Acts 22). Appeared before the council, uproar between Pharisees and Sadducees. Conspiracy to kill Paul, warned by nephew, sent to Caesarea (Acts 23) now before Felix, no crime, but kept in prison in hope of securing money (Acts 24).

### **II. Sermon As Preached By Paul.**

- A. Righteousness—"Character or quality of being right or just."
  - 1. Righteousness of God, that quality of being just with man (Rom. 3:24-25).
  - 2. The revelation of God's righteousness, the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17).
  - 3. The word of righteousness, the entire doctrine of



Christ (Heb. 5:11-14).

4. We become the righteousness of God, the character God demands, in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

5. Therefore, Paul was preaching to Felix the facts, commands and provisions of the Gospel.

B. Self-control—This related itself to the Christian life. Crucifixion of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-24; Col. 3:5-11).

1. This would be a terrific blow to Felix and Drusilla!

2. Some today will not deny themselves anything, not even a cigarette, to another man's wife or husband.

C. Judgment to come—This relates to a future judgment before which all men must come, all must render account (Rom. 14:10-12).

1. This judgment is guaranteed by the resurrection (Acts 17:30-31).

2. The wrath of God is to be visited upon all the world of the ungodly (1 Pet. 4:17-19; 2 Thess. 1:5-10).

### III. The Effect Of Paul's Sermon.

A. Felix was terrified (Vs. 25); but procrastinated, waiting for a "more convenient season."

B. He did not want to give up his wife, or his vices. It never is convenient to give up pleasurable sin.

C. He was too busy with the affairs of state, too much business, and probably it was crooked.

D. He loved the honours of this world. It would have been a "come-down" to have become a Christian.

### CONCLUSION

Felix made excuse and said, "A more convenient season." Festus said, "thou art mad." Agrippa said, "With but little persuasion you would make of me a Christian." What will *your* excuse be? (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7-8).





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