

# **The Book of ACTS**

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## **ABOUT THIS BOOK**

This book is used by the permission. We thank William H. Smith and Gene Collins for their generosity and hard work in preparing the materials contained within.

### **HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:**

This book has be written in order to guide you to a better understanding of the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts of the Apostles was written as one book of history. It would benefit you to read it in it's entirety before studying this book. This will help you to see the structure of the letter and the overall message and tone that the writer had in mind.

As you study through the book, you should read each chapter individually before studying the chapter in this book describing the contents found in the letter. As you study through the book you should make special notes and write down any questions that have not been answered. You should also take down any personal notes that will help you later when you teach the book.

Finally, after studying through this entire book, you should read the letter one more time in its entirety. This time you should see things within the text that you did not see before. If you have any questions pertaining to this study that have not been answered, please write them on your test and an answer will be attempted.

God bless you in your study of the Acts of the Apostles!

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## **INTRODUCTION TO ACTS**

### **The Title**

The title attached to this important part of God's revelation is both inspired and misleading. The title was not added until about the middle of the second century AD. A better title might be: A Brief History of the beginning of the church.

### **The Author**

The writer does not mention his own name, however, tradition is clear and consistent that Luke the physician wrote both the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

### **Date of the writing of the Book of Acts**

The things that happen in this book are things that happened from just after the resurrection of Jesus to the close of Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

It is the opinion of many learned men that the book of Acts was actually written sometime between 64 to 70 AD, but some think it might have been written a little earlier.

The reason some believe that it may have been written earlier is:

1. There is no reference within Acts to Paul's epistles.
2. The abrupt ending of the book - before Paul's death.
3. No hint of the persecution of Nero.
4. No hint of the pending destruction of Jerusalem.
5. No hint of the knowledge of Paul's trip to Spain.
6. No hint of the Gnostic doctrine which arose.

### **The Purpose of this book:**

The specific purpose is not stated by the author. Therefore, we must conclude that the motivation of the Holy Spirit was to guide the writer to record what happened in the early church for those of us who would follow later. Therefore we can say that there is a Historical purpose behind its writing.

The letter was originally sent to the Roman official Theopolis, the writing can best be understood as trying to make thing more clear or more easily understood by Theopolis concerning the beginning of the church. (Luke 1:1-3)

The early reference to the resurrection of Jesus are clearly intended to encourage the belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus.(Acts 1:3; Luke 1:4).

The writing is also meant to defend the Gospel, in as much as it established the truth that the

disruptive forces within the Jewish nation and the Roman empire were not the fault of the Christ nor His church, but were caused by a hostile Jewish leaders.

### **Important Truths:**

Luke explains the method of evangelism used by the apostles and the early church. Also he records the flexibility of their preaching and teaching in their reaching out to different types of audiences.

Important to the church of all ages are the records of the people converted to Christ's church in the book of Acts. In the same way all of the New Testament letters were written with the members of God's church in mind. They were written to increase the faith of those who already belonged to Christ. They were not written to try to convert someone, but rather to tell them how to remain faithful and how to better serve God.

The book of Acts is written differently. The book of Acts recorded what was preached to the lost and what was demanded of those who heard the preaching that they might be saved. What we see in Acts then, is God's pattern for becoming a Christian. Many false teachings would be eliminated if all religious groups would follow this New Testament pattern for evangelism and church planting and stop following the teachings of men.

The Book of Acts also provides a clear guide to God's organizational pattern for the church. God did not leave His church alone to decide upon an organization they might like, but God described it very clearly in His word what he wanted for His church.

Here in the Book of Acts Luke tells us about Christianity designed for the whole world. While Luke shows us that the roots of Christianity began with the Jewish people, God intended it to go to the whole world, not just the Jewish people. It is clear that the Church of Christ is never to be seen as merely the Jewish religion with a few changes. It is something new designed for men as a "New Covenant."

The Book of Acts is the key to understanding God's great plan for saving all men. Here recorded for all men to see, is the record of God working in the lives of men and nations to bring about His salvation of all men.

We need to read the Book of Acts to study and follow when planning to reach the lost or to rediscover the true pattern for New Testament Christianity.

### **Organizational Structure of the Book of Acts**

The book of Acts is the historical record of the fulfillment of Jesus' charge to His apostles to take the gospel into all the world (See Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8).

As we read Acts we can divide it into four distinctive parts:

1. The background (and beginning of the church) (1:1-11)

2. Going to Jerusalem (1:12-6:7)
3. Taking the word of God Judea and Samaria (6:8-9:31)
4. Taking the word of God to the whole world (10:1-28-31)

## **THE BACKGROUND** **(AND BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH) 1:1- 11**

### **Background Material to the Acts 1:1-2**

The “former book” was the Gospel according to Luke. Its *content were*, the life and teaching of Jesus. Its *time frame*, was from the birth of Christ through the time he ascended up to heaven. Its *reveals to us*, Jesus’ final instruction to His disciples. Its *means of working* is through the Holy Spirit. Its *workers* are men like us called to be apostles by Christ.

### **The Evidence that Establishes Jesus as the Messiah and the apostles as reliable 1:3**

*His suffering* (especially the crucifixion) fulfilled every Old Testament predictive prophecy that pointed the way to Messiah. (Luke 24:4ff; Psalms 22; Isaiah 52:53, 12. *His bodily presence*, the resurrection (See Psalms 2;16;110). *The variety of evidences*; His many appearances (I John 1:1-4). *The time period of the evidence*: forty days. *The purposes of His appearances*:

1. To establish beyond any reasonable doubt that He was really raised from the dead. Death had no power over Him. The implications of this truth are staggering! Some of these implications will be noted in the preaching of the apostles. The major development of this doctrine will be found in the epistles.
2. Jesus appeared in order to help them have a better understanding of the kingdom of Heaven. He also gave them a clearer understanding of what they were to do after he went back to Heaven.
3. In order for God to carry out His plan for world evangelism, it was important that there be no doubt regarding who His Son was or about the nature of His kingdom. This is why he appeared to them and spoke with them after his resurrection, they needed his personal teaching to be able to deal with all of the hardships they must endure to follow his instructions.

### **The Command And Promise of Jesus: 1:4-5**

The **occasion** was one of the time Jesus was also adding to the evidence regarding the reality of His bodily resurrection (1:4a). The **command**: “*Do not leave Jerusalem*” (as prophesied in Isaiah 2:1-5; 1:4b). The **promise**: its source was God and Jesus had instructing them regarding it (1:4c; See also. Luke 24:45-49; John 14-16). The **explanation** of the promise (1:5):

1. The Words: It is vital that one uses only the right words or error is likely to get into the church. The correct wording is “baptized in/with the Holy Spirit.” There is not a scriptural basis for the wording “the baptism of the Holy Spirit!” (see. Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5).
2. The Baptizer: Note again John the Baptizer’s Spirit directed comments. Then notice Luke 24:49. Now re-read Acts 2:33.
3. The Nature: This is a promise not a command.
4. Some observations regarding this promise:
  - a. First notice the associations related to regular (most commonly known as water) baptism:
    - 1) Men are commissioned to baptize in water.
    - 2) Men are commissioned to baptize in water for as long as the redemptive period is to last (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
    - 3) Water baptism is a Divine command that must be obeyed (Acts 10:48).
    - 4) Water baptism is the final step in order to receive remission (forgiveness) of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
  - b. Notice the associations related to being baptized in/with the Holy Spirit:
    - 1) Only Jesus baptizes in/with the Holy Spirit.
    - 2) The baptism of Jesus (Holy Spirit Baptism) was to occur only one time. Its benefits continue, of course, even as the benefits of the one time cross event (Vis. Acts 2:18,33).
    - 3) “Baptized with the Spirit” was a promise.
    - 4) “Baptized with the Spirit” was unrestrictive (all flesh) while its benefits were restricted to those who had been baptized earlier by either John the Baptizer or under Jesus’ earthly ministry baptism and were already saved or, as would be the normal situation, those who were baptized into Christ under the new Christian covenant to who the promise was directly pledged.

### **The Mandate Arising out of the Promise: 1:6-8**

The Apostolic Question Regarding Time (1:6) - There is here an important implication regarding when the redemptive period was to be initiated. The question evolved from the teachings of Jesus concerning the kingdom being close at hand. In fact, they must have recognized that the current Jewish state was not the promised kingdom! Whatever their view, they must have had a drastically different view of the kingdom than the modern day premillennialist.

Jesus’ Response Regarding Their Question (1:7) - Jesus does not chide them for their misconception but simply reminds them that there are some things that fall within the “secret things” of God (Deuteronomy 29:29). Whatever their thinking, Jesus gently lets them know that all important truth for them is not the “time” of the kingdom, but what He had promised them while they were in the upper room.

Jesus’ Commission is the Thesis of the Book of Acts as well as its Outline (1:8) - The **power** of their commission was the Holy Spirit. The **person** of their commission was Jesus the Son

of God. The **purpose** of their commission is seen in its unique witness.

1. A witness is one who gives testimony concerning the truth of a matter.
2. The basis for his testimony is what he has seen and heard.
3. The content of his witness was that they had been with Him after His resurrection from the grave.

The **program** of their commission was to witness the gospel to the ends of the earth.

