

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

UNIT I - THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, CHAPTERS 1-7

Introduction and Survey of Unit I

"Theophilus" is one of the unknown disciples in the early church whose name means lover of God or loved of God. Luke's primary object is to show that Jesus continued His work and ministry after His resurrection but from a different position. (Acts 2:33).

From the Resurrection to Pentecost

From the resurrection of our Lord Jesus until the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a time period of 50 days. Those fifty days are divided into 40 and 10 - the 40 days of the Lord's post-Resurrection ministry, and 10 days of "tarrying" between the ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

During this 40 day period, the risen Lord was instructing the apostles "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (1:3). He was teaching them from the Scriptures, which was His custom. However, there was one point concerning the kingdom of God which was not touched, or maybe, the apostles did not want to understand or accept, and that was the TIME when He would restore the kingdom to Israel; hence the question the apostles asked in verse 6. The answer Jesus gave them was according to His repeated teaching; the TIME was God's secret (Matthew 24:36,42,44; 25:13).

During this 40 day period Jesus, also, gave anew the promise of the Father, to send His Holy Spirit, for power and guidance and charged the disciples with the Great Commission to be witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

During the time of "tarrying" we see the Apostles with other of the disciples (about one hundred and twenty in all) continuing "with one accord in prayer and supplication." Also, during this time, after asking for God's guidance in their choice, they named Matthias as the twelfth apostle to take the place of Judas, the traitor who destroyed himself. Since the foundation of the Church was being laid, it was necessary thus to complete their number. Unfortunately we have no further information about Matthias.

The Out-pouring of the Holy Spirit

With the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost we have the beginning of the Church. They had no building or church house; but as a community of Christians (although they were not yet called Christians) they met daily in various homes to break bread, or met publicly in

Solomon's portico of the Temple. 3000 was added to the group that first day (2:41), with God adding to the church daily (2:47) and another 5000 added a short time later (4:4).

The healing of the lame man (3:1-9) by Peter was typical of the multitude of "signs and wonders done by the Apostles" (5:12) and further evidence of the power of the Spirit. This miracle caused the arrest of Peter and John by the Sadducees, the leading faction of the Jewish priesthood.

In chapter six as the infant church continued to grow and the burden of the increased responsibilities came upon the Apostles, we see the church being organized, somewhat, to meet the needs with the appointment of seven deacons (though Luke does not use the term deacons), to take over the task of distributing food and other necessities to the poor of the Christian community. Stephen, "a man full of faith, and of the Holy Spirit," was named first of the seven deacons.

The Martyrdom of Stephen

Stephen because he was doing great wonders and miracles among the people was arrested and brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin, where on trial for his life, facing his judges, he delivered a soul-searching sermon in defense of himself. A sermon which he closed with a denunciation of the Jewish council (7:51-53).

As a result of his sermon before the Sanhedrin, he was seized by them, carried outside the city, and stoned to death (7:54-60). The witnesses of the stoning left their garments in the care of a young Jew by the name of Saul.

This incident was the signal for wholesale persecution of the Christians of the Jerusalem Church. The details of which are not related by Luke. Following the stoning of Stephen large numbers of believers in Jerusalem were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, and beyond the borders of Palestine as far as Antioch in Syria. However, the Apostles remained in Jerusalem.

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER 1

A. THE FORTY DAY PERIOD BETWEEN THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION. Acts 1:1-11.

VERSE 1 - CHRIST'S CONTINUED MINISTRY (cf. Mark 6:30).

"All that Jesus began both to do and to teach..."

This statement divided the work of Christ into two main streams:

- The Gospels and the Acts
- Before and after the Ascension
- The Gospels concern that which Christ Began to do and teach.
- The Acts concern His continued doing and teaching, by the Holy Spirit, through the Church, His now, visible, physical Body on earth.
- Doing and teaching! Not one without the other.
- It was not the end of His ministry. Christ is still doing and teaching today.
- Christ Jesus had many things to teach His disciples by the Spirit. The New Testament revelation had not yet been given. John 16:12-15; Acts 1:6.

The difference between the Gospel and the Acts is seen here.

- The Gospels
- Jesus Christ descends from the Father to the earth.
 - Earthly ministry begins.
 - Christ crucified for our sins, and not ours only, crucified for the sins whole world. I John 2:2.
 - The finished work of the Redemption.

- THE ACTS
- Christ returns (ascends into heaven) to the Father.
 - Heavenly ministry as High Priest begins. Hebrews 7:24-25.
 - Christ living and glorified for us.
 - Christ's continued ministry on earth through the Holy Spirit, whom He has sent. John 16:7-15.

The "doing and teaching" of Jesus is what He said, and what He did. His words and His works were of the Father.

- John 4:34
- John 5:19,30
- John 6:38
- John 8:28-29
- John 12:49
- John 14:10

Christ's earthly ministry is now by means of the Holy Spirit through His disciples to whom He has given authority to carry of His work.

- Mark 13:34
- Luke 9:1
- Luke 10:19
- Mark 16:17-18
- John 14:12
- Philippians 4:9
- 2 Timothy 2:2

Christ's ministry which He continues through the Church can be summarized according to:

- Matthew 9:35
- Acts 10:38
- Colossians 1:27-28

VERSE 2 - CHRIST AND 'THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"Until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen."

The Eternal Godhead

- verse 4, the Father is spoken of.
- verse 1, The Son is spoken of.
- verse 2, the Holy Spirit is mentioned.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Triune God. One God revealed in Three (distinct) Persons. Matthew 28:19.

Jesus' whole life was one of utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit. If He, as the sinless, perfect Son of God had to depend on the Spirit, how much more shall His disciples, His Church, also need to depend upon the same Spirit.

NOTE, from the following Scriptures passages the Holy Spirit in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Luke 1:35
- Matthew 1:18-20
- Matthew 3:16-17
- John 3:34
- Acts 10:38
- Matthew 4:1
- Mark 1:12
- Luke 4:14
- Luke 4:18
- Matthew 8:16 & 12:28
- 1 Timothy 3:16
- Hebrews 9:14
- Romans 8:11, & 1 Peter 3:18
- Acts 1:2

Thus we see that the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, was totally given over to and yielded to the Holy Spirit, and His life and ministry was by the power and ability of the Spirit.

Now this power and ability of the Spirit is what He intended His Church, His Body, to have, in the Acts of the Apostles and in this Dispensation of the Church Age.

NOTE these Scriptures, as fulfilled in the Church and the believer.

- John 3:1-5
- Ephesians 3:17-19
- 1 Peter 1:11-12
- Acts 8:5-7
- 2 Corinthians 1:21
- Romans 8:2,13
- Galatians 5:24
- John 5:19,30
- John 12:49

VERSE 3 a, b - CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

"To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days,"

"He shewed Himself ALIVE, after His PASSION, by many INFALLIBLE PROOFS.

1. The crucified-resurrected Savior

- 1 John 2:2
- Romans 4:25

On the fact of Christ's resurrection hangs the entire structure of Christianity, and the Plan of Redemption and the Atonement. Without it, Christianity is but another religion founded on a dead man.

The RESURRECTED Christ is the foundation of the Church.

1 Corinthians, chapter 15

The Resurrected Christ is the power and center of every Sermon in Acts, It is the power of every miracle, sign and wonder, and the foundation of all teaching in the Early Church.

God raised Him from the dead and shewed Him to chosen witnesses only. The last the world saw of Him was upon the Cross - crucified.

Acts 10:38-41

2. His Passion -

The passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, rightly began at His conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary and continued through the suffering of His soul in Hell.

- Philippians 2:6-8
- Matthew, chapter 12 (12:14,24)
- Matthew 13:57
- John 6:66
- Luke 22:39 - 23:53
- Isaiah 53
- Psalm 88:4-7

3. Infallible Proofs - positive, convincing, and unmistakable proofs.

Resurrection appearances before the Ascension:

To Mary Magdalene

- John 20:11-18
- Mark 16:9-11

To the Other Women

- Matthew 28:9-10

To Two Disciples Going to Emmas

- Mark 16:12-13
- Luke 24:13-32

To Simon Peter

- Luke 24:33-35
- 1 Corinthians 15:5

To 10 Apostles and others

- Mark 16:14
- Luke 24:36-43
- John 20:19-25

To Apostles, Thomas being present

- John 20:26-31

To Seven Disciples at Sea Shore

- John 21

To Five Hundred

- 1 Corinthians 15:6

Possibly:

- Matthew 28:16-20
- Mark 16:15-18

To James, Jesus' Brother
- 1 Corinthians 5:7

To Disciples with Another Command
- Luke 24:44-49
- Acts 1:3-8

In addition to the Resurrection Appearances of Christ, consider the following as proofs of Jesus' Resurrection.

None could account for the Roman soldiers falling asleep, which was punishable by death.

- Who would dare to break the seal of Rome on the Tomb?
- Who rolled the stone away for the women?
- Who caused the earthquake?
- Who stole the body of Jesus, and why could none find it?
- Why was the napkin about His head folded in a place by itself, and the clothes about His body in the shape of a "cocoon"?
- How did He get out of these grave clothes?
- Why did the Priests pay the soldiers money to keep the resurrection story quiet?

CHRIST IS ALIVE!!!

He gave many infallible proofs of His bodily resurrection. There would be no Book of Acts, no Salvation, no Christianity, no signs or wonders with out the RESURRECTED CHRIST.

VERSE 3c - CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"...and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Luke 24:27, (cf. 44-45)

"...He expounded unto them in all Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Apostles preached the Kingdom of God. Matthew's Gospel especially is the Book of the King and the Kingdom. In it we see the Birth and Ministry of the King; the King rejected, crucified and resurrected. In this Gospel there are twelve Kingdom of Heaven parables.

It is this Gospel which declares

Matthew 16:18,19 - "...upon this rock (Christ) I will build MY CHURCH.. .and I will give unto thee (Church) the KEY OF THE KINGDOM..."

To the Church is GIVEN the ADMINISTRATION of the Kingdom. The Church and the Kingdom are vitally connected. The Kingdom is the theme of the Gospels and the Church administrating the things of the Kingdom is the theme of the Acts and the Epistles.

Because Israel has a wrong concept of the Kingdom of God, confining it in a Nationalistic, Materialistic and Physical sense, they crucified Christ when He did not establish that type of a Kingdom.

The History of World Gentile Kingdoms is foretold in their order in Daniel 2 and in Daniel 7. Likewise the History of the Kingdom of God is foretold according to its order in Old Testament Prophecy.

- Daniel 9:24-27 (Church Age between 69th & 70th Week.)
- Zechariah 9:9,10 (We would especially note that between verses 9 and 10 is the Dispensation of the whole Church Age.)

Now the Kingdom of God - The New Testament Kingdom
- by means of the Church - will be declared in power by the Gospel of the Kingdom until the Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our God and His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever. (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 11:15).

The Kingdom of God is Heavenly, Spiritual, Eternal
- not of this world.

-John 18:36-37

VERSE 4 - The Promise of the Father

"And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but WAIT FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER, which, saith He, ye have heard of me."

"THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER" is a wonderful title for the Holy Spirit.

-Luke 24:49

-John 15:26

-Ephesians 1:13

On the basis of the Everlasting Covenant made in Eternity between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy spirit (the Persons of the Godhead), the Father covenanted with the Son that when the work of Redemption was accomplished, He would give the Holy Spirit to be poured out on all who would accept by faith the sacrifice of the Son and who would come to the Father through Him; thus enabling them to be:

- born of the Spirit (1. Corinthians 12:13)
- preserved (sealed) by the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13)
- baptized with the Spirit (Acts 1:5)

This was also called "The Holy Spirit of Promise," which means that God has made many promises to the saints in and through Christ and these promises are brought to pass, to

fulfillment, by the Spirit. He is the Father's Promise to us and He fulfills the Father's Promise in us

VERSE 5...- The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Distinction between Water Baptism and the Spirit Baptism.

Water Baptism is Ritual Baptism and as such is an act of obedience on the part of every believer who has repented of his sins and confessed faith in Jesus Christ.

Luke 3:21

Matthew 3:13-15

Acts 2:38

1 Peter 3:21

Secondly, Water Baptism is a reminder of the death and burial of the old man and the resurrection of the new man when one is born again.

Romans 6:3-5

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit enables the believer to walk the Christian walk.

Luke 24:49

Acts 1:8

Galatians 5:16

Jude 20

The selfsame Spirit is given at the New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), New Birth (John 3:3), salvation experience and at the Baptism with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:4). These are two separate and distinct experiences of the receiving of the One Holy Spirit. In salvation we receive a measure of the Spirit, while in the Baptism with the Spirit we receive the Holy Spirit without measure.

2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5

Acts 4:31

John 3:34

Relationship of and distinction between receiving the Holy Spirit when one is born again and being Baptized with the Holy Spirit is seen when you compare and contrast the following Scriptures.

John 4:14 with John 7:38,39

John 20:22 with Acts 2:2,4

Ezekiel 36:24-26 with Ezekiel 36:37

John 1:12 with Acts 1:8

Thus from this Scriptures we see that receiving the Holy Spirit when one is born again is one experience; while the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is another. The one gives power (authority) to become a child of God. The other gives boldness and power to our Christian witness.

The expression "The Baptism with the Holy Spirit" is a Scriptural expression. It is used by:

- John the Baptist, Matthew 3:11;
- Jesus, Acts 1:5;
- Peter, Acts 11:16.

Significant Scriptures concerning the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

-Luke 3:16

-Luke 11:10-13

-Acts 2:38-39

-Acts 2:1-13 (4)

-Acts 8:5-17

-Acts 9:1-18

-Acts 10:34-48

-Acts 19:1-7

-Ephesians 5:18

QUESTION: How does one receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? First of all let us understand that there is no set formula. Following, however is some of the things which needs to be going on in the believers heart.

1. The believers heart needs to be prepared by repentance towards God. (Acts 2:38)
2. The believer needs to desire and hunger after the fullness of the Spirit. (Matthew 5:6)
3. The believer is to ask with the expectation of being filled. (Luke 11:13)
4. Having asked the believer must believe that he has received. (Mark 11:34). Note: Jesus tells the disciples to wait for Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4) because the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent; however believers today are not to wait but believe they have received when they ask.

VERSE 6 - Question of the Apostles

"when they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

This question comes out of an incomplete concept of the Kingdom of God. The apostles were brought up and schooled in the Old Testament. They had waited for the Messiah. They understood that the Messiah is the One who will establish the kingdom upon this earth. That was their hope. It is still the hope for this earth. It is the Kingdom of God that they talked about during these days before Christ ascended, which involves the re-establishment of the house of David.

VERSE 7 - Jesus answer to the Apostles question.

"And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."

Jesus let them know, at this particular time, that the kingdom would not be established. However, as we see from verse 8, He showed them that He had something else for them to do. It was not for them to know the times or seasons - the Father had put those in His own power.

VERSE 8

A. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you..."

There are two Greek words for "power."

- Exousia, meaning, privilege, authority, used in John 1:12, Matthew 10:1

- Dunamis, meaning, power, ability, used in Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8. (Dynamite)

- Luke 10:19 uses both words.

"Ye shall receive ABILITY/POWER after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you."

- The authority is ours, through Christ.

- The ability is His, by the Spirit.

- The Book of Acts is a demonstration of the ability of the Holy Spirit. Not man's ability.

- Our ability, or lack of it, does not count with God. Often human ability is a hindrance to God.

