

***THE ACTS OF THE
APOSTLES***

OR

***THE ACTS OF THE
RISEN LORD***

STUDIES 1 - 12

***TEACHER
MANUAL***

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

GOING THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:1-3

Acts 1:1-3 -*The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

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

In many ways, **Acts** is the most exciting book in the New Testament for it is so full of movement and interest. These studies will be expository, devotional, practical and varied. This first study in the series is introductory to the whole.

To begin with, notice the following -

1. TITLE.

The book is known as “The Acts of the Apostles”. This is correct, though in the main it only tells us of the “acts” of two apostles:

Peter, whose ministry was to the Jews and whose great word was “repent”, and

Paul, whose ministry was to the Gentiles and whose great word was “believe”.

Strictly speaking, however, this book does not record the acts of men but of the Risen Lord, who, by the Holy Spirit, filled and used men as His instruments. This is the meaning of -

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

Luke tells us that in his Gospel he recorded many of the things “that Jesus began both to do and teach.....”.

Read -

Luke 1:1-4 - *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,*

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses,

and ministers of the word;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

For 33 years the Holy Spirit had indwelt, filled and worked through the human body of the Man Christ Jesus. Then, this same Man returned to Heaven and the Holy Spirit came and filled His mystical body, the Church. Thus the Lord continued to do His mighty works from the throne.

It is more correct, therefore, to call this book “The Acts of the Risen Lord”, or “The Acts of the Holy Spirit”. Because of this, the **Book of Acts** is an unfinished book. It records the continuing work of the Risen Lord from Heaven.

2. WRITER.

Luke wrote his Gospel, and also the **Book of Acts**.

Compare -

Luke 1:1-4 - *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,*

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

Acts 1:1-3 - *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

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

Both letters were written to Theophilus.

3. DATE AND PERIOD.

It was written about AD 63 and covers approximately 33 years of history. Our Lord lived upon this earth for 33 years, which, incidentally is the average life span of a man. In **Acts** we have an example of what can be accomplished through one generation of believers.

4. KEY VERSE -

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

KEY WORD - is “witness”.

In this one verse we have a bird’s eye view of the whole book. We start by reading of the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, the ecclesiastical centre, and conclude with the preaching of the gospel in Rome, the centre of world power.

Now consider some reasons why we should study this wonderful Book of Acts.

1#. It is the record of actual history.

Be sure of this. It is authentic.

2 Timothy 3:16 - *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

It is the first book ever written of Church history. It is the history book of the Church of which we are members. It applies to this Church age and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit in which we are living. Compare -

Matthew 16:18 - *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Acts 2:41 - *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them a Then they bout three thousand souls.*

The “building” and the “adding” are still going on!

2. It is full of instruction for us as Christians.

It is our text book.

2 Timothy 2:15 - *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

In it we learn how to worship, how to walk, how to witness, how to win souls, how to pray, how to conquer, how to suffer, how to rejoice in tribulation, how to live for the Lord, and how to die for the Lord.

This book tells us how the early Christians gave, how they worked together and how they acted in times of crisis. What an exciting record it is!

3. It contains a clear exposition of vital Christian doctrine.

Romans, of course, is the text book of theology, but in **Acts** we hear the Christian gospel being preached and we see it working. We hear it in the sermons and speeches of Peter, Paul, Stephen, Philip, James and Ananias.

We quickly learn what a Christian believes and how he is to present the gospel to others.

All the vital Christian doctrines are emphasized in the **Book of Acts**. "All the notes of the Christian gospel are sounded. They peal forth in rapturous harmony." It is significant to notice that the message, though preached by very many different people, is always the same.

4. It contains many thumbnail biographies.

Read through **Acts** and pick out the stories told, in brief compass, of individuals who God saved, blessed and used for the extension of His kingdom.

Read of Stephen - **Acts 6:5-7:60**.

Read of Dorcas - **Acts 9:36-42**.

Read of John Mark - **Acts 13:1-13**.

Read of Apollos - **Acts 18:24-28**.

For your own guidance, make a list of these biographies. Make your list alphabetically. When you have completed it, you will have a valuable aid to further study.

5. It has a strong missionary emphasis.

The **Book of Acts** is the authorized missionary manual of the Church. It deals with the why, the how and the where of missionary work. It speaks of the evangelization of cities. For example read **Acts 8:1-8**

It speaks also of individuals. For example read **Acts 8:26-39**.

