



OKLAHOMA CITY SCHOOL
of Biblical Studies

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Lectureship

**16th Annual Oklahoma City
School of Biblical Studies Lectures**

The First Century Church

April 1-3, 2005



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Foreword

Jesus, the Son of God, said **“I will build my church”** (Matt. 16:18) and with his own blood he purchased her (Acts 20:28). The birthday of that church, **the first century church**, is recorded in Acts chapter two. There the foundation was put in place and upon that teaching the churches of Christ stand.

The better our understanding of Acts chapter two, the better we are prepared to see the remaining history of the evangelistic church in ***The Acts of the Apostles*** and the following twenty-two books of the New Testament. The prophetic errors of the prophets all hit their mark; the birthday of the church in the last day of the Jewish age: **“the last days.”**

In **“the last days”** the forerunner, John the baptizer, arrived on the scene preaching, **“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matt. 3:2); he was followed by Jesus, who also preached, **“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matt. 4:17); and Jesus sent the twelve disciples out to preach, **“the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matt. 10:7). Peter on the day of Pentecost announced, **“This is that,”** referring the prophecy of Joel (Acts 2:16) and the kingdom of heaven was born.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give the evidence to create faith in the honest heart/mind that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30-31); ***The Acts of the Apostles*** reveals to us the birthday and the evangelistic nature of ***The First Century Church***. The one church Jesus promised to build and did build is **“the one body”** of the saved (Eph. 4:4 and 5:23-32).

That church, following the teaching of Christ, can and does exist today. Her marks of identification are clearly revealed in the prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in the New Testament. The **16th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures** are designed to help us know that we are members of that church and that others may become members.

We, the churches of Christ, must keep the mission of the church burning in our hearts; it must be a fire that will not be quenched! That mission is the preaching of the gospel of Christ to the lost.

Frank R. Williams, lectureship director

FRIDAY & SATURDAY'S SPEAKERS

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THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME

Norman Easter

Gal.4:4; Eph.1:10

2 Pet. 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

This passage is not teaching that literally each day of our calendar is a thousand years on God's calendar or visa versa.

It does teach that time is relative with God. God can take his own time. If He desires to delay the coming of Christ, it is a sign of His patience. Time is a matter of His choosing.

God might well use His own calendar or He may use man's calendar to set dates for man, such as the Passover, the Sabbatical year or the Lord's day.

Therefore, if God chooses to bring about some happening, He may well set the time. His time schedule is of His Own particular making. The fact of His being omniscient says that He well knows the future and can set events accordingly. Knowing the future, God may well set events to transpire on certain dates of the future without interfering with the free will of man.

However, foreknowledge and predestination are not the same thing. One could be sitting on a hilltop and see two trains approaching each other on the same track. He could well predict that they are going to crash into each other. If he knew their distance apart and their individual speed, he could even calculate the exact time of their crash. Although he could predict the crash and the time of the crash, the man had nothing to do with causing the crash. Further, a man might find a bridge out and predict that any train trying to cross the bridge would crash. It is also possible that a man knowing the train schedule could place a time bomb on the trestle and predetermine the crash of the train. We watched from the air, a school bus on a peninsula meet a boat in the bayous of Louisiana. Thus, we predicted the meeting of the bus and the boat that resulted in getting children to their school.

If such is the case with finite man, how much more is it so with infinite Deity? God may well know the outcome of man, whether it be his head-on collision or his victory in battle, but will allow man his own free will. He gave the choice of good and evil to Israel, prosperity or failure. The choice was theirs, not His. Yet, He knew that they would fail, but did not predetermine or make their failure. God did predetermine that when Israel failed that their enemies would siege them and they would be scattered throughout the nations and would become a hiss and a byword. (*Deut.28:37; 30:15-20*)

God did predetermine that upon the apostasy of Judah that they would be carried into Babylon for seventy years. Moreover, God predetermined that upon the apostasy of the Jews He would destroy Jerusalem and the entire Jewish economy. The Jews would be cut off and the gentiles would be grafted in. (*Rom.11*) His people the Jews would become no people and those who were counted as no people would become His people. (*Rom.5:6 1Pet.2:10; Hos.1: 1,2, 10; 2:23*) The fact of God's use of a time-table can be seen in the following: *Mk.1:15; Jn.7:8; Lk.24:44; Ac.3:18; Ac.1:7; Ac.2:1; Heb.9:10; Isa 46:10 Declaring the*

end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Psa 102:13 *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come.*

SAMPLE OF GOD'S CALENDAR

God set the time for: The march in the wilderness; Israel (Moses, various predictions); Calendar of the Jews (sacrifices and holidays); the 70 and 6 1/2 weeks of Daniel; Seventy years of captivity; The destruction of Jerusalem; John the immerser - ***Mk.1:15*** ; The 333 direct predictions of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ - ***Lk.24:44***; The church - ***Eph.3:10,11***; The Christian dispensation- ***Isa.2:2-4***; The kingdom or church of Christ - ***Dan.2:44; 7:13,14***; Day of Pentecost; The establishment of the church -***Mk.9:1***; The first day of the week ***1Cor.16:1***; The second coming of Christ - ***Ac.17:30,31; Mt.24:36***; God's time for obedience is **NOW!** ***Heb.3:15; 2Cor.6:2***;

God uses time to bring about His will. (***Eph.1:10,11***) Although God gives man freedom of choice and will, He also orchestrates time as a great conductor. The movement of the composition is by His direction. There was the dispersion at Babel. Abraham was called out of the Ur of Chaldees and promised a seed by which all nations of the earth would be blessed, Jacob was loved, Joseph was sold into Egypt and thought is was by providence so that his family might escape starvation. (***Gen.50***) Yet, he failed to understand God's plan to create a nation and a sacrificial system that would teach man the meaning and value of the sacrifice of His Son for the true salvation of His people. Moses was born, reared in Egypt, delivered the people and gave them a law the shadowed and prefigured the plan of God for the Christian system. The prophets "forth told" and foretold for the advancement of the will of God. The "fulness of times" is seen in the calendar of men from heathen nations. Cyrus was named three hundred years before his birth, Alexander was foretold by Daniel. Daniel explained the King's dream of the great image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay. These elements of the great image represented the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman empires. Daniel also explained the dream of the rock hewn out of the mountain that over powered these kingdoms to come. The rock represented the Kingdom of God, the church, that would cover the earth. (***Dan.4***)

The calendar of God would also orchestrate symphony of the will of God among men with what we may call the three "S's". That is, the scattering, the synagogue, and the Septuagint. He promised to scatter the Jews over the earth. (***Ezek.36:19***) With the scattering of the Jews and the establishment of the synagogues there was a paved road for there spread of the Gospel to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, even in Gentile nations. Add to this the provision of the Septuagint, the sacred Scriptures in a common tongue among the nations and the Gospel could be propagated throughout the world. From the trade routes of the Roman and British empires, the Gospel could be felt around the world.

It was by "due" time that Christ died for the ungodly. (***Rom.5:6***)

With the destruction of Jerusalem came the end of the Jewish empire and the time of the Gentiles ushered in. (***Rom.9:25,26; Lk.21:24; Rom.11:25***) The commission called "great" is the Gospel for every creature, to the end of the world. (***Mk.16:15,16; Mt.28:18-20***) At the consummation of the "dispensation of the fulness of times," the Lord's calendar will call for

the resurrection of all that are in the graves (**Jn.5:28,28**), the Judgment day and the entrance into Glory.

I. A STUDY OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES.

That is, the Christian age, in contrast to the times of God's calendar of the past dispensations. From the coming of Christ, announced by John the immerser, the day of Pentecost, which was "*fully come*" to the second coming of Christ. In this period is the times the prophets and angels longed "*to look into,*" **IPet.1:9-13** It is the golden age of Isaiah's prophecy. It is the time when "*all nations flow into the House of God.*" It is the day when one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to The Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Dan.7:13,14

It is now that we enjoy the time in God's calendar and we enjoy redemption, reconciliation and sanctification as in no other time. "*That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.*" (**Eph. 1:10**)

THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES

The following commentaries give excellent insight into **Eph.1:10** and **Gal.4:4** A list of source material is offered at the conclusion. These along with the "standby" lexicons and word studies are common reference sources but remain extremely useful.

- A. "He now states the mystery which God had revealed. In the dispensation of the fullness of times. In the last dispensation which came in the fullness of time; when the times were full, or ripe. "Fulness of time" is often applied to the period of Christ's coming. He might gather together in one all things in Christ. That the scattered families and tribes of men, both Jews and Gentiles, should all be gathered and united under one head, Christ. Nay, not only men, but angels, all things in heaven and earth, all should be united under Christ as head, so that he should be "all and in all" [**Col. 3:11**]. See **Rev. 5:13**. Compare **Mt. 28:18**, and many other passages which are parallel in thought." – B.W. Johnson, Peoples New Testament Commentary
- B. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary. **Eph.1:10**. Translate, "*Unto the dispensation of the fulness of the times,*" that is, "*which He purposed in Himself*" (**Eph. 1:9**) with a view to the economy of (the gracious administration belonging to) the fulness of the times (Greek, "fit times," "seasons"). More comprehensive than "the fulness of the time" (**Gal. 4:4**). The whole of the Gospel times (plural) is meant, with the benefits to the Church dispensed in them severally and successively. Compare "the ages to come" (**Eph. 2:7**). "*The ends of the ages*" (Greek, **1 Cor. 10:11**); "*the times* (same Greek as here, 'the seasons,' or 'fitly appointed times') *of the Gentiles*" (**Lk. 21:24**); "*the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power*" (**Ac. 1:7**); "*the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the prophets since the world began*" (**Ac. 3:20,21**). The coming of Jesus at the first advent, "*in the fulness of time,*" was one of these "times." The

descent of the Holy Ghost, “when Pentecost was fully come”(Ac. 2:1), was another. The testimony given by the apostles to Him “in due time” (“in its own seasons,” Greek) (1 Tim. 2:6) was another. The conversion of the Jews “when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,” the second coming of Christ, the “restitution of all things,” the millennial kingdom, the new heaven and earth, shall be severally instances of “the dispensation of the fulness of the times,” that is, “the dispensation of” the Gospel events and benefits belonging to their respective “times,” when severally filled up or completed. God the Father, according to His own good pleasure and purpose, is the Dispenser both of the Gospel benefits and of their several fitting times (Ac. 1:7). gather together in one—Greek, “sum up under one head”; “recapitulate.” The “good pleasure which He purposed,” was “to sum up all things (Greek, ‘THE whole range of things’) in Christ (Greek, ‘the Christ,’ that is, His Christ)” [ALFORD]. God’s purpose is to sum up the whole creation in Christ, the Head of angels, with whom He is linked by His invisible nature, and of men with whom He is linked by His humanity; of Jews and Gentiles; of the living and the dead (Eph. 3:15); of animate and inanimate creation. Sin has disarranged the creature’s relation of subordination to God. God means to gather up all together in Christ; or as Col. 1:20 says, “By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things in earth or things in heaven.” ALFORD well says, “The Church of which the apostle here mainly treats, is subordinated to Him in the highest degree of conscious and joyful union; those who are not His spiritually, in mere subjugation, yet consciously; the inferior tribes of creation unconsciously; but objectively, all are summed up in Him.” J.F&B.

- C. A. Barnes wrote on *Eph. 1:10*. That in the dispensation The word here rendered “dispensation,” oikonomian, means, properly, the management of household affairs. Then it means stewardship or administration; a dispensation or arrangement of things; a scheme or plan. The meaning here is, that this plan was formed in order (eiv) or unto this end, that in the full arrangement of times, or in the arrangements completing the filling up of the times, God might gather together in one all things. Tindal renders it, “to have it declared when the time was full come,” etc.

The fulness of times When the times were fully completed; when all the periods should have passed by which he had prescribed, or judged necessary to the completion of the object. The period referred to here is that when all things shall be gathered together in the Redeemer at the winding up of human affairs, or the consummation of all things. The arrangement was made with reference to that, and embraced all things which conduced to that. The plan stretched from before “the foundation of the world” to the period when all times should be completed; and of course all the events occurring in that intermediate period were embraced in the plan.

He might gather together in one. The word here used—*anakefalaiow* means, literally, to sum up, to recapitulate, as an orator does at the close of his discourse. It is from *kefalh* the head; or *kefalaion*, the sum, the chief thing, the main point. In the New Testament the word means to collect under one head, or to comprehend several things under one. *Rom. 13:9*: “It is briefly comprehended, i.e. summed up under this one precept,” sc., love. In the passage before us, it means that God would sum up, or comprehend all things in heaven and earth through the Christian dispensation; he would make one empire under one head, with common feelings, and under the same laws.

II. A TIME IN THE FULLNESS OF TIMES, was the time during the “fulness of times”, but at the end of the Jewish law and economy, by the appointment of God’s calendar was fulfilled that God sent forth His “only begotten Son”, born of a virgin woman for the redemption of lost humanity.

God sent forth his preexisting Son (*Phi. 2:6*) when the time for his purpose had come like the prothemia of *Gal. 4:2*.

Gal. 4:4 “born of woman” shows the virgin birth otherwise a redundant statement. “George sent his son, born of a woman, born an American, to the store for a loaf of bread. Unless there is some unusual circumstances, the fact of the existence of George’s son demand that the son be born of a woman.

Gal. 4:4 *But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law...*

A. THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME

1. —namely, “*the time appointed by the Father*”(But when the fulness of the time was come. The full time appointed by the Father; the completion (filling up, plhrwma) of the designated period for the coming of the Messiah. A. Barnes) God does nothing prematurely, but, foreseeing the end from the beginning, waits till all is ripe for the execution of His purpose. Had Christ come directly after the fall, the enormity and deadly fruits of sin would not have been realized fully by man, so as to feel his desperate state and need of a Saviour. Sin was fully developed. Man’s inability to save himself by obedience to the law, whether that of Moses, or that of conscience, was completely manifested; all the prophecies of various ages found their common center in this particular time: and Providence, by various arrangements in the social and political, as well as the moral world, had fully prepared the way for the coming Redeemer. God often permits physical evil long before he teaches the remedy **was come**—Greek, “came.”
2. sent **forth**—Greek, “*sent forth out of heaven from Himself*” [ALFORD and BENGEL]. This implies that the Son of God had an existence before his incarnation. - A. Barnes
3. **his**—emphatical. “*His own Son.*” Not by adoption, as we are (*Gal. 4:5*): nor merely His Son by the anointing of the Spirit which God sends into the heart (*Gal. 4:6; Jn. 1:18*).
4. **made of a woman**—“made” is used as in *1 Co 15:45*, “*The first man, Adam, was made a living soul,*” Greek, “*made to be (born) of a woman.*” The expression implies a special interposition of God in His birth as man, namely, causing Him to be conceived by the Holy Ghost. So ESTIUS.
5. **made under the law**—“*made to be under the law...*”, “made” by His Father’s appointment, and His own free will, “subject to the law,” to keep it all, ceremonial and moral, perfectly for us, as the Representative Man, and to suffer and exhaust the full penalty of our whole race’s violation of it. This constitutes the significance of His circumcision, His being presented in the temple (*Lk. 2:21,22,27*; compare *Mt 5:17*), and His baptism by John, when He said (*Mt 3:15*), “*Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*”

B. John Gill comments. “The time agreed and fixed upon between God and his Son from all eternity, in the council and covenant of peace, when the Son of God should assume human nature; which time was diligently searched into by the prophets, was revealed unto them, and predicted by them; as more generally that it should be before the civil government ceased from Judah, and before the destruction of the second temple; and more particularly by Daniel in his prophecy of the “seventy weeks”, towards and about the close of which there was a general expectation among the Jews of the Messiah’s coming; and was the fulness of time here referred to, and what is sometimes called the dispensation of the fulness of time, the end of the Mosaic dispensation and Jewish church state, the last days of that state, and the end of the Jewish world, as to their ecclesiastical and civil polity.

1. **The Jews themselves own that the time of the Messiah’s coming is fixed, and that at that time he shall come, whether they are worthy or not, for so it is asserted in their Talmud:**... “Alexander, R. Joshua ben Levi objects what is written, *Isa 60:22* “in its time”; and it is written, “I will hasten it”; if they are worthy I will hasten it, if they are not worthy it shall be hteb, “in its time”.”

And accordingly a more modern writer of theirs says {e}, “our redemption upon all accounts shall be, hnmzb, “in its time”, whether worthy or, wicked; but if worthy its time will be hastened;”...”**this phrase, “the fulness of time”, is an Hebraism,** and is the same with ymy talm, in *Eze 5:2* which the Septuagint render thn plhrwsin twn hmerwn, “the fulness of days”, and we, “when the days were fulfilled,” when the time was up; and the same sense it has here, and it is also the same with dewm, “the appointed time”, *Hab 2:3* and answers to proyesmia tou patrov, “the time appointed of the Father”, *Gal 4:2*.

2. **God sent forth his Son;** God not absolutely and essentially, but personally and relatively considered, is here meant, namely, God the Father, as appears from the relation the person sent stands in to him, “his Son”; not by creation, as angels, Adam, and all men are the sons of God; nor by adoption, as saints are; or by office, as magistrates be; or on account of his incarnation or resurrection from the dead, for he was the Son of God before either; but by divine generation, being the only begotten of the Father, of his divine nature and essence, equal to him, and one with him: and who was “sent” by him, not out of disrespect to him, but love to us; nor without his consent or against his will, he readily and heartily agreeing to it; nor does it imply any local motion or change of place, but only designs the assumption of human nature; nor does it suppose any superiority and inferiority, for though Christ, as man, and in his office capacity, as Mediator, is inferior to the Father, yet not as to his divine nature, or as the Son of God; but it suggests, that he existed before he was sent, and that as a person, and as a distinct person from the Father, otherwise he could not with any propriety be said to be sent by him; and also that there was an entire harmony and agreement between them in this matter, the Father agreed to send his Son, and the Son agreed to be sent; and that as to his taking upon him the office of Mediator, and his assumption of human nature in order to obtain eternal redemption: all this was not of himself, but done in concert with his Father, from whom as Mediator he had his mission and commission;

3. **made of a woman;** “made”, not created as Adam was; nor begotten by man, as men in common are; nor is he said to be born, though he truly was, but “made”; which word the Holy Ghost chooses, to express the mighty power of God, in his mysterious

incarnation, wonderful conception, and birth; though some copies read, “born of a woman”; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic version: “of a woman”; whose seed he was from the beginning said to be; of a woman, without a man; of a woman, a virgin, as was foretold; and not only made and formed in her, but of her, of her flesh and blood, of which he took part; and which denotes the low estate and great humiliation of Christ, and shows that as sin came into the world by the woman, the Saviour from sin came also the same way:

4. **made under the law;** under the civil and judicial law as a Jew, to which he was subject, paying tribute to the collectors of it; and which was necessary; that it might appear he sprung from that nation, to whom he was promised; and that he came before the civil government of that people was at an end; and to teach us subjection to the civil magistrate: and as a son of Abraham he was made under the ceremonial law, was circumcised the eighth day, kept the several feasts of tabernacles, passover, &c. and which was proper, since he was the principal end of it, in whom it centres, and for whose sake it was made; and that he might completely fulfil it, and by so doing put a period to it: and he was made under the moral law, both as a man and the surety of his people, and was subject to all the precepts of it, and bore the penalty of it, death, in their room and stead, and thereby fulfilled it, and delivered them from its curse and condemnation. **So the Targumist {f}, joins the incarnation of the Messiah and his subjection to the law together, as the apostle here does;** “the prophet saith to the house of David, because a child is born unto us, and a son is given to us, hrjml yhwle atyrwa lybqw, “and he hath took upon him the law to keep it, and his name shall be called”, &c.”