- Moses was stripped of his ability in the 40 years in the backside of the desert, and then God gave him HIS ability. Acts 7:22, Exodus 3:1-15.

- Peter and Paul, and other Apostles and Saints were stripped of their ability, in order to depend upon the ability of the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus said, **"I do nothing of Myself." John 5:19; John 12:49; 14:10.**

- Jesus said, **"Without ME ye can do nothing." John 15:5.**

QUESTION: what is the ABILITY/POWER of the Spirit?

HE is able to do all things. He is GOD - DEITY. (Acts 5:1-4)

The Holy Spirit is co-equal in majesty, power, glory, honor and attributes with the Father and the Son.

- All that the Father is, the Son is.

- All that the Son is, the Holy Spirit is, and He is able to be all that in and through believers.

He is Omnipotent - All Powerful. He can do all things.

He is Omniscient - All Seeing. He sees all. He is Omnipresent - All Present. He is always present in all places.

The 9 gifts of the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, reveal these attributes of the Holy Spirit.

B. WITNESSES UNTO ME

"...and ye shall be witnesses unto me..."

From the Greek word for witness (martur) comes the English word martyr which has the meaning of "one who bears witness by his death."

To be a true witness of the Lord Jesus Christ one must suffer the death of denying oneself and be prepared by the grace of God to give ones live for their faith in Christ.

Matthew 16:24

Psalm 116:15

Revelation 12:11

Stephen, James and others were martyred in Acts for their faith in Christ. Millions have died for their faith since then.

True witnesses never testify of themselves. As the Son witnessed of the Father and declared the Father so shall true witnesses speak of the Risen Christ.

John 5:30-40

John 15:26-27

C. THE GREAT COMMISSION - THE CHARGE TO BELIEVERS, INDIVIDUALLY AND CORPORATELY AS THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST.

"...ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8c)

The following Scriptures should be read along with Acts 1:8, for they give the complete "Great Commission" of the Lord Jesus.

Matthew 28:19-20:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."

Mark 16:15-18:

"...Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Luke 24:47:

"...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

John 20:21,23:

"...as My Father hath sent me, even so send I you.. Whose so ever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retain."

From these Scriptures we see that the "Great Commission" has a four-fold charge.

1. The Gospel, that is the Good News that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself and that whosoever believeth in Jesus would be saved, was to be preached (proclaimed) to every person in every nation.

2. That repentance and remission of sins be preached to those who believed on Jesus as their Savior.

3. That those who believed were to be Disciplined, that is to be instructed in the things and ways of God; being baptized; and taught to observe to do every thing commanded by Jesus.

4. Believers to deliver those who are oppressed of the devil by casting out demons and laying hands on the sick.

The order of fulfilling this four-fold charge is seen in Acts 1:8:

- Jerusalem, that is that place (city, community) where the Lord has planted you.
- Samaria, that is that area surrounding where the Lord has planted you.
- Judea, that is the State or Nation in which the Lord has planted.
- Uttermost part of the earth.

The charge of the Great Commission were given by Jesus through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4). Acts is the Acts of the Holy Spirit fulfilling and obeying that Commission.

The Commission remains unchanged. The means of fulfilling it and obeying it is the same. The interpretation, as seen in the Acts and the Epistles is the same.

Unbelieving believers may argue over "speaking with tongues, healing, casting out demons," as "not for today," or "this does not mean that," and others may argue over water baptismal formulas and words, but THE ACTS stands as the answer to what Jesus meant in the Commands of the Great Commission as given in the Gospels.

VERSE 9 - THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

A. The Ascension is the closing action of the 40 days' ministry after Christ's resurrection.

NOTE some of the important events of that 40 days.

1. The resurrection of Christ.

-1 Corinthians 15.

2. The presentation of Himself as the Sheaf of Firstfruits.

-Leviticus 23:9-15

-1 Corinthians 15:20-23

3. The presentation of the Blood and Body of Jesus Christ at the Throne of the Father.

Hebrews 9:12-15

Hebrews 6:19-20

Leviticus 16

John 20:11-18

4. The New Birth of the Disciples on the day of Christ's resurrection.

- As Adam received the breath of life, so did the disciples here. They were quickened by the Spirit.

- Old Testament saints were saved by faith in the coming Messiah.

- The New Birth was made possible through Messiah's death and resurrection.

John 20:22-23

Genesis 2:7

John 3:1-8

5. Various appearances of Christ to His own. Refer to pages 15 and 16 of notes.

6. Opening of the understanding in the Scriptures. Giving spiritual insight into the Prophets, the Law and the Psalms. Prophecy and fulfillment. Interpretation given.

Luke 24:44-46

7. The Great Commission given. Refer to notes on Acts 1:8.

B. JESUS ASCENDS

The Scriptures says concerning His ascension:

1. He was "taken up" Acts 1:9

2. He was "carried up" Luke 24:50-53

3. He was "received up" Mark 16:9

The earthly ministry is finished. His heavenly ministry begins.

Hebrews 7:25

The Son of God, as the Second Person of the Godhead, had to return to the Father before the Third Person, the Blessed Holy Spirit, could descend from the Father and be poured out upon all flesh.

John 16:7

C. A CLOUD RECEIVED HIM

Matthew 17:1-7

The following Scriptures reveal the exaltation and glory of Jesus THE MAN, as He enters Heaven to the Father's throne.

Psalms 24 - He enters as the King of Glory.

Psalms 110 - He enters and sits down as King and Priest

Revelation 3:21 - He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Philippians 2:5-11; Acts 2:33-36 - He receives the exalted Name.

Ephesians 4:8-16; Hebrews 1:3-14; Hebrews 2:9 He ascends far above all.

Mark 16:19-20; Hebrews 10:12-13; Revelation 1:1 -He sat down, after a finished work.

Thus Jesus is crowned with Glory and Honor. He is given the Oath of the Melchisedek Priesthood, and is given THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME, seated at the Father's Right Hand of power. Here He receives the Revelation (Rev. 1:1) and receives the Holy Spirit from the Father, to be poured out on the waiting disciples.

Here He begins His Heavenly Ministry, confirming His Word on earth with signs and wonders. Here He sits and reigns until all enemies are made His footstool. The MAN of Glory. Incomparable!

VERSES 10,11 - TWO WITNESSES

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men (not angels) stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

A. TWO WITNESSES AT THE ASCENSION

"...two MEN stood by them..."

It is significant that all through the life of Jesus there were at least TWO WITNESSES at the most important events.

Matthew 2:1-2

Matthew 17:1-12; Luke 9:28-35

Luke 24:4; John 20:12

Acts 1:10

Revelation 11:3-4; Zechariah 4

B. THIS SAME JESUS

Note: 2 Corinthians 11:1-4. Many are preaching "another Jesus" and "another Gospel," and "receiving another spirit" today. It will be the same Jesus - the Virgin Born, Sinless, Spotless, Crucified, Resurrected, Glorified, Ascended Son of God who will come again the second time.

Hebrews 13:8

C. IN LIKE MANNER

This same Jesus will return in the exact manner as He went away. That is, He went in a CLOUD, He went BODILY, PERSONALLY, LITERALLY, VISIBLY, GLORIOUSLY, as the GOD-MAN; and HE WILL RETURN THE SAME WAY.

Revelation 1:7

Revelation 19

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER ONE (continued)

B. THE 10 DAY PERIOD BETWEEN THE ASCENSION AND THE OUT-POURING OF THE SPIRIT (Acts 1:12-26).

VERSE 12-14, 15b - THE UPPER ROOM

"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter and James and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes and Judas the Brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.. (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty) ..."

1. "...a Sabbath day's journey..."

A Sabbath day's journey is a very limited distance, such as would naturally be regarded as the immediate vicinity of any locality. It is supposedly founded on the command, "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (Exodus 16:29). This measure was fixed by the Jewish legislators at 2000 cubits. 2000 cubits was supposedly used as the Sabbath day's journey since the distance between the Ark of God and the people according to Joshua 3:4 was to be 2000 cubits. Also, the extent of the suburbs of Levitical cities, Numbers 35:5, was 2000 cubits.

2. The Disciples

The 11 Apostles are named. These are the Apostles of the Lamb (Matthew 10:1-4) and had been with Jesus from the beginning (Acts 1:21,22). Having been with Jesus from the beginning is what then distinguishes them from the Apostles named in the epistles of Paul to the Churches.

-Romans 16:7

-2 Corinthians 8:23 (messenger is same Greek word as translated apostle which means "a sent one".)

-Philippians 2:25

-1 Thessalonians 2:6 (1:)

-Galatians 1:19

-1 Corinthians 15:8,9

-Acts 14:4, 14

In addition to the 11 Apostles of the Lamb who are named there are un-named women, the Mother of Jesus, and the brothers of Jesus and others. A total of about 120 disciples.

A new day is dawning. The Holy Spirit to be poured out on "all flesh" (Joel 3:28; Acts 1:17). Men and women alike from various walks of life. Different, yet one in Christ (Galatians 3:27,28), they all need the Spirit.

3. "the number.. about a 120."

Note 1 Corinthians 15:6. Over 500 brethren were witnesses of the fact that Jesus was risen, but only 120 made it to the Upper Room, for the Day of Pentecost.

120 is a significant number in Scripture.

- Moses' life divided into $3 \times 40 = 120$ years.
- Christ's life stamped with 3 groups of 40 days.
 - 40 days in His circumcision (Lk 2:21-24; Lev. 12).
 - 40 days in His temptation (Lk. 4:2).
 - 40 days in His resurrection (Acts 1:3).
- Solomon's Temple, dedicated in the 7th month in the Feast of Tabernacles had 120 trumpeters. (2 Chronicles 5:11-14)
- Here at the dedication of the Church, the true spiritual Temple, there were 120 disciples.
- In the day of Noah, the Holy Spirit strove with men for 120 years before the flood came. At the end of 120 years, Noah ceased to preach the word and the Spirit ceased to strive with men. All ungodly flesh was judged by the flood.
- The number 120 signifies "the end of all flesh".
- The Holy Spirit strives with men 120 Jubilees ($120 \times 50 + 6000$ years) at the end of which all ungodly flesh will be destroyed.
- Here in Acts 1, 120 signifies the end of the Lawman, the Flesh-Man Ministry, and the beginning of the Holy Spirit being supreme as the Shekinah Glory in the New Covenant Temple. (Ephesians 2:20- 22).

4. "...with one accord..."

The Disciple were in one accord both before and after Pentecost. They did not go there to become of one accord, but because they were already of one accord. They were there for the same thing, the one thing. they were of one mind, one heart, one purpose, one accord, and one desire. They were in UNITY.

John 17:21

Psalm 133

The Anointing Oil of the High Priest could only flow down to the Body where unity was.

Philippians 1:27

This "with one accord" was the secret of the power and blessing in Acts.

Acts 1:14

Acts 2:1, 46

Acts 4: 24, 32

2 Chronicles 5:11-14

Matthew 18:19

Amongst the Disciples in the Upper Room there was unity among the men and women - no fighting, no bitterness, no criticism, no strife - UNITY of mind and heart.

5. "...in prayer and supplication..."

SUPPLICATION means HUMBLE and EARNEST prayer in worship. "to kneel down, to entreat, implore, call upon humble."

PRAYER means to petition. It is constant, continual prayer. Not listlessness, carelessness, indifference. Persistent in prayer and supplication. The Disciples realized their need of Power from on High. They realized their uselessness, their helplessness, the inability of self.

VERSES 15-26 - JUDAS REPLACED

The Holy Spirit devotes 11 verses to this incident of the replacing of Judas. Concerning Judas certain questions come into the mind of believers.

Was Judas ever saved?

Was he foreordained/predestined by God to do what he did?

Did he have a choice in the matter, or did he sell Christ in order to fulfill Scriptures?

Let us look at the last two questions first. Here, in order to get the right perspective we need to see that there are two lines of Scriptures which meet only in God. Those Scriptures that pertain to DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY and those that pertain to HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY.

There are several words mentioned in the Bible which help us to understand these things, at least, in the measure that finite minds can understand the infinite.

1. Foreknowledge

Romans 8:29

Acts 15:18

1 Peter 1:2

Acts 2:25,31

Ephesians 1:4

1 Peter 1:20

1 Peter 1:10-12

2 Peter 1:20-21

God is Omniscient, He knows all things at all times. God knows the end from the beginning.

He is the I AM.

- He Fore knows
- He Foresees.
- He Foreordains
- He Foretells (this is prophecy)

2. Election.

1 Peter 1:2

Ephesians 1:4

Election is the act of choosing. Choosing is based on or is according to foreknowledge.

3. Predestination.

Romans 8:29

Ephesians 1:5

Predestination is bringing to pass Election. Election looks back to Foreknowledge. Predestination looks forward to the destiny. Predestination linked with God's love. God will never do anything with His creations which is inconsistent with His own nature of love. Predestination has to do with the future destiny of those who believe.

God as Creator will do nothing with His Creatures which is inconsistent with His Holy character. Thus to teach that Judas was predestined, and foreordained, against his own will, to betray Christ and to sell Him out is to insult the Moral attributes of God in His holiness, justice, righteousness and love.

Thus Judas fulfilled the Scriptures because God foreknew all things, and foretold the same, however he was responsible for what he did. Judas made the choice (Romans 6:16).

NOTE: PROPHECY is not Predestination but rather FOREKNOWLEDGE. God fore knew, He foresaw, and thus, through the mouth of the Prophets He FORETOLD.

Now the question, Was Judas ever saved? Or, did Judas lose his salvation?

On the surface it would seem that Judas was a believer, a follower of Jesus, who lost his salvation through the act of betraying Jesus.

- The Lord Jesus chose Judas as one of the twelve apostles to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. Matthew 10:1-4 lists Judas among the Apostles, as a Sent One. Jesus gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out, and also power over all sickness and all disease.

- Jesus ordained these 12 Apostles and sent them forth to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. Mark 3:13-19. Matthew 11:1.

- The 12 were sent forth two by two. So Judas worked with one of the other Apostles. Mark 6,7.

- Jesus said to the 12 when He sent them out: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." The Holy Spirit would speak through them.

- All 4 Gospels declare that Christ had the Passover with the 12 Apostles, which included Judas.

Judas was called by Jesus to be a disciple, but Judas was NOT A TRUE BELIEVER. The following Scriptures show the true nature of Judas' heart.

John 6:64

John 6:70-71

John 12:4-6

John 17:12

Next we come to JUDAS (John 17:12). No where in the Word does it say that Judas was ever a child of God, a believer. In fact in the beginning of Christ's ministry what is Christ saying of Judas? in John 6:64 Jesus implied (especially since the comma wasn't in the original) that Judas did not believe. Also, in John 6:70 we read "One of you is (not will be) a devil." Judas' job was to hold the bag and the Word said (John 12:6) he "bare", stole from it. Thus Judas was never saved, born again; was not a believer. Of course the devils believe and tremble (James 2:19), but this was not what Christ spoke of concerning Judas in John 6:64 - for no doubt Judas too had the mental faith, but not heart faith.

VERSES 16, 20. THE HOLY SPIRIT FORETOLD concerning Judas,

Psalms 41:9

Psalms 69:25-28

Psalms 109:8

VERSES 18-20,25 THE SUICIDE OF JUDAS,

Matthew 27:3-8

- verse 25, Judas went to his own place.