It shows concisely how men are called and equipped for missionary service. This book inspires, makes, trains, instructs and equips missionaries. It is a missionary book from start to finish.

Acts 13:1-5 - *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

6. It describes many notable conversions.

This will inspire you. Read of the conversions at Pentecost - **Acts 2:36-42**.

Of the conversion of the Queen's Treasurer - **Acts 8:26-39**.

Of the conversion of Cornelius - **Acts 10:1-48**.

Of the conversion of Lydia - **Acts 16:13-15**.

Of the conversion of the Jailer - **Acts 16:25-34** -

Of the conversion of Crispus - **Acts. 18:8.**

These are but examples of what God can do! Yes, examples of what God can do and of what He is doing all over the world today through the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the gospel and in answer to the prayers of God's people.

7. It is of great spiritual value.

To read the **Book of Acts** will send us to our knees. It will raise the temperature of our love for the Lord. It will fire us with new zeal and will stir us to be active in the Lord's service. Read of the men who turned the world upside down and you will be turned upside down also.

Acts 17:6 - *And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;*

Read of what God can do with ordinary men and women when they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

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

Acts 4:33 - *And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*

Acts 17:6 - *And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;*

The late Dr. Campbell Morgan used to say that a study of this book will do two things for us.

First - it will fill us with hope. We shall realize what a wonderful Lord we have, what a mighty Person the Holy Spirit is and what a powerful gospel has been entrusted to us.

Second - it will fill us with shame. To read this book will humble us and send us to our knees causing us to cry out, "Lord, do it again".

So, read through **Acts** again and again. Study it prayerfully, eagerly, methodically and expectantly.

WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:4-5

Acts 1:4-5 - *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

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

What do these verses tell us?

They record the final great command that the risen Lord gave to His first followers. He had commissioned them to preach the gospel.

Matthew 28:19 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

Now, just before His ascension, He told them that “they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father”, which, He said, He had often spoken about.

In order that we may clearly understand what our Lord was referring to, and how the promise of the Father related not only to them but to us, we shall ask and answer three main questions.

1. WHAT WAS THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER?

It was the promise of the advent of the Holy Spirit. Before Pentecost, in all earlier dispensations, He was working in the world and in the lives of God’s people.

In the Old Testament, we have instances of His coming upon men to empower them for special service.

For example:

Bezaleel -

Exodus 31:3 - *And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,*

Eldad and Medad -

Numbers 11:26 - *But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp.*

Gideon -

Judges 6:34 - *But the spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.*

Samson -

Judges 14:19 - *And the spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.*

Thus far, however, He had not come to abide with and in all God's people.

The promise of the Father was the promise that the Holy Spirit would come to Pentecost to do a distinctive threefold work in the lives of all Christians.

It was a promise that related to this period of time in which we are living, the Dispensation of the Spirit, the Church age.

a#. It was given through the prophet Joel.

Joel 2:28-32 - *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:*

29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

32 *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.*

b. *It was proclaimed by John the Baptist.*

John 1:29-34 - *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

30 *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.*

31 *And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.*

32 *And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.*

33 *And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

34 *And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

c. *It was referred to many times by our Lord Himself.*

John 7:37-39 - *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

John 14:16-17 - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

John 15:26 - *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:6-7 - *But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

John 16:13-14 - *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he*

speak: and he will show you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

d. It was anticipated by our Lord after the resurrection. This was an earnest of Pentecost.

John 20:22 - *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

e. It was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

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

The promise of the Father, then, was the promise that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit would come in a special way to do a threefold work in the lives of all God's children.

These three ministries of the Holy Spirit would only come into operation at and after Pentecost and throughout the whole of this dispensation.

2. What were (and are) these ministries?

a. He would come to BAPTIZE them all.

John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize His people with the Holy Ghost.

John 1:33 - *And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

Jesus told His people that they would be "baptized with the Holy Ghost".

Acts 1:5 - *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

The doctrinal explanation of this baptism of the Spirit is to be found in -

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 - *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or

Gentiles,

At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came and filled the 120, they were up until then isolated units, but He united them into the body of Christ. Pentecost marked the formation of the Church, the body of Christ.

All our “fathers” were baptized into Moses and in the sea once.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 - *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;
4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

That was never repeated. Likewise, the baptism of the Spirit was historical and collective and not to be repeated. By the baptism of the Spirit, every Christian has been placed into the body of Christ.

b. He would come to INDWELL them all.