{d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Vid. Jarchi & Kinachi in *Isa. lx. 22.*

{e} Kimchi in *Psal. cviii. 4.*

{f} In *Isa. ix. 6.*

- C. **BARNES Gal.4:4.** It is often asked why he did not come sooner; and why mankind did not have the benefit of his incarnation and atonement immediately after the fall? Why were four thousand dark and gloomy years allowed to roll on, and the world suffered to sink deeper and deeper in ignorance and sin? To these questions perhaps no answer entirely satisfactory can be given. God undoubtedly saw reasons which we cannot see, and reasons which we shall approve if they are disclosed to us. ...Even with our limited and imperfect vision, we can see the following things in regard to its being the most fit and proper time:

1. **It was just the time when all the prophecies centered in him, and when there could be no doubt about their fulfillment.** It was important that such an event should be predicted in order that there might be full evidence that he came from heaven; and yet, in order that prophecy may be seen to have been uttered by God, it must be so far before the event as to make it impossible to have been the result of mere human conjecture.
2. **It was proper that the world should be brought to see its need of a Saviour,** and that a fair and satisfactory opportunity should be given to men to try all other schemes of salvation, that they might be prepared to welcome this. This had been done. Four thousand years were sufficient to show to man his own powers, and to give him an opportunity to devise some scheme of salvation. The opportunity had been furnished under every circumstance that could be deemed favourable. The most profound and

splendid talent of the world had been brought to bear on it, especially in Greece and Rome; and ample opportunity had been given to make a fair trial of the various systems of religion devised on national happiness and individual welfare; their power to meet and arrest crime, to purify the heart, to promote public morals, and to support man in his trials; their power to conduct him to the true God, and to give him a well-founded hope of immortality. All had failed; and then it was a proper time for the Son of God to come and to reveal a better system.

3. **It was a time when the world was at peace.** The temple of Janus, closed only in times of peace, was then shut, though it had been but once closed before during the Roman history. What an appropriate time for the “Prince of Peace” to come! The world was, to a great extent, under the Roman sceptre. Communications between different parts of the world were then more rapid and secure than they had been at any former period, and the gospel could be more easily propagated. Further, the Jews were scattered in almost all lands, acquainted with the promises, looking for the Messiah, furnishing facilities to their own countrymen, the apostles, to preach the gospel in numerous synagogues, and qualified, if they embraced the Messiah, to become most zealous and devoted missionaries. The same language, the Greek, was moreover, after the time of Alexander the Great, the common language of no small part of the world, or as least was spoken and understood, among a considerable portion of the nations of the earth. At no period before had there been so extensive a use of the same language.
4. **It was a proper period to make the new system known.** It accorded with the benevolence of God, that it should be delayed no longer than that the world should be in a suitable state for receiving the Redeemer. When that period, therefore, had arrived, God did not delay, but sent his Son on the great work of the world’s redemption.

God sent forth his Son. Made of a woman. In human nature; born of a woman. This also implies that he had another nature than that which was derived from the woman. On the supposition that he was a mere man, how unmeaning would this assertion be! How natural to ask, in what other way could he appear than to be born of a woman? Why was he particularly designated as coming into the world in this manner? How strange would it sound if it were said, “In the sixteenth century came Faustus’ Socinus preaching Unitarianism, “made of a woman!” Or, “In the eighteenth century came Dr. Joseph Priestley, born of a woman, preaching the doctrines of Socinus!” How else could they appear? would be the natural inquiry. What was there peculiar in their birth and origin that rendered such language necessary? The language implies that there were other ways in which the Saviour might have come; that there was something peculiar in the fact that he was born of a woman; and that there was some special reason why that fact should be made prominently a matter of record. The promise was, *Gen. 3:15*, that the Messiah should be the “seed” or the descendant of woman; and Paul probably here alludes to the fulfillment of that promise.

Made under the law. As one of the human race, partaking of human nature, he was subject to the law of God. As a man he was bound by its requirements, and subject to its control. He took his place under the law, that he might accomplish an important purpose for those who were under it. He made himself subject to it that he might become one of them, and secure their redemption. {*}” made of a woman” “born”, “made under the law” “born”

- D. **E.M.Zerr**, Commentary on the New Testament. *Gal.4:4*. *Fulness of the time* means the time designated by the Father when his minor children (the Jews under the Mosaic Dispensation and the Gentiles under the Patriarchal Dispensation) were to be considered “of age” and ready to receive the full enjoyment of His provision for his children. That event was to be accomplished by the ushering into the world of His “only begotten Son” (see the comments at *Lk. 1:35* in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary). *Made is* from *ginomai*, which has a wide range of meanings in the New Testament. As it applies to an intelligent creature, the proper one of Thayer’s definitions is, “to become, i.e., to come into existence, begin to be, receive being.” In this verse it means that the Son was brought into being in this world through the use of a woman. (Again see the comments cited in the parentheses above.) *Under the law*. Jesus was born, lived and died while the law was in force, for it was not entirely replaced until Pentecost in Acts second chapter.

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PERSECUTIONS

Ron Cosby

Matthew 5:10-12. Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

Though the Christian is a child of God, he ought not be surprised when he is persecuted for his faith. Our Lord had to withstand the onslaught of His enemies. He forewarned all who follow Him that they will reap the hatred of ungodly men. Even Paul and the Twelve gave their lives for the faith. While being persecuted, they too made it clear that all who would be godly will be opposed by wicked men.

Even though the Lord and the first disciples lost their lives for righteousness' sake, they remained faithful. They continued to preach the gospel in the face of overwhelming physical forces. God will not forget!

I. PERSECUTION PREDICTED

- A. At the beginning of Christ's ministry, He predicted that His followers would be persecuted (*Matthew 5:10-12*).
- B. Our Lord reiterated this prediction three years later, during the last week of His life (*Matthew 24:9-10*).

II. PERSECUTION PRACTICED

- A. The ungodly persecuted the Lord
 1. Called Him names (*Matthew 11:16-20*).
 2. Falsely accused (*Matthew 12:24*). But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons.
 3. Deserted by many disciples and friends (*John 6:60-71*).
 4. Family rejected Him (*John 1:11; 7:5*). Later, after the resurrection, Jude and James believed. What a powerful witness to the resurrection of the Lord!
 5. Threatened with death (*John 8:58-59; 10:29-33*)
 6. Betrayed and seized in the Garden (*John 18:1-14*).
 7. Slay (*Acts 2:22-23*; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)
- B. The ungodly persecuted the Twelve
 1. Peter and John seized and threatened (*Acts 4*).
 2. *The Apostles seized and threatened (*Acts 5:17-42*).
 3. James and Peter arrested, the first apostle was executed (*Acts 12*).
- C. Persecution spread to the rest of the church.
 1. Stephen was stoned (*Acts 6-7*).
 2. Saul laid waste the church (*Acts 8:1-4*).
 3. Persecution spreads to the other cities (*Acts 9*).
- D. The persecutor became the persecuted. Paul was repeatedly persecuted.
 1. From the moment Paul was converted.
 - a. At Damascus (*Acts 9:23-25*).

- b. At Jerusalem (*Acts 9:28-30*).
2. Paul's first missionary journey.
 - a. At Antioch (*Acts 13:44-51*).
 - b. At Iconium (*Acts 14:1-5*).
 - c. At Lystra (*Acts 14:19-23*).
3. Paul's second missionary journey.
 - a. At Philippi (*Acts 16:19-40*).
 - b. At Thessalonica (*Acts 17:5-8*).
 - c. At Beroea (*Acts 17:13-14*).
 - d. At Athens (*Acts 17:32*).
 - e. At Corinth (*Acts 18:5-6, 12ff, 17*).
 - f. Special encouragement—by words (*Acts 18:9-10*).
4. Paul's third missionary journey.
 - a. At Ephesus (*Acts 19:9, 23ff, cf 20:1* "uproar").
 - b. At Greece (*Acts 20:2-3*).
 - c. Summary statement before witnesses (*Acts 20:18b-21, 23-24, 25 cf 36-38*).
 - d. Holy Spirit predicts Paul's imprisonment and death (*Acts 21:10-14*).
5. Paul arrested at Jerusalem.
 - a. Violence toward Paul (*Acts 21:27-36*).
 - b. Public defense (*Acts 21:40 - 22:29*).
 - c. Before the council [Sanhedrin] (*Acts 22:30 - 22:10*, "fearing lest Paul should be *torn in pieces*").
 - d. Special encouragement—by words (*Acts 22:11*).
 - e. Jewish band of forty (*Acts 22:12-25*).
6. Paul moved, imprisoned at Caesarea (*Acts 23:31 - 26:32*).
7. Paul delivered to Rome (*Acts 27:1 - 28:31*).
8. Luke's summary characterizes Paul's life as a Christian: He preached the gospel, though persecuted severely (*Acts 28:30-31*).

III. PERSECUTION'S PERPETRATORS

- A. Priests, patriarchs, and Paul lead the way (*Acts 7:1-2, 51ff*). Persecution fills the pages of the Book of Acts. At least twenty-four of the twenty-eight chapters give some detail concerning persecution of God's people (see *chapters 2, 4, 5, 6-7, 8:1-4; chp 9* Saul; *11:19; chp 12* James killed; *chp 13 vs 45 and vs 50; 14:19* stoned and dragged him out; *chp 16* Paul and Silas imprisoned; *chp 17* Jews sought Jason, *18:12* Jews rose up against Paul; *chp 19* [*20:1* calls it an "uproar"; also bonds and affliction]; *chp 21* seeking to kill him; *chp 22* lawful to scourge, *chps 23-28* imprisoned).
- B. Before the fall of Jerusalem, the Jews were the major persecutors, working through the rulers of other nations. Afterward, the peoples and nations became the principle predators.
- C. Parents, persons of one's own family, and partners were known to turn against their loved ones (*Matthew 12:34-39; 1 Corinthians 7:12-16*).
- D. Persons who abandoned their faith (apostates) fought against those they once stood beside (*Matthew 24:9-12*).

IV. PERSECUTION PORTRAYED

A. The word and concept of persecution means many things to many people. Our Lord's warning includes a good description of what He means.

B. **Matthew 5:10-12.**

1. *when men shall reproach ["revile," KJ] you, (Acts 23)*
2. *and persecute you,*
3. *and say all manner*
 - a. *of evil against you*
 - b. *falsely,*
 - c. *for my sake.*

C. **Matthew 24:9-10.**

1. *Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation,*
2. *and shall kill you:*
3. *and ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake.*
4. *and shall hate one another.*

V. THE PERSECUTED'S PURPOSE: *And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth (Matthew 13:20-21).*

A. Persecution ariseth...

1. ...because of the word (**Matthew 13:21**).
2. ...for righteousness' sake (**Matthew 5:10**).
3. ...for my sake (**Matthew 5:12**).
4. ...for my name's sake (**Matthew 24:10**).

B. Persecution must not arise because we are...

1. ...guilty of harming others (**1 Peter 4:15-16**).
2. ...guilty of faulty or questionable character or our own lies (**Acts 5**).
3. ...guilty of elevating ourselves above God (**Acts 12**).
4. ...guilty of browbeating the brethren (**1 Timothy 4:15-16**).

VI. THE PERSECUTED'S PERFORMANCE

A. How and what should the faithful child of God do in the face of persecution?

B. Preserve your life ("flee," **Matthew 10:23**).

C. Pray for and bless your enemies (**Matthew 5:43-47; Romans 12:14**).

1. Return good for evil.
2. "Forgiveness is the fragrance the flower leaves on the heel that crushed it" (Martin Luther King).

D. Be pleased (**Matthew 5:12**, rejoice, glad).

E. Persist in the faith (opposite of stumbled, **Matthew 13:21**).

VII. THE PERSECUTED'S PRIZE: *Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be*

exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you (Matthew 5:10-12).

- A. Prosperity in the inward man: "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake."
- B. Possession of salvation: "*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"
- C. Payment far beyond our performance: "*for great is your reward in heaven.*"
- D. Partners with the best of God: "*for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.*"

CONCLUSION: *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you (1 Peter 4:12-14).*

ACTS 2:1-21- Birth of the Church

Wayne Price

This chapter is a key in the tying together the Old and New Testaments (*Jer. 1:31-34; Joel 2:28-32; Heb. 10:1-10*). The kingdom prophesied by Daniel (*Dan. 2:44*) was set up on Pentecost, and was the church of Christ promised by our Lord (*Matt. 16:18, 19*) as being “just around the corner” (*Matt. 4:17*). Jesus Christ referred to it as the beginning of preaching “in His name” (*Luke 24:46-47*).

- I. The Coming of the Holy Spirit (*vss. 1-4*)
 - A. Pentecost
 1. This was one of the three chief feasts of the Jews, the Feast of the Weeks (*Lev. 23:15f.*). The other two were Passover and Feast of Tabernacles.
 2. Pentecost means “fiftieth”, and refers to the day after the 7th Sabbath following the Passover, which incidentally, was on a Sunday, the first day of the week!
 3. Due to the importance of this day to the 1st century Jew, a large multitude was in Jerusalem that day.
 - B. “They were all with one accord in one place”
 1. “They” who? The entire multitude, the 120 (*1:15*), or the twelve apostles?
 2. It refers only to the apostles, because of the following reasons:
 - a. It was promised only to the apostles (the general statement of John the Immerser – *Matt. 3:11* is necessarily limited to a few in the audience that day as is seen *Acts 2:2-5*)
 - b. Only the apostles were commanded to wait in Jerusalem until they received this power package (*Luke 24:49*).
 - c. Peter says that “we are all witnesses” (*Acts 2:32*) refers to the apostles. Remember that being a witness to the resurrection of Christ was a requirement to one’s being an apostle (*Acts 1:22*).
 - d. By reading *1:26* and *2:1* together, it is obvious that “they” refers to the “apostles” since it is the nearest noun with which it agrees in number.
 - C. “Filled with the Spirit”- an expression that is used frequently in the Scriptures
 1. Pentecostals assume every time this expression is used it means “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” but it’s primary usage is to signify that in the miraculous age of the 1st century, one had miraculous power or inspiration (see *Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 4:8; 4:31; Acts 13:9* etc.)
 2. Though the baptism in the Holy Spirit. is not mentioned in either *Joel 2* or *Acts 2*, yet according to *Acts 1:4-5* this is the very thing to which both references point.
 - D. Baptism in the Holy Spirit
 1. Jesus commanded the twelve to stay in Jerusalem until they “were endued with power” (*Luke 24:49*) from on high, and refers to it as “the Promise” (*Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8*) which they were to receive.
 - a. The Lord Himself had earlier referred to this event when He promised the sending of the Comforter, i.e. the Holy Spirit (*John 14:26*).
 - b. This refers, not to the personal Holy Spirit. Himself, but to power which came from the Spirit, in particular to miraculous revelation and divine recall (*Ibid.*) of the Lord’s will for mankind.

- c. The promise of the Father = the baptism of the Holy Spirit = sending of the Comforter!
2. The twelve were called apostles prior to this day of Pentecost, and hence before receiving the power package on that day (*Matt. 10:2*) and were able to perform miracles earlier as well (*Matt. 10:1-4*).
 - a. They were called “apostles” earlier either by (1) prolepsis, (2) by the fact that they were “sent out” (a general usage of the term), or perhaps though called “apostles” before Pentecost, the actual day of their inauguration was on Pentecost when they received the Holy Spirit, i.e., the power package from heaven.
 - b. The mere working of miracles was NOT the sign of an apostle, because the Corinthians themselves could work miracles (*1 Cor. 12:1-11*). The Twelve certainly worked miracles prior to Pentecost, BUT on Pentecost these miracle-working men were to receive a power package which they had not previously possessed.
 - c. This package was to be received at Jerusalem, on Pentecost (not before), and was limited to the Apostles only (*Acts 1:4-5*).
 - (1) Compare *2 Cor. 12:12* with *1 Cor. 9:1-2*
 - (2) Remember: “Signs of an apostle” had to be more than working a miracle, for the Corinthians did that!
 - d. Only the apostles could, by the laying on of hands, impart miraculous gifts to others (*Acts 8:14-18; 19:1-7; 2 Tim. 1:6*), which was part of the power-package they received on Pentecost (but not earlier).
 - (1) Hence the expression “signs of an apostle” is used to prove that Paul himself was an apostle, and mere miracle working was NOT such a sign, for others besides apostles could do that.
 - (2) Paul’s ability to work miracles did not prove that he was an apostle, but the fact that the Corinthians themselves could do so was proof! Why? Evidently because Paul himself laid hands on them, imparting to them the power to work miracles (*1 Cor. 9:1-2*).
 - (3) If power to work miracles came through prayer alone, then Paul’s argument would prove nothing!
3. Conclusion: The baptism in the HOLY SPIRIT. received by the apostles was nothing less than the very process that made them apostles in the first place, i.e. the empowerment or inauguration of an apostle.
4. Other related points:
 - a. The word “baptism” is a figurative expression describing the power the apostles received on Pentecost.
 - b. The New Testament does not mention a repetition of this baptism, though it is obvious that the Apostle Paul also received it since he was equal with the other apostles (*2 Cor. 12:11*), he was able to impart spiritual gifts to others (*Acts 19*), etc.
 - c. That which happened at the household of Cornelius in *Acts 10* was “like” (*Acts 11:17*) that which the apostles received in that it came from heaven directly, and included a similar gift (tongue speaking – *v. 46*). No one was made an apostle that day!
 - d. Furthermore, the belief that modern day converts to Christ receive this baptism, or that it is for anyone following the first century, is an idea of the mistaken!