Luke 16:28

John 14:2

VERSES 22-26 THE CHOICE OF MATHIAS BY LOTS,

It is to be remembered that the Holy Spirit had not yet been outpoured. The disciples are still in the transition period emerging from the Old Covenant into the New Covenant era.

The choice of Matthias was by lot, AND WAS OF THE LORD. According to ancient custom, names were written on paper and then placed in the lap or a vessel which was shaken to and fro, the first name cast out of the lap or vessel was recognized as the one whom the Lord had chosen.

Leviticus 16:8,9

Jonah 1:3-7

Numbers 26:55-56

Proverbs 16:33

Remember their prayer in verses 24-25, that the Lord would show who He had chosen of these two men.

verse 26, Matthias is here recognized as one of the Twelve. Thus Matthias was numbered with the 11 Apostles, before Pentecost and he was counted with the 11 Apostles after Pentecost Acts 2:14; also, Paul recognized Matthias as among the 12, 1 Corinthians 15:5.

The fact that Matthias is not mentioned by name again in Acts cannot be used as an argument against him being chosen by the Lord, for very few of the original 12 are mentioned in the Book of Acts. The main Apostles mentioned are Peter, James and John and then the Apostle Paul.

After this one instance, Apostles are never again chosen by lot. The Lord Jesus, himself, by the Spirit from that time on chose, ordained and equipped the Apostles and other Ministries.

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER TWO

I. THE DAY OF PENTECOST (Acts 2:1-13)

VERSE 1 - PENTECOST

"...And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come..."

Literally - the 50th day. There were 40 days of Christ's post resurrection ministry, then 10 days of waiting.

There was a set time for the Holy Spirit to come, even as there was for Christ Jesus to die on the cross of Calvary. Galatians 4:4.

God had appointed 3 Feasts in the Old Testament for the Nation of Israel.

Leviticus 23

Deuteronomy 16:16-17

1. The Feast of Passover. Fulfilled in the Gospels.
2. The Feast of Pentecost. Fulfilled in Acts and the Epistles.
3. The Feast of Tabernacles. Fulfilled in The Revelation.

Israel as "The Assembly in the Wilderness" (Acts 7:38), kept the Feast of Pentecost at Mount Sinai 50 days after the Passover Lamb had been slain and the deliverance from the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

The New Testament Church follows the same pattern, keeping the Feast of the Lord, in spiritual reality, in Mt. Zion, Heavenly Jerusalem. Hebrews 12:22-24.

The Old Testament is the type, prophecy and shadow. The New Testament is the anti type, and fulfillment and substance.

Under the Old Testament Pentecost, the Law was written on Tables of Stone, and the Tabernacle of Moses, the Aaronic Priesthood Order in given, and the Assembly in the Wilderness was established.

Exodus 19:1-6; chapters 20-40

While the Priests and the Jewish Nation kept the Ceremonials of the Feast of Pentecost at the Temple, which Temple God had now finished with as demonstrated in the rent Veil, the Disciples of Jesus in the Upper Room kept the True and Spiritual Feast of Pentecost in the New Temple, even the Church.

Jewry kept the Letter, the Shadow, the Form, the Type, the Promise and Prophecy.

The disciple kept the Spirit, the Substance, the Reality, the Anti type and the Fulfillment.

VERSES 2-4 - SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

At Pentecost there were Divine signs.

- "A sound came from heaven."

- "A rushing mighty wind... filled all the house."

- "Cloven tongues like as of fire. sat upon each of them."

- "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

- "They. . . began to speak with other tongues, as Spirit gave them utterance."

1. The WIND and the FIRE were both Old Testament symbols of the Holy Spirit. The Invisible, Third Person of the Godhead was seen and heard in the symbols of His own Nature and Person.

These signs touched the senses of seeing and hearing. They saw and they heard. Seeing and hearing are the only evidence of a true witness and testimony. Acts 4:20.

There are similar manifestation in the Old Testament for:

- Moses and Israel at Mount Sinai, The Feast of Pentecost. Exodus 19.

- Elijah at Mount Horeb, as God spoke to him in the still small voice after the earthquake, wind and fire. 1 Kings 19:8-13.

The Lord caused the earthquake, wind and fire. All were Divine manifestations of His power, yet He was not in them, but He was in the still small voice which followed.

SO IT WAS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

- THE WIND of the Spirit. The breath of God.

John 3:8

John 20:22

Ezekiel 37:9

- THE FIRE of the Spirit. To burn up chaff.

Matthew 3:11-12

Note: In contrast, the Lord Jesus had the Dove of the Holy Spirit upon Him for He was the only sinless and perfect man. Matthew 3:14- 17.

"Tongues of Fire" - Spiritually this was the lighting of. the lamps upon the Golden Candlestick in the Tabernacle as fulfilled in the New Testament Church so that the Lord would have a witness of LIGHT in the world, in and through the Church.

Revelation 1:12-20

Matthew 8:12

The Burning Bush.

Hebrews 1:7

Exodus 3:1-15

As God got Moses' attention and spake to him from out of the Burning Bush and the Glory of His Holiness, in a like manner God would make the New Testament Church a Burning Bush - burning yet unconsumed - to get the attention of the unbelieving world, causing His fire, His voice, His holiness, His name to be revealed in convicting, convincing, and converting power.

Fire is ever the symbol of God's holiness. The symbol of conviction against sin and unrighteousness. The Word of God and the Spirit of God are likened to fire. This fire would be seen and heard in the Church, purging, purifying, cleansing, warming and revealing the Glory of the Risen Christ in and through the Church, His Body.

2. ALL FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. Jesus had previously spoken to His disciples of the necessity of His leaving them and returning to the Father, so that the Spirit could come and dwell in them as He had been with them.

John 14:17.

As long as Jesus remained with the disciples, He was "straitened," that is limited by the physical, and localized in one place. He could be with them, walking and talking with them, but the only way He could be in them was to return to the Father and then come again to His disciples through, or by means of the Spirit.

John 14:18

Romans 8:9

This, then, necessitated His leaving them and leaving this earth.

Thus in Acts, chapter 1 we see Jesus returning to the Father, and in Acts, chapter 2, we see the Holy Spirit coming to the disciples.

Therefore in Acts and the Epistles it is "Christ in them"

Colossians 1:27

Beloved, true Christianity is Christ re-living His life in His own, saying and doing in and through them exactly what He said and did while He was here with them. This is the glorious mystery, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Now in the Book of Acts and the Epistles, and all the New Testament, we find different ways to express this experience of the coming of the Holy Spirit, with each different term or phrase bringing out some different facet of this experience.

Let us look at these different expressions, which describe the glory of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples.

a. Baptized with the Spirit. Symbolic of immersion into the Spirit.

Acts 1:5

Acts 11:15-17

John 1:33

b. Filled with the Spirit. Filled as an empty vessel would be filled. "One Baptism, but many fillings" is the New Testament order. Or, "Be continually filled with the Spirit."

Acts 2:4

Acts 4:31

Acts 6:5

Acts 9:17

Ephesians 5:18

a. Receiving the Spirit. Receiving as receiving a gift from a Giver (Luke 11:13). It is worthy to note that there was only one "tarrying meeting" in the Book of Acts and this was before Pentecost had fully come. None could be baptized in or with the Spirit until the Day of Pentecost had fully come. God's Spiritual Calendar and Time-piece was involved. All other meetings were "Receiving meetings."

Acts 2,38

Acts 8:15,17,19

Acts 10:47

d. Falling upon them. Or, the Spirit came upon them. The though here is of coming upon one from above, from the Lord in Heaven.

Acts 8:16

Acts 10:44

Acts 11:15

Acts 19:6

e. The Holy Spirit given. Related to C. above. The Holy Spirit was given as a gift; not earned by works or merit of receiver.

Acts 2:38

Acts 8:18-19

Acts 11:16-17

f. Poured out upon them. Poured out on the disciples, as pouring down Rain, the Early or Latter Rain, or as Living Waters upon the thirsty ground. Under this expression is noticed the symbolic characteristics of the Holy Spirit as being able to be 'poured out.' RAIN, WATER, RIVERS, DEW, and OIL, all are symbols of the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:44-45

g. Endued with power. Literally, to be "clothed with power from on high." Clothed as with a garment. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of the Lord came upon or clothed Himself with, or upon, Gideon, or Samson, or various Judges, etc., and so the believer receives a Garment of Priestly Ministry unto the Lord in the "clothing" from above.

Luke 24:47-49

3. THEY BEGAN TO SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES. Verses 4-13.

Mark 16:17, "These signs shall follow them that believe... they shall speak with New Tongues."

a. Note the progression in the Bible concerning "tongues"

- Tower of Babel. Here is the origin of tongues. Genesis 11:1-10. The origin of all languages, of all nations. The languages here were a sign of judgment on mankind for disobedience to the Word of God.

- Pentecost. Acts 2:4. Here at Pentecost, Babel is reversed. God gave the sign of tongues as a sign of grace. A gift available for all mankind, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Here salvation is opened to all nations, kindred's, tongues and tribes.

- Heaven. Revelation 5:9-10; 7:9. John beholds innumerable multitude gathered out of every kindred, every tongue, every tribe, and nation, worshipping the Lamb of God. A sign of glory and redemption here. Their language here is "Worthy is the Lamb."

Let us notice the contrast between Babel and Pentecost:

BABEL

Nimrod - the Spirit of Satan
Rebellion and blasphemy
To glorify man
Bricks and slime
False unity, centralize
Confusion and division
Tongues of confusion
Let us make US a name
The Babylon of earth
Obedience to Nimrod, Rebel

PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit - The Spirit of God
Obedience and worship
To glorify God
Living stones of believers
True unity, to be sent forth
Order and unity
Tongues of unity
To magnify and reveal God's name
The Heavenly Jerusalem
Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ

b. Tongues in the Old Testament

There are several foreshadowings of the "sign of tongues" in the Old Testament, all of which find their fulfillment in the Church and the New Testament. God had used this "Sign" in the Old Testament, but never expressly through human voice.

- To Balaam. Numbers 22; 2 Peter 2:15-16.

God used a dumb donkey to speak in a tongue never learned, unknown to the speaker, but understood by the hearer. The animal here rebuked the prophet for his iniquity. The prophet was his own interpreter. The sign was "a speaking with tongues." This miracle of speech was similar to the Day of Pentecost sign.

- To Belshazzar Daniel 5

God wrote by the hand in an unknown tongue over against the candlestick on the walls of Babylon. God used Daniel to interpret it. This was the Sign of Judgment on the Fall of Babylon, and it is prophetic of the Lord speaking by His Church against Spiritual Babylon today.

- To Israel Isaiah 28:9-13; Deuteronomy 4:31-35.

God spoke in the Hebrew tongue to the Chosen Nation at the Feast of Pentecost in Mt. Sinai. In the New Testament Pentecost, God spoke by many tongues for all nations. Isaiah foretold that God would use the "stammering lips and another tongue to speak to this people, yet people would not hear."

1 Corinthians 14:21 Isaiah 28:11

The reaction to this sign of tongues then is the same today.

Acts 2:6-7; 12-13

The were confounded, amazed, doubted and mocked

c. The sign of tongues as evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts.

In the Book of Acts "speaking with other tongues" was the distinct and unique sign, and evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

If the Christian community today had but the record of the Acts, and cast aside the traditional teachings and books of men, we would have to admit that the evidence in Acts of the reception of the Spirit was this sign!

Note in every case in Acts that it gives or suggests this evidence.

1. Acts 2:1-4

2. Acts 8:5-24

3. Acts 9:17-19

4. Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17 How did Peter know that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit?

5. Acts 19:1-7

6. Acts 18:1-11; 1 Corinthians 14:18

It is note worthy that the signs of the Rushing Wind and the Tongue of Fire are not repeated in the Acts, but the sign of Speaking with tongues is when the Spirit is poured out.

The ability to speak with tongues was of the Holy Spirit, "...as the Spirit gave them utterance."

It must be remembered that although "speaking with tongues" is the evidence of the Spirit's reception, the Holy Living is the evidence of the Holy Spirit filled life. The Spirit comes to make us Holy.

It is sadly possible to receive the Spirit, yet not walk in and live in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16

Question: Do all speak with tongues? 1 Corinthians 12:30.

A careful study of each record in Acts shows that the SIGN of speaking in tongues accompanied those who believed. This is in accord what the Word says in Mark 18:17, and this is without an Interpretation to the Church.

In 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, Paul is dealing expressly with the Gifts of the Spirit, and is dealing with the Gift of speaking with tongues with INTERPRETATION, as in the function of New Testament believer's meeting. Without interpretation the person must keep silent. All do not have the gift of divers kinds of tongues spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:10.

The SIGN of tongues is for personal edification.

1 Corinthians 14:2,4

The GIFT of divers kinds of tongues with interpretation is for the edification of the Church,

1 Corinthians 14:5,6

d. Additional observations and comments concerning "speaking with other tongues" in Acts 2:1-13.

The disciples were not preaching the Gospel to the heathen nations in these new tongues.

They were not merely using "sanctified new tongues" as believers. The Greek word for "tongues" is "languages". They began to speak in other (different, foreign) languages as the Spirit gave the words. The Spirit gave them utterance, expression and the words to speak.

The hearers heard them speak in the various languages. Verses 6-8.

The disciples were declaring the wonderful works of God. Verse 11.

This speaking in tongues was a miracle of speech, not a miracle of hearing. The disciples were not speaking in their own Jewish language or in some heavenly language while the hearers heard their own national language in their minds.

It was a miracle of speech, by the Spirit, in and through the believers. They were speaking languages they had never learned, and languages they did not understand.

The hearers, in this record, were their own interpreters. The hearers heard and understood naturally by their own native birth what the disciples spoke supernaturally, by the Spirit.

It was a convincing and a convicting sign to some, as they realized that these ignorant Galileans were speaking languages never learned by them. It was a convincing sign of the Baptism with the Spirit.

The 17 places named (verses 9-11) covered the 4 corners of the then known earth.

II. THE CHURCH IN ACTION

VERSES 14 - 40, THE FIRST SERMON

Peter, the Apostle to the Jews (the Circumcision, Galatians 2:7-8) preaches the first sermon which results in 3,000 converts being added to the Assembly of Believers, the Church.

This sermon of Peter contains tremendously important facts, which fall into two main divisions:

1. JOEL
2. JESUS

I. JOEL - The Prophetic Word

Acts 2:16-17.

The Last Days

What did the prophets mean by the "Last Days?" Note the following Scriptures:

Hebrews 1:1-2; Genesis 1:2

Genesis 2:17

Exodus 20:1-21

Matthew 11:28-30

Jeremiah 31:33

Ezekiel 36:26-27

Joel 2:28-30

Isaiah 2:1-3

Psalms 90:4

2 Peter 3:8

"The Former Days" (time past) began with Genesis 1:2 and ended with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who Himself was God. The Former Days were 4 days or 4 thousand years.

- During the Former days there was The Law, The Psalms, and the Prophets which pointed to Christ and the Church. It was the Age (dispensation) of Shadow and Type. The Old Covenant. Natural Israel.

"THE LAST DAYS" had its beginning at Calvary and will come to a close when the Millennial Reign of Christ on earth is over. The last days will be 3 days or three thousand years.

- During the Last Days we have the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the out pouring of the Holy Spirit, the Epistles (letters to the Churches). It is the Age of Fulfillment. The New Covenant. Spiritual Israel.