### **The Ascension of Jesus 1:9**

Some important questions regarding the ascension are: Who ascended? Jesus (1:11). What ascended? The glorified human body of Jesus. Where did He ascend to? Heaven (Hebrews 1:3; Psalms 24). Why did He ascend? To provide intercession and mediation (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:23-25; I Timothy 2:5; Galatians 3:19-20). A careful remembrance of the above facts will aid the careful student to gain a better understanding of several fundamental doctrine and help protect him from error.

### **The Angelic Assurance 1:10-11**

The Apostolic Experience (1:10 a) - It is vital that what they experienced regarding Jesus' ascension be clearly kept in mind. It is that experience which will determine one's understanding of the nature of both the ascension and the second coming. Their second experience of that day was the appearance of angelic beings. Notice the expression "dressed in white." (Matthew 28:2-4; Mark 16:1-5; Luke 24:1-8, 22-23; John 20:10-12).

The Angelic Message (1:11) - Note the expression "this same Jesus." "Heaven" is the name given to God's peculiar dwelling place. So heaven is the express location of Jesus' abode at this time. Note the WAY Jesus is to return at his "second coming." It will be "in the same way" or manner that He left. The emphasis is not the clouds but the form, that is bodily. Several implications of importance:

1. Verse 11b does not discuss any of His providential returns (such as His appearances before Paul. Acts 9:3-7; 22:8; 26:15; II Corinthians 12:8; Acts 23:11).
2. It will be to bring back with Him those saints who have died prior to His second coming to reunite them with their bodies (I Thessalonians 4:14-17).
3. It will be to change those saints who are alive into their glorified states to give immortality to their mortal bodies (I Corinthians 15:51-54).
4. It will be to punish those who don't know the true God or those who do know Him but have rejected His glorious gospel (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  - a. This means that He will also raise the wicked as well. What the time interval, the Bible sees the resurrection of both the righteous and wicked as a single event (Acts 24:15; John 5:28-30).
  - b. This also brings to pass the final responsibility of Jesus toward the wicked men when He sits as the Judge (John 5:27; II Corinthians 5:10).

## THE GOSPEL TO JERUSALEM

*1:12-6:17*

### **Some Important Things to begin with 1:12-14**

The disciples' place of dwelling: (1:12-14) - Notice the geographical change (Luke 24:50-53 compare with 1:12-14). Notice it is "the upper room." Now compare all this with Luke 22:7-12. This room would have them in the proximity of the temple area (Luke 24:53) and probably where they had partaken of the last Passover. More than likely it was a large upper room.

1. Those who were temporarily dwelling (1:13b).
2. Those who had visited Romans time to time (1:14b)
3. Note their major purpose there (1:14a)
4. What is of supreme importance is the fact that they were obedient to Jesus' command given in verse 5.

The Apostolic Need (1:15-20) - Peter is obviously the apostolic spokesman (1:15). Peter's comment regarding the Scriptures and Judas' defection are made by analogy and not prediction (1:16-17).

1. Old Testament prophecies are to be studied carefully and contextually in order to determine the nature of their context.
2. All prophecy must be interpreted in one of three ways which only context or New Testament comments can verify.
  - a. Much Old Testament prophecy is local and exclusively Jewish (Deuteronomy 23:1-8).
  - b. A fairly large portion of the Old Testament is applicable to Christianity only by analogy (See also Isaiah 6:9-10 with Acts 28:25-27).

Luke's editorial comment regarding Judas' fate is found in 1:18-19 (See also Matthew 27:1-10).

The Apostolic Answer to the Lack (1:21-22) - Since Judas defected (It was not that he had died. He would have been replaced even if he lived!), his office had to be replaced. The logic was simple: the apostolic office was to lay the foundation of Christianity. Apparently, that could not be officially initiated without the complement of twelve (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:32; Revelation 21:9-14). Additionally this had to be done before Pentecost since that was God's ordained day to begin His promised work of redemption.

Therefore, God gave the requirements through Peter in order to get the job of replacement accomplished (1:21a). The requirements to replace the one apostle who defected were as follows (1:21b-22):

1. Must be male.
2. Must have been a regular and long time disciple.
3. He had to have witnessed (stood in the presence of) the resurrected Jesus.

The work of the one to replace Jesus is seen in 1:22b.

The Selection Process (1:23-26) - Apparently only two disciples fit the qualifications: Joseph & Matthias (1:23). Prayer was offered regarding the selection (1:24-25). Finally, lots were cast so that the decision was left totally in God's hands (Lev 16:8; Proverbs 16:33; 1:26). Note this observation: the selection requirements demanded by the Holy Spirit forever removed and possibly for the future replacement (or succession) of the original apostles. The very nature of their work was unique to the first century.

### **The Work Begins 2:1-47**

The Promised Spirit is Poured Out (2:1-4) - The **promise** (Joel 2:28-32). The **explanation** (Isaiah 32:15-20; 35:1-10; 44:1-5; Ez 39:25-29). The **anticipation** (John 4:10; 7:27-29; 14-16). The **preparation** (Luke 24:45-49). The **realization** (Acts 2:1-4):

1. When? Pentecost 33 AD.
2. Who? At this time by the apostles.
3. Where? Somewhere in the temple area. Luke recorded "they were all together in one place."
4. What? "All of them were filled (brought under the influence) with the Holy Spirit."
5. Attendant with miracles and signs for confirmation (See Hebrews 2:3-4; Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:15-22).
6. Where? This will be discussed later.

What is the meaning of this unusual event? Consider Matthew 3:11-12 which discusses the two works of Jesus:

1. He is to baptize "with fire." This meant that He would judge in time a wicked nation that had rejected every overture of God in their behalf. They had rejected God's prophetic word and His redemptive kingdom (Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Mal 4:1-6).
2. He was to "baptize ... with the Holy Spirit." This was the initiation of His work of redemption and renewal. Remember our earlier passages to Isaiah and Ezekiel. (See John 7:38-39; Titus 3:4-7).
3. All of God's promises focused in on this great feast day! Forgiveness of sins was to be offered and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! What we had lost in Eden we had again regained through God's great redemptive effort.

**Important!** Do not make the mistake of thinking that the miraculous was just something unusual for that day and age. Nothing could be further from the truth. The gift of the day was the Holy Spirit Himself! The miracles were only the confirmation of the fulfilled promise (Joel 2:28ff). Also consider the notes: Baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The Jerusalem Audience (2:5-13) - The **people** were Jews of many nations (2:5). The **reaction** was "bewilderment and utterly amazed" (2:6-12; See Verses 9-11 with Isaiah 11:12). Another **reaction** was "others mocking said" (2:13). The **experience** was "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (2:8) Note: The Greek word actually means:

1. Tongues - language (J.H. Thayer 1100).
2. Language (Greek - DIALECTO) - "Language of a nation or region" (J.H. Thayer 1258).
3. The miraculous "tongue" was the special gift of being able to speak as a native a foreign language that one did not know.
  - a. This was a Holy Spirit given power (2:4).
  - b. They were declaring the "wonderful works of God" (2:11).
4. The nature of the miraculous tongues was in a "prayer" form (I Corinthians 14:2,14).
5. Tongues, therefore, were not for preaching, but for a sign to get one's attention (I Corinthians 14:22).

Why does Acts 2 seem to differ from I Corinthians 12-14? The difference is **place, audience, and purpose.**

Peter's Sermon was the First Gospel Sermon Ever Preached (2:14-41) - His *introduction* (2:14-21) was a rebuttal to the sceptics (2:14-15) and assertion regarding the questioned phenomenon (2:16-21). The *problem is presented*. Peter convicts them of sin (22:23a). The *plan is explained*. Peter preaches the gospel (2:23b-37):

1. He speaks of the crucifixion (2:23b).
2. He speaks of the resurrection (2:24-35).
  - a. He affirms the resurrection (2:24).
  - b. He establishes it by Scripture (2:25-31).
  - c. He gives the apostolic witness (2:32).
3. He speaks of the ascension (2:33-37).
  - a. The Joel 2 prophecy is reaffirmed (2:33).
  - b. The 110th Psalm agrees too (2:34-35).
  - c. The conclusion is undeniable (2:36).
  - d. The response of some of the audience (2:37).

**\*\*SEE APENDEX ON BAPTISM, P. 50**

The *plea is made*. Peter tells the believers what God has directed for them to do so that they might be saved (2:38-39). The response that is required of them is believe, repentance, and immersion. The promises they receive are: Remission of sins, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and being added to God's church (V47). Peter's *continual appeal* to the audience (2:40). The *results* of the first gospel sermon (2:41). Much belief and obedience to God's plan.

**A Summary Statement** of the early disciple's response to their Christian obligations (2:42-47) - 1) They were **devoted to God** [the greater context] (2:42a; see also Ex 20:1-7; Mark 12:29-31; I Thess 4:1). 2) They were **devoted to the apostolic word** (2:42b). The early church recognized the essential need to learn what the apostles taught (See also Psalms 119:18). 3) They were **devoted to the fellowship** (2:42c). This spoke of their need for assembly or church togetherness [we would say formal assembly] (See Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 10:26). Nearly every letter of our New Testament was written to a Church of Christ. 4) They were **devoted to the breaking of bread** (2:42d). 5) They were **devoted to the**

**prayers** (2:42e). This would be public and private prayer (See also Colossians 4:2; Psalms 55:17). 6) They were **devoted to the apostles** (2:43). 7) They were **devoted to one another** (2:44-47a). They cared for one another (2:44-45). They studied with one another (2:46a). And, they had table fellowship with one another [they ate together] (2:46b); 8) They were **devoted to evangelism** (2:47b).