John 14:16-17 - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

Notice these words of the Saviour which pointed forward clearly to their fulfillment.

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

The Holy Spirit, Who had been with them, would thereafter be in them - “for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”. The distinctive mark of a Christian is that he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is true of every Christian from the moment of believing on Christ.

The following references confirm this.

John 7:39 - *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

Romans 5:5 - *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Romans 8:8-9 - *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

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

1 Thessalonians 4:8 - *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.*

c. He would come to EMPOWER, them all.

In other words -

Luke 24:49 - *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

and

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

were fulfilled in the experience of these first disciples.

Acts 2:41 - *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

We only have to read through the **Book of Acts** to see how wonderfully these early Christians were empowered when the Holy Spirit clothed them.

3. WHY DID THEY HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE PROMISE?

They had to wait for God's time, in accordance with -

Leviticus 23:15-17 - *And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:*

16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD.

Doubtless the waiting time was a time of heart searching and of earnest prayer.

Luke 11:13 - *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

In God's calendar, Pentecost had to come fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. They had to wait - they did wait - the Holy Ghost came in fulfillment of our Lord's promise.

4. DO WE HAVE TO WAIT?

- a. WE DO NOT have to wait for the Holy Spirit to baptize us into the body of Christ.*

What is spoken of in -

1 Corinthians 12:13 - *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

has already taken place. We enter into the good of this at the moment of conversion. Every believer is already baptized into the body of Christ. There is, therefore, no command in scripture to seek the baptism of the Spirit.

- b. WE DO or MAY have to wait for the Holy Spirit, Who indwells us, to fill and possess us.*

Read again -

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

He waits to fill us.

Ephesians 5:18 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

He can only fill and possess us if we do not grieve Him.

Ephesians 4:30 - *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

or quench Him -

1 Thessalonians 5:19 - *Quench not the Spirit.*

c. ***WE DO*** have to wait for the Holy Spirit to empower us for special service.

We do not wait for Him but on Him, in order that He may endue us with power and thus make our service for Him effective.

1 Corinthians 2:4 - *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:*

Let us rejoice that the promise of the Father has been fulfilled and that the Holy Ghost has been given without measure.

John 3:34 - *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

As believers, we have been baptized into His body, the Church, and are members one of another. Let us give Him the right of way in our lives and be utterly dependent upon Him for Him to fill us with Himself and use us for His glory.

Take us, Lord, oh, take us truly,
Mind and soul, and heart and will!
Empty us and cleanse us throughly,

Then with all Thy fullness fill.

THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY MANDATE

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 -*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

This key verse is where we learn from the lips of our Lord Himself, His own plan for world evangelization, or what is to be “the whole work of the whole Church for the whole age”.

How is the gospel to be spread today? Who are the people to do it? How are they to do it? What are their resources for doing it? These and other questions find their answer in our study verse.

1#. THE PEOPLE CHOSEN BY THE LORD.

It is important and encouraging to notice that God does not choose angels or supermen, but ordinary men and women to be His witness. “Ye.....you.....ye.....” - mark these pronouns in -

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

How often we come face to face with the principle enunciated in -

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 - *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Most of His witnesses are ordinary folk like ourselves. This brings us to the important point - God expects every Christian to be a witness.

Dr. Pierson said, “Witnessing is a necessity of a truly saved soul. A light that does

not shine, a spring that does not flow, a seed that does not grow is not more an anomaly than a life in Christ that does not witness for Christ.“

Every Christian is to be a witness. This means that God has, or should have, witnesses everywhere - in homes, in shops, in offices, in hospitals, in factories. Everywhere, wherever there is a Christian, there should be a witness.

It is clear then that the people whom God chooses to be His witnesses are all those whom He saves by His grace. Read through the **Book of Acts** and make a note of those whom God saved and then used as His witnesses.

You are a Christian. Are you a witnessing Christian?

2. THE PLAN ADOPTED BY THE LORD.

What is the function of the witness? To witness means to give a testimony based on personal knowledge. A witness must tell, not what he thinks or supposes, but what he knows from personal experience. He must give first-hand, up-to-date evidence. Compare -

John 3:11 - *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.*

John 9:25 - *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

Acts 22:15 - *For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.*

God's plan, therefore, is that every one of us who loves Him and who belongs to Him should tell what we have seen and hears, and what we know of Him and of His grace. Notice that our testimony is to centre upon the Person of Christ Himself.

“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me.....”. We are not to witness to a denomination, a system or a creed, but to the Person of our Lord Himself.