The Early Church had no "New Testament", only the "Old Testament", and their understanding had been opened to the truth that the Prophets not only spoke to their time, but also, to the generations in this present Age/Dispensation, the "Last Days."

1 Peter 1:10-12

2 Peter 1:20-21

2 Timothy 3:15-17

Five ways in which God revealed His will under the Old Testament to the Prophets.

Numbers 12:1-8

The Prophetic Spirit to be upon all Flesh now.

ALL FLESH

Joel 2:28-29

1. Sons and Daughters Legal Heirs

John 1:12-13

Romans 8:16-17

Galatians 3,29

2. Young Men and Old Men Age no longer counts.

3. Servants and Handmaids Class distinction over.

The Spirit is now available for all, regardless of position, ages sex or race. Galatians 3:26-28

Comments:

Joel's prophecy covers the whole of this age as the Age/Dispensation of Pentecostal Outpourings and not just the early church in its beginning, but it consummates at the Second Coming of Christ, amidst Signs in Heaven and Earth before the Notable Day of the Lord.

Revelations 6:12-17.

The signs spoken of by Joel were not fulfilled at Pentecost, i.e. (id est - that is), the sun was not darkened, the moon was not turned to blood, there was no vapor, fire and pillars of smoke.

The fulfillment of Joel's prophecy reaches down to the events in the Book of Revelation. All this goes to confirm that the "time element" of Joel's prophecy reaches from Pentecost to the Coming of the Lord Jesus the Second Time.

II. JESUS The Living Incarnate Word

Let us note these important facts Peter declares concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

A. His sinlessness

Verse 22a - Jesus, the sinless man.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth..."

Jesus "Saviour"

Matthew 1:21-23

Isaiah 7:14

Jesus of Nazareth. This involves His sinless birth, His virgin birth or incarnation, His humanity, His consecration to Father's will and service. This title was used by man, devils, and on the cross.

Mark 1:24; 14:67

John 1:45

Matthew 2:23

John 19:19

B. His Life Ministry

Verse 22b - Jesus, the Perfect Man

"...a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."

God the Father, showed His approval of Jesus' life and ministry by the miracles, signs, and wonders which He did by and through Him. Never had God used any other as He did His only Son - not Moses or Elijah or Elisha, and not the Judges. NONE could compare with the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in word, deed, or claim. God was with Jesus.

Luke 4:18-19

Acts 10:38

John 3:34; 35-36

John 8:28

John 9:4

John 14:10

Works of God - Healing, Miracles, Revelation, Casting out demons.

C. His Crucifixion

Verse 23 - Jesus, The Crucified Man

"Him being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

God's Part - Calvary was according to God's plan, counsel and foreknowledge.

Man's Part - Man's lawlessness and wickedness fulfilled God's plan.

Acts 13:27, "... because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him."

D. His Resurrection.

Verses 24-32 - Jesus, The Resurrected Man.

"(Jesus) Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. etc..."

The central fact of all the sermons in the Book of Acts is the RESURRECTION for on it hangs all the previous and following facts.

1 Corinthians 15:1-19

Peter in this sermon refers to Psalm 16:8,10 to show that they could not, and in fact did not, find their fulfillment in David himself, as his (David's) tomb was still with them. Therefore David in this Psalm spoke of the Messiah, Jesus, in whom alone these Scriptures find their fulfillment.

verse 31 - "He (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption."

E. His Exaltation

Verse 33 - Jesus, The Exalted Man

"Therefore being by the right hand of God EXALTED..."

In the following verses Peter shows how God exalted Jesus.

1. His Ascension. Verse 34a.

"For David is not ascended into the heavens..."

Jesus - The Ascended Man

Proverbs 30:4

Psalm 68:18

Ephesians 4:9-10

Acts 1:9

2. His Enthronement. Verse 34b.

"...but he (David) saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand..."

Jesus, The Enthroned Man

Psalm 110:1

Matthew 22:41-46

Zechariah 6:12-13

Isaiah 9:7

Hebrews 1:3

Philippians 2:9-11

3. His Glorification. Verse 36.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Jesus - The Glorified Man

Jesus is The Man in God's Image, the Last Adam, through whom a race of people would come to this same image. Heaven had never received a Man like this.

John 8:58

John 10:30

Hebrews 1:3a,b

Romans 8:29

III. Jesus "whom ye have crucified..." Verse 36c

Peter lays this death of Jesus, the One whom the Father has exalted right on their door step.

Isaiah 53

Matthew 27:22-23

John 1:29

Galatians 3:13

I John 2:2

IV. "... what shall we do." Verse 37

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Here we have a dramatic example of the truth of the following Scriptures.

Romans 1:16

Romans 10:17

I Thessalonians 2:13

John 6:63

Isaiah 55:11

Their heart was pricked. They were brought under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, thus they ask, "...what shall we do?"

Beloved, when Jesus is preached the conviction of the Holy Spirit in the heart requires a response.

V. "Repent, and be baptized... in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ... save your selves from the untoward (perverse) generation." verses 38, 40.

Peter in response to the question of those who had heard the gospel, "..what shall we do?", instructs them to:

"... Repent..."

Acts 3:19

2 Timothy 2:26

Acts 2:40

"...be baptized..."

a) "...in the name of Jesus Christ..."
distinguishes New Testament baptism from John's baptism.

John 1:19-34 (33)

Acts 19:1-5

Matthew 28:19

b) "... for the remission of sins..."

1 Peter 3:20,21

Acts 22:16

Romans 6:1-6

c) "... ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Spirit). For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call".

VI. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls (persons)."

VII. Compare Acts 2:36-40 with Acts 16:25-34 as to:

- a) Who were involved;
- b) Response (question asked);
- c) Instructions given;
- d) Results

VERSES 42 - THE MARKS OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

"And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer."

"... they continued steadfastly..." That is to say, they, the church as a whole, and each member individually remained strong in, persevered in, continued in...

1. THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE

A New Testament Church recognizes the importance of sound doctrine (teaching) and therefore perseveres, continues steadfastly in teaching the Apostles' Doctrine. In the Last Days many shall depart from the Faith (sound doctrine), being seduced by doctrines of devils.

1 Timothy 1:9,10

1 Timothy 4:1, 6, 13, 16

Hebrews 13:9

Ephesians 4:11-15

Philippians 4:9

2 Timothy 2:2

In Hebrews 6:1-2, we have simply outlined for us the first principles of the Doctrine of Christ, the Apostles Doctrine, that is, the doctrines which the Apostles taught and continued in steadfastly. These doctrines, or teachings are divided into 7 areas of teaching.

a. Repentance from Dead Works

b. Faith toward God

c. Baptisms

- Baptized into Christ
- Water Baptism
- Holy Spirit Baptism

d. Laying on of Hands

e. Resurrection of the Dead

f. Eternal Judgment

All of these teachings are in operation in the Four Gospels in the teaching of Jesus and in the Book of Acts.

2. FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship with one another. Not organizational fellowship, nor sectarian/worldly fellowship.

1 Corinthians 1:9

Ephesians 3:9

Ephesians 5:11

Philippians 3:10

2 Corinthians 6:14

1 John 1:3, 6, 7

3. BREAKING OF BREAD

Matthew 26:26-29

1 Corinthians 10:15-21

1 Corinthians 11:23-34

Acts 20:7

The New Testament Church met on the First Day of the week to "break bread together." The custom thus established in the New Testament Church was to take of the Lord's Supper each week on the 1st day of the week.

This is symbolized in the Table of Shewbread in the Tabernacle. The bread was arranged every 7th day before the Lord, "on behalf of the children of Israel as a everlasting covenant" and was partaken of by the priests, as representatives of the children of Israel as a nation, and individually. This bread was called "The Bread of His Presence."

Leviticus 24:1-9

Exodus 25:30 (Lit. "shewbread" means "bread of the face or presence")

The Lord's Supper speaks of:

- presence of the Lord in the bread and the wine
- manifesting our communion with Him
- a discerning of the Body of Christ
- symbolic of the New Covenant
- the Children's bread
- Divine healing and Health and Cleansing
- the unity of the Body of Christ

Note: In not discerning the Lord's Table - His Body and the local Church, which is His physical body on earth today - we bring judgment to ourselves in sickness, weakness and death. The opposite is also true. As we discern "The Body of Christ," we receive blessings in health, strength and life.

4. PRAYERS

In the Book of Acts, seventeen of its chapters has some reference to prayer. The prayer of the saints are the incense upon the Golden Altar, ascending to God, the Father, through the ministry of the High Priest, Jesus Christ.

Revelation 5:8

Psalms 141:1-2

Hebrews 7:25

A Prayerless Church is a Powerless Church

Jude 20

1 Thessalonians 5:17

The Church was born in prayer and is to be "A house of Prayer."

Acts 1:14

Matthew 21:13

C. VERSE 47b "... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER THREE

I. THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN (Acts 3:1-11)

In this chapter we have the first recorded miracle of healing in the Book of Acts.

VERSE 1 - Hour of Prayer

"Now Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."

1. "Now Peter and John went up together into the Temple..."

We see that after the Day of Pentecost, Peter and John still went to the temple to pray. All the believers there in Jerusalem were Israelites or proselytes, and they continued to go to the temple to pray.

2. "...the Temple..."

The Temple had been cleansed by Jesus and had seen His wonderful ministry. The priests had rejected this cleansing of the Temple. God rent the Vail of the Temple at the crucifixion of Jesus. This testimony of God had been rejected, hence the Temple was to be destroyed in a number years, in A.D. 70.

John 2:13-16

Matthew 21:12-15

Luke 19:45-48

Matthew 27:51

Matthew 24:1-2

3. "...at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."

The ninth hour was apparently the time of the evening sacrifice when a priest went to offer incense at the golden altar with his prayers. That golden altar, the altar of incense speaks of prayer. This was the time of prayer. There would be a great company in the temple area praying at this time.

Luke 1:8-10

Acts 10:3

We would, also, note that it was at the ninth hour that Jesus died on Calvary's Cross.

Matthew 27:45-50

VERSES 2-11, THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN

This man had been born lame. He was brought every day and was put there at the gate which is called Beautiful. He was there to beg for alms. This was the way he lived, of course. This poor beggar saw Peter and John, and hoped that they would be able to give him something.

When Peter and John gave him this much attention the beggar looked at them with the certainty that they would give him something.

The lame man did not, however, expect to receive healing.

This man undoubtedly had been there for many years, yet Jesus had not healed him, during His earthy ministry.

1. Compare verse 4 and 12

verse 4 - to the man in need, Peter says, "...Look on us..."

verse 12 - to the questioning people, Peter says, "Why look ye on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man well."

2. "...Silver and gold have I none..."

This is in great contrast to the rich Laodicean Church, which according to Revelation 3:17 is rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing. Laodicea is the Church which has a form of godliness and denies the power thereof.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

The power of money verses the power of God. Many times a rich church becomes a powerless church.

An incident is told of one of the early saints of the church in Rome who walked in on the pope as he was counting money. Realizing that he had walked in on something which was private, he started to walk out. The pope said to him, "No longer can the church say, 'Silver and gold have I none.' " As the saintly man continued walking out, he said, "Neither can the church say to the impotent man, 'Rise up and walk.'"

3. "...such as I have give I thee..."

Matthew 10:1

Luke 9:1

The Lord Jesus had given them power over all sickness and disease, and power to cast out devils.

Here the Lord Jesus confirmed His Word.....".with signs following." (Mark 16:15-17, 18-20)

The healing of the lame man was "an act of the Holy Spirit" through the Apostles. It was the manifestation of the Gifts of the Spirit, in healing and miracles and faith. (1 Corinthians 12:6-9).

4. "...in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

This is the first distinctive use of "The Name" in healing power after the ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 14:12-14, 26

John 16:23-24, 25-28

The Lord Jesus Christ had given the disciples the legal right to use His Name. Here, then, we see the power and the operation of the the Name of Jesus in healing.

The disciples understood the power in the Name of Jesus. He, Jesus, was at the back of His Name. His Name took His place in the Early Church.

Now, The Name of Jesus was not just a magic formula, or a mere theory, or doctrine to argue over. "The Name" meant the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. "Himself is His Name and His Name is Himself" -- such is an old Hebrew saying concerning God and His Name.

As Peter took the lame man by the right hand, immediately the power of the risen Christ flowed into his being, and his ankle bones received strength, causing the man to leap and walk.

The people saw the man LEAPING, walking and praising God, and greatly wondered over the miracle.

5 "...leaping..."

Don't miss the significance of the word "leaping", as it appears twice in verse eight.

This is a very interesting chapter. We will find that Peter is going to offer the kingdom to the nation of Israel again because at this time the church is 100 percent Israelite. There are no Gentiles from the outside. The church began with the Jews in Jerusalem. Later, it will go to the ends of the earth. But this, now, is the Jerusalem period. This is not another dispensation, but, rather a period of transition, so the kingdom is being offered to Israel again. This will be their final opportunity.

What will be some of the identifying marks of the kingdom?

One, will be that the lame will "leap". (Isa.35:6)

"Then shall the lame man leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Every instructed Israelite going up to the temple that day marveled at this lame man "leaping". They knew this could actually be the beginning of the kingdom. The Messiah had been crucified, raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and seated at God's right hand. If they would receive Him, He would come again.

This miracle took place in Solomon's Porch. Solomon's Temple had never witnessed such "glory as this."

II. PETER'S SERMON (Acts 3:12-26)

The rest of chapter three is Peter's sermon to the wandering people gathered at the Temple. This is Peter's second sermon in the Book of Acts. The sign of speaking in tongues was the basis for the first Pentecostal sermon. The sign of the healing of the lame man is the basis for this sermon in Acts 3.

Actually every miracle in Acts is "a sermon" to the ones having ears to hear what the Spirit is saying.

1. Not "...by our own power or holiness..."

Peter is here affirming and declaring a real truth. It was not by his power, that is to say, not by what he was able or capable of doing, nor was it by his holiness, that is to say, not by who he was, that the lame man was healed.

Now having affirmed very carefully that the miracle of the healing of the lame man was not done in his own power, he directs this Jewish audience back to the Old Testament. He is going to tell them that if they will turn to God, the Old testament prophecies concerning the establishment of the "Kingdom" can be fulfilled. Prophecies which were well know by the Jews, such as:

Zechariah 12:10

Ezekiel 36:27-28

Isaiah 12:11-6

Isaiah 35:6

Isaiah 35:10

They should have seen that this lame man was a miniature, a picture of the whole nation. If they would but turn to God, these promises would be fulfilled.

2. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers..."

This is one of the richest and most significant Divine Titles in the Bible. Its first revelation was to Moses at the burning bush, where God revealed Himself by the name, "I AM WHO I AM."

Exodus 3:14-15

Mark 12:26-27

John 8:56-59

These three men - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - are the only three men after which God has been pleased to call Himself the God of - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are symbolic of the fulness of the Godhead bodily..." (Col. 2:9).

ABRAHAM typifies FATHER GOD, who is the Foundation, the Source, the Beginning, the Covenant-holder, the Source of salvation, and the Father of all who believe.

Romans 4:1

Romans 4:16

Galatians 3:7

ISAAC typifies THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD. Isaac, too was born as a result of a miracle and was typically sacrificed and resurrected and thus becomes a magnificent type of the New Testament, Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1-5

Genesis, chapter 22

Hebrews 11:17

JACOB typifies the HOLY SPIRIT. Jacob was the third person of this Trinity of men, who proceeded from the Father Abraham, through the Begotten Son. He is the first one to anoint the rock (Bethel) with oil.