### **Peter and John Preach in the Temple 3:1-26**

The Beggar crippled from birth is healed (3:1-10) - Notice the apostles continued in their Jewish ways (3:1). The hour of prayer was three times a day ( 6 am; 3 PM; and 7-9 PM). Acts 21:17-26 illustrates that the apostles had no difficulty with observing the Law of Moses. Can you explain that?

The background circumstances of the beggar is found in 3:2-5. The apostolic miracle of healing is next described in 3:6-8. Notice that faith was not necessary for this miracle to occur (See also vs 5-6). Now observe the nature of the miracle in verse 7-8.

The observers response (3:9-10). Notice what they observed regarding the miracle (v 9). This man was recognized by a wide variety of people (v 10a). Now observe the reaction to a genuine miracle (v 10b).

\*\*\*\* Note Appendix Insert Regarding **True Miracles**, page 47

### **Peter's Temple Sermon: 3:11-26**

The occasion of the sermon (3:11). Jesus is proclaimed as the Messiah (3:12-16). An important disclaimer (v 12). God has been at work in your midst: the ascension doctrine is affirmed (v 13a). An accusation is present and the sin doctrine is affirmed (v 13b-14). Another accusation is made and the crucifixion doctrine is mentioned (v 15b). The contrast is now put forth and the resurrection doctrine is now declared (v 13 b). Testimony is presented regarding these truths, this is apostolic witness that is given (v 15c). Final Divine proof is laid out: The evidence of Divine power as seen in the healed man (v 16). Note the following:

1. The source of the apostolic power: faith.
2. The ground of the apostolic power: Jesus.
3. The proof of the apostolic power: The healed man standing before them!

Repentance and faith are demanded by God in order to obtain salvation (3:17-20). Peter's words of understanding (v17). Peter then explains (v 18) and invites those to come to salvation (v 19-20). He demands repentance (v 19a) and demands baptism (v 19b). He then proclaims forgiveness of sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (3:19c). He then gives the promise of the Christ's return (v 20).

Peter then gives an explanation of the Christ's absence (3:21-23). The work of God must be completed before Christ can leave heaven (v 21). The prophetic proof and warning of the above point is seen in verses 22-23 (See also Deuteronomy 18:15ff). Peter concludes with

an appeal to their Jewish heritage (3:24-26). He affirms that their generation is the terminus of all prophetic utterance (Luke 21:22; v 24). He then affirms their Jewish heritage is fulfilled in Abraham's seed, Jesus (v 25-26).

### **The Church's First Opposition: 4:1-22**

The Doctrinal Conflict (4:1-2) - The established leaders of the Jews are the ones trying to stir up problems (v1). They have two major complaints: 1) They were upset because the apostles were teaching without authorization (v 2a); and, 2) They were upset over the teaching regarding the resurrection (v 2b). During Jesus' ministry the Pharisees were His major antagonists. From Acts' time on, there will be a shift from them to the Sadducees. The reason is their aversion to the resurrection doctrine.

Peter and John are Arrested and Jailed: (4:3-4) - They are jailed and held over because of the late hour. Perhaps, a little psychology was being applied from the wily old political leaders as well (v 3). Luke, then gives a brief progress report of the church movement (4:4). He shows the apostolic effectiveness (v 4a) and showed that the male membership had reached five thousand by this time (4b).

The Apostles First Legal Questioning: (4:5-12) - The important gathering spoke of the Jewish leadership's growing concern regarding the new Christian movement (v 5-6). The apostles face their accusers and are interrogated (v 7). Then the apostles present their defense (v 8-12):

1. The influence of the Holy Spirit - boldness (v 8a).
2. The question of healing is answered (8b-12).
  - a. Those addressed (v 8b)
  - b. The charge (v 9a)
  - c. The answer (v 9b-10a)
  - d. The gospel is presented (v 10b-12).
    - 1) The problem (v 10b)
    - 2) The plan (v 10c)
    - 3) The prophecy (v 11)
    - 4) The plea (v 12)

The Sanhedrin's Reaction: (4:13) - They were awed by the apostles' courage (v 13a). They were amazed at their knowledge (v 13b) and acknowledged their association (v 13c).

The Sanhedrin finds themselves in a dilemma (4:14).

The Sanhedrin's Private Deliberation (4:15-17) - The apostles are sent away (v 15). The Sanhedrin has difficulty in deciding what to do (v16), however they make a decision (v 17).

The Sanhedrin's Command and the Apostles Bold Response (4:18-20) - The Sanhedrin tells the apostles to go and speak no more about the resurrected Jesus. The apostles respond by

stating that they must obey God rather than men.

The Sanhedrin's Dilemma (4:21-22) - They simply released Peter and John with a warning (v 21 a). They were restrained by any other action because they feared the people (v 21b). They were unable to answer the miracle (v 22).

### **The Church's Response to Persecution 4:23-31**

The apostles report to the church at Jerusalem (v 23). The church's first response to the persecution was found in prayer (v 24-30). Prayer was made to the Sovereign Lord (v 24) the Lord of Prophecy (v 25-26) and to the Lord of Proclamation (v 29-30). The church's second response was proclamation (v 31). This was a sign of God's approval (v 31a) and their approval (v 31b).

### **The Church's Response to Need 4:32-5:11**

The **reason** of their benevolence is found in verse 32. Then the good things that came from their benevolence is found in verses 32-33. There was generosity (v 32b), increased evangelism (v 33a), multiplication of God's blessings (v 33b), and no needy person was among them (v 34a). The **explanation** of their benevolence is found in verse 34-35. They sold their personal properties (v 34b). They gave their funds to those in need (v 34c) and the things were laid at the apostles feet to be distributed (v 35). An example of such an act is described in verses 36-37.

Next Luke describes a **danger** of benevolence (5:1-11). The failure was caused by keeping back a portion that was to be given (v 1-2). The tragedy of the action is seen in verses 3-6. The sin was against God (v 3a) Ananias made the choice (v 3b-4a) and the crime was terrible (v 4b). The penalty was death (v 5-6). The tragedy continued with Saphira (v 7-10). After three hours she came to the apostles (v 7a), she was confronted (v 8), and she died as well (v 9-10). This placed a great fear upon all of the church (v 11).

### **The Church's Opposition (Limited & Emotional) 5:12-16**

The Unique Place of the Apostles (5:12-16) - The apostolic office was special to that time. It served an essential part in the development of Christianity. It was to decide all the issues and settle all disputes. Thus, God had to establish its place beyond all doubt and challenge. This was especially so in the miraculous. Note:

1. Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:18-26 - There were 12 apostles.
2. Matthew 19:28-30; Luke 22:29-30 - There were 12 thrones.
3. Eph 2:20 (See also I Corinthians 3:10) - They laid the foundation of the church.
4. Revelation 21:14 - Their names are engraved on the 12 foundations.
5. Matthew 16:18-29; John 20:21-22 - They were given the keys to the kingdom's laws.
6. I Corinthians 14:37-3 - They spoke the authoritative word of God (See also I Thess 1:13; II Pet 1:16-21; 3:16).

7. I Corinthians 12:12 - They worked special apostolic signs.
8. Acts 8:18 - They were instruments through which the Holy Spirit gave certain and limited miraculous powers (gifts) to others. None received any miraculous gifts without apostolic presence.

Therefore, in the beginning of Christianity, God made an important distinction between the apostles and all others by letting **only** them work the miracles. Please keep that in mind as we consider the following things.

At this point Luke gives a brief update regarding the place of the church in the Jewish community (**5:12-14**). The apostles (exclusively) performed their confirmation signs (**v 12a**). The church was united and meeting in the temple on a regular basis (**12b**). The Jewish community generally respected the church, but feared her too. Thus, a natural division was slowly occurring (**v 13**). Yet more and more Jews were submitting to the preached gospel daily (**v 14**). The results being that people were carrying all the sick from the vicinity of Jerusalem to be healed by the apostles (**v 15-16**).

There was also an emotional negative response from the Jewish leaders to the success the apostles were having in planting churches (**5:17-18**). The emotional response was primarily from the sect of the Saduces (**v 15**). They exercised their power in the government to try and stop apostles efforts to teach Jesus (**v 18**) by putting the apostles in jail. God intervenes and sends the apostles out with a job (commission) (**5:19-20**). An angel comes (**v 19**) and opened the gates and tells them to go (**v 20**) to teach in the temple. The apostles obey (**v 21**). The Sadducees were confused (**5:21b-24**). The full Sanhedrin (all of the officials) met and asked for the prisoners to be brought to them (**v 21**). They were confused to find that the prisoners were not in their cells (**v 22-24**). The apostles were once again taken (from the temple where they were teaching) and brought before the tribunal, but with a gentler hand (**v 25-26**). The apostles were questioned (**v 27-28**). Then the apostolic defense became the offense (**v 29-32**). Notice what they said as they spoke to these Jewish leaders:

1. God is the supreme authority and must be obeyed before all other authority (**v 29**).
2. The gospel is again presented (**v 30-32**).
  - a. You killed Jesus [Problem] (**v 30b**).
  - b. Jesus was crucified [Plan] (**v 30c**).
  - c. Jesus was resurrected [Plan] (**v 30a**).
  - d. Jesus ascended to God [Plan] (**31 a**).
  - e. Jesus offers salvation [Plea].