II. The Crowd's Reaction to the Events of that Day (vss. 5-13)

- A. The "sound" caused a crowd to assemble
1. Nothing is stated here about an actual wind being felt that day, but rather that they heard a sound like wind.
 2. "as" of a "*mighty rushing wind*" does not speak of a literal wind, any more than "like as" fire (v. 3) refers to literal fire!
- B. Who made up the crowd that day?
1. "*devout men, from every nation under heaven*" (v. 5)
 - a. Perhaps their coming from great distances is testimony of their being devout.
 - b. Some 15 or so different areas are listed in 2:9-11 (Iraq, Egypt, Asia, Africa, Italy, etc.)
 2. Surely this explains how the gospel was carried into all the world, even though Acts may not explicitly mention each place by name. Perhaps this explains how that some Roman brethren had the gift of prophecy (*Rom. 12:6*) when compared with *Acts 2:10*, yet we know that Paul had not imparted such gifts to them (*Rom. 1:11*). Jerusalem and Pentecost must have been where and when they received the gift.
- C. What was this "*speaking in tongues*?"
1. Instead of being a language known only to God, as some Pentecostals aver, this describes languages spoken at that time somewhere in the world.
 - a. Both dialektos and glossa are used to describe this event, and are used synonymously.
 - b. Instead of being unintelligible until interpreted, these were quite understandable.
 - c. Naturally people would gather around the apostle which was miraculously speaking in their native language, hence it is probable that this huge multitude that day (see v. 41) consisted of a number of smaller groups where an apostle was speaking in a language which he had never studied nor knew. Obviously this was a miracle
 2. A "miracle of hearing" or a "miracle of speaking"?
 - a. If the former, there would have been no need of a plurality of speakers as declared by the text: "*the people heard THEM speaking...*" (v. 6)
 - b. It was the apostles who were baptized in the Holy Spirit, not the crowd! *Acts 2:4* is decisive: Those filled with the Spirit (i.e. the apostles), "*began to speak with other tongues...*"
 - c. The miracle was in the speakers, not the hearers! The tongues were foreign to the ones speaking them, but not to the hearers. Notice the text: "*his own language*" (v. 6); "*our own tongue*" (v. 8); "our tongues" (v. 11).
- D. The Effect of These Events upon the Crowd
1. All of this was certainly an "attention grabber" as no doubt was intended.
 2. The crowd was "*confounded*," or confused (v. 6); "*amazed*," and they "*marveled*" (v. 7); and were "*in doubt*" (v. 12).
 3. For Galileans to be able to speak all the different dialects (languages) there that day caused great astonishment!
 4. What did it all mean? (v. 12). The miracle at Babel was reversed (*Gen. 11:7*) as far as "purpose" was concerned.
- E. Some, unwilling to accept obvious miracles that day, tried their hand at giving a naturalistic explanation, with the purpose of ridiculing: "*These men were drunk*," they argued.

III. Peter’s Explanation (vs. 14-21)

- A. Peter, by the inspiration of the Spirit, answered the question which plagued the crowd, and in doing so he delivered the first gospel sermon.
 1. The mockers were wrong; it was too early in the morning to be drunk, Peter declares (v. 15).
 2. To explain what was happening, Peter quotes **Joel 2:28-32** in verses 17-21 laying the groundwork for fulfillment of “the promise” (Joel’s specifically, not the more general promise to Abraham, as is evidenced by the verbs describing the events that day “see” and “hear” – v. 33).
- B. “*this is that...*”
 1. Some 800 years previously, God had Joel deliver the prophecy which was beginning to be fulfilled that very day.
 2. Guesswork is eliminated by Peter’s inspired commentary “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.”
- C. “*the last days*”
 1. A reference to the last days of Israel and its main city, Jerusalem. We know that this prophecy was a “pointer to Pentecost” since Peter said it was (v. 16). But it also points to the destruction of Jerusalem, thus encompassing the whole period between Pentecost and 70 A.D.
 2. How do we know? Because Christ (**Mat. 24:29; Mark 13:24-25**) refers to the same section, **Joel 2:30-31**, and applies it to the fall of Jerusalem!
 - a. This speaks of miraculous events (v. 17f.)
 - b. Would this not limit the age of miraculous activity to the period roughly between 30 and 70 A.D.?
- D. “*pour out from my Spirit*” (v. 17)
 1. The ablative case is the case of “origin” or “source.”
 2. This could be the ablative (“from”) and not the genitive (“of”) even without the preposition apo used in front of “Spirit,” but the presence of apo demands that the case be understood as ablative.
 - a. Why is this important?
 - b. Because it is not the Spirit Himself that is being poured out, but rather something i.e., “power” which comes FROM the Spirit (both vs. 17 and 18 have the same construction!)
 - c. The HOLY SPIRIT. is the SOURCE of the gifts, but not the gift, and this is significant because Joel’s prophecy serves as the background for miraculous gifts in the N.T..
- E. “*all flesh*”
 1. All races, classes, etc., and certainly both Jew **and** Gentile (see “afar off” v. 39)
 2. But only Jews were present on Pentecost, so the “total” fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy had to extend beyond the events taking place that day. Why?
 3. Their Jewish “daughters” prophesying is not recorded as occurring that day, so the promise would be extended to include them (see **Acts 21:9**), as apostles imparted such gifts evidently.
 4. Hence, Joel’s prophecy began to be fulfilled that day, and Joel gives a “birds-eye” view of the summary of miraculous work from Pentecost until revelation was completed, along with its accompanying signs which followed (**Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4**).
 5. “Visions” and “dreams” refer to those that are mentioned later in this book

- (*Acts 10:9ff; 22:17ff*), with all such miraculous activity connected with revelation and limited to the 1st century age of miracles.
- F. “*Blood, fire, smoke, sun darkened,*” etc.
1. Instead of being literal events, these are probably used figuratively to designate times of fearful judgments; remember that the fall of Jerusalem lies in their near future.
 2. Compare similar language regarding Babylon (*Isa. 13:1, 9-10*), and Egypt (*Ezek. 32:2,7*). Such apocalyptic language is describing political turmoil, upheaval, and overthrowing of powerful figures.
- G. In contrast to the impending judgment on Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem, some good news was announced to mankind
1. “*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*”
 2. Possibly this refers to the Jews who would accept Christ before their nation went under, but it certainly applies also as a type to the final judgment of mankind, and salvation from the woes pertaining involved in that future judgment (*Matt. 25:30, 46, et al.*)
 3. “*Calling on the name of the Lord*”
 - a. Not a mere oral pronunciation of the Lord’s name (*Matt. 7:21, 22; Luke 6:46*)
 - b. It means becoming subject to, or becoming obedient to the Lord.
 - (1) *Acts 9:21* - “*But all that heard him were amazed, and said; ‘Is not this he that destroyed them which **called on this name** in Jerusalem...? (Acts 9:21)*”
 - (2) *Acts 22:16* - “*...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, **calling upon the name of the Lord***”
 - (3) *2 Tim. 2:22* - “*Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that **call on the Lord** out of a pure heart.*”
 - (4) Perhaps a good way to end this treatise is to ask the question: “*How shall they **call on him** in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?...*” (*Rom. 10:14*)

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ACTS 2:22-40 - The Kingship of Christ

Brant Stubblefield

Main Text: Acts 2: 22-40 KJV

I. Introductory Remarks:

May I, at this time, extend my deepest appreciation to the elders of the Barnes church of Christ for their relentless efforts they continue to make in furthering the teaching of the “*sound doctrine*” (*Titus 2:1*). No doubt, the Lord’s church is seemingly under severe attack from within our own ranks. Those among us that are constantly hurling the darts of liberalism must be confronted, and in addition, the gospel of Christ must be preached to the world in which we live (*Gal. 1:6-9, Rev. 22:18-19, Rom. 1:16, Mk. 16:15-16*). In addition, I would like to express my love for the faithful brethren, here and abroad, who embrace and respect the Sacred Text. “Let brotherly love continue” (*Heb. 13:1*).

II. Peter

A. In *Acts 2:22a*, the inspired apostle Peter declared, “*Ye men of Israel, hear these words.*”

1. How did Peter have the authority to make such a demand?
 - a. Peter was an apostle (*1 Pet. 1:1, 2 Pet. 1:2*).
 - b. All apostles had the baptism of the Holy Spirit (*Acts 1:1-5,26; Acts 2:1-4*).
 - c. Therefore, Peter was an inspired apostle who was guided into all truth (*John 16:13*), by the Holy Spirit, and thus he spoke *authoritatively*.
 - d. Peter like the apostle Paul, spoke by inspiration, and thus what they taught served as binding “*commandments of the Lord*” (*1 Cor. 14:37*).
 - e. In addition, Peter delivered the message with power and boldness because he was an eye-witness to the resurrection of Christ.
 1. All apostles were present at the resurrection of Christ, except Judas, who killed himself (*Matt. 27:5*), previous to the resurrection.

B. The Responsibility of the Hearers

1. Let us briefly note that gospel preaching today, just as it was in the first century, has a two-fold requirement. There is the duty on the part of the preacher to “*preach the word*” (*2 Tim. 4:2*), and the necessity of the audience to “hear” the message that is being delivered.
 - a. The “men of Israel” were to “hear” the sermon!
 - b. According to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance the word “hear” (*Acts 2:22*) conveys the idea of “to give audience to,” and listening with the desire to “understand.” Peter is demanding their attention to a message that is Divine and of supreme importance.
 - c. This same word “hear” is also found in the following passages (*Rom. 10:14, 1 Tim. 4:16, Heb. 3:7, James 1:19, Rev. 13:9*).
 - d. I implore you as well, to lend your ear to the Holy Writ, that you might truly, “*hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*” (*Rev. 13:9*).

III. The Kingship of Christ Proposed and Proved

A. “*Approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs*” (*Acts 2:22a*).

1. Definition of a miracle- “an extraordinary occurrence that could not be explained by

the laws of nature and, therefore, is evidence of the intervention of Deity. Man cannot, by his own power, duplicate a miracle.” (Defined by M. Fox)

2. Within the immediate context these miracles included all of the miracles that the apostles had been eye-witness of (“*in the midst of you*” -**Acts 2:22**), which would include all miracles they witnessed that are recorded in the Scriptures, along with the miracles Jesus performed that are not in the Bible. “*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*” (**John 20:30-31**).
 3. Nevertheless, the most powerful sign executed by Christ was in fact the resurrection, because in this single triumph of Divine miraculous activity, he completely overcame all forces of evil and changed forever the lives of countless individuals- giving hope to the hopeless (**Col. 1:27**).
 - a. Power over death - “having loosed the pains of death” (**Acts 2:24**). See also **Rom. 6:3, 1 Cor. 15:54**
 - b. Power over Satan -(**Matt. 10:28, 1 Cor. 15:54-57**).
 - c. Power over the grave- “God hath raised him up” (**Acts 2:23**).
 - d. Power over sin- (**Rom. 6:23, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16**)
 - e. Power over fleshly corruption- (**Acts 2:31**).
 - f. Power over Hell (hadean realm)- (**Acts 2:31**).
 - g. Power over wicked men- “wicked hands have crucified and slain” (**Acts 2:23**).
 - h. Power over earthly kings-(**Acts 2:34**).
- B. Prophecy also proves his Kingship.
1. Although eye-witness testimony of the apostles acted as an “inspired account” (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**), we must remember that the fulfillment of prophecy is yet another bolstering element to the kingship of Christ. “*We have a more sure word of prophecy*” (**1 Pet. 1:19**).
 - a. Definition of prophecy- anything spoken by a prophet on behalf of God. (see **Exodus ch 4**)
 1. There are only two types of prophets-true and false.
 - a) A true prophet must have all signs come to pass, and he must never teach anything as to contradict inspired Scripture.
 - b) A false prophet violates one or both of the rules listed directly above. (See **Deut. ch13, 18**)
 2. Since the Jews regarded the Old Testament as the inspired word of God, Peter preaches from the Old Testament to prove the Deity of Christ.
 - a) Peter also proves that Jesus was a prophet himself, and since the following Old Testament prophecies were perfectly fulfilled by Jesus, the honest Jews would begin to realize that they had murdered the Messiah spoken of in the Old Testament, which was the climatic conclusion of Peter’s sermon (**Acts 2:36**).

IV. Examination of Prophecies in **Acts 2:22-36**

A. **Acts 2:23-24** prophecy from **Isaiah 53**

1. “*Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*” (**Acts 2:23a**)- this phrase no doubt, gives reference to the undeniable fact that it was indeed the pre-purposed will of the Father that his only begotten Son must die, and

was aware of this, even before his coming (*Gal. 4:4*).

2. “By wicked hands ye have crucified and slain” (*Acts 2:23b*). This prophecy was fulfilled as the hands of the wicked Romans, led Jesus unjustly, to be crucified between two thieves.
 3. “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (*Acts 2:24*). Notice this two-fold prophecy, both of the fact that it was the Father’s will to resurrect His son, and secondly that Jesus is life (*John 14:6*). Consequently, with that in mind, the resurrection of Christ, was never a question as to its occurrence, rather, it was simply a matter as to the Divinely appointed time.
- B. *Acts 2:25-28* prophecy from *Psalms 16:8-11*
1. “For David speaketh concerning him” (*Acts 2:25a*)- King David spoke or prophesied concerning the Son of David. (*Jesus was the son of David*)
 2. “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (*hades*)” (*Acts 2:27a*)- Remember as the Lord hung suspended on the cruel cross of Calvary a penitent thief that knew about the Lord and His kingdom said “Rememberest me when thou comest in thy kingdom” (*Luke 23:42*) Jesus replied, “Today thou shalt be with me in paradise” (*Luke 23:43*). In the hades realm of the departed souls there are two different places within hell (*hades*). There is the portion the Lord referred to as “paradise” (*Luke 23:43*), and there is the place where the rich man is still be tormented, to this very hour, known also as hell (*tartarus*). As far as hell (*gehenna*), or the final abode of the wicked, is concerned, Jesus has never spent one second there! Again this testifies to his miraculous strength over death and the world to come.
 3. “the Holy One” (*Acts 2:27*)- the Lord Jesus who was the promised and prophesied Messiah of the Old Testament.
- C. *Acts 2:29-31* prophecy from *Psalms 89:3,4,35,37;132:11-2; Sam. 11-16*
1. God, the father, had promised through his spokesman, David, that Jesus should set on the throne.
- D. *Acts 2:32-35* prophecy from *Psalms 110:1*
1. *Verse 32*- Because David had foretold of Christ as the Messiah, and all the apostles except Judas were eye witnesses to the resurrection, the coronation of Christ is about to take place in the courts of Heaven. Christ will now be exalted to a place of honor, namely “the right hand” (*Acts 2:34*). The right hand signifies the Divine side of Christ.
 2. *Verse 33*- “which ye now see and hear” (*Acts 2:33*)-With all of the conclusive evidence that Peter has presented including, inspired eye-witness testimony, miracles, prophecy, all of which was based upon the reliance of the Old Testament Scriptures, which the Jews believed! What more was left to say? Peter had proved the Kingship of Christ!
 3. Peter declares that David had foretold of the exaltation of Christ while he was alive! In *Matthew 24:43* Jesus quotes from what David had said in *Psalms 110:1*, concerning the exaltation of the Messiah, and applies it to himself. Normally, according to the greater versus lesser argument, the son is less than the father. However, David knew of the coming of Christ and spoke of his holiness and high position. According to the inspired prophet David, Jesus is a higher king than David, and David referred to Christ as “Lord” (*Acts 2:34*).

V. The Undeniable and Heart-Wrenching Conclusion

- A. *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).*
1. Those who were honest were pricked in the heart by the working of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of inspired “words” (*Acts 2:22, 37*). Those that claim a direct operation of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the Bible are ignorant of its teachings, or are acting in dishonesty!
- B. These rank sinners who were guilty of murdering the son of God are now aware of the reality of what has really happened. The text implies, they now believe in Jesus Christ, as the Messiah prophesied of the Old Testament. The evidence provided by Peter, inspired of the Spirit, has now caused them to ask the following question.
- C. *“Men and brethren, what shall we do” (Acts 2:37)?* By virtue of the fact that these once ridiculers and mockers of Jesus would even ask such a question is indicative of their present change from unbelief to belief. Furthermore, they realize that something must be done on their part to rectify this horrible situation. Many today deny that we have anything to do with our salvation. Such could not be further from the truth. Otherwise, why the strong imperative words of Peter, *“Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40)?*
- D. The Answer of Pardon Given
1. There are two prerequisites given explicitly in verse 38, namely, repentance and baptism. Since both of these imperative commands are joined together by the conjunction and, both are therefore, equally necessary to achieve the end result, which is, the remission of sins. Nonetheless, this verse does not promise remission of sins at baptism, but only states that baptism is definitely one of the requirements that must be met prior to one receiving the remission of sins (*Acts 2:38*). However, there are other passages that plainly teach us that it is at the climatic point of scriptural baptism that one has his sins *“washed away” (Acts 22:16)*, and is thereby *“added to the church” (Acts 2:47)*, which is the body (*1 Cor. 12:13*).
- E. Common Errors on Baptism Among the Denominational World
1. Baptism has nothing to do with your salvation! *“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21).*
 2. Baptism has nothing to do with washing your sins away! *“And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).*
 3. Be baptized because you have been saved! *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15-16).*
 4. Baptism is not for the remission of sins! *“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” (Acts 2:38).*
- F. Common Errors on Baptism within the Church.
1. Sadly to say, some like Mark Henderson, of Quail Springs church (of Christ?), in Oklahoma City, OK are now affirming some if not all of the four errors I mentioned above. P.S. Yes, I have spoken directly, by phone, to Mr. Henderson. Others like Mark Rodriguez from the Western Hills church (of Christ?), in Lawton, Ok, also deny the necessity of baptism. I have also spoken to him, and I am currently attempting to teach him out of his Baptist doctrine.