Genesis 28: 18-19

3. "... hath glorified His son Jesus..

Matthew 11:2-6

John 2:23

Philippians 2:8-11

Hebrews 1:1-2

4. Sermon facts - verses 13-15

- Jesus delivered up. His arrest.
- Jesus denied. His
- Jesus innocent. His innocence declared by Pilate.
- Jesus the Holy and Just One.
- Jesus killed. His death.
- Jesus the Prince of life, i.e., The Author of Life.
- A murderer granted to the people, even Barabbas, who was released instead of Jesus.
- Jesus raised up from the dead. His resurrection.
- Jesus glorified. Evidenced by this miracle.

The apostles are witnesses of these facts. Witnesses who have both seen and heard the resurrected Christ.

5. The power of HIS NAME. verse 16

Refer to comments under 4, page 60.

Note the emphasis here by Peter, on FAITH, "through faith in His name hath made this man strong..."

Faith for healing miracles is directed toward the NAME OF JESUS. Jesus is the Healer. Jesus' Name is who He is. Himself is His Name, and His Name is Himself. Jesus' Name takes His place in the Church.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

Romans 10:17

Hebrews 4:2

Jesus Christ Himself is the WORD.

John 1:1-3, 14-18

Psalms 138:2

6. The sin of ignorance. verse 17

"...through ignorance you did it, as did also your rulers."

The crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth was a sin of ignorance.

Luke 23:34

1 Corinthians 2:8

1 Timothy 1:13

The significance of Peter's statement here, that "...through ignorance you did it...", is made clear in the following passages. As we consider these passages, we need to keep in mind that Peter in this sermon is offering to Israel the kingdom.

Leviticus 4:2-3,13-14,22-23,27-28

Numbers 15:27-29

Luke 23:34

1 Timothy 1:13

Numbers 15:30-31

Deuteronomy 17:12-13

Deuteronomy 15:22

Psalm 19:13

2 Peter 2:10

From the above Scriptures we would note two categories of sin: the Sin of Ignorance and the Sin of Presumption.

SECONDLY, let us note the main differences between the Sin of Ignorance and the Sin of Presumption from these Scriptures. Later we will look at the Sin of Presumption in view of ETERNAL SALVATION.

a. THE SIN OF IGNORANCE.

- for sins of ignorance God had provided a blood-sacrifice; the sin was placed on the sacrifice, thus it was removed, forgiven.

- the sins of ignorance are sins of not knowing what you do.

- the sins of ignorance are sins of UNBELIEF, that is to say, not knowing the truth.

b. THE SIN OF PRESUMPTION.

- for sins of presumption there was no blood-sacrifice; thus there was no place for forgiveness or the removal of the sin.

- it was a sin of iniquity, which then is the same thing as rebellion, witchcraft, stubbornness and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23).

- the sin of presumption is a willful sin; in contrast to the sin of ignorance, the person committing the sin of presumption KNOWS the will of God as stated in His Word, but makes the SELF-WILLED CHOICE to disobey God's expressed will. This self-willed choice is often put this way; "I know I should do this/I should not do this, BUT...".

- the sin of presumption is a DESPISING of God's Word which results in breaking God's commandments. Reasons and excuses for doing or not doing what God commanded to do or not to do does not take the sin out of the realm of presumption.

- since there was no sacrifice for the sin of presumption, it therefore meant that the person, or nation remained under the burden of their iniquity, which then brought the penalty of death upon them; a cutting off from the people.

Thus according to the Law for the Sin of Ignorance there was FORGIVENESS; but for the Sin of Presumption there were CONSEQUENCES (temporal consequences) since the sin was not removed/taken away/forgiven.

THEREFORE to the Israelites to whom Peter was speaking here, the words, "through ignorance ye did it, as did also your leader," was quite significant because Peter was offering them individually and as a nation forgiveness and restoration, in a way in which they could comprehend from their understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures.

THIRDLY, Lest there be confusion and misunderstanding, How are we to view the Sin of Presumption as described in Numbers 15:30- 31 in light of CALVARY and ETERNAL SALVATION?

a. The eternal consequence of sin, all sin without exception (sins of presumption as well as sins of ignorance) was removed/taken away/forgiven by the vicarious atonement of the sacrificial Lamb of God on Calvary's Cross.

John 1:29, 36

Isaiah 53:4-12

Romans 3:21-24

Romans 4:6-8, 24-25

Romans 5:9

Romans 8:1

1 John 2:2

b. Salvation which is a gift of God to those who by faith receive Jesus Christ as their Savior is eternal salvation and therefore can not be taken away/lost/cut off.

Ephesians 2:8,9

Romans 3:28

Romans 6:23

John 3:16

John 10:28-29

Romans 8:37-39

Hebrews 7:27

Hebrews 9:12

Hebrews 10:10,14

Hebrews 10:17

c. In light of points a and b above, that all sin, as to its eternal consequence was forgiven/removed at Calvary and that since this salvation in Jesus Christ is eternal salvation and therefore once received by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary's Cross can not be lost, HOW THEN, are we to understand Numbers 15:30,31 which states that the person who sins presumptuously "... shall be cut off from among his people..." and "...his iniquity shall be upon him."?

Understanding is seen from the study of the following Scriptures.

Hebrews 10:26-30

Hebrews 6:4-9

1 John 5:16,17

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

1 Corinthians 6:18

Matthew 18:34

1 John 1:5-7

1 John 2:11

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Ephesians 4:30

Genesis 6:3

Sins of presumption/wilful sins/setting aside and thus despising Gods Word brings the person under the corrective judgment of God, in order that the person may be purged of his sin;

- secondly, the presumptuous sin causes the person to be cut off from God's blessings;
- thirdly, the presumptuous sin might possibly bring sickness and physical death;
- fourthly, will most assuredly rob him of his fellowship with God, grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit causing spiritual darkness to overshadow the persons soul.
- and fifthly, will give satan an open door into that persons life, so that he might torment him.

BOTTOM LINE: Sins of presumption will always have temporal, as well as, spiritual consequences, **BUT WILL NEVER HAVE ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES**, either temporal or spiritual.

FOURTHLY, it is note worthy, that of all the Commandments of God against which a believe might wilfully/presumptuously sin, the two specific examples which God in His Word has given us (one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament), **BOTH** of them have to do with the Third Commandment.

Exodus 20:8-11

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Numbers 15:32-36

Hebrews 10:25-29

Romans 3:31

Matthew 5:17-19

Acts 20:7

FIFTHLY, let us take a look at the **CONTEMPORARY** understanding or rather misunderstanding of the meaning of the Sin of Presumption.

- the contemporary meaning of presumption is a result of making use of a secondary meaning rather than the primary meaning of the word presumption which, by the way, corresponds with both the Hebrew and Greek meaning of the different words in the Bible which are translation, presume, presumption, presumptuously, etc.

The primary meaning of presumption is an overstepping of proper bounds; forwardness; effrontery -an immodest; shameless, irreverent, disrespectful behavior, or speech, lacking in judgment or caution, rash, indiscreet; bold self-confidence, boldness; barefaced; audacious - not restrained by a sense of shame, propriety, or decorum, rudely bold, brazen.

Secondary meaning of presume: to take for granted; accept as true lacking proof to the contrary; to assume; suppose.

In contemporary thinking it is presumptuous (a sin of presumption) to assume that God in His Word says what He means and means what He says.

For example Isaiah 53:5 says, "...with His stripes we are healed." It would then according to contemporary thinking be a sin of presumption to believe and confess this Word, to stand on this

Word, if there was sickness still in your body.

6.Dangers of Contemporary misunderstanding:

1. Creates doubt as to what God says and thus far of believing and standing on the Word of God.
2. Waters down the seriousness and consequences of willful sin.

Psalm 19:13; "Keep back thy Servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the "GREAT TRANSGRESSION."

7. VERSE 18 - Sufferings of Christ foretold by Prophets fulfilled.

"But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled."

As in Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, so in this sermon we see Peter referring to the old Testament Prophets. It must be continually remembered that the Early Church had no New Testament, so they continually appealed to the old Testament as the witness and confirmation of all that God was doing in their midst.

The declaration of diverse and numerous prophecies, given by various persons over several thousands of years, over different generations, yet all finding their fulfillment in the ONE MAN, even Jesus Christ.

This proves absolute inspiration, inerrancy, and the infallibility of the Scriptures.

Likewise, they prove the Deity of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, and the long promised and foretold Messiah of God.

Following is a listing of prophecies and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ concerning the humiliation and suffering of the Messiah.

<u>PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST</u>		
<u>PROPHECY</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>FULFILLED</u>
Genesis 3:15	seed of a woman	Galatians 4:4
Genesis 12:3	seed of Abraham	Matthew 1:1

Genesis 17:19	seed of Isaac	Luke 3:34
Numbers 24:17	seed of Jacob	Matthew 1:2
Genesis 49:10	from the tribe of Judah	Luke 3:33
Isaiah 9:7 33	heir to the throne of David	Luke 1:32, 33
Micah 5:2 7	born in Bethlehem	Luke 2:4, 5, 7
Daniel 9:25	time of His birth	Luke 2:1, 2
Isaiah 7:14 27, 30-31	to be born of a virgin	Luke 1:26-
Jeremiah 31:15 16-18	slaughter of the innocents	Matthew 2:
Hosea 11:1 15	flight to Egypt	Matthew 14- 15
Malachi 3:1	preceded by a forerunner	Luke 7:24,27
Psalms 2:7 3:17	declared to son of God	Matthew
Isaiah 9:1-2 4:13-16	Galilean ministry	Matthew
Deuteronomy 18:15	a prophet	Acts 3:20, 22
Isaiah 61:1, 2 4:18,19	to heal brokenhearted	Luke
Isaiah 53:3 Luke 23:18	Rejected by His own People the Jews	John 1:11
Psalms 110:4 5:5-6	Priest after order of Melchizedek	Hebrews
Zechariah 9:9	triumphal entry	Mark 11:7

Psalm 41:9 22:47, 48	betrayed by a friend	Luke
Zechariah 11:12 26:15	sold for thirty pieces of silver	Matthew
Psalms 35:11 14:57,58	accused by false witnesses	Mark
Isaiah 53:7 15:4,5	silent to accusations	Mark
Isaiah 50:6 26:67	spat upon and smitten	Matthew
Psalm 35:19 15:24,25	hated without reason	John
Isaiah 53:5 5:6,8	vicarious sacrifice	Romans
Isaiah 53:12 15:27,28	crucified with malefactors	Mark
Zechariah 12:10 20:27	pierced through hands and feet	John
Psalm 22:7, 8	scorned and mocked	Luke 23:35
Psalm 69:21 27:34	given vinegar and gall	Matthew
Psalm 109:4 23:34	Prayer for His enemies	Luke
Psalm 22:17, 18 27:35,36	soldiers gambled for His coat	Matthew
Psalm 34:20 19:32,33,36	no bones broken	John
Zechariah 12:10 19:34	His side pierced	John
Isaiah 53:9	buried with the rich	Matthew

27:57-60		
Psalm 88:3-7 2:31,	soul suffering the torment of	Acts
Psalm 16:10 2:2	God's wrath in hell	1 John
Psalm 49:15 16:6, 7	His resurrection	Mark
Psalm 68:18 16:19	His ascension to God's right hand	Mark Acts 1:9 Ephesians
4:8		Hebrews
1:3		

8. VERSES 19, 20, 21 - THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS SPOKEN BY THE PROPHETS

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come (lit. so as may (shall) come times of refreshing) from the presence of the Lord; And he shall (may) send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution (restoration) of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His Holy prophets since the world began."

A. TWO OBSERVATION ABOUT THESE PASSAGES

1. Peter is saying that if you, Israel, accept Jesus as the Christ, then the Father would send Jesus back to this earth and all things spoken of by the prophets would be accomplished.
2. We would note, that the restoration of all things is limited to that which is spoken of in and by the prophets. The prophets had spoken of the restoration of Israel. There are those who would use this verse to put forth the belief that eventually everything and every person will be saved (restored). No where do the prophets speak of the restoration of Satan, fallen angels or unregenerate man.

B. In these verses Peter speaks of:

1. Repentance
Luke 15:17, 18
2. Conversion

Luke 15:20

3. Sins being blotted out (wiped away).

1 John 1:9

4. Refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Here is especially is the thought of "Rain, Early and Latter Rain". Out pouring, which brings refreshing, and reviving from the effects of heat and drought.

Isaiah 28:12

Deuteronomy 11:10-21

5. The Second Coming of Christ

Acts .1:11

6. His Ascension to the Father's throne

Acts 1:9

7. Restitution, or restoration

Joel 2:21-27

9. VERSES 22,23 - THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES

Deuteronomy 18:15-22

Hebrews 1:1-2

Jesus Christ was the Prophet like unto Moses, who received the words of the Father God, and spoke in the Name of the Lord, and He was the one to whom Moses pointed.

Moses was the foundation of all the old testament Prophets. All who spoke were measured according to that revelation given to Moses.

Moses foretold that Christ would come from the midst of thy brethren. This was prophetic of the incarnation in the virgin Mary, and His (Jesus) being born of the Tribe of Judah and of the House of David.

"Like unto Moses" In His lowly birth, ministry, signs and wonders and miracles. In His glory, greater than Moses.

Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic economy of the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, the Sacrifices and the Feasts of Israel, that is to say, that Jesus was the fulfillment of all that was under the careful management of the Mosaic system as given by God to Moses. Put another way, the Mosaic economy was but the foreshadow and in this sense descriptive of the Prophet who would be raised up from the midst of the people.

Jesus fulfilled the Law: Moral, Civil, Ceremonial. However, His fulfilling of the Law was more than Him living righteously according to the standards of the Law. He was the Law in the flesh as the fulfillment of the Law. Jesus is, therefore, the standard of God.

Moses said all that he was commanded to say, but Jesus spoke the Father's words: "But I say unto You" He spoke with the voice of authority.

Israel could not stand the Glory or the Voice of God at Mt. Sinai, and asked God to give them a Man, a Mediator, and thus God spoke through Moses to them.

Exodus 20:18-21

Deuteronomy 4:10-13; 32-40

Hebrews 12:18-21

Moses spoke all that he was commanded to, in the Name of the Lord. Thus Moses was a remarkable type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, however, is the "greater than Moses." He is the One to whom Moses pointed, the One of whom Moses was but a type.

Moses was the SERVANT in the house.
Jesus was the SON and built the house.

Hebrews 3:4-6

Jesus spoke the Father's Words, in His Father's Name.

John 8:26-33; 37-47; 56-59;

John 12:47-50

10. VERSE 24 - SAMUEL, AND ALL THE PROPHETS WHO HAVE SPOKEN

Peter brings in Moses in verses 22-23.

Peter brings in Samuel in verse 24.

Then he mentions ALL THE PROPHETS, as many as have spoken----all foretold of "these days".

That is to say, All THE PROPHETS foretold of the Last days, "these days," the days in which we live, which "last days" began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

It is worthy to note the use of the Old Testament as seen in the Book of Acts. These quotations from the prophets show us clearly how the Early Church understood, interpreted and applied the utterances of the Old Testament Prophets, to that which was taking place in the Church.