The apostles add their personal witness and that of the Holy Spirit (the power of miracles) Who is given to indwell each Christian (**V32**) They were the eye witness to the resurrection. They had done undeniable miracles to confirm their testimony. Their changed lives were the final witness.

Gamaliel' council on behalf of the apostles (**5:33-40**). The Sadducees wanted to kill the apostles (**v 33**), but Gamaliel reacted with a speech (**vv 34-39**). He defended the apostles and

challenged the court not to take God's part in judgment. The court decided to have the apostles flogged and commanded them not to preach (v 40). The apostles response to the persecution (5:41-42) was very interesting. They were joyful (v 41) and kept on preaching and teaching about Jesus (v 42).

### **The Church Working Together 6:1-7**

Look at what was happening that caused the church to need some organization (6:1). The tensions of two cultures living and working together were present. There were people who were both Greeks and Jews culturally who were now Christians. There also was a growing need for a work of food being distributed to the poor widows of the church. {**Important:** Luke, at this point, introduces a important point to Theopolis being able to understand of the gospel spreading beyond the the Jewish people. It was the increasing number of Greek people who were becoming Christians}. The church was and is meant to spread between more than one culture, village or tribal group.

The solution to the problem is found in 6:2-4. It is assumed that earlier the apostles had at least directed this matter. In time this work became too much for them (v 2a). Out of this kind of circumstance, it seems that they later had to add others to relieve them of local leadership (See also Acts 13 where we find elders). It is to be noted that each office or work has some special demands that are to be met before all other important works (v 2b). The solution: special qualified personnel to handle each regular ministry (v 3) Note:

1. The Holy Spirit describes their qualifications.
2. The congregation is to search out and select.
3. The other leaders are to evaluate and ordain them.

The special responsibilities of the apostles must be continued (v 4). The personnel are selected for the work (v 5-6). The church agreed with the inspired proposal (v 5a). Seven men were selected from among them (v 5b). They are presented to the apostles for three things (v 6):

1. They were inspected to see if they agreed that they met the qualifications given by the Apostles.
2. The church then Prayed for them.
3. The Church ordained them (set them to do this work before God).
4. The church gave them a specific work to do. (Here then are the first men who have the apostolic hands laid upon them in order to receive the ability to use a miraculous gift.)

Luke makes a summary in 6:7. There are at least six of these summary statements (See 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:15; 19:20; 28:31). Each summary seems to represent a certain progression in Luke's mind that sets the stage for a further expansion of the kingdom. This closes the first section of the Book of Acts.

## **THE GOSPEL TO JUDEA AND SAMARIA**

## 6:8-9:31

### The Church faces Opposition a third time (General & Doctrinal) 6:8-8:3

First Luke introduces Stephen (one of the deacons) (6:8). Stephen was full of grace and power (v 8a). This is the first time anyone other than the apostles have worked miracles! Apparently by this time, God had decided that the apostles position of authority can not be successfully be challenged. Or, this is another recorded instance of God's endorsement to the worker (v 8b). Don't forget - the ability to use the miraculous gifts he used was given to him through the laying on of the apostles hands (6:6; 8:18; See also II Corinthians 12:12; I Corinthians 9:1). He did not get this gift just because he prayed to receive it, it had to be given to him by an Apostle.

The background to the opposition arises in the Greek community (6:9-10). Here is a strange paradox. The community was at the same time the best for its free thinking and yet it is the most hostile to the new Christian ideas. (Note John 12:20-26). Incidentally, if you remember this Greek background, most of the problems by pointed out by people who write commentaries or study books will disappear.

Stephen is arrested and charged (6:11-7:1). The Greek plot arises out of the weakness of their position (v 11). The crookedness and lying about Stephen and his arrest is seen in 6:12. I called this section a "**general persecution**" because, for the first time, the people become involved, not just the religious leaders (See also this with 2:47 & 5:13). The plot against Stephen is described in 6:13-14. Blasphemy is the charge. This crime, under the law carried the death penalty (Lev 24:16). Note:

1. First charge - Blasphemy against the temple. Stephen may have spoken of God's new temple. The body of Christians (John 7:38-39; 14:17) or, he may have spoken of the Lord's prediction of the destruction of the temple (See Matthew 24).
2. Second Charge - Blasphemy against Moses' customs. Perhaps, this was Stephen's insistence upon hearing Jesus now (Deuteronomy 18:15). Also that the law lead men to Christ and was not an end in itself.

When they looked at Stephen it looked like he had the face of an angel (**6:15**). Stephen, then makes the first point of his defense: *Israel's forefathers often rejected their God - sent saviours (7:12-16)*. The background to their patriarchal promises is given (v **2-8**). Joseph was God's first deliverer sent to them (v **9-16**).

Stephen then makes his second point: *Israel's forefathers also rejected Moses whom God had sent to lead them (7:17-43)*. He describes the condition of the people while they were in Egypt (v **17-19**). God sent them Moses and they rejected him (v 20-29). God in His mercy sent Moses again to help Him deliver His people (v 30-34). Moses whom they rejected is again chose by God (v 30-34). Moses also gave them words regarding another Savior to come (Deuteronomy 18:5ff; v 36-37). Moses gave them the law of God which they rejected (v 38-39). The most serious charge was: that they had rejected the true God and in turn were

rejected by God (v 40-43).

Stephen's third point: *You have misunderstood the nature of God's temple (7:44-50)*. Their temple was only a copy, not the real thing (v 44). The proof: It was changed from time to time (v 45-47). The prophets all spoke of it as being only a symbol (Isaiah 66:1-2) [This point is also developed at length in the book of Hebrews 8:1 - 10:18] (v 48-50). Stephen's point is clear and inextricable - The temple is only a shadow, and is not necessarily in order to worship!

Now let's look at a summary of Stephen's argument up to this point:

1. In light of the past, you Jews need to be careful lest you too reject yet another of God's saviours.
2. Contrary to speaking against Moses, I affirm belief in what he wrote at Mount Sinai regarding the coming of another Deliverer. Do you?
3. Finally, to speak of another more suitable temple, or even the destruction of the present one, it is not blasphemy, but the affirmation of Scripture.

Now Stephen makes his fourth point: *It is you non-believing Jews who speak against God, His temple and His law (7:51-53)*.

After the people heard this they were angered and had unrestrained violence against Stephen (v 54). Stephen then looks up and sees Jesus in the heavens at the right hand of God (v 55-56; See also Matthew 26:64-65; Dan 7:9-14). His vision claim affected the audience wherein they covered up their ears (v 57-58). Stephen's final words "Lord, Jesus receive my spirit" (v 59-60). Saul is now introduced and agrees to the death of Stephen (v 58; 8:1a).

The results of Stephen's death are seen in **8:1-3**. The church (especially its Greek members) came under open persecution (v 1b). The church generally was scattered into Judea and Samaria (v 1c).

**Here, within this event two things occur that are worth to noticing:**

***1st, God, in using the preaching and death of Stephen pronounces condemnation upon stubborn, unbelieving Jews; and 2nd, moves the church out of its roots in Jerusalem so that the gospel could go out to Judea and Samaria and the rest of the world as Jesus had charged in Acts 1:8.***

In spite of the persecution, Stephen was given a proper burial (v 2). Notice the expression "godly men." (See also Luke 2:25 - Richard Longnecker, The expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 9, page 354):

"Luke has already used "godly men" (andres eulabeis) of the Jews at Pentecost who were receptive to the working of God's Spirit (c.f. 2:5). He also used the adjective 'euabes' (devout) of the Simeon in the temple (c.f. Luke 2:25) and he will use it of Annius of Damascus (c.f. Acts 22:12).

Therefore, when Luke says that “godly men buried Stephen,” he apparently means that certain devout Jews who were open to the Christian message volunteered to ask for Stephen’s body and bury him, much as Joseph of Arimathea did for Jesus (c.f. Luke 23:50-53).”

The burial and mourning recorded seem to suggest mob violence, more than a court, carried out the execution. Saul, a young leading Pharisee, becomes the driving force in the persecution of the church.

Now the providence of God prepares for a wider expansion of the gospel. Saul is introduced (8:1a,3) and shortly his conversion will occur (9:1-30). The persecution breaks the gospel into a wider Jewish audience as well as a half-Jewish audience (v1, 4-5). The Holy Spirit sends Philip to teach an Ethiopian Eunuch (this was forbidden under the Old Testament law - Deuteronomy 23:1). Peter is being prepared by God to go even further in the spreading of the gospel - all the way to uncircumcised Gentiles! (Acts 10:1-11:18). Later the church at Antioch reaches out to Gentiles (even though they seemed to have circumcised them) (Acts 11:19-24). Finally, the gospel breaks beyond the Jews to the world of uncircumcised Gentiles (Acts 13-28).

### **The Gospel Reaches to Samaria 8:4-25**

**Luke’s background summary (8:1-4)** - Jesus mentioned His plan for world evangelism in (1:8). The Jerusalem church, in spite of the persecution, is well established and able to continue. This will be observed by how rapidly they return to Jerusalem after the initial pressure is off and continued to be such a dominant force for the gospel. Therefore, the gospel is ready to be advanced.

Judea is more or less assumed to be evangelized. Luke wants to record the events which illustrate the events which illustrate the gospel breaking beyond its Jewish limitation.