2. Many churches of Christ are “dedicating babies” all across our nation. These congregations are bootlegging this practice out of the denominational churches such as Lutheranism, and Catholicism. Instead of completely compromising, we meet them half-way by doing every thing these other groups would do, except “sprinkle” a little “holy water” on their heads. The church of Christ in Perkins, Ok is currently practicing “baby-dedication” services. I have spoken with the preacher of this congregation by phone as well.
3. I suppose one of the most common errors is that of accepting people in the fellowship on their “denominational baptism.” What people fail to realize is, that baptism is far more than just “*for the remission of sins*” (*Acts 2:38*)! Does baptism not “put one into the body or church of Christ” (*1 Cor. 12:13, Acts 2:47*)? How can one be taught wrong and obey correctly? If we can throw out the necessity of having been taught properly, why can we not toss out the necessity of baptism by immersion? When the Bible says in *Acts 2:47* that the “*Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved,*” I don’t believe any of those were added to denominational groups. If a person was taught right, he has the ability to obey right, but if a person is taught wrong he cannot obey right, until he is taught “more accurately,” as was the case of Apollos. (see *Acts 18:26*)
4. Another error taught by some in the church is that baptism washes away all sins-past, present, and future, and such is not the case. If baptism, washes away all sins, there would be no need to continue to “repent, confess, and pray” (*1 John 1:9, Acts 8:22*).
5. Some preach that you can be baptized without repenting! They would never admit to such, but may I please illustrate. A man named Bob, who is a sinner, steals \$25,000 from the home of a banker. Bob has been working for the banker as his personal gardener for ten years. For the last five years Bob has been having a sexual affair with the banker’s wife, named Sarah. Bob talks Sarah into leaving her husband, and divorcing him. A few months later, after the heat blows over, Bob and Sarah marry. Bob has stolen the banker’s \$25,000.00 and his lovely wife. After a month or so, the couple decides to attend a local church of Christ that is only a couple of blocks away. As they arrive, they are greeted with a warm reception, and invited to a “divorce recovery class.” Bob and Sarah really feel at home. After Bible Class they walk into the auditorium for the worship service. As the preacher is speaking Bob decides he wants to become a Christian and change his life. He really feels guilty about the whole situation. As the invitation song is sung he responds, and walks down the aisle to the front of the building. The preacher meets him, and they begin to discuss the situation. Bob explains to the preacher that he has stolen the money and the woman and he wants to make things right. Now, we know this is a fictitious story, but what would some of our preachers tell this man to do? Some would say that Bob must give back the money, but he could keep the banker’s wife. Some would say he could keep the banker’s money to buy new clothes for the banker’s wife. But faithful preachers like Peter, would say, “*Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins*” (*Acts 2:38*). Friends, scriptural baptism follows scriptural repentance, and that means returning what is not rightfully ours!

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Kingship of Christ is vividly portrayed as an inspired reality presented to the honest Bible scholar in depth, and to the young student as well, on differing levels. Nevertheless, as we reflect upon the Christ may we ever be reminded of the incomprehensible power that Deity has, but more so of the love that compelled him to come that he might “*seek and save the lost*” (***Luke 19:10***). And may we as preachers in the church of Christ, never shirk our duties to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ- “*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel the gospel of Christ. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned*” (***Mark 16:15-16***).

Sources:

King James Version Bible

The Work of the Holy Spirit by Marion R. Fox

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance

ACTS 2:41-47 - The New Testament Church

Lloyd Unsell

Acts 2:41-47

Introduction:

The above scriptures are a result of what has happened in the preceding verses. The gospel of Christ has been preached, men have been convicted of their sins and they are told what they must do. They are encouraged to action with many other words from the apostle Peter. The response of those that gladly received the word can be summed up under three headings: (1) What they did to save themselves from that crooked generation. (2) What God did in response to their obedience. (3) What they continued to do as the church of Christ.

I. THINGS NECESSARY TO BE SAVED FROM A CROOKED GENERATION.

- A. They gladly received the word. This implies that some of them did not gladly receive the word.
 - 1. Gladly receiving the word is more than just hearing. They all heard the gospel preached. They all heard the command to repent and be baptized. They all heard the many other words of exhortation from Peter.
 - 2. Gladly receiving the word must mean that they were ready and willing to do whatever God demanded of them.
- B. This is evidenced by the fact that they were baptized. Being baptized was an act of faith with the expectation that God would forgive their sins.
 - 1. Since Jesus is the author of salvation to all who obey him (*Heb. 5:9*), they had to do it in order to save themselves from that crooked generation.
 - 2. It is not a case of man saving himself. God saves, but only those who gladly receive his word and are obedient to Him.

II. WHAT GOD DID WITH THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED:

- A. *Verse 41* says they were added (*to them*). The phrase '*to them*' is added in *verse 41*. However in *verse 47* the phrase '*to them*' is in the original.
 - 1. To what or whom were they added? In the KJV *verse 47* says God added to the church.
 - 2. Some object to saying, '*they were added to the church*' since the word church is not in the original language.
 - 3. In *verse 41* they were added to the apostles that God set in the church first of all (*1 Cor. 12:28*).
 - 4. The phrase '*to them*' in *verse 47* refers to, those who were added in *verse 41*.
 - a. Since those in *verse 41* refers to those added to the apostles.
 - b. And God had set the apostles in the church first of all.
 - c. The (about) 3,000 were added to the church, along with all who were added to them afterwards.
 - 5. We are on scriptural ground when we say that God adds the saved to the church.
 - 6. This also answers the questions, "Do you have to be a member of the Lord's church to be saved?" And "Is baptism essential to being saved?"

7. The question “Which church do I join,” is also answered in this text: The saved have no choice. The Lord adds the saved to His church.
 - a. The church that Christ built (**Matt. 16:18**).
 - b. The church that Christ purchased with His blood (**Acts 20:28**)
 - c. The church of which Christ is the savior (**Eph. 5:23**)

B GOD HAS NOT CHANGED HIS METHOD.

1. Our text plus all the other information in the New Testament agrees with this method of being saved. God adds the saved to the church of Christ.
2. There is no authority for becoming a member of the church of Christ other than the above method.
3. We must conclude that when we save ourselves from this crooked generation by faithful obedience to God’s method. He will add the saved to that same church.

C. GOD EXHIBITED HIS APPROVAL:

1. The apostles did many wonders and signs.
2. This was according to the promise that Christ had made to the apostles (**John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 1:8; Mark 16:20**)
3. This was God giving evidence of His approval (**Heb. 2:4**)

III. WHAT THE SAVED CONTINUE TO DO AS THE CHURCH:

A. In Worship (**Acts 2:42**)

1. Continue steadfastly in apostles’ doctrine.
 - a. The idea of ‘steadfast’ is unwavering or resolute. Their dedication was an unwavering commitment to the things the apostles taught.
 - b. They were steadfast in the apostles’ doctrine. Not their opinion or supposition. The apostles teaching was from the Lord (**John 4:26; 16:13**) (**1 Cor. 14:37**).
 - c. The apostles are now teaching that which is revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. Their teaching is confirmed by the signs and wonders done. (**Heb. 2:4; Mk. 16:20**).
 - d. In order to be the church of Christ today, that church must continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.
2. Fellowship:
 - a. This is jointly participating together in an activity.
 - b. The churches primary fellowship is with God and his Son (**1 John 1:4**).
 - c. Fellowship with God and one another is determined by walking in the light (**1 John 1:7**).
 - (1) *The entrance of thy word giveth light* (**Psa. 119:130**).
 - (2) The apostles’ doctrine was God’s word (*The light of the glorious gospel of Christ* **2 Cor. 4:4**).
 - (3) When they continued in the apostles’ doctrine they were walking in the light (having fellowship with God).
 - d. When a group has fellowship with God they have fellowship with each other.
 - e. Laying by in store on the first day of the week is part of the fellowship of the church (**2 Cor. 8:4**).
3. Breaking of bread.
 - a. The above statement is a figure of speech in which a part is put for the whole (synecdoche).
 - b. The same phrase is used in **Acts 20:7** and it plainly means the Lord’s Supper or

communion. This verse tells us the day of the week when the church met together for this purpose

- c. Since they were continuing in the apostles doctrine in breaking of bread (Lord's supper) on the first day of the week, in order for anyone today to continue in the apostles' doctrine the same must be done.
 - (1) The only other reference of the church meeting on the first day of the week is to lay by in store as God has prospered (*1 Cor. 16:1, 2*).
 - (2) This was also a command of the apostles.
 - d. This is our communion (fellowship) in the Lord's body and blood (*1 Cor. 10:16*).
 - e. The breaking of bread is to remember the Lord's death till he come (*1 Cor. 11:26*).
4. Prayers:
- a. The faithful have the blessing of approaching the throne of grace with boldness (*Heb. 4:16*).
 - b. Prayer is not relegated to any particular time or place (*1 Tim. 2:8; 1 Thess. 5:17*).
 - c. Prayer, as well as other things, must be done in the Lord's name (by his authority (*Acts 4:7; Col. 3:17*)).

B. IN THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES:

1. Daily in the temple, Praising God.
 - a. They were of one accord, this act praised God
 - b. This is remarkable considering how sectarian they were as Jews.
 - c. Their unity and concern for each other brought praise to God.
 - d. When anyone continues in the apostles' doctrine it will bring praise to God.
2. House to house:
 - a. They were together in the apostles doctrine as well as care and concern for one another.
 - b. Demonstrated in eating together and sharing their possessions.
 - c. They were of a single heart (cf *Phil. 2:2*).
3. This was proof of the great change that Christ had wrought in their hearts.
4. The church of Christ today should imitate this same attitude in its everyday life.

III. Conclusion:

When people today are convinced by the gospel that Jesus is the Christ, they will be cut in the heart and seek God's answer to the question of salvation. God's answer to this question today is the same as it was when these events recorded in the New Testament happened. A person must still repent and be baptized in order to be saved. God still adds the saved to the same church that he added those on Pentecost. It is the church that Jesus built, bought and will save. The saved (church of Christ) must still continue in the apostles' doctrine as given in *Acts 2:42*. The church must be of one accord and have the same care and concern for each other that was evidenced in the early church. This is what continuing in the apostles' doctrine means. The church must have the same concern for the lost that was true of the first century church. The gospel is still God's power to save. Therefore, the church must continue to plant and water and God will take care of the increase.

THE MIRACULOUS AGE

Stephen Wiggins

There are at least three areas pertaining to the subject of miracles that must be appreciated in order to properly and fully understand the biblical teaching of miracles. First, the *definition* of a miracle must be understood. In this area one must be concerned as to how the Bible defines and describes a miracle as opposed to how that same term may be used in modern day expression. What is and is not a miracle according to the Bible should be foremost in one's mind when studying this subject.

Second, one must fully appreciate the *purpose* of miracles. Why were miracles performed according to the Bible? What was the purpose of their existence? Why did God endow certain ones within the early church with the ability to work miracles? Third, one must reflect on the *cessation* of miracles. Why and when did miracles cease? Why are not miracles being performed today? The answers to such questions will help one to biblically define the perimeters of the miraculous age.

Not only must these three areas pertaining to the definition, purpose, and cessation of miracles be learned but it also helps to appreciate these areas in the order of the sequence just given. For example, before one can fully appreciate the *cessation* of miracles he must comprehend the *purpose* of miracles because the two are intimately connected. If one cannot understand *why* miracles were given in the first place then it is difficult to see why miracles served their purpose and are no longer needed today. But once one grasps the divine design of miracles then he is in proper position to appreciate how miracles served their purpose and eventually ceased.

It is also true that for one to fully understand the purpose of miracles he must comprehend the *definition* of a miracle. One of the main reasons why many people never understand the purpose and cessation of miracles is because they never really understand the biblical definition of a miracle. Those who go through life thinking that the physical birth of an infant is a miracle are obviously going to have difficulty concluding that miracles have ceased. Thus, the definition, purpose, and cessation of miracles should be studied together in order to appreciate what the Bible says about the miraculous age.

I. JOEL'S PROPHECY

Whereas miracles were utilized by God to create the world as Deity spoke the universe into existence (*Gen. 1*); and whereas the biblical record sets forth multiple miraculous events in the Old Testament (*Ex. 7-14*); and whereas Jesus performed multiple miracles during his public ministry (*Jno. 20:30-31*); and whereas a miracle will take place in connection with the general resurrection sometime in the future on the "last day" (*Jno. 5:28-29; 6:39-40*); the purpose of this article is to elaborate on the miraculous age as it is defined and described by Joel's prophecy in his book at **2:28-32**. This Old Testament passage is quoted by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost and applied to miraculous phenomenon that commenced on that day and continued within the first century church (*Acts 2:16-21*).

Joel's prophecy is a summary of the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit by which the gospel was given and confirmed. It is the basis and background of what the New Testament teaches about the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit. This passage should never be out of sight when reference is made to the work of the Spirit and miracles in the New Testament. Joel's prophecy was God's

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promise of inspiration and miraculous gifts to the apostles and the early church during which time the revelation of the gospel was being given.

Joel's prophecy anticipates the time in which the miraculous gifts would be distributed to believers within the first century church through the laying on of the apostles' hands (**Mark 16:15-18; Acts 8:14-19; 19:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:7-11**). That Joel's prophecy embraced more than the apostles is seen from the fact that both men and women ("daughters" and "handmaidens") would become recipients of inspiration (cf. **Acts 2:17-18; 21:9**).

Joel's prophecy also anticipated the spiritual equality of all men. The miraculous gifts would be distributed without distinction as was needed among both Jews and Gentiles ("all flesh"), male and female ("sons" and "daughters"), rich and poor ("servants") old and young ("young" and "old"). This demonstrated that the gospel was for all without racial, social, sexual, or gender distinctions (**Gal. 3:26-29**). Spiritual gifts distributed among the Gentile Christians presented an argument that no Judaizing teacher could answer (**Gal. 3:2-5**).

II. DEFINITION OF MIRACLES

However one decides to define a miracle one thing is certain: one must distinguish between the natural and the supernatural. A natural event is something that takes place in harmony with God's natural laws that the Creator himself set in motion at the beginning of time. These are everyday, ordinary happenings such as the falling of rain, the birth of a child, or the budding of a flower. These are not miracles but natural, normal occurrences in which events transpire in complete accord with God natural laws.

A providential event is a happening in which God does something but utilizes his natural law as means to accomplish whatever he desires. Instead of God operating contrary to his laws he acts in harmony with and by means of these laws. An example of God acting providentially is the giving of our daily bread in answer to prayer (**Matt. 6:11**). God gives the bread. He is the source of the gift and he gives it to mankind but he does so through and by utilizing natural laws that he has already set in motion.

A miracle, however, is when God does something by acting contrary to his natural laws. It is an event which transcends and temporarily sets aside that which is natural. For example, God has always turned water into wine by natural processes. The grape vine with its root system draws moisture from the ground which travels up through the vine and into the grape. Over a period of several months this moisture (water) turns into grape juice. Jesus miraculously turned water into wine, however, when he circumvented the grape vine and the natural laws that ordinarily govern the processes of making wine (**Jno. 2:1-11**).

Miracles therefore are events that cannot be explained by natural phenomenon. It was an event that pointed to supernatural power and influence. For example, when Peter and John performed the "miracle of healing" on the lame man the Jewish authorities concluded: "*for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem, and we*

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cannot deny it” (**Acts 4:16, 22**). Even these unbelievers could not deny the obvious. Miracles demonstrated that their source was nothing short of divine power and thus they are referred to a “*mighty works*” (literally “powers,” **2 Cor. 12:12**).

III. PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

My objective here is to focus on one word in two New Testament passages that informs us of at least one reason for which God intended the design of miracles. Following the giving of the Great Commission in which our Lord informed his apostles that miraculous signs would accompany the believers as they went forth and preached the gospel (**Mark 16:15-18**), the inspired writer makes this comment: “*And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed*” (**Mark 16:20**). Again, and perhaps with the preceding passage in mind as he wrote, the Hebrews writer states that the “*great salvation*” was “*confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will*” (**Heb. 2:3-4**).

Of interest here is the fact that in both of these passages it is specifically stated that God’s word was “confirmed” by miraculous signs. This term is translated from the verb form, *bebaioo*, found eight times on the pages of the New Testament. According to the Greek-English lexical authorities the word in this context carries the meaning of “to verify, to prove to be true and certain” or “to put something beyond doubt, confirm, establish” (Louw & Nida, p. 340; Danker, p. 173).

The idea is that the miracles were given to the apostles and other inspired individuals to corroborate and authenticate that the message being preached by them originated with God and not man. Miracles performed in conjunction with the oral proclamation of the truth, then, verified the truthfulness of the gospel message. This was especially needful during the first century when the gospel was being orally proclaimed in the absence of any written New Testament record as we have today. This was one of the primary purposes for which miracles were given to the early church and performed everywhere the gospel was proclaimed (cf. **Rom. 15:19**).

IV. CESSATION OF MIRACLES

Miracles were needed to confirm the gospel as it was initially dispensed by oral proclamation through the apostles and other preachers of the gospel (**Acts 8:4-8**). Keep in mind that this was during a time in which there was not yet any written record of New Testament revelation. The apostles could not point to a passage in the New Testament to prove that what they were preaching was God’s truth, as we can do today. The reason why is because the New Testament Scriptures would not begin to be written until some twenty years after the church had its beginning in Acts chapter two.

Once, however, the total and complete revelation of God’s word was given and written down in permanent form there was no use for miracles to continue. There was no need for God’s word to be

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confirmed and corroborated over and over again in every generation until the Lord returns in his second coming. Once the gospel was verified by miraculous manifestation and embodied in written form on the pages of the New Testament then miracles ceased, having served their purpose. This happened sometime by the end of the first century.

In *1 Corinthians 13:8-10* the apostle Paul discusses the use of the miraculous gifts in the first century church and specifically elaborates on their cessation. He states: “*Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.*”

Here the abiding quality of love is set in contrast to the temporary nature of the miraculous gifts. Love would continue on within the church for all time. The spiritual gifts, here represented by the gifts of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge, would “cease” or “be done away.” It was through these gifts that God was miraculously making known the inspired revelation of the gospel. That these gifts were “in part” refers to the fact that only partial, bit-by-bit, piecemeal revelations were given at any given time. All of God’s revelation was not given in one instance. Rather God’s word was revealed over a period of time in which it was presented “in part.”

This partial revelatory process was to be replaced with the arrival of “the perfect” (literally the *complete* thing). The meaning of the passage therefore is this: When the revelatory process (i.e., the communication of divine truth by miraculous inspiration) is completed, the means by which such revelation is made known (i.e., the miraculous gifts) would cease, having served their purpose. The conclusion therefore is that when the New Testament record was fully and finally revealed miracles ceased there no longer being any need for continuous revelation or confirmation of divine truth.

In his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, while specifically discussing the cessation of the miraculous gift of tongues, W.E. Vine states:

There is no evidence of the continuance of this gift after Apostolic times nor indeed in the later times of the Apostles themselves; this provides confirmation of the fulfillment in this way of *1 Cor. 13:8*, that this gift would cease in the churches, just as would ‘prophecies’ and ‘knowledge’ in the sense of knowledge received by immediate supernatural power. The completion of the Holy Scriptures has provided the churches with all that is necessary for individual and collective guidance, instruction, and edification (p. 143).