Notice also that witnessing is not to be only a matter of telling. Primarily it is to be a matter of living. We certainly should use our lips in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. But first, our lives must witness for Christ.

Notice that **Acts 1:8** says, *“Ye shall be witnesses unto me.....”*.

What we are is more important than what we say. If our lives are witnessing for Him then our saying will be effective and powerful.

What a glorious plan this is that the Lord has adopted for the evangelization of the world! Every one of His children is to go forth into his ordinary sphere of life and live and speak for the Lord there.

3. THE PLACE INDICATED BY THE LORD.

Where are God's witnesses to go? We have already noticed that God wants them everywhere.

In -

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

a definite geographical setting is indicated - "*in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*".

Compare with -

Matthew 28:19 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

This inevitably means that some witnesses must leave their homes and go to other places and other lands in order that they may obey the Lord's commission, being His witnesses to peoples who have never heard of Him.

Acts 1:8 is our authority for sending out "foreign" missionaries. This commission is obligatory on all Christians in every age.

a. In the light of Acts 1:8, as His witnesses, every one of us should be willing to go anywhere for the Lord.

Whatever our age and circumstances, we should be willing to be the Lord's witnesses in the place of His choice.

b. In the light of Acts 1:8, young people under the age of 30 should be especially exercised as to whether or not the Lord would have them be His witnesses where the need is greatest.

Undoubtedly the need is greatest in many other lands where there are still millions of people who have never heard of Christ. Whereas, here in the homeland, we have churches everywhere!

Every young Christian who has health and strength should be willing to go wherever the Lord would have him go and to live and to labour for Him there as His witness.

c. In the light of Acts 1:8, all who would be His witnesses must begin in Jerusalem.

That is, we must begin at home. We must live consistently for the Lord in the home, in the office, in the hospital or wherever we are just now. We must be His witnesses there. Going to Africa will certainly not make us witnesses!

God's great heart of love yearns over the whole wide world. His method for evangelizing it is to send forth living witness.

Study very carefully -

Romans 10:13-15 - *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Who is sufficient for these things?

4. THE POWER SUPPLIED BY THE LORD.

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses.....”. No one can be an effective witness without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Compare -

Luke 4:18 - *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,*

Luke 24:49 - *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

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

How was it that Peter and Paul were such vital witnesses? How does anyone, anywhere, witness effectively for the Lord? Compare -

Zechariah 4:6 - *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

The empowering of the Holy Spirit is given to us to enable us to obey the Lord's command to witness effectively for Him.

5. THE PERIOD GIVEN BY THE LORD.

How long have we left in which to evangelize the world? Until the Lord Jesus comes again.

Compare -

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Acts 1:9-11 - *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

John 9:4 - *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

All the signs of the times proclaim the fact that His coming is surely very near. If you

and I would be His effective, living witnesses, we must be on the job at once. The matter is urgent. The time is short. The need is great. Millions are lost.

The Lord Jesus says to each one of us -

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

All our service must be filled with a real sense of urgency. We must hurry to preach the gospel.

Acts 8:29-30 - *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.*

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

We must be importunate in our praying.

Acts 12:5 - *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

Go, labour on while it is day,
The world's dark night is hastening on;
Speed, speed thy work, cast sloth away,
It is not thus that souls are won.

Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice;
For toil comes rest, for exile home
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,
The midnight cry, Behold, I come.

“THIS SAME JESUS”, ASCENDING AND DESCENDING!

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:9-11

Acts 1:9-11 - *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

It is important for us always to remember that the Christian faith rests upon certain great historical facts. In this respect, Christianity is different from other religions which are concerned with moral systems, philosophies and religious observances. The gospel is God's good news of what He has done in history in the Person of His Son and for the salvation of men.

What are the great acts of God upon which the Christian faith rests and which are declared in the gospel? They concern the Person and the work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Five great facts concerning Him are brought before us in the opening verses of Acts.

(1) His incarnation inferred in -

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

(2) His crucifixion -

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

(3) His resurrection -

Acts 1:3 - *To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible*

proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

(4) His ascension -

Acts 1:9 - *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

and the next great historical event -

(5) His second advent -

Acts 1:10-11 - *And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;*

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

In this study we are to consider and compare the fact and purpose of His ascension and the promise and purpose of His advent. We are to link together His going up and His coming down, for both are brought before us in this section of scripture.