**Philip preaches to Samaria (8:5-8)** - Luke again emphasizes the content of early preaching (v 5). The Holy Spirit confirmed the truth of the gospel (v 6-7). First Philip preached the message (this is fundamental). Then, the Spirit confirmed the truth of that message (secondary and temporary). There are several illustrations of the miraculous work. The results were that many Samaritans were saved (v 8,12).

**Simon the Sorcerer is used to confirm a vital point (8:9-11)** - Simon astonished all people with his abilities of doing magic. Many claimed he had the power of God (v 9-11). Simon responded to the gospel (v 12-13). There was the gospel proclaimed, then belief and baptism by the Samaritans (v 12). Simon, too, heard, believed, and was baptized (v 13a). Simon was awed by the display of Divine power and the signs worked by Phillip (v 14-17).

The special need for the apostles is seen in 8:14-17. The need for the presence of the apostles was two fold:

1. To give apostolic witness (v 8).
2. To give their apostolic endorsement to this advancement of the gospel (v 14).
3. To pass on the ability to do miracles.

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT, NOTE HOW THE POWER TO DO MIRACLES IS RECEIVED:**

\*\*\*

The apostles prayed for the Spirit to allow them to pass on the miraculous gift by impartation of their hands (v **15-17**). They (the Samaritan believers) had received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when they were baptized (See 2:38-39; 5:32). The difficulty that arises out of this section comes about because of the failure to observe the basic rules of grammar. The expression “indwelling” speaks of son-ship or salvation (Galatians 4:6; Eph 1:13-14; Romans 8:9). The expression “filled” speaks of being under the influence of the Spirit (Eph 5:21). The expression “on” or “upon” means to empower one supernaturally (Jud 14:6,9; 15:14). The test, grammatically speaking, is a ‘metonymy [mi ton e mi], which is the name of one thing for that of another to which has some logical relation, as “scepter” for “sovereignty” or “bottle” for “strong drink” or “cup” for “contents.” Luke uses the name “Spirit” to denote the “Spirit’s power.” This is quite common in Luke’s writings.

The point of this section is found in verses 18-19. Simon was in the past a master of performing fake or false miracles. Yet, both the Samaritans and Simon recognized the awesome contrast between his false miracles and God’s true miracles. And remember, there was no explanation of the difference, only the demonstration of it. Simon recognized that the apostles could do something that even Philip could not do, that is to give God’s power to others (v 18a-19). Notice carefully that this stated conclusion is the inspired Luke’s and not Simon’s. Luke is affirming that only the apostles could pass on the gifts! Simon’s deep problem was a total misunderstanding of the apostle’s goals and God’s purposes (v 18b).

After Simon approached Peter with the desire to be given the gifts, he was rebuked because he wanted the gifts to make money (v 20-23). Peter tells Simon to repent and pray for forgiveness. Then Simon asks Peter to pray for him so that nothing would come upon him (v 24). The apostles then started on their way back to Jerusalem preaching on their way in the villages of the Samaritans (v25).

**Philip is directed to take the gospel even beyond the Samaritans (8:26-40)** - Luke begins by describing the occasion of the gospel to go to the Ethiopian (v26-29). Philip was instructed to for to the Jerusalem - Gaza Road (v 26). There he met the Ethiopian (v 27a). The Ethiopian is described in verses 27b-28. He was not a full proselyte (someone converted to the Jewish religion who was not a Jew by birth), but probably a proselyte of the gate [God fearer]. Luke again is emphasizing that even “half-Jews” are acceptable to God. The Ethiopian was reading from book of Isaiah (v 29).

**The opportunity to share the gospel is now focused upon (8:30-35).** In the ancient world when men read, they read out loud (v 30). Philip, who walked with him, heard him reading and asked him if he was understanding what he read (v 30b). The Ethiopian, asks Philip to assist him (v 31). The Ethiopian was studying from Isaiah 53:7-8 (v 32-33). The Eunuch’s

question is answered by Philip (v 34-35). He preached the prophecy of Jesus [picture]. He preached the need for Jesus [problem]. He preached the gospel of Jesus [plan]. He preached the response to Jesus [plea]. Now the Ethiopian responds (8:36-39). The Eunuch sees water and desires baptism (v 36). He confesses that Jesus is the Christ (v 37). He is then baptized (v 38). He was joyful because he had been saved (v 39). Philip, then went on his way preaching (v 40).

### **The Conversion of Saul 9:1-31**

Saul was travelling about persecuting Christians (9:1-2). However, on the road to Damascus, he encountered the glorified Jesus (9:3-9). Saul was confronted by Jesus through a bright light and questioned about his persecution of the saints. He is told to go to the city where he would be told what to do (v 3-6). The people with him were made speechless (v 7). At this time Saul could see nothing. This went on for three days and he also did not eat or drink (v 8-9).

A disciple named Ananias has a vision in Damascus (9:10-16). He is commissioned to go to Saul (v 10-12). He is afraid because he knew of Saul's power to persecute (v 13-14). The response to Saul's encounter with Jesus is now described in 9:17-25. He is then commanded to go and he obeys (v 15-17a). Ananias explains his coming to Saul (v 17b). Saul is then healed (v17-18a). Saul then arises and was baptized (v 18). He is then strengthened (v 19). Saul then responds by preaching Jesus in the synagogues (v 19b-22). He is plotted against by the Jews who wanted to kill him, however, the disciples help him to escape (v 23-25).

Saul is helped by Barnabus in Jerusalem (9:26-30) - With the conversion of Saul, peace came to the region. The first church is considered to be planted in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. he church continued to be strengthened and increased in numbers.

Saul's conversion is a vital link in God's providential plans for world evangelism. He will become God's special instrument to take the message to the Gentiles. Look how difficult it was for Peter, even with several miracles, to go to Cornelius' house. Paul's Greek background was a great help towards breaking through his Jewish prejudices. He was the most familiar with the best thinking of the Gentle world. He spoke Greek as a primary language (See 21:37-39). Paul's Roman citizenship was a very precious thing in the first century as well (See 22:27-28). Many people would have liked to have been Romans as they enjoyed many privileges which the Jews did not. Also, Paul's special upbringing and early training prepared him for this special assignment form God (See also Phil 3:4-6; Acts 22:2-5). Paul was a man who could move effortlessly through several worlds of his day:

1. He was a true Roman citizen.
2. He was a born citizen of Rome.
3. He was an intellectual Hellenist.
4. Paul was a real citizen of all the important worlds of the first century. He was God's man for all three!

Now with Saul's conversion, God is ready to proceed with an ever - expanding evangelism. He will begin to move into real world evangelism.

## THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

9:32-12:24

### Peter's Preparation for Broader Evangelism 9:32-10:48

The healing of Aeneas at Lydia (9:32-35) - Biblical miracles were seldom worked on "hidden" ills. The miracles by nature had to have stood on their and not human testimony. Except on rare occasions, the healings were instantaneous and broad in their action.

Peter's trip to Joppa (9:36-43) - This entire section is providential preparation for the following one. It certainly took all of God's efforts to push the Christian Jews into accepting what will happen next - including Peter!

Cornelius' vision sets the stage for further gospel advancement (10:1-8) - Cornelius as a God fearing man who was prominent in his time (v 1-2). In the ninth hour of the day, he saw a vision containing an angel with a message (v 3-6). He is to send some men to Joppa and call for Peter to come, he immediately obeys (v 7-8).

Peter's vision is designed to prepare him for a new task (10:9-16) - Note God's foreknowledge in His providential timing (v 9). Peter's quiet time for prayer is also mentioned (v 9-10). Peter then has a vision which he did not understand until later (v 11-16). Jewish separation from foreign nations revolved primarily around the Levitical food laws (See also Lev 11:24, 31-35, 39-40, 43-45; Lev 7:22-27; Mark 7:14-19). It is also important to notice that the number three is used. It had a real and powerful impact on Peter. It would always get his attention (Mark 14:29-31, 66-72; John 21:15-17).

The arrival of the men Cornelius had sent to Peter (10:17-23) - Peter's thoughts and God's providence meet (v 17-18). The Holy Spirit reassures Peter (v 19-20). Then Peter meets with the three men who were sent by Cornelius (v 21-23).

Peter and his party at Cornelius' house (10:23b-33) - The party then begins their journey to Cornelius' house (v 23b). They arrive and an audience begins to gather (v 24). Cornelius then explains why Peter was summoned (v 27-33). He explains his vision and that the people were gathered to hear what he had been commanded by God to tell them.

Peter's sermon to Cornelius and his household (10:34-43) - Peter tells of his new understanding regarding God's view of non-Jews (v 34-35). Then he begins his sermon. Note the sermon below:

1. Peter's **introduction** (v 36-38) - Jesus is Lord and Savior (v 36). He also explains how God had anointed Jesus and they (Cornelius and his household) knew it (v 37-38).
2. Peter's **major points** (v 39-42)
  - a. The apostles were eye witnesses to all that had happened to Jesus (v 39a).
  - b. The Jewish leadership had Jesus crucified (v 39b).

- c. God raised Him from the dead (v 40-41).
  - d. The apostles were commissioned to preach Jesus as the ascended Lord and coming again Judge (v 42).
3. Peter's **conclusion** (v 43) - A call to belief.

God sets His approval on accepting uncircumcised (non-Jewish people into his church) (10:44-46) - As the invitation was reached, the Holy Spirit fell upon them (v 44). The Jewish brothers who were with Peter were astonished by the Holy Spirit's work (v 45). The reason: They knew the Holy Spirit had approved these uncircumcised Gentiles (v 46a).