The New Testament writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit became the infallible interpreters of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Following is a list of Prophets who were referred to or quoted in the Book of Acts and applied to the Church.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Acts 1:15-20 | The Psalms concerning Judas |
| 2. Acts 2:14-21 | The Prophet Joel foretold of the Spirit |
| 3. Acts 3:19-23 | Moses foretold of Christ |
| 4. Acts 3:22-25 | Samuel and all the prophets who spoke |
| 5. Acts 2:22-36 | David spoke of Christ |
| 6. Acts 4:25-26 | David spoke of the opposition to Christ |
| 7. Acts 8:28-37 | Isaiah spoke of Christ |
| 8. Acts 10:43 | All the Prophets |
| 9. Acts 13:15 | Reading of the Law and Prophets |
| 10. Acts 13:33-35 | The Psalms |
| 11. Acts 13:34,47 | Isaiah |
| 12. Acts 13:38-41 | Habakkuk |
| 13. Acts 17:2-3 | Paul opened the Scriptures to them |
| 14. Acts 28:23 | Paul spoke to them out of the Law of Moses and the Prophets from morning till evening |
| 15. Acts 28:26 | Isaiah |
| 16. Acts 15:16 | Rebuilding of Tabernacle of David from Amos. |

The whole of the New Testament is the revelation of that which was in the Seed-form in the Old Testament.

The Gospels, the Book of Acts and the Epistles abound with quotations, allusions and interpretative revelation of that which is hidden in the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets.

11. VERSE 25 - THE CHILDREN OF THE PROPHETS

Peter tells them that they were the children of the Prophets, and also the children of the Covenant made with Abraham, Issac, and Jacob.

Jesus Christ was THE SEED of David, the SEED of Abraham, in whom all nations were to be blessed.

This "SEED" to bless all nations is that "many-membered Seed" revealed in Christ and His Church.

Galatians 3:16, 28-29

Christ and His Church will bless ALL the Nations, through the Gospel of the Kingdom, as in operation in the Book of Acts.

12. VERSE 26 - TO THE JEW FIRST

God sent His Son to the Jew first, to bless them by offering them the kingdom through acceptance of Jesus as the Christ and turning away from their sin.

Romans 1:16-17

Every where that Paul went, he went first to the Jews, into the Synagogues. The tragedy is that the Jews as a whole rejected the Gospel (although many thousands were saved) and then the Gospel was sent to the Gentiles.

Blind unbelief read and heard the Scriptures every Sabbath day in the Synagogues, yet fulfilled them in condemning the Christ of God.

Acts 13:27

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter, pertaining to the events of the healing of the lame man.

1. VERSES 1,2 - "... preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

The signs and wonders in Acts were the proof of the resurrected Christ. They were proof of His risen power. God worked with the disciples in spite of all opposition. The priests, the Captain of the Temple, the Sadducees were grieved that the disciples of Jesus "... preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead".

2. VERSES 3,4 - Results of preaching

The disciples are put in prison.

About 5000 Jews believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

- election of grace, Romans 11:1,5
- Pentecost was a great harvest time, and is the fulfillment of this election of grace as evidenced in this great harvest of Jews.
- Here we see the Feast of Firstfruits, under the Early Rain Out pouring of the Holy Spirit.

3. VERSES 1,5,6 - The Sanhedrin

The Priests, the Rulers, the Elders, and Annas and Caiaphas and kindred gathered together, in council. This council was known as the Sanhedrin, the Great Council of the Jews which consisted of at least 70 members, with the High Priest as President.

Under Roman law the Sanhedrin had the power to condemn, but did not have the power to put to death.

This Great Council or Sanhedrin had two political/ religious parties (Acts 23:1,6), the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

- The Sadducees were the Modernist of that day and did not believe in the resurrection, in angels or the Spirit (Acts 23:8).
- The Pharisees were the fundamentalist of that day.

The Sanhedrin was the voice of the Jews, but not the voice of God. We see this, in that, when it was time for the Messiah to be revealed God bypassed the leaders of the Jews and gave His word to John.

Luke 3:1-6

Eventually, Judaism, having degenerated into hypocritical fundamentalism, and ritualistic formalism, being bound by Talmudic traditions and interpretation of the Scriptures, because of the stubbornness and hardness of heart of its rulers, believing a lie, was passed over by this new move of the Spirit of God.

(The Talmud from which comes the Talmudic traditions and Scriptural interpretation, is a collection of writings constituting the Jewish civil and religious law; it consists of two parts, the Mishnah [text] and the Gemara [commentary/interpretation] . However, most often, a reference to the Talmud is restricted to Gemara, thus giving the interpretation the status of being the Law, rather than the Scriptures themselves.

We see Jesus attacking the authority of this tradition in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:21-22; 27-28; 31-32; 33-34; 38-39; 43-44).

We would, also note, that it was Annas and Caiaphas who had Jesus condemned to death by the testimony of false witnesses.

John 18:13

Matthew 26:59

Luke 3:2

4. VERSE 7 - THE CHALLENGE

"...By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?"

A man who had been lame for 38 years has been miraculously healed, yet the religious leaders, instead of rejoicing and praising God for this miracle and giving God the glory, question the disciples by what power or name they had done this.

There is no greater blindness than religious blindness. It is the worst type of blindness.

John 9:39-41

The words of Jesus would come to the disciples.

Matthew 10:20

Mark 13:9-13

John 16:1-4

Jesus had foretold the time would come when the disciples would be taken before Councils, and cast out of the Synagogue, but they were not to be concerned about what they would speak, for the Holy Spirit would give the answer in the same hour.

They were to be hated for His Name's sake.

The religious leaders because of their blindness thought they were doing God service.

Deuteronomy 13:1-11

The Law commanded the rulers to enquire diligently if any prophet or dreamer having signs and wonders accompanying him or if he led Israel to follow other gods.

All such were to be put to death, after diligent inquiry for the truth. Jesus had been condemned as a false prophet, leading the Jews after 'another god' even a 'false god' and this 'new sect' was leading the people away from the truth and the True God, even as Jesus did.

However, if they, the religious leaders had cared to study their own Scriptures, and compared all that Jesus said, and did, and was; they would have found that He was actually bringing men to God, as the only Begotten Son of God; that He was in fact the Messiah promised.

Matthew 11:1-6

5. VERSES 8-10, PETER'S ANSWER TO THEIR QUESTION

Peter is once again, "filled with the Holy Spirit." Let's compare Acts 2:4 with Ephesians 5:18.

One Baptism, but continual filling with the Spirit.

Peter declares this healing of the lame man was a good deed.

Acts 10:38

Jesus went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil.

When questioned as to what means this miracle had been performed, Peter tells them that it was by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, "whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead"

What a stinging conviction would be upon the Great Council, and the High Priests and Rulers. It was evident that the disciples could not have done this of themselves, which they had confessed (Acts 3:12).

It was evident that it had been done by the power of a Name; and they knew that a Name could have no power unless the Person whose name it was, was alive.

No one could use a dead person's name to do a notable miracles like this. Here was irrefutable proof that Jesus whom they had crucified was alive, and was backing up the use of His Name on earth.

The Sanhedrin, also, knew that every true prophet of Jehovah in the Old Testament, who prophesied and preached in the Name of Jehovah (the Lord) and had signs and wonders following their ministry, had such as evidence of their credentials.

The Old Testament prophets ministered in the Name of the Lord God. The New Testament ministers preached in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts chapters 3 and 4 center around "The Name of Jesus". Once again the Name always meant the person.

Acts 3:6, 16

Acts 4:7, 10, 11-12, 17-18

"For where two or three are gathered together in My Name there I AM in the midst of them" Matthew 18:20.

The Name of the Lord Jesus Christ was not merely a theory, or a doctrine, or a theological argument in the Early Church. The Name was a Power, a Person -risen and ascended and glorified, living in the power of an endless life, to stand behind and back up the use of that Name.

Satan fears the Name of Jesus in operation. For it is

"... a Name which is above every Name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

6. VERSE 11, THE STONE REJECTED

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."

Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Stone set at nought (made as nothing) by the Religious Leaders of the Jews.

The Builders, these Religious Leaders, found no place for Him in their building, in their program, in their religion, in their traditions. He was the stone that would not "fit".

The Sanhedrin knew the Old Testament prophecies concerning "The Stone or Rock". Many of these prophecies were distinctly Messianic.

Note some of these Scriptures:

1. Christ is the Anointed Stone - Bethel

Genesis 28:18-19

Isaiah 61:1-3

Luke 4:18

Acts 10:38

2. Christ, the Stone of Stumbling and Rock of Offense to the Jews.

Isaiah 8:14

Isaiah 28:16

Romans 9:32-33

Luke 2:34

1 Corinthians 2:23

3. Christ, the Smitten Rock, from whence flows the Living Waters of the Holy Spirit.

Exodus 17:5-7

1 Corinthians 10:1-4

4. Christ, the Rock upon which the Church is built.

Matthew 16:16-18

1 Corinthians 3:10-12

5. Christ, both the Foundation Stone and the Head Corner Stone of the Church.

Isaiah 28:16

Psalms 87:1

Ephesians 2:20

1 Peter 2:1-9

Psalm 118:22

Matthew 21:42

Acts 4:11

(Note concerning the Corner Stone: The corner stone is the stone at the corner of two walls, tying or uniting the walls. Specifically, the stone built into one corner of the foundation of an edifice as the actual or nominal starting point of a building. Also, Corner Stones were used or placed at different elevations in the building and likewise at the top of the corner, as the headstone/capstone. These corner stones served to keep the building square and plum.)

Jesus, then, is the Foundation/the Rock upon which the Church is built; He is, also, the Foundation Stone, that is to say, the Chief Corner Stone of the Foundation which keeps the Church square, and also, the Headstone/Capstone of the Corner which keeps the Church plum.

6. Christ, the Grinding Stone.

Matthew 21:44

7. Christ, the Cleft Rock

Exodus 33:22

In Christ we see the fulfillment of all that "The Rock/Stone means in prophecy.

7. VERSE 12, NO OTHER NAME

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there in none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Jesus, the only name of salvation. There is salvation in no other name.

Matthew 1:21

Acts 2:21,36

8. VERSES 13-22, THE APOSTLES THREATENED

Consider the important points in these verses.

1. verse 13 They had been with Jesus. We become like those we live and associate with, and in whose presence we are the most. WHO HAVE WE BEEN WITH?

2. verses 14-16 Silencing proof. The Sanhedrin admitted that they were faced with undeniable, unchallenging and convincing proof and evidence in the healing of this man. They could not deny it, or say it was false.

3. verses 17-18 The disciples were happy to suffer for His Name's sake.

Matthew 24:9

Luke 21:12-19

4. verses 19-20 True witnesses. A true witness is one who has both seen and heard and will then obey God rather than men.

Acts 5:28-32

1 Peter 3:17

5. verses 21-22 God was glorified, not Peter, nor John nor the Apostles; they were only vessels used. No headlines in the newspapers or Religious magazines glorifying man. THEY GLORIFIED GOD.

When the Holy Spirit is come, He will glorify Jesus, John 16:14. He will not glorify man, or movements, or organizations, or sects. He will glorify the Son of God.

9. VERSE 23, THERE OWN COMPANY

After being further threatened not to speak or to preach in this Name (the Name of Jesus), the disciples went to their own Company. They did not go to the Synagogues, or onto the ground of those who did not believe on the Risen Christ. They went to their own Company.

10 - VERSES 24-31, EARLY CHURCH PRAYER MEETING

The prayer in these verses is founded upon Psalm 2. They prayed the Word! They prayed for more boldness to preach, asking the Lord to confirm with further signs and wonders, and to teach concerning the Resurrected Jesus, in spite of opposition.

Note in these verses the KEYS of the Kingdom in operation.

1. The Word verse 29
2. The Name verse 30
3. The Spirit verse 31
4. The Prayers verse 31

These four keys are linked in one chain; linked together in operation.

Jesus said, "Upon this Rock (Himself) I will build MY CHURCH and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM of Heaven... whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Here in Acts we see the Lord building His Church.

Peter is using THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM to bind and to loose, and the gates of hell are not prevailing (standing up to) against the Church

Without THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM, the Church stands powerless and bewildered and ineffective before a religious and political world. Only these "keys in operation make the Church, His Church, His Body effective in ministry.

These Keys became lost over the "Dark Ages of the History of the Church", through sin and unbelief.

THE WORD was taken away from the people and became a "closed and forbidden book".

Lifeless forms and sectarian Names which divided the Christian community were substituted, denominational names, instead of THE NAME of Jesus. On. His name, the Name of Jesus makes us one.

1 Corinthians 1:10-11

THE SPIRIT depart from the Church, as the Church depended less and less upon the Holy Spirit for ministry.

PRAYER became a worship of images, relics, superstitions and rites; a matter of empty words and forms, instead of being a power with God and with all men.

God is restoring these "KEYS" to His Church today. These will be the marks of the TRUE CHURCH, marching forth conquering and to conquer.

These Keys are linked together in operation.

- Old Testament Ministries spoke THE WORD of the Lord.
- They moved as THE SPIRIT came upon them.
- They ministered in THE NAME of the Lord.
- They waited upon the Lord in PRAYER for the will and mind of God.

The WORD must be quickened by the SPIRIT, who gives power to use the NAME effectively, and all this is made possible as the Church seeks the Risen Lord in PRAYER.

Luke 12:12

John 14:26

John 15:26

John 16:7-13

Luke 24:49

Acts 1:8

John 14:12-14

Acts 1:14

Jesus, who is THE WORD made flesh, needed the Anointing SPIRIT upon Him, as He ministered in His Father's NAME, and His whole life was a life of PRAYER.

John 1:1,14

Philippians 2:6-7

John 3:34

Luke 4:14

Luke 4:18

Acts 10:38

John 4:34

John 5:19,30

John 6:38

John 8:29

Luke 5:16

Luke 6:12

Luke 9:18

Luke 9:29

Luke 11:1

Luke 22:41

Matthew 14:23

Examples of the prayers of Jesus:

Luke 10:21-22

Luke 11:2-4

Luke 22:42

John 11:41-42

John, chapter 17

(Note, a study of the Gospel of Luke will show the prayer life of Jesus.)

What the Rod of God was to Moses, so THE NAME OF JESUS was to the Early Church.

Exodus 4:17

Mark 16:17

As the disciples prayer in ONE ACCORD (Acts 4:24) upholding the Word of God in prayer, then the place was shaken and the Holy Spirit came upon them in power.

11. VERSES 32-37, UNITY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

A summary of the important points in this section are as follows;

1. verse 32 Unity of believers. One Spirit, one heart, one mind. Christ's prayer, "that they might be one," as in the unity of the Godhead is evident.

John 17:21

1 John 5:7-8

Many members, yet One Body.

Ephesians 1:4,16

1 Corinthians 12:20

One of the strengths of the Early Church. Many souls, many hearts, yet all made one heart and one soul, in one accord, in one place. where this unity is, the Lord commands His blessings to flow.

Psalm 133

Acts 1:14, 2:1-4

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 4:24, 31-32

Acts 5:12

Jeremiah 32:28-40 (37-40)

2. verse 32 All things common. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, the inbred selfishness and possessiveness of the believers was subdued, which gave way to unselfish liberality. This was not man-made communism or man-made collectivism (socialism).

3. verse 33 Great power and great grace. Here is the ability of the Holy Spirit upon the ministry. The nature of the Spirit of God is manifested. God is gracious, and the grace of God is manifested in giving.