God always intended miracles to be provisional or temporary in nature. In view of their particular purpose God never intended for miracles to last through succeeding generations up until the twenty-first century. Thus anyone claiming the ability to perform miracles today implies that we do not have God’s completed revelation and that it has never been fully and completely confirmed. Such implications demean God and exhibit skepticism toward God rather than exalting him. What must be appreciated is that miraculous signs were given for a specific purpose. This purpose having been accomplished we may rest assured that we have access to God’s word today in the Bible.

THE MIRACULOUS AGE - *Stephen Wiggins*

Whereas few would claim to be able to raise the dead today as the apostles were able to do many are still adamant that at least *some* of the miraculous operations of the Spirit continue today such as tongues or healings. In view of this claim the late brother James Bales observes that “All the gifts stand or fall together. There is no scriptural argument for the perpetuation of some of them and the cessation of others. If any are available today, all are available (*Pat Boone and the Gift of Tongues*, p. 9).

V. CONCLUSION

In his very popular book, *Miracles*, C.S. Lewis argues strongly for the authenticity of New Testament miracles. Strangely, however, he relegates Old Testament miracles to the realm of myth. This is due to his conviction that truth first appears in mythological form and then over a long “process of crystallization” becomes historical truth. Thus, he is not certain whether or not the “chosen mythology” of Old Testament literature should be viewed in the same light as the New Testament documents (p. 176). This is painful skepticism at its worst.

Every person who accepts the Bible as God’s inspired word will have no problem accepting the miracles of either Testament. We accept without hesitation every miracle recorded in God’s word as genuine. We believe that every miracle recorded within the Bible happened in exactly the same way as God’s word portrays it as happening. The Bible itself is a product of the miraculous work of the Spirit and therefore cannot be mistaken in this matter.

We also accept with the same tenacity those passages that anticipate the cessation of the miraculous age when the completed will of God was given. What one believes and teaches about miracles must be gleaned from what the Bible says about this subject. It is insufficient and irresponsible to talk about miracles divorced from their biblical context. Our understanding of this subject must be grounded in biblical precedent. To do otherwise is to make a dangerous and tragic mistake.

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THE MIRACULOUS AGE - *Stephen Wiggins*

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

Marion Fox

Introduction: The church is depicted as the “house of God” (*1 Tim. 3:15*) and all well-built houses are built on a solid foundation (*Mt. 7:24-25*). This study considers the foundation upon which the Lord’s church is built.

I. The foundation in prophecy.

A. Jesus is the foundation of the church (*Isa. 28:16*).

1. Jesus is the only foundation of the church (*1 Cor. 3:10-11*).

- a. There is no other foundation that can be laid other than Jesus Christ.
- b. This rules out the apostles and prophets being part of a foundation.

2. Jesus is also the chief corner-stone of the church (*Ps. 118:22-23*).

a. This passage is quoted in *Mt. 21:42*, *Mk. 12:10-11*, *Lk. 20:17*, and *Acts 4:11*.

α- The Jewish leaders examined Jesus and determined that He was unfit to be their corner-stone for building. Their view of the kingdom was of a carnal kingdom and not a spiritual kingdom (*Jn. 18:35-36*).

β- The Jews did not walk by faith and stumbled at the stone of stumbling (*Isa. 8:14-15* and *Rom. 9:31-33*).

1) The Jews stumbled at the stone because they did not walk by faith.

2) Those who were spiritually-minded accepted Him as Savior, the carnally-minded ones did not.

b. The corner-stone was to come from Judah (*Zech. 10:3-4*).

3. Note that Isaiah states that the stone is laid for a foundation (the stone is the foundation – *Isa. 28:16*).

a. Even Jesus had to be tried (and shaped) by trials (*Heb. 5:8-9*).

b. Jesus was tried (tempted) in all points (*Heb. 4:15*).

B. What about the claim that the apostles and prophets are part of the foundation (*Eph. 2:19-22*)?

1. The expression “foundation of the apostles and prophets” has two possible interpretations in both Greek and English.

a. It might refer to the apostles and prophets being part of or all of the foundation.

b. It might refer to a foundation laid by them or revealed by them. (This is the only alternative that will harmonize with the remainder of the Scriptures.)

c. The foundation laid by Paul was his doctrine (*Rom. 15:18-21*).

2. To say that the apostles and prophets are part of the foundation is to use figurative language. (Since figurative language is the exception and literal language is the general rule, those who claim it is figurative need to supply a compelling reason for it being a figure of speech.)

II. Lessons learned from the figure of a building built from Jesus as the foundation.

A. The whole house of God (church) is built upon Jesus as the foundation (*Eph. 2:19-22*).

1. The church is the household of God that is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (the foundation they had laid – the gospel).

- a. Each stone has to be shaped to conform to the image of Christ (*Rom. 8:29*).
- b. The chief corner-stone is the pattern for the remainder of the building.
2. Every building has a pattern, Jesus is the pattern for the church (the house of God).
- B. Each Christian is a stone (λίθος) in the wall of the temple (church or house of God) and must be shaped by the chief corner-stone (*1 Pet. 2:1-10*).
1. Definition of the word λίθος “[fr. Hom. down]; a stone: of small stones ... spec. stones cut in a certain form: ...” [Thayer, p. 378]
 - a. This is only one figure (of many) for the child of God in the New Testament.
 - b. These metaphors must not be applied to other passages of Scripture.
2. There is both an internal and an external shaping of the child of God by the word of God (*1 Pet. 1:22-2:3*).
- a. The convert is shaped internally by the Word (*1 Pet. 1:22-25*).
- b. The child of God is to long for the Word in order that he might grow (*1 Pet. 2:1-3*).
3. Finally, Peter goes to the figure of Jesus being a living stone (a shaped stone) to complete the conversion process (*1 Pet. 2:4-8*).
- a. Each Christian is a living stone in the wall of the temple or church (*1 Pet. 2:4-5*).
- b. Jesus (the chief corner-stone) is precious to the spiritually minded person (*1 Pet. 2:6-7*).
- c. The spiritual nature of this process and system repels those who are carnally minded (it does not attract them – *1 Pet. 2:7-8*).

PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH

James E. Foster

Introduction:

- A. The theme of this series of lectures is “First Century Church.”
- B. My subject will be “The Practices of the Church” and will include -
 - a. Worship
 - b. Benevolence
 - c. Evangelism

I. The Worship of the 1st Century Church

- A. The church of Christ is a divine institution
 - 1. Its establishment was in God’s eternal purpose for man - (*Ephesians. 3:10*)
 - 2. It was foretold by the prophets of old - (*Isaiah 2*) (*Daniel 2*)
 - 3. It was purchased by a divine person - (*Acts 20:28*)
 - 4. Jesus Christ, who has been given all authority (*Matthew 28:18-20*), is its head and foundation - (*Ephesians 1:22-23*) (*1 Corinthians 3:11*)
 - 5. It exists to bring glory to God (*Ephesians 3: 21*)
- B. It is obvious that a subject as important as worship to God ought to be seriously and carefully considered by everyone.
- C. It is quite generally taken for granted that almost anything anyone wants to do as an act of worship to God will be acceptable to Him - if only the worshipper is sincere and honest.
- D. It is not enough to just worship (*John 4:24*)
 - 1. The Bible specifies the exact items and methods which the church of the 1st century and every century since then are to use.

II. Acceptable worship in the first century consisted of 5 items

- A. Singing - (*Ephesians 5:19*) (*Colossians 3:16*)
 - 1. Music in worship is divinely authorized
 - 2. This suggests that we recognize certain facts
 - a. The kind of music (only 2 kinds - vocal and mechanical)
 - b. The purpose
 - c. The manner
 - 3. What the New Testament teaches on singing
 - a. *Matthew 26:30*
 - b. *Acts 16:25*
 - c. *Romans 15:9*
 - d. *1 Corinthians 14:15*
 - e. *Ephesians 5:19*
 - f. *Colossians 3:16*
 - g. *Hebrews 2:12*
 - h. *James 5:13*

4. There are two types of commands in the New Testament
 - a. Generic (*Matt. 28:18*) “go” How should we go? The choice is ours: walk, ride, fly, etc.
 - b. Specific (*Ephesians 5:19*) “sing”
5. Its purpose -
 - a. Expression of heart (*James 5:13*)
 - b. Expression of praise and thanksgiving to God (*Hebrews 13:15-16*)
 - c. Teaching and admonishing one another (*Col. 3:16*)
6. The New Testament is absolutely silent of any reference to the use of a mechanical instruments of music in worship to God.
7. There is no authority for their use in the New Testament
8. Even denominational leaders recognized they were never authorized.

--Examples--

1. Catholic Encyclopedia: “...the first Christians were of too spiritual fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice.”
2. John Calvin: “Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to Him.” Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Vol. 1, P. 539
3. John Wesley: “I have no objection to instruments of music, in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.” Methodist (founder)
4. Adam Clark: “Music as a science, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity.” Methodist (commentator)
5. Martin Luther: “Martin Luther called the organ an ‘ensign of Baal.’” McClintock & Strong’s Encyclopedia
6. Charles H. Spurgeon: “I would as soon attempt to pray to God with machinery as to sing to Him with machinery.” Baptist preacher
7. J. H. Garrison: “There is no command in the New Testament, Greek or English, commanding the use of the instrument. Such a command would be entirely out of harmony with the New Testament.” (Christian Church)
8. Professor John Girardeau, Presbyterian Professor in the Columbia Theological Seminary in *Music in the Church*, page 179, makes the following statement: “The church, although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into a corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental music for 1200 years.”
9. Yet we have some in the church today that are using it.

B. Preaching and Teaching (*Acts 5:42*)

1. The early church grew as a result of its teaching and preaching
 - a. It started with about 3,000 being added (*Acts 2:41*)
 - b. It continued to teach and grew to about 5,000 (*Acts 4:4*)
 - c. Multitudes both men and women were added (*Acts 5:14*)
 - d. The number of disciples multiplied (*Acts 6:7*)
 - e. They went everywhere preaching (*Acts 8:4*)
2. They understood the true nature of preaching -
 - a. Was to refute false ideas
 - b. To explain the scriptures
 - c. To convict men of sin
3. This is the supreme work of the church
 - a. Most noble work on earth
 - b. Any church not interested in and active in teaching is not like the church Jesus died for.
4. The church is the only institution authorized by God to preach the gospel (*1 Tim. 3:15*)
 - a. It is to make known the wisdom of God (*Eph. 3:10*)
5. The early church was busy reaching the lost with the gospel (*Col. 1:23*)
6. Jesus had commanded it (*Mark 15:15-16*)
7. The gospel is the only power that God has revealed to save lost man (*Rom. 1:16*)
8. Much of the preaching done today has been softened and toned down.
9. Example: A preacher was quoted as saying, “If you don’t obey the gospel, when you die you will go to hades.” After services someone asked him what he meant by such a statement, for all men go to hades when they die. He said that was right and that he was really talking about Hell, but he hated to use the word in the presence of children!
 - a. I can’t help but wonder how we will keep our children and others from going to a place we won’t even mention.
 - b. We need to boldly preach the whole counsel of God.
10. This soft preaching is called “Weasel Word” preaching.
 - a. The “Everyday Dictionary” by the New York Times says-- “Weasel words are evasive or meaningless expressions.
 - b. The phrase is used to describe what many think to be “softer and safer” speech. Weasel words are constantly used to cover up and avoid reality.
11. Jules Feiffer, a culture cartoonist wrote, “I used to think I was poor. Then they told me I was not poor but needy. Then they told me it was self defeating to think of myself as needy, I was deprived. Then they told me “underprivileged” was overused. I was disadvantaged. I still don’t have a dime, but I have a great vocabulary.
12. Weasel words are used all the time in our everyday life.
 - a. Lumber and paper companies are “Forest Managers.” You don’t hear much of “cutting timber.” That has a negative reaction on certain people (the evolutionists).
13. People now open “Auto Service Centers” rather than a “garage.”

14. They insist you will think more of an automobile if it is “previously owned” rather than “used.”
 15. We no longer have “garbage dumps” but “Sanitary land fills.”
 16. Janitors are now “Sanitation engineers.”
 17. Some of our agricultural experts have decided that milk comes from “Milking parlors” instead of “barns.” It sounds better.
 18. It is humorous to think we would fall prey to such senseless exercise of futility. After all, garbage dumps are still garbage dumps and the smell is just as offensive no matter what they are called.
 19. The religious world is not immune to such use of words.
 - a. Drunkenness is “sickness”
 - b. People living together without being married are not called adulterers or fornicators. It is just a “modern live in arrangement.” Homosexuality is simply an “alternative lifestyle.”
 - c. On every hand the search is on to find words that are smooth to take the place of words like sin, error, wrong, lost, etc.
 - d. All such reminds us of (*Isa. 5:20*) and it further reminds us of (*Isa. 30:10*)
 20. This is a very important subject for our day and time because:
 - a. There are certain liberal teachers and preachers that have set out to change and restructure the church and make it like the denominations.
 - b. But the Bible says we *must* “*continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away --*” (*Col. 1:23*)
 21. There is a wide-spread movement across our land to change the worship of the church.
 22. Many claim they are tired of the “old ways” we have always known to be true.
 - a. Promoters of these changes insist that the church must change if it is to remain relevant to society and appealing to the public - especially to the present generation of young adults.
 23. These changes that are being promoted come as a result of men and women doing what they want and like instead of having a real interest in what God wants.
 - a. (*Titus 1:10-11*)
 - b. (*2 Peter 2:1-3*)
 24. The emphasis in teaching squarely shifts from doctrinal distinction to self gratification.
 - a. I like it, therefore it must be sweet in God’s sight as well.
 - b. But (*Isaiah 55:8-9*) says,... “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts.*”
 - c. “*There is a way that seems right to man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.*” (*Proverbs 14:12*)
- C. PRAYER was another practice of the early church
1. It is said of the disciples (*Acts 4:24*) “*They lifted up their voices with one accord.*”
 2. Prayer has divinely specified conditions
 3. Must address God reverently - (*Matthew 6:9*)
 4. Ask in faith (*Matthew 21:22*) (*James 1:5-8*)
 5. Must be obedient (*1 John 3:22*)
 6. Must be in keeping with God’s will (*1 John 5:14*)

7. Addressed to the Father in the name of Jesus -
 - a. (R.N.C.) Max Lucado - During the Republican National Convention of 2004 in New York City, Max Lucado, a preacher for the church of Christ in Texas, offered the benediction on one of the nights and blatantly left off the name of Christ from the end of his prayer. He has also removed the name of Christ from the front of “his” church in Texas.
 8. The Bible tells us that God hears the prayers of the righteous -
 - a. (**1 Peter 3:12**)
 9. Therefore let us be a praying people like those early disciples (**1 Thes. 5:21**).
- D. GIVING - was another practice of the early church. The early church was a benevolent church.
1. To meet a great need, the disciples pooled their assets and dedicated them to the Lord (**Acts 4:32-37**).
 2. They sold and gave into a common treasury to enable the church to take care of those needs. (**Acts 2:44**) In so doing they didn’t allow anyone to have lack (**Acts 4:34-35**). None said that what he possessed was his own. (**Acts 4:32**)
 3. Now days it is said 25% of the membership assumes 100% of the responsibility. Well, that 25% are the only ones laying up treasures in heaven (**1 Tim. 6:18-19**). When the day of the Lord comes, these foolish 75% will not be able to profit from any of the “oil” in the lamps of the wise 25%. (**Matt. 25: 8-12**)
 4. Our giving should be “*as we have prospered.*”
 5. On the 1st day of the week (**1 Corinthians 16:2**).
 6. Out of a loving “*cheerful heart.*” (**2 Corinthians 9:7**)
 7. We are not to raise money except by freewill offerings.
 - a. Not by garage sales, car washes, bake sales, etc. in the name of the church.
 8. As Paul stated to the elders of Ephesus, we are to “*remember the word of the Lord Jesus Christ how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive.*”
 - a. (**James 1:27**)
 - b. (**Ephesians 4:28**)
 - c. This includes all members -
 - d. Remember Christ came to minister and serve, not to be served.
 - e. Let’s be like Him. (**Gal. 6:10**)
- E. THE LORD’S SUPPER was another Practice of the Early Church
1. It must be done for the right purpose, on the right day, using the correct elements.
 - a. Some do not respect the authority of the scriptures with reference to the Lord’s supper.
 - b. An elder in a North Carolina church, while teaching a class said, “The Lord’s supper is an individual decision and not absolute to salvation. Alternatives: Take the supper Thursday evening since that is when the Lord established the supper in the first place. Take the Lord’s supper once a year since the Jews took the Passover meal once a year. Take the Lord’s supper each Sunday - the Lord’s supper will be offered here each week if you choose to take it or don’t take it at all. There is more scripture to support foot washing than there is for the Lord’s supper.” * See references at end of lesson.

2. The Lord's supper was instituted on the night the Lord ate the Passover with his disciples.
3. The Passover was instituted just before the children of Israel left Egypt (*Ex. 12:11*) and just before the destruction of the first born (*Ex. 12:12*).
4. The purpose of the Passover was to commemorate the Lord passing over and sparing the children of Israel at the death of the 1st born. (*Exodus 12:14*)
5. It was also ordained to teach people of future generations (*Exodus 12:26-27*).
6. Likeness between Passover and the Lord's supper
 - a. Both are memorials
 - b. At both the Passover lamb was slain
 - c. Lamb was to be without blemish (*Ex. 12:5*), (*1 Peter 1:19*)
 - d. No broken bones (*Ex. 12:46*), (*Psa. 34:20; John 19:36*)
 - e. Each had a God appointed day. (*Numbers 9:1-13*), (*Acts 20:7*)
 - f. What does this teach concerning those who miss the Lord's supper at its appointed time?
 - g. Each had unleavened bread
7. The Purpose of the Lord's Supper
 - a. Memorial - "*This do in remembrance of me...*"
 - b. Jesus wanted to be remembered - just as God the Father wanted Israel to remember Him.
8. The supper is to be taken by those saved by the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, in remembrance of Him on the 1st day of each week till He comes again. (*1 Cor. 11:23-30*), (*Acts 20:7*)

III. The Church of the First Century had God's Approval of their Worship - if we do the same today, we will also have His approval.