**\*\*\* NOTE: Anyone who is not a Jew by birth is called a "Gentile."**

The result of all of this (10:46-48) - Peter questions those with him as to what should be done (v 46b-47). He then commands them to be baptized (v 48a). Peter then stayed for a few days to give them further instructions concerning God's word (v 48b).

**The Jerusalem Church is Prepared to Accept the Cornelius Baptism 11:1-18**

The Jewish reaction to the baptism (11:1-3) - The news shocked the Jewish Christians (they thought they were the only ones chosen by God) (v 1). Because of this there was strong criticism against Peter because he ate with Gentiles and he baptized Gentiles (v 2-3). The conclusion was that Peter had sinned and what he had done was wrong.

Peter's defense of his actions (11:4-18) - Peter was obviously expecting this criticism and was prepared to answer the charges (v 4). First to answer the violation of the food laws, Peter tells of his vision (v 5-10). Next, Peter relates the circumstances regarding the sending of Cornelius' emissaries and the Holy Spirit's orders to answer why he went (v 11-12a). Peter, then, refers to the six witnesses he took with him for verification (v 12b). Peter now gives a report regarding Cornelius' vision (v 13-14):

- 1. He told what Cornelius had experienced (v 13a).
- 2. He told of Cornelius' instructions (v 13b).
- 3. He told what Cornelius was to expect (11:14).

Peter then explains what he preached (v 15a). Notice what had to happen before the Holy Spirit fell upon them (v 14). This would agree with the preceding facts (v 34-43). Notice, the words of 10:44, "these words," apply only to 10:43. Therefore, the words of 11:15a, "As I began to speak" do not refer to its conclusion!

The Gentile Pentecost had occurred (v 15b). The Gentile Pentecost was to confirm God's acceptance of uncircumcised Gentiles apart from the law of Moses and Judaism (15:7-9). There are some things in the text that have implications. 1) The Holy Spirit came ON them - not IN them! and, 2) It had an unusual nature about it - as it "had come on us at the beginning." Notice 11:17: "... as God gave them the like gift" as he did unto us ..." What was this "like gift?" It is the power to speak other languages as a sign of God's endorsement of the event.

The Gentile Pentecost is now explained (11:16-17). What happened reminded Peter of something that John the Baptizer had said regarding being “baptized with the Holy Spirit” (v 16). Peter’s point was: If God confirmed the with the sign for the unbelievers, they were accepted by God too! (v 17a)/ Peter’s conclusion was this: “What was I to think that I could oppose God?” (See also 10:46; 11:17b). The Jerusalem church responded positively (v 18).

### **An Evangelism Among the Gentiles (non-Jewish people) Begins At Antioch 11:19-21**

Some background thoughts to this section (11:19-21) - There are some circumstances regarding the outcome of Stephen’s speech and its results. Don’t forget the Hellenist background of this new advance (v 19a). Luke also mentions the early Jewish limitation (v 19b). Several other factors which must be remembered. Saul’s conversion and early training (11:25). The Cornelius experience. It should be noted that apparently his case was considered an exception and not the rule by the Jews (v 18). Now notice that the Hellenists among the church of Christ at Antioch begin to preach to the Gentiles (v 20).

Luke’s editorial comment regarding this new advance (11:22) - Comment: It is my thought that while the Gentiles were, for the first time, preached to, the church did not at this time insist on their circumcision. Notice that the Jerusalem church only sent Barnabus and not any of the apostles. Secondly, it is only later under Paul’s preaching in Asia that the problem of non-circumcision arose. We will notice the truth of this when we study Acts 15.

The Jerusalem church is now better prepared to deal with this new advance (v 22). They did not feel the need to monitor the situation for doctrinal safety. Notice, they sent no apostle as in 8:14 or as in God’s wisdom in 10:20 and 11:12.

The work of Barnabus in the new Gentile mission (11:23-26) - His work was encouragement (v 23). This was Luke’s evaluation of Barnabus (v 24). He recruits Saul as a co-worker (v 25-26). The disciples move a bit more away from Judaism by a new name (v 26b).

The evidence of true conversion by the church in Antioch (11:27-30) - The arrival of the prophets (v 27). There seemed to be a real interest in this work by the Jerusalem church. There appears not to have been any miraculous gifts early to the new members at Antioch. Why? Because no apostles came during their early stage. Saul has some maturing to do before he functions as a full apostle. Apparently this will not occur until Cyprus and Sergious Paulus (13:6-12).The message of the prophet was that there would be a great famine in the land (v 28). This would be during the reign of Claudius who ruled Rome about 41-45 AD. His reign was marked by a series of harvests and famines. The church took up a collection and sent Barnabus and Saul to deliver the gift to the brethren in Judea (v 30). The year was about 46 AD. FF Bruce in his commentary of Acts, suggests that this is the visit Paul mentions in Galatians 2:1-5.

### **Herod’s Agrippa’s Civil Persecution of the Church (through use of his governmental power) 12:1-4**

The background information (12:1-4) - No doubt the growing influx of Samaritans and

Gentiles robbed the church of its last favor with the Jewish masses. The Cornelius event could not have been missed by many of both Christian and regular Jews. That kind of action and approval of the Gentiles could only bring hostility. The church at Antioch was probably the last straw in the minds of many Jews who, to this point, had a “wait and see” attitude. No matter that they probably insisted upon circumcision, complete acceptance of the Gentiles was too much! The stage was set for more intense persecution.

Luke describes the persecution this way: “*It was about at this time*” (v 1a). The Jewish King Herod arrested a number of the disciples and had the apostle James put to death (v 1b-2).

Peter is put in jail (12:3-4) It is now obvious that the whole view of the Jewish population had turned hostile (v 3-4). The action (of Herod) pleased the Jews (v 3a). Herod, based on the response of the people, becomes more aggressive and arrests Peter before large crowds (v 13b). Herod’s is cautious with Peter. One wonders if he knew of Peter and the other escape described in 5:17-24. Whatever the reason, he takes extreme care that such will not happen with his prisoner (v 4).

Peter’s escape from Herod’s prison (12:5-19a) - The church begins to pray for Peter (v 5). The angel of the Lord frees Peter (v 6-11). Peter reports to the disciples before he goes into hiding (v 12-17). Herod is completely frustrated (v 18-19a).

God’s judgment on King Herod (12:19b-23) - Herod had the guards that were attending to Peter executed He then went from Judea to Caesarea. (v 18-19b). Then the people began to say he was a god. Then the angel of the Lord struck him dead because he did not give glory to God (v 23). Now, read Josephus’ non inspired historian who writes an account of how the judgment of Herod was seen by the people around him then: (Antiquities XIX, 8,.2)

“Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all of Judea, he came to the city of Caesarea, which was formally called Stratos Tower; and there he exhibited shows in honor of Caesar, upon his being informed that these was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons, and such as were of dignity throughout the province. On the second day, of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of which shows contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated be the fresh reflection of the sun’s rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from this place, and another, that he was a god; and they added, “Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.” Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently afterward look up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that his bird was a messenger of ill tidings to him; and he fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends and said, “I, whom you call a god, am

commanded presently to depart this life; while providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept of what Providence allots, so as it pleases God; for we have by no means lived ill, but in a happy and splendid manner.” When he said this, his pain was become violent. Accordingly he was carried into the palace, and the rumour went abroad every where, that he would certainly die within a little while. ... And he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life being in the fifty - fourth year of his age, in the seventh year of his reign.”

Luke’s summary statement is found in 12:24. The word of God continued to progress and the church multiplied.

## **THE GOSPEL TO ASIA 12:25-16:5**

### **The Holy Spirit Calls His Mission Team 12:25-13:3**

The background is found in 12:25. This is where Luke speaks of Paul and Barnabus and John Mark returning from Jerusalem. They returned to Antioch where the prophets and teachers received them (13:1). Then the Spirit calls Paul and Barnabus to work (v 2). The church cooperates and sent them on their way (v 3).

### **The First Mission Target 13:4-12**

Paul and Barnabus set sail for Cyprus (v 4). Then their mission method is described in verses 5-6. They went, at first only to the synagogue (v 5a). John Mark is mentioned for the first time as a member of the mission team (v 5b). Their preaching approach never seems to have varied until Paphos (v 6a).

The circumstances which led to their changed preaching methods (13:6b-12) - The team meets Elymas the sorcerer (v 6b-7a). Sergius Paulus requests to hear from the missionaries (v 7b). Elymas seeks to discredit the team (v 8). However, Paul rebuked him and he was struck blind (v 10-11). The proconsul, seeing the evidence, and hearing the word of God, believes (v12).

### **The Missionaries go to Pisidian Antioch 13:13-52**

Apparently, rising out of the Paphos experience, going to a bigger area for preaching was agreed on by Paul and Barnabus. The results of the decision created a number of significant changes in their work. Luke will note these in the following chapters.

**They sail from the island to the mainland (13:13)**. They left Paphos and sailed to Attalia, the port of the city of Perga (v 13a). The first change is one of leadership. Notice, it is now - Paul and his companions. The next change that Luke notes is John Mark leaving the work (v 13b). Why did he leave? Was it homesickness? It is important that we know. Was it resentment over the obvious change of leadership? Perhaps, it was that John Mark was not ready for Gentile evangelism. Whatever it was, it must have been serious (15:37-39). The

latter point seems to have eliminated homesickness. Barnabus' willing acceptance of Paul's leadership would seem to eliminate the matter Mark's resentment over Paul's newly assumed place of prominence. Doctrinal issues seem the most likely cause of Mark's leaving and the later split between Barnabus and Paul which resulted. What doctrinal point could have so upset John Mark that he would leave the work? This writer thinks it was the new and open work with the uncircumcised Gentiles and leaving them so!