John 3:16

Ephesians 4:8, 11-13

1 Corinthians 12:1-9

That same Spirit of giving is now upon the early believers. The grace of giving.

John 1:14-17 (16)

Romans 3:24

Romans 5:1-2

4 verses 34-35 Freewill offerings. Offerings were laid at the Apostles' feet. They were not given by compulsion, but voluntarily. No man was obligated to give, nor was it commanded. These were FREEWILL and VOLUNTARY OFFERINGS. It was entirely a personal matter concerning how much to give.

This was in fulfillment of that which happened in the Old Testament.

a. Freewill offerings at the Feast of Pentecost.

Deuteronomy 16:9-17

b. Freewill offerings for the building of the Tabernacle.

Exodus 35:4-29

c. Freewill offerings for building of Temple.

1 Chronicles 29:1-20

In each record, all was voluntary, or freewill. "Every one whose heart stirred him up, and whose spirit was made willing came and gave and rejoiced."

The New Testament Chapters concerning the right attitude and spirit of giving are:

2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9

Giving is upon the basis of the Law of Love. Love gives. "God so loved the world that He gave." This is what was happening here in the Early Church under the operations of the Holy Spirit.

The people had confidence in the Apostles when they laid the money at their feet. The Ministry was not out to enrich themselves on the Freewill offerings of tithes of the people.

WHAT AN EXAMPLE FOR THE MINISTRY TODAY.

5. verse 35-37. Distribution to the needy

Deuteronomy 15:1-11

Israel was to give freewill offerings to "the brother, the poor, and the needy," etc.

Here the needy saints are supplied.

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER FIVE

Here in chapter 5 we see the first tragedy in the in the Early Church, and the first mention of Satan, the enemy of Jesus Christ and the Church.

1. VERSES 1-16, ANNANIAS & SAPPHIRA - SATAN AGAINST THE CHURCH

"BUT...."

The scene changes. In the midst of Glory and blessing and grace and power upon the Ministry and the people, Satan is seen at work, and that which had begun in Divine blessing now closes with judgment, Divine Judgment.

Up until now, the opposition had been from WITHOUT, through the religious leader of the Jews.

Now we see Satan working subtly from WITHIN, through some members of the Church.

Satan's tactics have never changed. If he cannot destroy the Church, then he will corrupt it. If he cannot beat them, then he will join them. The enemy WITHIN is more deadly that the enemy WITHOUT.

Ananias and Sapphira were believers - not unregenerate persons. Their sin was met with Divine Judgment.

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

In these verses we see the "Acts of the Holy Spirit" The Holy Spirit knows all things. He gives Peter a "Word of Knowledge", not the "Gift of Knowledge" but simply a "rhema", or "a word".

Let us consider the important truths concerning the Holy Spirit as recorded here.

1. Reveals the Holy Spirit as a Person. They lied to and tempted and sought to deceive a Person, even the Holy Spirit of God.
2. Reveals the Omniscience of the Spirit.
3. Reveals the Omnipresence of the Spirit.

4. Reveals the Omnipotence of the Spirit.

5 Reveals the Holy Spirit as God.

THE FIRST RECORDED SIN IN THE EARLY CHURCH CONCERNED
THE SIN OF MONEY-LOVE AND DECEPTION.

It is important to understand what this sin was, and why the Divine Judgment was so drastic.

1. The SIN WAS NOT:

- having land or possessions.
- in selling the for a certain amount of money. It was their property.
- in refusing to give? No one was under compulsion to give. All was given freewill.
- in not giving it all? No, as this was a personal thing.
- a sin of IGNORANCE.

2. The SIN WAS:

- in not keeping their vow or promise to give it all Deuteronomy 23:21-23

Ecclesiastes 5:1-6

- in letting the thought of Satan to keep back part of the price of the land and say they had giving it all conceive in the heart.

James 1:12-15

- in agreeing, conniving and conspiring together to keep back a part. It was deliberately planned by them both, to wrongly appropriate the money.
- in acting a lie, giving a lying impression that they were giving all.
- in attempting to deceive the Holy Spirit, and the Ministry; in tempting, or trying, or testing the Holy Spirit to see whether this would be detected.
- a sin of hypocrisy.
- a sin of covetousness.
- a sin of PRESUMPTION.

DIVINE JUDGMENT ON THE SIN

This is the first record of Divine discipline in the Church. It was not of man, but an act of the Spirit, spoken through man. Peter did not execute the judgment. The penalty for this sin was executed by the God the Holy Spirit

Sin when it is conceived brings forth DEATH.

James 1:13-15

The process of all sin is as follows:

- Seed thought implanted by Satan
- Conception in the mind
- Formation and development
- Birth, or sin brought forth
- End result - death

DIVINE WARNING CONCERNING SIN OF MONEY-LOVE

1 Timothy 6:9-10

This was the sin of Judas. Satan put into Judas the thought to betray Jesus for money. Judas' sin, also, had the same consequence - death.

John 13:2, 27

Matthew 26:14-15

Acts 1:18

This sin, the love of money, was the first recorded sin of Israel after entering the Promised Land.

Joshua, chapter 7

It brought defeat into the whole camp of Israel until it was Divinely judged. Death struck, after the operation of ministry of the Urim and Thummin.

THE SPIRIT OF JUDGMENT AND BURNING WAS UPON THEM

Isaiah 33:14-17

Isaiah 4:4

Either sin of the Holy Spirit had to go!! Had these two believers gone undetected, how much more sin and deception would Satan have brought into the Church.

So great was the power and purity of the Church that a sin - a lie - could not remain in the presence of God the Holy Spirit.

When the glory of the Former House is seen upon the Latter House, sin and deception will not be able to live in God's presence, for "judgment is to be-gin at the House of God." 1 Peter 4:17.

Cleansing, purging, purifying is the power of the Holy Spirit.

God is Holy, and God is Love. Both are revealed here.

THE RESULT OF THIS DIVINE JUDGMENT

1. The fear of God

No division came in the Church, neither was there any criticism of Peter. A godly fear fell on all, a reverential fear, a fear of grieving the Lord, or of grieving the Spirit, a fear of falling into the sin of deception, acting a lie, or attempting to deceive one another.

Not the fear of man, nor the fear of Satan, BUT the FEAR OF GOD is to be restored again to the Church through Divine manifestations.

Fear fell on all inside the Church, the believers.

Psalms 86:11

Psalms 34:9

Fear fell outside the Church, upon the unbelievers.

Revelation 14:7

If judgment begins at the house of God, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear.

2. The power of God.

The Fear of God and the Power of God came together. There was even a greater manifestation of the power of God upon purified Church.

The sick were healed, unclean spirits driven out. How could the works of Satan - sickness, disease and demon spirits resist the power of God, when sin had been so dealt with?

"...they were healed every one."

Note the word "overshadow" in verse 15. In Luke 1:35 the Holy Spirit "overshadowed" the Virgin Mary in the supernatural birth of Jesus, the Word made flesh. So here the Holy Spirit is "overshadowing" the Church, the Body of Christ, continuing the same ministry and bringing forth the Word.

THE BOTTOM LINE, verse 14

"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women"

2. VERSES 17-28, RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION INCREASES.

The High Priest, and the Sadducees rise up and are filled with indignation at the increase of the power of the Risen Christ in the Church.

Blind, unrepentant and hardened religious leaders, continue to resist the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles are put into the common prison as they are a number of times in the Book of Acts.

Acts 5:17-18

Acts 8:3

Acts 12:4

Acts 16:23-24

In this instance, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD open the prison doors by night and tell them to go and preach all the words of this LIFE.

John 10:10

1 John 5:12

Acts 11:18

Christ was their life.

"He that hath the Son hath life..."

The Law could only minister death.

Note the motive behind the opposition was ENVY and JEALOUSY, translated "indignation" in verse 17.

Even so the Lord Jesus Himself was delivered by these same High Priests over to death because of envy.

Matthew 27:18

In spite of the miracles, healings, casting out demons, and the manifested power of God in angelic visitation, the Religious Leader persist in blindness, hardness and rejection of the truth that could set them free.

John 8:32, 36

Verse 21:

- The Disciples teach again in the Temple.
- The High Priest and the Sanhedrin, and all the Senate of the Children of Israel come together, and ordered the disciples to be brought out from the prison.

What bewilderment must have laid hold of them when they came and found the prison truly shut, and the keepers guarding the EMPTY prison.

Here is revealed the miracle that the Angel of the Lord had performed. The Disciple were brought out of the prison without the guards seeing or knowing of this deliverance.

The Religious Rulers now really feared where this how this movement was growing.

The Apostles were re-arrested when they were found preaching in the Temple.

Note the use of the word "this".

- _ "This life", verse 20
- "This" verse 24
- "This Name" verse 28
- "This Man's Blood" verse 28

At Pilate's Judgment Hall they cried "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Matthew 27:25.

When they did this, they invoked upon themselves and the unborn generations of Jews the curse of innocent Blood. This curse upon the Jewish Nation cannot be lifted until they accept this very Blood of Jesus for cleansing.

Deuteronomy 19:10,13

Deuteronomy 21:8,9

Zechariah 12:10

Zechariah 13:1

Numbers 35:30-34 (33)

The name of the Jesus became exceedingly hateful to them, as every miracle and witness was a conviction against them for rejecting and crucifying the Christ of God.

3. VERSES 29-33, THE ANSWER OF THE APOSTLES

They must obey God.

Acts 4:19

Acts 5:29

Acts 5:32

Romans 15:19

Hebrews 5:9

Verse 30, they witness once again to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The exaltation of Jesus, to be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to the Jews.

Repent----- A change of mind, especially in relation to sin, God and His Son Jesus.

Forgiveness- A loosing or sending away, that is to say, removing the sin.

Verse 32 gives us an important principle. **GOD GIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM.**

CONVICTION

"They were cut to the heart..."

The Word as a two-edged sword cuts to the heart.

Hebrews 4:12-13

These Religious disobedient hypocrites are exposed to the truth, YET seek to Christ and His Church.

John 8:40

4. VERSES 34-39, GAMALIEL - A WORD OF WISDOM

God had a witness for Himself in the midst of the Council - the Sanhedrin who fears not to speak in defense of the truth.

Gamaliel - At whose feet Saul had been trained in the Law, as a Pharisee. He was a Doctor of the Law, well respected among the people. He speaks a word of warning and wisdom to the Council.

Let us contrast the two cases Gamaliel quotes to the situation of the Apostles.

Of Men

Of God

Theudas, boasts himself to be somebody.

Jesus of Nazareth, born in the days of taxation

About 400 men join him

Many follow Jesus

He was slain

He is slain

All who obeyed him were scattered, and brought to naught.

God raised Him from the dead. His disciples obey Him. The Church multiplied.

Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of taxing, drew away much people after himself.

Many leave the Synagogues

He perished.

The Holy Spirit comes to the obedient ones.

All as many as obeyed him were dispersed.

Believers added daily to the Church

IF this counsel or work be of men it will come to nought.

IF it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest ye be found to fight against God.

Peter and John have been with Jesus, and are not interested in drawing people unto themselves. The Gospel and the Acts show how the Religious Rulers were certainly found to be fighting against God, as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a lesson for today. Church History sadly reveals that each "new visitation" of the Spirit of God has been fought by the Religious Leaders since God generally used a man to be His voice.

Acts 13:27, 30-41

Gamaliel's attitude should be that of every believer. This was a "word of wisdom".

Movements of men, maintained and energized by men, collapse in due season.

False religious movements maintain existence because they are inspired and energized by a false spirit, and doctrines of Satan and devils.

The True Church of Jesus Christ is maintained and energized by the Holy Spirit, and will last for all eternity.

5. VERSES 40-42, THE APOSTLES BEATEN

The disciples a beaten, flogged, for teaching and preaching in the Name of Jesus.

They are once again forbidden to preach in His Name

They departed REJOICING. In spite of the flogging, the disciples rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus.

The Apostles continued, DAILY, to teach and preach

Acts 2:42

Hebrews 3:13

- The Lord added to the Church daily.
- Exhort one another daily.
- Daily in the Temple, and in every house, they taught.

All this was a fulfillment of the "daily ministrations" of the Sanctuary or the Tabernacle of Moses.

Apostolic preaching and power will bring apostolic results, in signs and wonders, and this will bring apostolic persecution!

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER SIX

Chapter six brings us to the circumstances which brought about setting in servers (deacons) in the early Church, and one of those who was set in as a deacon named Stephen, who would become the FIRST MARTYR in the Church.

1. VERSE 1, THE SIN OF MURMURING

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there ROSE A MURMURING of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration (passing out of food)."

"Murmur" - to mutter, or grumble, in a low undertone, that is to say, to speak in low, indistinct tones without movement of the lips, as in complaining or speaking to oneself.

The Book of Numbers records what a terrible sin murmuring is in the sight of the Lord, and the Divine discipline it brings.

There are seven (7) murmurings recorded against, Israel, and here in Acts, chapter 6, the same thing begins to creep into the Church.

1. Numbers 11:1-3
2. Numbers 11:4-23 (Psalm 106:15)
3. Numbers 13:32 - 14:2, 27-36
4. Numbers 16:1-11, 41
5. Numbers 16:41, 17:5-10
6. Numbers 20:1-5
7. Numbers 21:4-6

The Apostle Paul says to the saints,

1 Corinthians 10:10-11, "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

2. VERSES 2-6, THE CHOOSING OF DEACONS

In verse 1 a need was identified and made public to the multitude of believers, some of the widows and needy were being left out of the daily passing out of food and other needs,

The poor, needy, were to have their needs met by the people.

Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Acts 2:44-45

Acts 4:32-35

In order to meet that need the Apostles called the church to assembly and then in verse 3 we see they suggested to the people to choose 7 men out of the group to oversee the daily ministration to all the people.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

These 7 men (servers, deacons) were to meet certain standards, or have certain qualifications, as seen in verse 3 and also in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Acts 6:3

- a, A man among you. A deacon must be a believer, not an outsider.
- b. Of honest report. Good character and reputation, both inside and out the Church.
- c. Full of the Holy Spirit. Not just being baptized with the Holy Spirit but living a Spirit filled life.
- d. Full of wisdom.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 - additional qualifications given by the Holy Spirit.

- e. Must be grave. Reverent, sincere in spirit.
- f. Not double tongued. Not double minded or two faced, James 1:8; Psalm 12:2
- g. Not given to much wine. Not a drunkard or given to excesses.
- h. Not greedy of filthy lucre. Not covetous, or having a love for money.
- i. Holding the mystery of the Faith in a pure conscience. Motivated by love and not self interest.
- j. Must be proven first. One who has been serving without the position.
- k. He must have a wife that is also;
 - 1) grave
 - 2) not slanders. not a Gossiper, whisperer.
 - 3) Sober. Self controlled.
 - 4) Faithful in all things. Dependable.
- l. Husband of one wife.
- m. Must rule their children and their household well.

The qualifications of a deacon are very similar to that of the elders, as in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Compare verse 8, "likewise" and verse 10, "also".

THE MINISTRY OF A DEACON

Though the word "deacon" is not specifically used here in these verses from Acts, it is clearly implied in the use of the Greek words in verses 1 and 2.

Verse 1. The Greek word "diakonia" is used for "ministration"

Verse 2, The Greek word "diakonea" is used for "serve"

The Greek word for "deacon" is "diakonas".