- A. Why take a chance on doing something that might cause one to lose his soul? (*2 Jno. 9*), (*Matt. 15:9*)
- B. We have scriptural authority and God's approval for:
 1. The Lord's supper on the first day of the week (*Acts 20:7*)
 2. Giving of our means (*1 Cor. 16:2*) as prospered (*2 Cor. 9:7*)
 3. Singing (*Ephesians 5:19*)
 4. Preaching and teaching His word (*1 Tim. 4:15-16*)
 5. Prayer (*Acts 4:24*)
- C. The early disciples continued steadfastly (*Acts 2:42*)

CONCLUSION:

- A. For the church to be all that the Lord would have it to be, we need more "POETS."
 1. Not the literary kind, but the kind mentioned in (*James 1:22*)
 2. James in this verse is encouraging Christians to be "doers" of the word and not hearers only -
 3. The word "doer" is derived from a word denoting "creative action."
 4. This is used especially in the field of poetry.
 5. The word is translated "poet" in (*Acts 17:28*).

- B The great need of the day is for each member to become a “creative” doer of God’s word.
1. Sermons and lessons are audited week after week without any positive effort on the part of many to put the truth into practice.
 2. It is sad to say, but many members read chapter after chapter in the Bible without making a positive effort to carry it out or make application to themselves.
 3. To be saved, each member must continue to be “... *doers of the word and not hearers only.*”

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JEWS & GENTILES:

Legal & Cultural Background of the First Century Church

Benjamin J. Williams

INTRODUCTION

Much of the Bible is misunderstood because of an ignorance of the Historical Context in which it was written and the conditions of the people to whom it was written. This lesson hopes to shed some light on some important features of the time leading up to the New Testament and the background of the people that constituted the church of the first century.

I. Survey of the Days of the Law of Moses

A Special People

1. The Jews were a special race (*Zech. 2:7-8*).
 - a. God preserved the Jews because of the promises made to their righteous forefathers, such as:
 - 1) Abraham (*Gen. 12:1-3*),
 - 2) Jacob (*Mal. 1:2*),
 - 3) And David (*Isa. 37:33-36*).
 - b. The Messiah was to be the seed of Abraham (*Gen. 17:19; Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16*).
2. The Jews enjoyed special blessings.
 - a. When the Jews were righteous, they enjoyed prosperity and success (*Deut. 29:9; Josh. 1:7*).
 - b. When the Jews sinned, they were punished by the withdrawal of these blessings, but they were never allowed to be utterly destroyed (*II Chr. 13:12; Neh. 9:30-31*).

B. The Law & the Gentiles

1. The Law of Moses was **not** for all mankind.
 - a. The Law of Moses was a special law given to the Jews alone (*Deut. 5:1-3*).
 - b. The Law of Moses contained no evangelistic provision for taking Judaism into the entire world. Either God was a respecter of persons who wanted the Gentiles to remain ignorant and lost, or God allowed the Gentiles to live and be justified by another law, in particular, the law they had been living under all along – the Patriarchal Law.
2. The Gentiles continued under the Patriarchal law.
 - a. Three examples will demonstrate that the Gentiles lived under some law that they could follow and in so doing be acceptable to God.
 - 1) Balaam was a Gentile. He was also a prophet of God, because:
 - a) His prayers were heard and he correctly anticipated a direct response from God (*Num. 2:8-9*),
 - b) And God was concerned with what he would do to Israel (*Num. 22:12*) whereas God would not have cared whether a false prophet cursed or blessed Israel (*I Kings 18:26-29*).
 - 2) Nineveh was a Gentile city. They were told to repent and they did. God was pleased with their repentance, yet there is no indication that they ever became proselytes (*Jon. 2*).

- 3) Cornelius was a Gentile, proven by God's comparison of him to what would have been unclean meat under the Law of Moses (*Acts 10:11-14*). A proselyte would not have been properly compared to an unclean animal. The people also knew that Cornelius was not a Jew or a Jewish proselyte (*Acts 11:3*). Cornelius worshipped prior to his baptism and that worship was accepted by God (*Acts 10:1-4*). A pagan's worship would not be acceptable to God, so Cornelius must have worshipped according to some system.
- b. The natural conclusion is that the Gentiles continued to live under the Patriarchal Law during the duration of the Law of Moses. The law of the patriarchy included:
 - 1) Sacrifices (*Gen. 4:3-5; Job 1:5*),
 - 2) Communication through the patriarchs and some prophets (*Gen. 12:1*; also see Balaam),
 - 3) An oral, moral code containing the same ethical precepts as the Law of Moses (*Rom. 2:13-15*),
 - 4) And a priesthood role for the patriarchs (*Job 42:8*).
3. The Gentiles eventually became sufficiently wicked that God no longer dealt with them, waiting instead for the coming of Christ (*Act 17:30* *And the times* [referring to a period of time] *of this ignorance* [idolatry, v. 29] *God winked at* [looked pass the time, not ignored the ignorance]; *but now commandeth dl men every where to repent:*)

II. Legal Transition

A. The Passing of the Old Law

1. The Law of Moses had a specific purpose in its own time.
 - a. It helped prevent sin (*Gal. 3:19*).
 - b. It showed the need for a better system (*Gal. 3:21-22*).
 - c. It taught about sin's consequences (*Gal. 3:22*).
 - d. It prepared the Jews for Christ (*Gal. 3:24*).
2. The Law of Moses was kept and fulfilled by Christ (*Matt. 5:17-18*)
3. The Law of Moses is no longer in affect today.
 - a. The Law of Moses was abolished by the cross of Christ (*Col. 2:14*). You can study the context to see that the handwriting of ordinances is the Law of Moses.
 - b. The Law of Christ came into affect after Christ's death (*Heb. 9:14-17*).
4. The Law of Moses continues to serve a purpose today, but not as a law (*Rom 15:4*). The Law teaches us important principles.

- ### B. The institutions of Judaism continued after the Law of Moses lost its effectiveness (*Heb. 8:13*). Proponents of Judaism were the greatest persecutors of the early church, as demonstrated by many examples in Acts. The remains of Judaism were destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

III. Gospel to the Gentiles

A. The Measure of the Their Fathers

1. The Jewish leadership and many other Jews were corrupt.
 - a. John refused to baptize them due to their lack of repentance. He also preached of their doom (*Matt. 3:7-12*).
 - b. They acted as their fathers that killed the prophets (*Matt. 23:29-39*).
 - c. They rejected both Christ and His Gospel (*Acts 7:51-60*).

2. The Jews' rejection of the Messiah and His Gospel was prophesied.
 - a. Prophesied by Isaiah, *Isa. 6:9-10*
 - b. Quoted by Christ, *Matt. 13:12-15*
 - c. Quoted by John, *John 12:37-41*
 - d. Quoted by Paul, *Acts 28:23-28*
 3. Other Jews believed and obeyed the gospel, but they were constantly hounded and persecuted.
- B. What God Has Called Clean
1. Cornelius was the first Gentile to be converted (*Acts 10 and 11*).
 2. The gospel went to the Gentiles in addition to the Jews from that time forward. The result was that many congregations contained both Hebrew and Gentile Christians.
- IV. Fitly Framed Together
- A. Problems Between Jews & Gentiles
1. Hebrew converts had difficulty overcoming their disdain for Gentiles. The incident Paul records exemplifies this (*Gal. 2:9-11*).
 2. Some Hebrews tried to bind the Law of Moses on Gentiles, especially the act of circumcision (*Acts 15:1-2*).
- B. Promoting Unity
1. The instructions given to the Jews & Gentiles of the first century church serve as a model for Lord's church today.
 2. Unity is necessary for the members of the church to walk worthy of the name "Christian" (*Eph. 4:1-6*).
 3. The fact that Paul rebuked Peter and contended with the men trying to bind the old Law teaches that the path to unity is through truth and character, not race or compromise.
- C. One Spirit
1. The problem can be overcome when Christians have a common mind/heart/character (*Acts 2:44-46; Phi. 1:27-28*).
 2. Paul told the Jews that the "new Jew" was one that was a Jew by character, not birth (*Rom. 2:28-29*).
 3. *Rom. 15:5-6 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: [6] That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

CONCLUSIONS

- The descendants of Israel were a chosen people with a special law – the Law of Moses.
- The Gentiles continued to live under the prior law during that time – the Law of the Patriarchs.
- Both laws began to pass away as the New Testament went into effect – the Law of Christ.
- The character and doctrine that united the first century church under the Law of Christ must unite Christ's body today for us to do His will.

CATHOLIC TRADITIONS vs. BIBLE HISTORY

Gary Henson

INTRODUCTION

- A. Growing up, my mother would always take my sister and myself to mass. Upon one occasion my mother was ill, and my father, who was a Baptist, dropped us off. Yet, and I remember clearly, as we arrived he said kindly, yet with sobering concern, "I cannot see how one man can tell everybody else what to do."
- B. I was no more than eleven years old when I heard those words, but they would resurface when I was seventeen. "Yes. Just why is it that a mere man is telling everyone else -- is telling me -- what to do in religion? Isn't that only for God to do? And doesn't He do that with the Bible? Although the Catholic Church began very early and is quite large in number, something is not right."
- C. I was then open to other possibilities. I did a little looking around, and I thank God I came in contact with the church of Christ. By means of Bible classes and sermons I was able to learn the truth concerning the plan of salvation, the oneness of the church (in contrast to the great falling away and denominationalism) and other truths. What a priceless blessing was now mine, all because a speck of doubt was placed in my mind concerning the head of the Catholic Church.
- D. Since then, a continuing study of the Scriptures, church history, debates which others had with Catholics and visits with other former members of Catholicism have confirmed many times my decision concerning Catholic traditions verses the Bible and history.

BODY

I. The Origin of the Catholic Church--Two Alternatives

- A. The Bible predicted there would be a falling away (*1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:1-12*).
 1. Thus, one of three choices must have occurred:
 - a. The larger portion of the church remained faithful, and a small portion fell away;
 - b. The larger portion fell away while a small portion remained faithful (and was hidden in insignificance); or
 - c. All of the church fell away (but was restored in place to place and from time to time as various individuals read and built according to the instructions of the Bible).
 - B. The above three choices (when considering history) present the following alternatives:
 1. Either the Roman Catholic Church is the true church while a small portion fell away, or: the Roman Catholic Church (although it was by far the larger portion) is that which fell away.
 2. One of these alternatives must be true. Not 'both'; not 'neither'; but one and only one *must* be true. The ramification of the correct answer is truly extensive.
 - a. If the Roman Catholic Church is the true church, then all non-Catholics are in error and ought to repent and join the Catholic Church.
 - b. However, if the Roman Catholic Church is that which fell away, then all in Catholicism (as well as those who have merely tried to reform Catholicism) are in error and must repent and return to the way the church was before it fell away.
 - c. Yes, the correct answer is very weighty.
 - C. So, how do we determine which alternative is correct?

1. The prophecy of **2 Thess. 2:3-4** identifies a characteristic of that portion which fell away. It reveals,
"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the second coming of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."
 - a. Furthermore, verse 7 indicates that the factors which would lead to the falling away were already at work in Paul's time. [*"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work...."*]
 - 1) Thus, this man of sin would eventually in the future (as **verse 6** indicates when it states: *"...that he [the man of sin] might be revealed in his time."*) come from within the apostate group, and, as **verse 8** makes clear, he would continue until the second coming of Christ.
 - 2) Since the apostasy was beginning at Paul's time, and the man of sin would still be alive at the second coming (as **verse 8** makes clear: *"whom the Lord...shall destroy with the brightness of his coming"*), such clearly indicates that this man of sin would be a succession of men who held the same position.
 - b. Thus, a clear identification mark of the group which fell away (in distinct contrast to any who did **not** fall away) is the arising of a man (succession of men) who is exalted above all others in "Christianity," even to the extent of holding the place of God on earth.
2. Does the Roman Catholic Church have such an identification mark?
 - a. Ask any Catholic, "Who is the head of your church on earth?" The answer will be, "The pope." Such will *always* be the answer because that is what Catholicism believes. [*"Vicar of Christ, a title of the pope implying his supreme and universal primacy, both of honour and of jurisdiction, over the Church of Christ" (Catholic Encyclopedia, 15:403)*].
 - b. Furthermore, Catholicism maintains that the pope is the vicar (acting in place) of Christ [See quote above]. It is even claimed that he has the ability on occasions to speak with infallibility. [*"But its present meaning was formally determined by the Vatican Council, Sess. IV, const. de Ecclesia Christi, c.iv: 'We teach and define that it is a dogma Divinely revealed that the Roman pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the Divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals..." (Catholic Dictionary, p.667)*].
 - c. It is without question, the Roman Catholic Church *does* have a succession of men who are exalted above all others, even to the extent of holding the place of God on earth, and such is the identification mark of the group that fell away.

D. CONCLUSION:

1. The two alternatives were: either the Roman Catholic Church is the true church and a small

portion fell away, or the Roman Catholic Church itself was the apostasy.

2. Due to sheer number, we wish it could be otherwise, but the truth is simply unmistakable.

II. The Pope

- A. The Roman Catholic Church stands or falls upon the claim that the pope is the head of the church as a successor to Peter.
 1. If the pope is the successor to Peter (who is claimed to be the first pope), then the Roman Catholic Church is the true church.
 2. However, if the doctrine regarding the pope is false, then the Roman Catholic Church is an erroneous organization.
- B. In their attempt to establish the papacy, it is claimed that **Matt. 16:18** teaches that Peter is the first pope.
 1. This verse reads the same in the KJV and The Douay-Confraternity Version (authorized Catholic version): "*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.*"
 2. However, this verse does not support the Catholic's claim.
 - a. First, in order for Peter and the rock to be the same thing, they must be the same gender (masculine, feminine or neuter).
 - 1) A *man* would not be described with words such as: she or her.
 - 2) However, "Peter" is PETROS which is *masculine*, and "rock" is PETRA which is *feminine*! (Moulton, p. 323).
 - 3) Thus, Peter and the rock *cannot* be the same thing.
 - b. Second, there is a difference in the words' definitions.
 - 1) "PETRA denotes a mass of rock, as distinct from *petros*, a detached stone or boulder, a stone that might easily be thrown or easily moved" (Vine, III, 302). Liddell and Scott add, "*petros, o, a stone, distinguished from petra*" which they define as, "*shelf of rock*" (p.636). Bullinger adds, "*petra, a rock, a projecting rock, a cliff; geographically, 'a rock in situ,' as distinguished from petros a stone, a rolling stone, a loose stone, that might be thrown by the hand, etc.*" (p. 650).
 - 2) Thus, the two are distinct and distinguished from each other.
 - a) One is small and can be easily handled; the other is massive and virtually immovable.
 - b) One is but a stone ("...thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone" [**John 1:42**]); the other is a secure foundation (**Matt. 7:24-25**).
 - 3) Thus, when Jesus uses the words *petros* and *petra*, instead of indicating they are the same, He is making it clear that they are *not* the same!
 - c. Furthermore, in **Matt. 16:18-19**, Peter is given the keys which allowed him to bind and loose.
 - 1) Thus, if one has the keys, then he can bind and loose; and, if one can bind and loose, then he obviously has the keys.

- 2) However, Peter was not the *only* one who had the power to bind and loose. In ***Matt. 18:18***, the other apostles *also* were given the authority to bind and loose--which was possible only if one had the keys. Thus, they likewise had the keys.
 - 3) This makes clear that Jesus, in ***Matt. 16:18-19***, was not making Peter the head of the church, or else there are supposed to be twelve popes functioning at the same time.
3. Conclusion: Truly, not only does ***Matt. 16:18*** fail to teach the beginning and the validity of the office of the pope, it refutes it. Consider other verses which likewise reveal this doctrine to be false.
- C. If, according to the Catholic Church, the pope cannot be married, then anyone who is married cannot be pope.
1. However, Peter *was* married (***Matt. 8:14*** - - "*And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother...*"). It is obvious is it not, in order for Jesus to see Peter's *wife's mother*, Peter had to have had a *wife*!
 2. Therefore, Peter could *not* have been a pope.
 3. It has been objected that Peter's wife had died *before* he became the pope. [Reply]: Such is untrue because (when the church had been in existence for more than twenty years) Paul wrote the book of First Corinthians in which he referred to Peter's living wife (***1 Cor. 9:5***).
- D. If Peter was the sole head of the church on earth, then *no one* would have been his equal.
1. Yet, Paul said he was *not behind* the very chief of apostles (***2 Cor. 11:5***).
 2. Since Peter was an apostle, and since Paul was *not behind him*, then Paul would have either been Peter's *equal* or his *superior*!
 3. Yet, *neither* alternative fits Catholicism.
- E. If Peter was the head of the church to the extent that it would be built upon *him* (as the Roman Catholic Church claims ***Matt.16:18*** to teach), then the church would be built upon *no one else*.
1. However, the church is said to be built upon *others* (the apostles and prophets [***Eph. 2:19-20***]).
 2. Therefore, Peter was *not* the head of the church.
- F. If it is biblical to bow down before the pope (if he is the vicar of Christ [a man standing in the place of Christ]), then it would be biblical to bow down before Peter.
1. Yet, Peter *prohibited* a man from bowing to him (***Acts 10:25-26*** [Cornelius]).
 2. Therefore, Peter was *not* the vicar Christ. Peter would have known that one is to bow before God (***Matt. 4:10***), but he also knew that he was not the vicar of Christ (who would be deserving of the bow). Rather, he knew he was but a man (***Acts 10:26***).
- G. If Peter was an apostle, and if no apostle was to have dominion over the others, then Peter did not have dominion over the others (and, thus, he was not pope).
1. Yet, ***Matt. 20:20-28*** teaches that *no apostle* was to have dominion over the others.
 2. Therefore, Peter did *not* have dominion over the other apostles. Thus, he was not pope.
- H. If Peter was an elder, and if the oversight of an eldership is limited to *only* the *local* congregation, then Peter did *not* have the oversight of the *entire* church.
1. Peter *was* an elder, and the oversight of an eldership *is* limited to only the local congregation (***1 Pet. 5:1-2***).

2. Therefore, Peter did *not* have the oversight of the *entire* church--because he was not a pope.
- I. If Peter did not have the authority to teach something different from what the inspired men had previously taught, and if popes (who claim to be successors of Peter) teach something different from what the inspired men taught, then the authority from which they speak is not from God.
 1. Peter did *not* have the authority to teach something different from what the inspired men had taught (*Gal. 1:8-9*), and popes *do* teach something different from what the inspired men taught (purgatory, mechanical instruments, etc.).
 2. Therefore, the authority from which they speak is *not* from God--but from men (*Matt. 21:24-24; 15:9*).
- J. [Conclusion] With these verses it is abundantly clear that the crucial doctrine upon which the entirety of Catholicism stands is false. It is not a teaching from God. Rather, it is that which men in the great apostasy have produced.
 1. Actually, it was a doctrine which did not even exist until it finally evolved some 430 years later with Boniface III being the first to be named pope (Boettner, pp.7-9). Although the Catholic Church claims to have a historical record of the succession of popes, it is acknowledge by one of their own authorities there are no such records for the first 300 years.