**Paul and Barnabus at the Antioch synagogue (13:14-41).** After the Prophets asked if Paul and Barnabus had any word of exhortation, Paul responded with a sermon (v 16-41). Paul asks for their attention (v 16). He then precedes to show God's elect Israel (v 17a). Election always a purpose of the election (I Corinthians 1:1-2). The major purpose of Israel's election was to produce a Saviour (Gen 12:3). There were other purposes for their election or call which are not germane to Paul's point in this context. They are:

1. They were to produce God's Scriptures (Romans 3:1-2).
2. They were to prove the reality of God (Isaiah 45:1-6).
3. They were to demonstrate man's inability to live by any "works" oriented law system (Galatians 3:21).
4. They were to provide a base for world evangelism (Ex 9:16).

The proof of their election is seen in 13:17b-22. God caring for them in Egypt (v 17b-20). He led them through the desert (v 18). And led them to conquer Canaan (v19-20a). God cared for them in the promised land (v 20b-22). He provided judges for them (v 20b). He let them pick a king after their own hearts (v 21). He then even gave them a king after His own heart (v 22).

God, then, presented the Christ (13:23). He was the descendant of David(v 23a) given first to Israel (v 23b) and given in fulfilment of promise (v 23c). He also gave them proof regarding the Christ:

1. The prophetic proof (13:24-25) - Through the prophet's message and his denial.
2. The people proof (13:26-29) - The correct people received the offer (v 26) and acted wrongfully as it was foretold (v 27-29).
3. The positive proof (13:30-31) - God raised Jesus from the dead and there was witnesses.
4. The prophetic proof (13:32-37) - God promised that He would raise Jesus (Psalms 2; v 32-33) to never die (Psalms 16; v 34-35).

Paul's conclusion to this was that David decayed in the grave - yet Jesus will not (v 36-37). He then makes a plea for the people to receive Christ (13:38-41). His plea is for forgiveness of sins and they should not reject the offer.

**The response to Paul's sermon (13:42-45)** - They were invited back and a good many followed Paul and Barnabus. There was also hostility present from jealous Jews.

The new and broader area of work for their evangelism (13:46-48). They turned to pure Gentile evangelism. The basis for their decision was found in prophecy (See also Isaiah 49:6; v 47). The Gentiles' reacted favorably. The team's hearts were made glad because of the Gentiles' respect for God's word. The Gentiles rejoiced over the decision. .

The Jews stir up trouble against the disciples (13:49-52) - The Gentile work flourishes (v 49). The Jews then use civil authorities against the saints (v 50). Paul and company express their protest (v 51). However, this did not stop their joy (v 52).

### **The Iconium Mission 14:1-7**

First, as it was their habit, they worked the synagogue. The response was mixed (14:1b-2). They were sharp in their presentation and a number of both Jews and Gentiles believed. As usual, the unbelieving Jews made trouble. This did not stop the missionaries efforts (v 3). The Holy Spirit did His work of confirmation. Note that Luke specifically states the purpose of miracles (v 3b). The people became divided. The unbelieving Jews wanted to harm the missionaries, however, the preachers successfully made their escape (14:4-7).

### **The Lystra Mission 14:8-20**

A man born a cripple is healed (8-10) - Notice Luke's triple description of the handicapped man (v 8). Also notice the circumstances of this healing (v 9-10). He heard the gospel preached and Paul had observed the man's faith (v 9). Paul commands him to stand (v 10a). Then a complete healing occurs (v 10b).

The pagan misunderstanding and the apostolic response (14:11-17) - They assumed that their pagan gods were in human form (v 11). They thought that Barnabus was Zeus and Paul was Hermes (v 12). The pagan priest brought sacrifices to offer to them (v 13). The apostles rushed out and made an explanation of the miracle (v 14-17). They affirmed that they were humans (v 15a) and their mission was to deliver a message of good news given to them by the true God (v 15b). The content of their message was:

1. They were to turn from their idols to serve a living God ( v 15c).
2. The true God is the Creator of all things (v 15d).
3. The true God had left the nations to themselves for quite some time without confronting them (v 16).
4. Nevertheless, He had left evidence for Himself and had continued to bless them with food (v 17).

Even though they made the explanation, they still had difficulty restraining the crowds from offering sacrifices to them (v 18).

The Jews stir up trouble and stone Paul (14:19-20a) - More than likely, the Jews gained permission and did the actual stoning themselves. Thinking Paul dead, they reaped the final insult by not burying the body but simply dragging it outside the city and leaving it. The

disciples found him and discovered that he lived.

### **Their return to Antioch of Syria 14:20-23**

The following day after he was stoned, he left for Derbe (v 20b). They preached the gospel there and made many disciples (v 21a). Then, they returned to all the new churches (v 21b-23):

1. They returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.
2. They strengthened the brothers (v 22a)
3. They encouraged the brothers (v 22b).
4. They organized the brothers [elected elders] (v 23).

Next they preached in Perga (v 24-25). Then they set sail to Attalia to Antioch of Syria (14:26-28). They returned to the church that had sent them. They reported on the new Gentile work. They stayed and worked for some time in Antioch.

### **The Jerusalem Controversy 15:1-29**

The background of the controversy (15:1-3) - There is the arrival of some Judiazers (Jewish people who had become Christians and wanted to make Christians obey the Old Testament Law). These people came from the Jerusalem church. The Judiazers insist that circumcision is essential in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabus debated the issue. Then Paul and Barnabus are sent to Jerusalem over the issue.

The first leg of the journey (15:3-4) - The joy of Phoenicia and Samaria over the Gentile conversions brought much joy on their way. Then they arrive in Jerusalem and are welcomed.

The debate and discussion of the problem (15:5-21) - The apostles and elders met together to discuss the issue of circumcision.

1. *Peter* is the first to speak (15:7-11). He details the Cornelius conversion (v 7-9). He next affirms the Jews inability to keep the law (v 10). The apostolic conclusion regarding the destiny of God-fearing Gentiles: Notice the order of conversion as expressed by Peter - “***we shall be saved, even as they***” (v 11).
- 2.. *Barnabus and Paul* give their report of Gentile evangelism and Divine confirmation. (v 12).
3. *James* next speaks for the elders of the church (15:13-21) - He first mentions apostolic confirmation (v 13-14). He next affirms that such agrees with Scripture (Amos 9:11-12; v 15-18). He then makes his apostolic judgment (v 19-21):
  - a. Do not make it difficult for the Gentiles (v 19).
  - b. A letter defining God’s expectations of obedience for the Gentiles is to be prepared (v 20).
  - c. He also wants to give them an explanation of his judgement (v 21).

The letter to the Gentiles (15:22-29) - A delegation is selected to deliver the letter (v 22). The letter and its contents include:

1. The greeting (v 23)
2. The Problem corrected (v 24)
3. The delegates (v 25-27).
4. The only requirements (v 28-29).

### **The Gentile reaction to the letter 15:30-35**

The church was strengthened (v 30-32). The delegation of Paul and Barnabus returned home (v 33). Then Paul and Barnabus continued their work (v 35).

### **Problems between the mission team 15:36-16:5**

Paul and Barnabus have a serious disagreement (15:36-41) - Plans are made to return to the field to check on their new converts (v 36). The source of the problem was a disagreement concerning John Mark (v 37-38). Then they resolve to split up and go their ways. Barnabus takes Mark and goes to Cyprus to work (v 39); while Paul takes Silas and goes to Syria and Cilicia (v 40-41). Timothy is added to Paul's team at Lystra (16:1-3). Thus, the Jerusalem letter is delivered throughout the area (16:4). Thus, the churches were being strengthened and increasing in number (16:5).

## **TAKING THE GOSPEL TO THE COUNTRY OF GREECE 16:6-19:20**

### **Seeking the Lord's will 16:6-10**

The apostle and his company were frustrated as the Spirit of Jesus restricted them from going to Bithynia (v 6-8). Paul then has a vision of the man of Macedonia (v 9). He immediately decides to go there (v 10).

In this section of Scripture there are several points to notice:

1. There is the first control of God in their work. Some of it was through the use of natural events and some miraculous.
2. It is important to notice the sections of scripture where Luke used the word "*we*". This lets the readers know when Luke actually joins the travelling party. Richard Longnecker in his book on Acts in *The Expositors Bible Dictionary*, volume 9, has the following comments regarding these sections:

"At the beginning of this panel we have our first "*we*" section (16:10-17) of the latter half of Acts (Cf 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28; 28:16). Temporal references in the panel are fairly general, even when datable - e.g., the Edict of Claudius (18:2) and Galilio's proconsulate (18:12) leave some margin for dispute. Generally, however, the material given here covers the years AD 49-56, with the first journey into Macedonia and Achaia taking place about 49-52 and the second centered in Ephesus during 53-56."

### **Paul and his company 16:11-40**

Their travel route and destination is described in 16:11-12.