This Greek word "diakonas" is translated in the New Testament as follows:

- Deacon, 5 times
- Servant, 7 times
- Minister, 20 times

The word essentially means, "A servant, one called to serve, to wait (a waiter, one who serves tables), or an "attendant."

A Deacon is:

1. A servant of Christ.
2. A servant to the Church.
3. A servant to the Ministry.

THE ORDINATION OF DEACONS

The 7 men were chosen and these men had proved themselves before the Church and the ministry. They are set before the Apostles, and the Apostles appoint them to their service. This confirmed the choice of the people.

These men (deacons) were then ordained by prayer and by the Laying on of Hands by the Apostles.

THE PLACE OF DEACONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is worthy to note the following examples of those who served as deacons, as servants to the Church and ministry, and how they served.

There is no mention as yet of Prophets, or Teachers, or Evangelists, or Pastors, or Elders.

The New Testament Church is evolving, "line upon line, here a little, there a little."

The first OFFICE pertains to the Deacon - "the servant ministry,"

It is the Spirit of Christ to serve one another in love. The Lord Jesus Himself is the supreme example of the Deacon. The ministry of the Deacon will be Christ re-living His life and ministry in and through him, as the Servant of all.

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto (diakonec), but Minister (to serve, to act as a Deacon), and to give His life a ransom for many". (Mark 10:45.)

1. The 12 Apostles acted as Deacons also, and learned to be servants of all, in the Spirit of Christ.

Note in the following Scriptures Christ's rebuke for POSITION SEEKING.

Matthew 23:1-12

Mark 9:33-35, 10:35-44

1 Corinthians 3:5

He that would be great among us shall be a servant (deacon) to all.

Compare Jeremiah 45:5

2. Timothy served as a Deacon to Paul and to the Churches.

Acts 16:1-3

1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, 6

3. Tychicus was a Deacon first also.

Ephesians 6:21-22 - a faithful minister- Deacon
Colossians 4:7

4. Erastus served with Timothy, as Deacon to Paul in his travels.

Acts 19:21-22

5. Epaphras served as a Deacon.

Colossians 1:7-8; 4:12

6. Onesiphorus acted as a Deacon to Paul

2 Timothy 1:16-18

Churches and the ministry as unto the Lord. These first proved themselves in the Local Church before they came into the particular Ministry gift Christ had given them.

They traveled at times with the Apostles, and also from Church to Church, taking messages and reports of the welfare of the Churches and the ministry.

They were servants to the Local Churches ministering in the distribution of freewill offerings to the needy, the widows, the poor, and ministering in temporal things.

The Elders and Deacons worked together in the Local Church.

Philippians 1:1-2

Although only men may hold the OFFICE OF A DEACON,

1 Corinthians 11:3

1 Timothy 2:12

1 Timothy 3:11-12

the scriptures also reveal that certain women served as Deaconess, as servants to the Church.

1. Paul commended Phebe as a servant (diakonas) or Deaconess of the Church at Cenchrea.

Romans 16:1-2

2. In the Gospels we find that many women ministered (diakonas) unto Christ of their substance.

Luke 8:1-3

Matthew 27:55-56

3. Martha, Mary, Mary Magdalene and other women followed Christ and ministered to Him as Deaconess's.

Luke 10:38-42

John 12:2

Of the 7 men in Acts 6 chosen to be Deacons, Stephen, the first named, becomes the first Martyr of the Early Church. His witness and testimony is given in Acts 7.

Philip, another Deacon, is the first mentioned Evangelist in Acts, and his ministry as such is recorded in Acts, chapter 8.

Both proved themselves in the Church at Jerusalem. The true Spirit of Christ should be manifest through all believers.

Galatians 5:13, "...By love serve one another".

Jesus said, "I am among you as one that serveth."

Luke 22:27

John 12:1-17

The choice of Stephen and Philip among the 7 Deacons in Chapter 6 prepares for Chapters 7 and 8 in which Stephen and Philip are prominent.

3. VERSE 7, INCREASE AND MULTIPLICATION

The Word of God increased. The Living Word and the Written Word.

John 1:1-3, 14

The disciples multiplied greatly.

A great company of the Priests became obedient to the "Faith".

Great victory came as many of the Priests realized that the Aaronic Priesthood was finished, and the Temple worship and Mosaic economy had ceased, as witnessed by the RENT VEIL.

No longer was there need for animal blood sacrifices. All had found their fulfillment in Christ Jesus.

A new Temple, a new Priesthood of all believers, a New Covenant and spiritual sacrifices, a New and Heavenly High Priest at God's right hand - all these were now in affect.

It was the Order of Melchisedek.

Hebrews 7:1-7

Revelation 1:6

1 Peter 2:1-9

4. VERSES 8-15, STEPHEN - MINISTRY AND WITNESS

As noted previously, the record of the choice of these 7 Deacons is introductory to the Testimony and martyrdom of Stephen, and the Ministry of Philip the Evangelist.

1. Stephen, full of faith and power (dunamis). The ability factor of the Holy Spirit. Great signs and wonders manifested again. The Gifts of the Spirit in operation.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

2. The Synagogues oppose the truth, disputing with Stephen. Foretold by Jesus.

John 16:1-2

3. They could not resist the Wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Fulfillment of:

Luke 21:12-17

4. False witnesses brought in to testify against him, even as they did to Christ.

Matthew 26:59-68

Stephen is falsely accused of blasphemy against;

- a. The Holy Place, the Temple,
- b. The Lord God,
- c. The Customs which Moses delivered.

5. Stephen is brought before the Council, or the Sanhedrin.
6. The Glory of Christ within shone upon the face of Stephen even as:
 - a. Moses' face shone in Mt. Sinai . Exodus 34:29-35
 - b. Christ's face shone in Mt. Transfiguration. Matthew 17:1-3

This is the Glory that will remain, while the Glory of the Law passes away.

2 Corinthians 3

The Temple, the Law, and Moses himself all prophesied and pointed to Christ Himself, but the Rulers became so engrossed in the form and the letter, they missed the One to whom all these pointed.

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER SEVEN

Chapter seven is a continuation of the events pertaining to Stephen, one of the 7 deacons chosen in Chapter 6, and who is now brought before the Sanhedrin,

Here we have Stephen's marvelous "Defense" of the Christian Faith. It gives a remarkable panoramic view of the History of the Nation Israel, beginning with Abraham and culminating in the rejection of Jesus Christ, the JUST ONE.

The address of Stephen is also remarkable in the fact that he carries his hearers through the History of the Nation as found in their own Old Testament Scriptures, and yet he never once mentions the Name of Jesus in verses 1-53.

The only express reference to Jesus of Nazareth is that which is found in his conclusion in verse 52, where he speaks of Him as "The Just One".

The Holy Spirit spoke through Stephen as promised by the Lord Jesus in Mark 13:9-13. When brought before the Councils, it was given them in "that hour" what they were to speak.

Stephen's address shows how saturated in the Word of God he was.

There is absolute Divine Order and Divine Pattern in the progression of this Chapter. It may be considered Nationally, Prophetically, Typically, as well as Dispensationally and Personally.

1. VERSES 1-53, STEPHEN'S MESSAGE, A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ISRAEL

It is significant to note again the Stephen never once mentioned The Name of Jesus in his witness before the Sanhedrin, yet the whole of his message reveals Christ Jesus in His ministry, rejection, humiliation and exaltation to the Father's Right Hand.

The Holy Spirit brought the application home to the hearts of the Council with convicting power, making know to them WHO was meant in this historical survey of the Chosen Nation.

A. ABRAHAM, verses 2-7

The God of Glory appeared to Abraham - Genesis 12:13; Genesis 15; Nehemiah 9:7. Israel was the only nation who had the visible manifestation of the Shekinah Glory of God. Romans 9:4, Exodus 13:21-22.

Abraham was called and sent of God and is the Father of all who believe.

B. ABRAHAM, ISSAC. AND JACOB, verse 8; Exodus 3:6

The Three Fathers. The foundation of the Chosen Nation. These three men, typical of the fullness of the Godhead Bodily. Each manifesting the Characteristics typically, of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Abraham - Type of the Father, the Beginning, Covenant holder, the Promise, the Foundation, the one who was willing to offer his Only Begotten Son. Hebrews 11:19.

Issac - Type of the Son of God, the central person of these three. Typically slain and resurrected on the third day. Genesis 22. Hebrews 11:19.

Jacob - Type of the Holy Spirit, as the third person of these three. The fruitful one, the multiplying one, the anointer of the Bethel Rock with oil.

C. THE TWELVE SONS OF JACOB, verse 8, Genesis, chapters 48-49.

The Founders of the 12 tribes of the Chosen Nation Israel. The household of Faith. The Israel of God. Their names holding prophetic truths.

D. JOSEPH, verses 9-19; Genesis, chapters 37-50.

One of the richest types of Christ, as the beloved and rejected son of the Father.

Joseph, sent to his brethren by his father. Rejected. sold for silver to the Gentiles, falsely accused, cast into prison, interprets dreams of three days to the prisoners, out of which one lives, and one dies.

Joseph is later exalted to the Throne, given a name at which every knee in the kingdom bows.

Then he was made known and accepted of his brethren "the second time".

E. MOSES, verses 20-38; Hebrews 11:24-25

Another remarkable type of Christ, as the Prophet Deliverer (Savior). Children were slain at his birth, yet he escapes in Egypt. Rejected of his brethren and suffers a period of humiliation. He is accepted the second time when He declares the Name of God as I AM, in ministry of signs and wonders.

To Moses is given the Law Covenant, the Tabernacle, the Glory of God, and Holy Oracles.

F. CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS, verses 38-39.

"The called out Company." Israel, with the Tabernacle and Priesthood and Sacrificial worship system becomes a remarkable type of the New Testament Order in its earthy pilgrimage.

G. AARON, THE HIGH PRIEST, verses 40-43.

A type of Christ as the High Priest of God, Numbers 16. Aaron was rejected as God's ordained High Priest by the rebellious Israelites. God caused Aaron's Rod to bud as being His seal upon Aaron's Ministry. Aaron was exalted and accepted the second time. Israel however, falls into idolatry, and substituted the Tabernacle of Molech for the Tabernacle of Moses, and brings in the Star of Remphan instead of the Star of Messiah.

H. TABERNACLE OF WITNESS, verse 44; Exodus, Chapters 25-40; John 1:14.

The Tabernacle is typical of Christ, the True Tabernacle of God. Christ Jesus is the Tabernacle of Witness. The Witness of the Father. In Him is God's Glory, Habitation, and Voice heard. He is all the truth personified in the Furnishings of the Tabernacle. God's voice speaks through Him as our Mercy Seat. Numbers 7:89; Romans 3:25.

I. JOSHUA AND CANAAN REST, verse 45. (Jesus, KJV, is a reference to Joshua, not Jesus of Nazareth)

Joshua typifies the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who leads the children of God into the True

Promised Land, Spiritual Rest. Hebrews 4:8; Joshua 5:2.

Joshua was rejected of his brethren the first time, after he had brought the message of God's Promised Canaan. The Congregation threatened to stone Joshua along with Caleb. Numbers 13-14.

After 40 years (Compare 40 Jubilees) Joshua is exalted by God as the Leader into Canaan, with the New Generation.

It is the second generation, who experienced the second circumcision. Joshua is accepted the second time.

a. DAVID, THE KING, verses 45-46.

Typical of the Son of David, Jesus Christ, the King and Messiah. David is anointed King in the midst of his brethren, but experiences a period of rejection, suffering and humiliation at the hand of Saul, the Anointed of the Lord. In his rejection he gathers to himself a great army. 1 Samuel 22:1,2.

Later, David is exalted to the Throne, and is accepted by all Israel the second time.

K. SOLOMON, THE KING, verses 47-50.

Solomon is typical of Christ as the Builder of the Temple. Solomon was a man of wisdom, and uses the materials prepared by David before his death, for the Temple of the Lord. He builds by the wisdom of the God.

The Temple is prophetic of Christ and His Church. John 2:21; Isaiah 66:1-4; 1 Kings 8:27; 1 Cor. 6:19.

L. THE HOLY SPIRIT, verse 51.

The conclusion of Stephen's message is the charge of RESISTING the Holy Spirit, the same as their fathers.

Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in hear and ears describes their spiritual condition. Although, they are under the Covenant of Circumcision, Acts 7:8, yet spiritually they were uncircumcised, or Gentilized! Deuteronomy 9:6,13;10:16;Jer.6:10; 9:26; Romans 2:25-29 (29).

M. THE PROPHETS REJECTED, verse 52.

All the prophets pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ as THE WORD, and all experienced rejection and humiliation at the hands of Israel, their own nation. Matthew 23:31-36; Luke 13:31-35, Matthew 21:46.

The rejection of the prophets was consummated in the rejection of the Son of God - THE WORD made flesh,

N. THE LAW BY ANGELS (MESSENGERS), verse 53.

The Nation of Israel violated the Law which was given them by the messengers of God.

SUMMARY - verse 52

The Prophets foretold the coming of the JUST ONE, and now the Nation had rejected and slain Him; they had become the murderers and betrayers of the Christ of God.

Even as Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua and David were rejected the first time by their brethren, then exalted the second time, so the Lord Jesus was rejected the first time by the Nation Israel, but will be accepted by faith and be grafted into the olive Tree, in the "second time". Romans 11; Hebrews 9:28.

2. VERSES, 54-60. STEPHEN' S TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN AND HIS DEATH.

Verse 54 tells us they were "cut to the heart". Literally, they were sawn asunder, or excessively angry, and irritated. And they gnashed on him.

Verse 55 - Stephen saw heaven opened and the Glory of God and Jesus standing at the Right Hand of God.

Note this verse was proof of Christ's resurrection, ascension and glorification to the Father's throne, being foretold by Jesus to these High Priests at His own trial.

Matthew 26:64

The members of the Sanhedrin hearing Stephen exclaim in verse 56...

"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

"... they crying out in a fit of rage took hold of him, threw him out of the city and then stoned him to death."

3. STEPHEN - LIKE CHRIST

Let us from chapter 6 and chapter 7 see how Stephen was like Jesus.

Chapter 6

- Stephen as a Deacon, a servant of all.
- Chosen from among the people.
- of honest report, full of the Spirit and wisdom.
- Did great miracles and wonders among the people.
- Full of Faith and the Holy Spirit.
- Opposed by the Synagogues, who disputed with him.
- Unable to resist the Spirit and Wisdom by which he spoke.
- Charged with blasphemy against Moses, The Law,

- The Temple and The Customs.
- Stirred up the People, the Elders and Scribes against himself.
- These took him to the Council.
- False witnesses testify against him.
- His face shone as an angel with the Glory of God.

Chapter 7:

- He committed his spirit to the Lord Jesus.
- He prayed for his enemies, for forgiveness.

Stephen was indeed "like Jesus" in his life and ministry, and in his witness before the Sanhedrin and then in his death outside Jerusalem.

Stephen - his name is prophetic, meaning "a Crown".

- a deacon becomes the first MARTYR (Witness, Acts 1:8, Greek, martyr, one who bears witness by his death).
- Stephen received the martyr's "CROWN".

Stephen hated and killed "for His Name's sake,"

Matthew 24:9

Stephen had drunk deeply of the Spirit of Christ, the Calvary Spirit, and now was drinking the "same cup and being baptized with same Baptism" as his Master had experienced.

Philippians 1:21

Luke 12:4

THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS IS THE SEED OF THE CHURCH.