"The sources from which the historian must reconstruct the story of the primitive church, are from the point of view of his task, far from ideal. There are no diaries, memoirs, or correspondence of the chief actors, no dossiers of official papers, no systematically filed records, certificates, and statistics. There are the summary lives of Our Lord we call the Gospels. There are letters from various Apostles to different communities of believers, and, in the next two centuries, a none too voluminous collection of polemical, apologetical, and expository writings. *But nowhere save in the Acts of the Apostles, is there, for nearly three hundred years, anything that can be called a contemporary historical record.* The precious facts, very often, are no more than the carefully gleaned *obiter dicta* of the theologian and the controversialist, of the unbelievers and the heretic too, no less than of the Catholic writer" (Hughes, p.2-3). (Emp. added).
 2. Furthermore, when records are submitted to establish a record, they are subject to being a forgery.
 - a. "Substituting of false documents and tampering with genuine ones was quite a trade in the Middle Ages" (*Cath. Ency.*, VI, 136).
 - b. "Writers of the fourth century were prone to describe many practices (i.e., The Lenten Fast of Forty Days) as apostolic institutions which certainly had no claim to be so regarded" (*Cath. Ency.*, III, 484).
 - c. "Six centuries passed before it was discovered that the Pseudo-Isadorean or False Decretals as they are now called, were to a great extent a forgery" (*Cath. Dict.* p. 105).
 3. Thus, there are no records which trace a succession of popes to Peter. Even if there were such records, it would not matter because the Bible not only fails to teach such a position, it refutes it.
 4. It is true then, one man *cannot* tell everybody else in the church what to do.

III. *Ex Cathedra* and "The Infallible Source"

A. Explanations.

1. *Ex cathedra* is the belief that the pope, upon occasions, is able to speak with infallibility (inspired of God).
2. "The Infallible Source" is the contention that the Holy Spirit guides the church (Roman Catholic Church) into a perfect interpretation of the word through (at least) the pope. **John 14:26** is used in the attempt to support this claim. It reads: "*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*"
3. These two beliefs, if strongly indoctrinated, clench a powerful grip upon the Catholic.
 - a. He is convinced that the Roman Catholic Church is the original church (not the apostasy), and that God has made the pope the head of the church through whom He speaks and interprets the Bible.
 - b. Thus, whatever the pope says is right (regardless of what the Bible says, or what any denominational person might tell him).

B. However, the Catholic needs to consider carefully: if the age of miraculous gifts ceased upon the completion of the writing of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, then miraculous prophesying (which would include *ex cathedra*) and miraculous interpretations, knowledge and discerning of spirits (which would include "The Infallible Source") have ceased.

1. The miraculous gifts *have* ceased upon the arrival of the perfect (**1 Cor. 13:8-13**) which is the completed New Testament (**Rom. 12:2; Jas. 1:25**).
2. Therefore, the miraculous prophesying and interpretations no longer occur.

C. Thus, the belief in *ex cathedra* and "The Infallible Source" is a belief which has been conjured to trap a multitude.

IV. The True New Testament Church?

A. The argument.

1. If it can be shown that the true church today must be identical to the church in the New Testament, and if it can be shown that the Roman Catholic Church is **not** identical to the church in the New Testament, then it can be shown that the Roman Catholic Church is *not* the true New Testament church.
 - a. How then, can it be shown that the true church today must be identical to the church in the New Testament?
 - b. Such can be accomplished quite simply by a question: "*True or False: The Catholic church affirms that any church today which is not identical (in worship, government and beliefs) with the church as established by Jesus Christ and as written in the New Testament, is not the true church which Jesus built.*"
 - 1) If the reply is "false," then:
 - a) This implies that God can contradict His teachings (i.e., teach a doctrine one way in

the first century, but teach the exact opposite in the twentieth century). Yet, one of the statements of a contradiction must be a falsehood (lie), but neither God, nor truth, lie (*Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:21*).

b) Also, if a church does not have to be identical to the original church, then denominationalism would then be approved of God, and *all* "churches" are accepted with God.

c). Of course, the Roman Catholic Church would not agree to either of these ramifications.

2) Thus, the answer must be "true," which is precisely what one Catholic authority said: "...if it be not identical in belief, in government, etc., with the primitive Church, then it is not the Church of Christ" (*Catholic Facts*, p. 27).

2. Conclusion: the Roman Catholic Church is *not* the true New Testament church.

B. Identical? or changes?

1. The Roman Catholic Church, then, in order to be the true church of Christ, must be identical to the primitive church. Is it? Or have there been changes?

2. The Catholics *themselves* admit the following are later additions: the priesthood (*Cath. Dic.*, p. 692); clergy (*Cath. Dic.*, p. 189); employing the word "Father" (*Cath. Dic.* p. 342); papal infallibility (*Cath. Dic.*, p. 674); church government (*Externals of the Catholic Church*, p.19); a hierarchy (*Cath. Ency.*, VII, 334); candles and incense (*Cath. Ency.*, III 246); holy water (*Cath. Ency.*, III, 76); purgatory (*Externals of the Catholic Church*, p. 351); Lent (*Cath. Ency.*, III, 484); fasting (*Cath. Dic.*, p. 340); the word "mass" (*Cath. Ency.*, X, 6); multi-observance of mass (*Legislation on the Sacraments in the New Code of Canon Law*, p. 87); sprinkling holy water on the people (*Cath. Dic.*, p. 403); and many, many more.

C. With all these changes, it is obvious that the Roman Catholic Church is *not* identical to the primitive church, and if it is not identical to the primitive church, then it is *not* the true church of Christ.

CONCLUSION

1. When talking with a Catholic, it *must* be realized how *they* view Christianity.

a. They believe that they are the original church (not the apostasy) which is set up by God to have a pope, through whom God guides the church today. They are taught to accept what the pope and the church teach.

b. Thus, one will find but little success in discussions about infant baptism, purgatory, mass, etc., for the Catholic will resort to, "You are wrong because I am in the original church which has the pope and "The Infallible Source" (the church) which teach otherwise."

2. However...

a. ...identifying Catholicism as the apostasy,

b. ...revealing how *Matt. 16:18* fails to teach that Jesus was making Peter a pope,

c. ...presenting other verses which make clear that Peter was not a pope,

d. ...explaining how miraculous guidance from God no longer occurs,

e. ...and listing the changes in the church (in contrast to the primitive church) which have either been

introduced or approved by the pope,
f. ...you then might get some precious soul to wonder, "Just how can it be that one man can tell everybody else what to do?"

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HERESIES within the CHURCHES of CHRIST

Gary Smith

There has always been the possibility of heresies within the Church. Men and women are created free moral agents. We may choose to do right and we may choose to do wrong. God never instilled within man a tendency toward wrong. If God instilled within man a tendency toward wrong then it would be inevitable that man sin. If God instilled within man the tendency toward right then it would be inevitable that man sin not. What God instilled within man is the ability to recognize right and wrong. And God instilled within man the right to choose one or the other based upon that recognition. Man is a creature of free will and volition. He is forced to neither choose right nor wrong. What man does with his life is entirely within his choosing. In the beginning God created man in his image: “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*” (**Gen.1:26**). The terms image and likeness refer not to man’s physical characteristics, but to his spiritual resemblance to his maker. Man (male and female) is like his creator rationally and morally. God created a chasm between man and beast by giving man the capacity for fellowship, self-awareness, self-consciousness, speech, moral discernment, values, and worship. It is indeed man’s ration and moral properties that identify his likeness to God. But it must be kept in mind that in the beginning man is not pure because of his habit or manner of living. For these characteristics have yet to be established by him choosing what is right, and by rejecting what is wrong. In what sense then is man like his creator when it comes to morals? Man, in the beginning is morally innocent, as is his creator. He is untainted by sin for he has not known sin. Man, in the beginning, is rationally like God in that he has the ability to reason based upon information. But it must be kept in mind that this rational is untapped until God gives him revelation. Thus man’s likeness to God is in his ability to reason and recognize certain values in life. But it is God who must define, enumerate, ascribe, characterize, and assign the degree of values upon all things and upon all actions. I now speak of man’s condition in the beginning to properly understand his condition today. Man was created in the image of God. Man tainted his image by using his God-given volition for evil. Today men and women struggle to regain and retain what was lost by sin. But the sin of Adam did not loose salvation for all men. All men who sin as Adam sinned loose their salvation, not because Adam sinned, but because they sinned: “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death passed by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*” (**Rom.5:12**).

Sin is possible seeing that God created man a free moral and rational agent. Man has the ability to discern evil from good, and he has the ability to reason and recognize the reward and the recompense of his actions. The beast has no concept of eternal consequence. The beast does not discern the potential good in recognizing a higher power. The vocabulary (utterances) of the beast is essentially the same year after year, generation after generation, century after century. The great gulf that God fixed between man and beast is seen when the scripture says, “*...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul*” (**Gen. 2:7**). What God breathed into man’s flesh was the ability to reason, to discern, to decide, to determine, and consequently to dominate. Man was given the power to dominate all the animals. But man himself is no animal; he is the combination of flesh and spirit. It is the spiritual part of this fleshly entity that is made in the image and likeness of

God. Man dominates, not by the power of his cerebral content, but by the power of his invisible soul. Man, according to the purpose of God, is to dominate all other creatures of the earth. But man's dominion encompasses more than all the creatures; it encompasses life itself. Man is to dominate life. This living soul created in God's image had within the garden of Eden a never ending source of life called "*the tree of life*" and it stood "*in the midst of the garden*" (**Gen. 2:9**).

The reason I have spent so much time discussing the beginning, of time, the creation, and of man and woman, is because so much error results from not understanding the beginning.

I. Calvinism and the proposed sinful nature of man

- A. Man is created in God's image
- B. Is man sinful?
- C. From whence did man derive this sinful nature?
- D. Is man a creature of free will?
- E. Why offer sacrifices?

II. The Doctrine of Inherited Sin

- A. Sin is not a biological trait (**I John 3:4**)
- B. What is inherited sin?
- C. Definition of inherit
 - 1. To receive (property or a title, for example) from an ancestor by legal succession or will.
 - 2. To receive by bequest or as a legacy.
 - 3. To receive or take over from a predecessor: *The new administration inherited the inherited the economic problems of the last four years.*
 - 4. Biology To receive (a characteristic) from one's parents by genetic transmission.
 - 5. To gain (something) as one's right or portion.

D. **Ezekiel 18:20-24** .

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to All the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

III The Role of man (the male) in the beginning

- A. To share in dominion over the world with the female
 - 1) **Gen. 1:28** "And God blessed them, and **God said unto them**, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish** the earth, and **subdue** it: and have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*" They, the man and the woman were to have dominion over all the animals.

Please notice that this dominion of the male and female is not designated as a dominion that is held as a union. This observation will become important in other matters of doctrine.

- 2) God made both man and woman in his image—not merely the male *Gen. 1:27* “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” *Gen. 5:1, 2* “*This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; v.2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.*” It is important to observe that it is not the union of man and woman that is made in the image of God. Both the man and woman, individually, are made in the image of God. If a man never marries a woman he is nevertheless in the image of God. If a woman never marries a man, she is nevertheless made in the image of God. This observation will later become critical in understanding the roles of men and women in the age of Christianity.

B. To rule over the woman

- 1) *Gen. 3:16* “*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*”
- 2) Adam is not to desire the leadership of the woman
- 3) The first source of consultation is God

IV The Distinctive roles of males and females

A. *Mt. 19:4-6* “*And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he **which made them at the beginning made them male and female,** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*”

- B. God made man in two distinct sexes. One sex is to desire the opposite sex. The male is to desire the female, and the female the male.

V The Distinctive role of the female

A. Eve was a help meet (suitable) for Adam *Gen. 2:20*

B. Adam was first formed, then Eve

- 1) What this means is that Eve **did** not become subject to the man after sin. She was subject unto man from the beginning of her creation. The expression “*Adam was first formed then Eve*” is a play on words in the Greek language. The Greek word arche means either *beginning* or *ruler*. It was a common understanding of New Testament writers that the first to be was over all others. The word first protos is here used as a synonym for arche to depict the right of ruling. This mindset was derived from the Hebrews who gave greater honor to the firstborn. When Jesus said, “I am the first and the last” he referred to his rightful place on the throne of God. Since he was the self-existing one he was before all others.
- 2) *Col. 2:17* “*And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the **beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in things he might have the pre-eminence.***” There are four key words that demand our special attention:
 1. before derived from pro
 2. consist from sunestaken

3. beginning taken from arche meaning ruler
4. firstborn derived from the compound protos, first, and tikto, to beget.

If we think about what is being taught here and how it is being taught we will glean a much better understanding of the role of females in the religious arena. First, the male is before the female. Second, the woman is upheld by the man—her frame work—her ostem—her steel—her ability to stand comes from the man. In the man all of the woman consists. She stands with him by his strength—this signifying her purposed role from God.

Gen. 2:21-23 “*And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*”

Third, she is *after the man* thus signifying her position of service as a helper in contradistinction to a leader. Fourth, Adam was the firstbegotten signifying his pre-eminence.

VI The distinctive role of women according to New Testament Doctrine

- A. **I Tim. 2:8** “*I will therefore that men*”
- B. **I Tim. 2:9** “*In like manner that women*”
- C. **I Tim. 2: 9** “*the women*”---significance of the definite article—an articulate expression
 - 1) the article limits the noun or pronoun that it modifies
 - 2) the means by which it limits will be identified in the context
 - 3) the expression “that women” is literally the women. The word that is not present in the original
- D. **I Tim. 2: 10** “*But which becometh women*” –Notice the change from an articulate noun to a non-articulate noun. Notice that the word women is plural. The writer thereby indicates that “the women” (that is Christian women) behave as becometh women. The first noun is articulate followed by an anarthrous noun. The idea conveyed is that the Christian women are to behave as becometh women (the role given in the beginning).
- E. **I Tim. 2:12** “*But I suffer not woman to teach*”
 - 1) the word “a” is not necessary in the text.
 - 2) The word woman is now singular instead of plural indicating that the penman is addressing womankind.
 - 3) The writer is not saying I suffer not Christian women to teach, but rather saying I suffer not woman to teach or usurp authority over man.
 - 4) The major premise for Paul’s argumentation goes back to the beginning
I Tim. 2:13, 14
- F. **I Tim. 2:12** “*I suffer not woman to teach*”
 - 1) meaning of the word teach (didasko)
 - 2) **Titus 1:9** to exhort and convince the gainsayer

VII The distinctive roles of man and woman in marriage

- A. The husband is the head of the wife **Eph. 5:23**
- B. The wife is to submit to the husband **Eph. 5:24**

VIII The distinctive roles of man and woman in Church

- A **I Cor. 14: 34** “Silence in the Church”
- B. This type of silence is not demanded of the men
- C. “*If they will learn anything*” speaks not of learning by any means, but rather is an idiom for method of learning. If they are not allowed to learn in the ordinary sense of the word then they would be better off not being there. They were not allowed to interrogate the men teachers.
- D. They were not allowed to have an open discussion of the scripture during the corporate worship. The statement, “*If they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home*” speaks of the restriction that is placed upon them in contrast to the lack of this same restriction regarding the men of **verse 31**: “*For ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn...*” (v. **31**). In other words all the men were allowed to prophecy in order to learn—but not so with the women. Their method of learning involved neither interrogation nor questions.
- E. “*Their husbands*” is derived from tous idious andras which is literally the men of you or “your men” if put in the English possessive case. In this context this expression should be understood in light of the similar expression of **verse 34** which says, “*Let your women*” which is derived from Ai gunaikes umon, literally the women of you or “your women” if put in the English possessive case. The expression “your women” should not be understood as your wives. Neither should the expression “your men” be understood as “your husbands.” This, no doubt does add to the constant misinterpretation of this text. Tous idious andras should be understood as their men, but not limiting the expression to a husband and wife relationship. The expression would have included the son, the father, the grandfather, or any other man living in the household. Likewise the expression Ai gunaikes umon should be understood as “your women,” not indicating or limiting the meaning to wives, but rather embracing the women of the congregation.
- F. “*As also saith the Law*”
- 1) Why should a woman who is under subjection to one member of the body of Christ have the right to rule over the many?
 - 2) “The Law”→ “*Thy desire shall be to thy husband*” **Gen 3:16** “*He shall rule over thee*”

For those who would limit this verse to the relationship of husbands and wives be aware that this implies that only married women are forbidden to speak in the assembly. Thus the prohibition would be women who are married must keep silent. If this is the case then there is no prohibition against unmarried women preaching to the congregation.

THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH

Jerry C. Brewer

INTRODUCTION

- A. Evangelism is the prime work of the church. The church which does not recognize this fails to understand the purpose for its existence. That singular mission is coexistent with the mission of Christ Himself (*Lk. 19:10*)
- B. “Evangelism” is the act of preaching the gospel. While this word does not appear in the New Testament, the word “evangelist” appears three times (*Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5*) and describes one who “evangelizes” or preaches the gospel.
- C. When the disciples were scattered from Jerusalem, Luke writes that they “*went everywhere preaching the word*” (*Acts 8:4*). When he wrote that the Samaritans “believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ,” he used the Greek verb *euaggelizo* which means, “to announce good news (‘evangelize’) espec. The gospel—declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel)” (James Strong, *Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*).
- D. The evangelistic church, then, is the church which preaches the gospel of Christ to the lost wherever it has opportunity, and this is the singular mission of the church.
- E. It has been taught, and I once taught, that the mission of the church is three-fold, i.e., evangelism, edification, and benevolence. While all of these are necessary in the lives of Christians, the mission of the church is not to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, nor is its mission to merely edify itself. Understand that all of these must be done, but only evangelism is the church’s mission. It is useless to practice benevolence and edify the church when the lost remain lost. While Jesus fed multitudes (*Mark 6:30-44*) He did not feed every hungry person in Israel. While He performed many miraculous healings of the infirm, He did not affect cures for every person in His time. Instead, He proclaimed that His mission was to save the lost through His teaching (*John 6:44-45*). Edification and benevolence are necessary works of the church, but they do not constitute its prime mission.
- F. Let us look, then, at the evangelistic church as described in the pages of Holy Writ.

I. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH UNDERSTANDS WHAT THE GOSPEL DOES

- A. The gospel is God’s power to save (*Rom. 1:16-17*). Where the gospel does not go, there can be no salvation for man.
- B. Paul understood the urgency of the gospel message (*1 Cor. 9:16*).
- C. In our postmodern society which says that each person’s belief is truth, even if it contradicts another, many in the church have lost sight of this central truth—the gospel is the means by which God saves men. Postmodernism has given a great shot in the arm to the false doctrine of universalism and few people can be found who believe anyone will be eternally lost—even if they are ignorant of the gospel. The evangelistic church recognizes this doctrine for what it is—one of the devil’s prime weapons in his war against God and the Truth.

II. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH KNOWS TRUTH SAVES AND ERROR CONDEMNS

- A. This means the evangelistic church will never compromise the Truth, for Truth mingled with error is error. Jesus said the Truth frees from sin (*John 8:32*).

- B. On the other hand, error condemns men's souls. Satan's greatest tactic in leading souls to eternal torment is not a frontal assault against Truth, but the subtle ploy of mingling error with it. He used God's words to mother Eve, but added a single three-letter word to lead her into sin (*Gen. 3:4*).
- C. The evangelistic church preaches the pure, simple saving gospel unmixed with the doctrines, opinions, feelings or "think-sos" of men (*2 Tim. 4:1-4*).
- D. The evangelistic church also knows that preaching the gospel of Christ will make enemies of many of those who do not want it (*Gal. 4:6*) but we must never cease preaching it.

III. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH IS A TRULY CONVERTED CHURCH

- A. It is impossible to persuade others to obey the gospel when members of the church do not demonstrate its saving, cleansing power in their own lives (*1 Tim. 4:16*).
- B. It is hypocritical to preach that others should obey the gospel and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world (*Titus 2:11-12*) when we refuse to live by those precepts we preach.

IV. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH UNDERSTANDS IT IS A VINEYARD

- A. The Lord described the kingdom as a vineyard (*Matt. 20:1-16*) and members of the kingdom as His laborers.
- B. The householder in the parable hired laborers into his vineyard. There is no place for idlers in the church. Idlers are dead wood which saps the energy and strength of the church and causes that energy to be spent on them instead of being spent to seek and save those who have never heard the gospel.
 - 1. There is always something for everyone to do in the Lord's vineyard. No one who is a Christian is too young or too old to perform some work in evangelizing in his community.
 - 2. My mother died last December at age 92. One of the last works she did in the Lord's vineyard was to roll 100 copies of the November issue of The Gospel Preceptor to be thrown to houses in Carter, Oklahoma. No one is ever too old or too young to evangelize.

V. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH IS A STUDIOUS CHURCH

- A. Before one can teach the gospel to others, he must first know it himself. The church which is evangelistic and fulfills its mission is one in which its members hunger and thirst after righteousness (*Matt. 5:6; Psalms 1:1-2; 2 Peter 2:2*).
- B. The evangelistic church is one in which members add to their Bible knowledge daily (*2 Peter 1:5-8; 2 Tim. 2:15*).
- C. Members of the evangelistic church also know and understand that their own faith is increased through study of God's word (*Rom. 10:17*). Thus, in increasing their own faith, they fortify themselves to better resist the devil and to convert others to Christ.

VI. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH IS STEADFAST

- A. By that we mean steadfast as the church at Jerusalem was (*Acts 2:41-42*).
- B. The Jerusalem church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. This means they continued not

only to learn, but to practice and preach the doctrine of Christ which was revealed through the apostles (*John 16:13; 14:26; Acts 2:1-4*).

VII. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH IS COURAGEOUS

- A. One of the greatest problems faced by the church today is opposition from a postmodern world which denies that such a thing as absolute, objective Truth exists. This opposition comes from without and sometimes from within the body of Christ.
- B. Persecution comes to God's people in all forms. Paul assured Timothy that Christians will suffer persecution (*2 Tim. 3:12*). Persecution can range from being called names like "Campbellite" to the most extreme forms as Stephen suffered (*Acts 7:59-60*) and as Christians who were sewn into animal skins and torched to light the streets of Rome during Nero's reign.
- C. But none of these things can keep the evangelistic church from fulfilling its mission of preaching the gospel (*2 Tim. 2:8-10*).
- D. Even stocks and a jail cell could not bind the word of God Paul preached (*Acts 16:25-33*).
- E. The Jerusalem church was courageous in the face of such persecution and boldly answered those who sought to stop their preaching (*Acts 4:18-20*).

VIII. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH UNDERSTANDS ITS MISSION

- A. The church is the only institution charged with preaching the gospel. If we don't do it, it won't be done (*2 Tim. 2:2*).
- B. The Jerusalem church did not cease preaching the word of God after it was scattered upon the death of Stephen (*Acts 8:4*).
- C. From Jerusalem, the word of God was taken to Samaria by Philip (*Acts 8:5-12*) and then to Ethiopia through the conversion of that country's treasurer (*Acts 8:26-39*).
- D. In a single generation (about 30 years) the first century church evangelized the entire world (*Col. 1:23*) and they did it without benefit of air travel, computers or the internet. How much more are our opportunities than theirs? That being so, how much greater is our responsibility to utilize every means at our disposal to preach the gospel to the lost?

IX. THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH UNDERSTANDS THE VALUE OF SMALL EFFORTS

- A. Philip had great success in preaching to large crowds in Samaria, but was called away from that effort to preach to a single man on a lonely road running from Jerusalem to Gaza. His effort in preaching to that single soul sent the gospel to the country of Ethiopia (*Acts 8*).
- B. Today we have the great internet technology which can send the gospel around the world with the click of a mouse button. Great work is being done in this way by such efforts as the Online Academy of Biblical Studies. The students in my class this semester are from Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, and the Philippines. They attend an internet class every Saturday and take what they learn to others in their communities. This great work under the oversight of the elders of the Phillips Street church in Dyersburg, Tennessee and directed by Tom Bright is literally taking the gospel to the entire world through the internet.

- C. The Gospel Preceptor also maintains a website presence on the world-wide web and since its internet debut on January 17, 2002 almost 88,000 people have visited the site. What a tremendous asset we have to carry the gospel to that many people!
- D. But the measure of success for the evangelistic church is not in numbers, but in doing the will of God (*Matt. 7:21*). Small evangelistic efforts in doing God's will that may seem insignificant will yield great results, for the salvation of a single soul is worth more than all the world (*Matt. 16:26*).
 - 1. Two dear friends where I preached a few years ago related how they learned and obeyed the gospel of Christ. They were shopping at Walmart in Yukon, Oklahoma when they saw a note on the bulletin board that offered a free Bible correspondence course. They took down the information, wrote for the course and were baptized into Christ because someone used an small, insignificant means of evangelizing.
 - 2. Two members of the Northeast church in Elk City were on their way to the air-port in Oklahoma City. In the course of their trip, they took gospel tracts and left them wherever they stopped. The wife, who was flying to Michigan to visit her sister, left tracts on the plane. Now, that plane not only took her to Michigan, but went on to other cities, delivering and picking up passengers. A single gospel tract could have been read by dozens of people.
 - 3. One doesn't have to be a gospel preacher to evangelize. Evangelism can take the forms described above, or as Aquila and Priscilla in private teaching (*Acts 18:26-28*). The results of their private teaching of Apollos was far reaching.
- E. Evangelism can be in a great meeting like Philip's in Samaria or in a simple note on the bulletin board at Walmart. As we consider the great mission before us, let us look at every possible, scriptural way to carry the saving message of Christ to the world around us. Not only do the souls of others depend upon our efforts, but our own souls do as well.

CONCLUSION

The prime work of the church of Christ is preaching the gospel to a lost and dying world. That work involves every man, woman, boy, and girl who is a Christian. It is not the work of the gospel preacher alone, nor of the elders alone, but it is the prime mission of each Christian. As those who were scattered from Jerusalem, let us go forward, clad in the armor of God (*Eph. 6:13-19*) and preaching the word in every place. The souls of the world about us, as well as our own souls can be saved *only* if we are a truly evangelistic church.

The CHURCH of the NEW TESTAMENT: CAN IT EXIST TODAY?

David Watson

I. THE DEFINITION OF RESTORATION

A. Restore (verb)

1. Latin: *re*-again; *staurare*-to make strong
2. To bring back to a former or normal condition, as by repairing, rebuilding, altering, etc.; as, restore a building, painting, etc.

B. Restoration (noun)

1. A putting or bringing back into a former, normal, of unimpaired state or condition.
2. **Galatians 6:1**
 - a. **Matthew 4:21**
 - b. **Mark 1:19**
- C. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk **therein**.” (**Jer 6:16**)

II. THE DESCRIPTION OF JOSIAH’S RESTORATION

A. The Reign of the King

1. The Conspiracy against the King
 - a. “And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house.” (**2 Kings 21:23**)
 - b. “And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house.” (**2 Chr. 33:24**)
2. The Coronation of the King
 - a. “And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.” (**2 Kings 21:24**)
 - b. “And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.” (**2 Kings 21:26**)
 - c. “But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.” (**2 Chr. 33:25**)
3. The Chronology of the King (640-609 B.C.)
 - a. “Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem.” (**2 Kings 22:1**)
 - b. “Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.” (**2 Chr. 34:1**)
4. The Character of the King
 - a. “And he **did that which** was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.” (**2 Kings 22:2**)
 - b. “And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there **any** like him.” (**2 Kings 23:25**)
 - c. “And he **did that which** was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways

*of David his father, and declined **neither** to the right hand, nor to the left.” (2 Chr. 34:2)*

B. The Reforms of the King

1. The Chronology: *“For in the eighth year of his reign (632 B.C. age 16), while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year (628 B.C. age 20) he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.” (2 Chr. 34:3)*
2. The Cleansing: *“And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that **were** on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust**of them**, and strowed **it** upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.” (2 Chr. 34:4-5)*
3. The Cities: *“And **so did he** in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.” (2 Chr. 34:3-7)*
4. The Companion/Co-Laborer: *“The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.” (Jer. 1:1-2)*
5. The Commission: *“See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.” (Jer. 1:10)*

C. The Repairs of the King

1. The Collection: *“And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah (622 B.C. age 26), **that** the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people: And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which **is** in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.” (2 Kings 22:3-7)*
2. The Construction: *“Now in the eighteenth year of his reign (622 B.C. age 26), when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. And when they came to Hilkiyah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of*

*all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem. And they put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house: Even to the artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and **other** of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of musick. **Also they were** over the bearers of burdens, and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites **there were** scribes, and officers, and porters.” (2 Chr. 34:8-13)*

III THE DISCOVERY OF JOSIAH’S RESTORATION

A. The Report of The Book

1. *“And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.” (2 Kings 22:8)*
2. *“And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD **given** by Moses. And Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah delivered the book to Shaphan.” (2 Chr. 34:14-15)*

B. The Reading of The Book:

1. *“And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.” (2 Kings 22:8-10)*
2. *“And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it. And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen. Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.” (2 Chr. 34:16-18)*

C. The Reaction to The Book

1. The Clothing
 - a. *“And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.” (2 Kings 22:11)*
 - b. *“And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.” (2 Chr. 34:19)*
2. The Command

- a. *“And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king’s, saying, Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah...” (2 Kings 22:12-13)*
- b. *“And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king’s, saying, Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah...” (2 Chr. 34:20-21)*
3. The Concern
 - a. *“...concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.” (2 Kings 22:11-13)*
 - b. *“...concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.” (2 Chr. 34:19-21)*
4. The Communing
 - a. *“So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.” (2 Kings 22:14)*
 - b. *“And Hilkiah, and **they** that the king **had appointed**, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) and they spake to her to that **effect**.” (2 Chr. 34:22)*
- D. The Revelation of The Book
 1. The Curses
 - a. *“And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.” (2 Kings 22:15-17)*
 - b. *“And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, **even** all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and*

shall not be quenched.” (2 Chr. 34:23-25)

2. The Compassion

- a. *“But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, **As touching** the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard **thee**, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy **grave** in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.” (2 Kings 22:18-20)*
- b. *“And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel **concerning** the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard **thee** also, saith the LORD. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.” (2 Chr. 34:26-28)*

IV THE DEDICATION OF JOSIAH’S RESTORATION

A. The Reading

1. The Congregation

- a. *“And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.” (2 Kings 23:1-2)*
- b. *“Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.” (2 Chr. 34:29-30)*

2. The Covenant

- a. *“And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all **their** heart and all **their** soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.” (2 Kings 23:3)*

b. *“And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.” (2 Chr. 34:31-32)*

B. The Restoration

1. The Corruptions Purged

a. *“And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.” (2 Kings 23:4)*

b. *“And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.” (2 Kings 23:5)*

c. *“And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.” (2 Kings 23:6)*

d. *“And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.” (2 Kings 23:7)*

e. *“And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man’s left hand at the gate of the city.” (2 Kings 23:8)*

f. *“Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem,” (2 Kings 23:9a)*

1) *“But they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.” (2 Kings 23:9b)*

g. *“And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.” (2 Kings 23:10)*

h. *“And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.” (2 Kings 23:11)*

i. *“And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings*

- of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake **them** down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.” (2 Kings 23:12)
- j. “And the high places that **were** before Jerusalem, which **were** on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.” (2 Kings 23:13)
- k. “And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.” (2 Kings 23:14)
- l. “Moreover the **workers with** familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away” (2 Kings 23:24a)
2. The Completion of Prophecy
- a. “Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, **and** the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, **and** stamped **it** small to powder, and burned the grove.” (2 Kings 23:15)
- b. “And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that **were** there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned **them** upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.” (2 Kings 23:16)
- c. “Then he said, What title **is** that that I see?” (2 Kings 23:17a)
- 1) “And the men of the city told him, **It is** the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.” (2 Kings 23:17b)
- 2) “And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones.” (2 Kings 23:18a)
- 3) “So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.” (2 Kings 23:18b)
- d. “And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke **the LORD** to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel.” (2 Kings 23:19)
- e. “And he slew all the priests of the high places that **were** there upon the altars, and burned men’s bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.” (2 Kings 23:20)
3. The Command of Passover
- a. “And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as **it is** written in the book of this covenant.” (2 Kings 23:21)
- b. “Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth **day** of the first month. And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD, And said

unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; **it shall not be** a burden upon **your** shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel, And prepare **yourselves** by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. And stand in the holy **place** according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and **after** the division of the families of the Levites. So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that **they** may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these **were** of the king's substance. And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred **small cattle**, and three hundred oxen. **Conaniah** also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand **small cattle**, and five hundred oxen. So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment. And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled **the blood** from their hands, and the Levites flayed **them**. And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as **it is** written in the book of Moses. And so **did they** with the oxen. And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the **other** holy **offerings** sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided **them** speedily among all the people. And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron **were busied** in offering of burnt offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron. And the singers the sons of Asaph **were** in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters **waited** at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them. So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah. And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept." (2 Chr. 35:1-19)

- c. *“Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, **wherein** this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.” (2 Kings 23:22-23)*
- C. The Reason: *“That he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.” (2 Kings 23:24)*
- D. The Result: *“And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that **pertained** to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, **even** to serve the LORD their God. **And** all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.” (2 Chr. 34:33)*

V. THE DEMISE OF JOSIAH’S RESTORATION

- A. The Resistance:
 1. The Confrontation:
 - a. *“In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him” (2 Kings 23:29a)*
 - b. *“After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him.” (2 Chr. 35:20)*
 2. The Command: *“But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? **I come** not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from **meddling with** God, who **is** with me, that he destroy thee not.” (2 Chr. 35:21)*
 3. The Combat: *“Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.” (2 Chr. 35:22)*
- B. The Result:
 1. *“And he (Necho) slew him (Josiah) at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre.” (2 Kings 23:29b-30a)*
 2. *“And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in **one of** the sepulchres of his fathers.” (2 Chr. 35:23-24a)*
- C. The Requiem:
 1. *“And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.” (2 Chr. 35:24b)*
 2. *“And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they **are** written in the lamentations.” (2 Chr. 35:25)*
- D. The Record:

1. “Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, **are** they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?” (2 Kings 23:28)
2. “Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to **that which** was written in the law of the LORD, And his deeds, first and last, behold, they **are** written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.” (2 Chr. 35:26-27)
- E. The Removal: “Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.” (2 Kings 23:26-27)

VI THE DEMAND OF RESTORATION

- A. The Revelation:
 1. The Creator not The Creature: (*Jer. 10:23*)
 2. The Complete: (*1 Cor. 2:9-13; 13:8-12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jam. 1:23-25; 2 Pet. 1:3*)
 - a. The Book/Bible/Blueprint (2 Kings 22:8; 2 Chr. 34:15)
 - b. The Old Paths, The Good Way (*Jer. 6:16; Mat. 11:28-30*)
- B. The Reading:
 1. The Creatures:
 - a. By all and to all (2 Kings 22:8-10; 23:1-2; 2 Chr. 34:16-18; 29-30)
 - b. To every creature (*Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16*)
 2. The Curses:
 - a. 2 Kings 22:15-17; 2 Chr. 34:23-25
 - b. *Gal. 1:8-9; Rev. 22:18-19*
- C. The Reaction:
 1. The Covenant:
 - a. 2 Kings 23:3; 2 Chr. 34:31-32
 - b. *Mat. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; Heb. 5:9; 8:5*
 2. The Churches: (*Acts 19:8-10; Rev. 2-3*)
 - a. Ephesus
 - b. Smyrna
 - c. Pergamos
 - d. Thyatira
 - e. Sardis
 - f. Philadelphia
 - g. Laodicea
 - h. Colosse
 - i. Hierapolis
- D. The Reforms/Repairs: (*Jer. 1:10*)
 1. The Cleansing of Corruptions (2 Chr. 34:4-5; 2 Kings 23:4-20, 24)

- a. *1 Cor. 5:1-13*
- b. *Rev. 2-3*
2. The Construction according to Commandments (*2 Kings 23:21-23; 2 Chr. 34:8-13; 35:1-19*)
 - a. *1 Cor. 11:17-34*
 - b. *Rev. 2-3*
3. The Character: (*2 Kings 22:2; 23:25; 2 Chr. 34:2*)
 - a. *Col. 3:17*
 - b. *1 Pet. 4:11*
- E. The Results: (*2 Kings 23:24; 2 Chr. 34:33*)
 1. *2 Tim. 4:6-8*
 2. *John 14:1-6; Rev. 21-22*