The conversion of Lydia is then described in 16:13-15. The absence of a synagogue did not imply the absence of Jewish worship (v 13a). The Jewish religion was represented by women in the city of Philippi (13b). Lydia was one of the women and she was open to the word of the Lord (v 14-16). She was a merchant (seller of purple) or business woman. Probably she was a person of some wealth (v 14a). She apparently, was a “God fearer” and not Jewish. However, her heart was receptive to the gospel message. She, and a number of her party, were immediately baptized into Christ (14b-15a). Lydia’s house became the center of Paul’s (and his fellow workers) mission work (v 15b).

The girl with the evil spirit 6:16-24. There was a slave girl who was possessed with an evil spirit who was disrupting Paul and Silas’ prayers. Paul cast the spirit out (v 16-18). Her masters’ greed caused them to take Paul and Silas before the courts (v 19-21). They were charged with teaching foreign customs and thrown into prison (v 22-24).

Paul and Silas in Prison and the Conversion of the Phillipian Jailer (16:25-34) - Paul and Silas began praying and singing in the jail (v 25). Suddenly, an earthquake shook the place and the doors were opened (v 26). The jailer decides to kill himself, but Paul stops him (v 27-28). Paul then tells the jailer what he needs to do to be saved (v 31-32). He obeys (v 33). Then the jailer took Paul and Silas home and they had a meal and rejoiced together (v35).

Paul and Silas are imprisoned again (35-40) - Their release was ordered (v 35-36). However, they were not happy about the way they were being released (v 37). Then the chief magistrates became afraid when they heard that their prisoners were Roman citizens and begged them to go (v 38-39). Then they went and visited the brethren before they left the city (v 40).

### **The Missionaries travel to Thessalonica 17:1-9**

The missionaries travelled through several different cities before they reached Thessalonica (17:1).

Paul in the synagogue (17:2-4) - Notice Paul's method of teaching in the synagogue (v 2-3):

1. He would reason from the scriptures (v 2b).
2. He would interpret the Scriptures (v 3a).
3. He would use reference from Scriptures to prove his interpretation (v 3b).

The result of his preaching was again made evident by Luke. There were people who were persuaded and joined the movement (v 4).

The Jews then stirred up trouble for Paul and Silas (17:5-9) - This was because they became jealous (v 5a). They formed a mob from the market place (v 5b). Then they sought out a man named Jason and took him before the city authorities (v 5c-6). They charged Paul and Silas as being trouble makers and defying Roman law (v 6-7). They then received a bond and then released Jason (v 9).

### **The move to Berea 17:10-15**

Again Paul goes straight to the synagogue (v 10). The Berean received the word eagerly and examined the Scriptures daily (v 11-12). The Jews from Thessalonica heard about the converts being made and stirred up the crowds against the missionaries (v 13). Then the brethren took Paul and helped him escape the Jews by sea (v 14-15).

### **Paul's stay in Athens 17:16-21**

Paul arrives in Athens and becomes annoyed at the idolatry of the Greeks (v 16). He then began to preach in the synagogue and in the market places (v 17). He then is mocked by the Epicureans and Stoics (v 18). Then they took Paul to Areopagus and demanded to know what his preaching meant (v 19-21).

### **Paul's sermon on the Areopagus 17:22-31**

We are Introduced to Paul (17:22-23) - It is interesting to note that Paul does not directly quote from the Hebrew prophets but he does express their thought. He also, quotes directly from the Greek poets. He is careful to use only the ideas which were true and in agreement with the Scriptures. In other words, his speech was firmly based on Biblical revelation (See also Acts 14:14-18; 20:21).

Paul was impressed with the importance of religion in their lives (v 22). He also mentions their admitted ignorance (v 23a). Then he announces his topic (v 23b).

The true God is the Creator (17:24-31) - Paul states that the Creator is the only God (See also Isaiah 43:10; 44:6; 45:5-6,21,22). He then states that God is the Creator of all things (See also Gen 1:1; v 24b). And God is Lord of Heaven and earth (See also Isaiah 40; v 24c). There were also some logical deductions that came from the message, they are:

1. God can not be contained in anything on the earth (v 24b).
2. God has no dependency on anyone or anything (v 25).

3. God is the provider for all creatures (v 25).
4. God is the providential controller of the universe (v 26).

Paul then states that God is personal (17:27-28). God desires a meaningful relationship with man (v 27). He has a real care for all human kind (v 28). God is not like a idol which is full of nothing - he is like man (v 29). Paul ends by telling what God demands from His creatures (17:30-31). God's patience was seen in His not destroying man because of his ignorance and rebellion (v 30a). God now demands repentance (v 30a) because there is a coming judgment (v 31).

### **The response to Paul's sermon 17:32-34**

There were three responses seen in response to Paul's sermon. They are:

1. Some rejected the gospel arrogantly (v 32a).
2. Some rejected the gospel indifferently (v 32b).
3. Some accepted the gospel gladly (v 33-34).

### **Paul travels to Corinth 18:1-17**

Paul then went on to Corinth (v 1). There he found and teamed up with Aquila and Priscilla making tents (a trade which Paul worked at to support himself. All Jewish boys were taught a trade by which they could support themselves even if they were rich.) (v 2-3). He also preached in the synagogue on Saturdays (v 4). After Silas and Timothy arrived, Paul began devoting himself completely to preaching (v5). However, when the people in the synagogue rejected the message, Paul declares that he will take the word to the Gentiles (v 6). The gospel then makes rapid progress (v 7-8). Paul is also reassured by the Lord in a vision that he should not be afraid (v 9-10). So Paul settled there eighteen months (v 11).

The Jews then went to Gallio to try to bring accusations against Paul (v 13). However, Gallio dismisses their arguments (v 14-15). The Jews were driven away from the judgment seat because Gallio was not concerned with their pettiness (v 16-17).

### **Paul's return to Antioch of Syria 18:18-23**

Paul had completed eighteen months in Corinth (v 11). Paul now decides to leave and return to Antioch at Syria. Aquila and Priscilla travel with Paul on the first part of the journey (v 18a). Then, Paul takes a vow and shaves his head (v 18b).

Paul makes a brief visit to Ephesus (v 19-21). It is here that Aquilla and Priscilla will remain. Perhaps, they are Paul's helpers to get the worked started and maintained (v 19a). Paul did initiate the gospel in Epehesus in the synagogue (v 19b). He is requested to remain longer, but he refuses. However, he does suggest that he might return (v 20-21).

Paul then spent some time in Antioch and then proceeded to Galatia and Phrygia (v 22-23).

## "BAPTISM"

(The action and design of baptism)

God has designed baptism in a particular way and as a particular action. In this lesson we will examine the design and purpose of baptism.

### THE DESIGN

**Romans 6:17** *"But thanks be to God that though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. (18) You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."*

A. Notice the word "**Form**". (There is a design)

From the Greek word "**TUPOS**" is translated the words "**Pattern or Form**". It is used of a mold into which one pours lead or wax. Each image produced from that particular mold is exactly the same. With each line and detail reproduced from the mold.

Paul here used this particular word when detailing how the people had been set free from their sins. Through obeying a particular pattern of obedience, reproduced from the original exactly. Today to be set free from our sins, we must do the same.

### II. NOTICE THE PURPOSE IN THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM:

A. I Peter 3:21, "Which also after a true likeness does now save you even baptism, not the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God."

1. "Baptism" equals that through which we shows our agreement to obey God. (It is proof of our belief in and obedience to God. Mark 16:16-16)

B. Acts 22:16, "and now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."

C. Mark 16:15-16, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved."

**CONCLUSION:** If a man knows God has commanded him to be baptized, he cannot have a clear conscience unless he is baptized. Why? Notice the following:

**Note: The Body which is the church, Eph 1:22-23**

We are Baptized into the Body

1 Corinthians 12:13

We are Baptized into Christ, Colossians 2:8-13, Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27

**Note: The Body which is the church, Eph 1:22-23**

We are Baptized into the Body

1 Corinthians 12:13

We are Baptized into Christ, Colossians 2:8-13, Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27

The Saved are added to the church when they are baptized, Acts 2:38 - 47

### **III. THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM**

A. There is but one baptism, Eph. 4:5

B. Baptism is an immersion,

1. Baptism is **Not** the Sprinkling or Pouring of water. There are different words used in the Greek language for sprinkling and pouring.

a. *RANTIZO* is translated, **SPRINKLE**.

b. *CHEO* is translated, **POUR**.

c. **Baptism** is from the Greek word *BAPTIZO*, meaning **to immerse, dip, plunge, duck**, etc..

C. Baptism is a burial in water; Romans 6:4, Col. 2:12, Acts 8:36 - 38.

D. Baptism is only for those who:

1. Can be taught, Matthew 28:19-20, (Infants cannot be taught about Christ and baptism).

2. Can believe the Gospel, (Infants cannot believe the gospel)

3. Can repent of sin, Acts 2:38, Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30-31

a. Repentance is NOT a change of life. It will produce a change of life, but "Repentance" is from the Greek word METANOEO, meaning "a change of mind," and includes a change of heart and will. No one is ready to be baptized until he has repented.

4. Can obey that form of doctrine from the heart, Romans 6:17-18

"Baptism has an identity. It is distinguished from man-made traditional baptism. Both its purpose and its design are distinct. It cannot be otherwise and still be New Testament baptism."\* God's church can be identified by its adherence to the pattern laid down in his own word.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

\*Some notes in this section taken from "The Church of Christ", by Ed Wharton