Notice that four times we are told that Jesus was “taken up” -

Acts 1:2 - *Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:*

Acts. 1:9 - *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

Acts 1:11 - *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

Acts 1:22 - *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

We are also told that the Lord is coming down again, for, while in -

Acts 1:9-10 - *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

we have the record of Jesus ascending, in -

Acts 1:10-11 - *And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;*

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

we have the promise of Jesus descending.

Three truths are emphasized here about His ascension and His second advent.

(1) He ascended personally.

He will come again personally. Notice the words in **Acts 1:11** - *“this same Jesus”*. It is the same Lord Jesus Who was born in Bethlehem, Who lived 33 years upon this earth, Who was filled with compassion for all who were in trouble, Who died for our sins, rose for our justification and ascended, Who will come again!

(2) He ascended bodily.

He will come again bodily. His was a bodily resurrection and a bodily ascension. He came from the grave a resurrected Man, with “a glorious body”. Compare -

Acts 1:3-4 - *To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

Philippians 3:20 - *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

After forty days, He ascended in the same body. His return will be a bodily return.

(3) He ascended visibly.

He will come again visibly. It was “while they beheld” that He was taken up -

Acts 1:9 - *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

They saw Him “go into Heaven” -

Acts 1:11 - *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?*

this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

When He comes again He will be seen first by all His Own people, then by everybody.

Compare -

1 John 3:2 - *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Revelation 1:7 - *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

Zechariah 14:4 - *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

These precise references assure us that in these three important respects, as our Lord ascended so He will descend.

The same Jesus Whose birth is recorded, Whose ministry is chronicled, Whose crucifixion is described, Whose resurrection is declared, Whose ascension is so clearly stated, will surely come again personally, bodily and visibly.

1#. "THIS SAME JESUS": ASCENDING.

Where is Jesus now?

Compare -

Hebrews 1:1-3 - *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Ephesians 1:19-23 - *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Why did He ascend, and why is He in Heaven now?

Many answers could be given to these questions, but consider the following:

- a. *Because His earthly mission was completed and He must now commence His heavenly ministry from the throne.*

His earthly mission culminated in His death upon the cross, where He made atonement for our sins.

Having finished this He “*sat down*” -

Psalm 40:8 - *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*

John 1:29 - *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

John 17:4 - *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

John 19:30 - *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

Hebrews 1:3 - *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

From **1 Timothy 2:5** - *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

We learn that He is in Heaven as our Mediator.

John 14:6 - *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

He is in Heaven as our great High Priest.

Hebrews 4:14-16 - *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 8:1 - *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;*

He is there as our Advocate.

1 John 2:1-2 - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He is our Intercessor.

Compare -

Romans 8:34 - *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Hebrews 7:25 - *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Luke 22:31-32 - *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

He is working through His Church.

Compare -

Matthew 16:18 - *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

1 Corinthians 12:13 - *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

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

Luke 19:12 - *He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.*

In Heaven He continues the work which He began on earth. He is now “receiving a kingdom unto Himself”.

b. *In order that all His people everywhere might enjoy His continual presence.*

While He was down here upon earth He could only be in one place at one time. From Heaven now, in the Person and by the presence of the Holy Spirit, He is with every one of His people.

Matthew 18:20 - *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Matthew 28:20 - *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

This could only be possible by His ascension.

He is with us now, in our joys -

John 2:1-11 - *And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:*

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

in our testings -

Matthew 14:27 - *But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*

and all the time -

Hebrews 13:5-6 - *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

c. To prepare our Heavenly home.

This is clearly stated in the Saviour's own words.

John 14:2 - *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

At His ascension, the Bridegroom went to prepare a place for His Bride. He is our Forerunner, we are to follow!

Hebrews 6:20 - *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

2. "THIS SAME JESUS": DESCENDING.

Why will Jesus come back again? What will He do when He comes?

a. He is coming to receive all His people to Himself so that they may be with Him for ever.

To begin with, compare -

John 14:2 - *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

1 Corinthians 15:23 - *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits;*

afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

When He comes, He will rapture all believers into His presence. The dead will be raised and the living will be changed, and we shall have new bodies.

This rapture will not be partial but complete in that every redeemed person will go to be with the Lord, for we are saved by grace and not by works.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 - *Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 - *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

b. He is coming to establish His earthly and millennial kingdom.

This is referred to six times in **Revelation 20**. Of course the burden of all Old Testament prophecy that still waits fulfillment refers to the coming kingdom of Christ.

Matthew 6:10 - *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

This will only be initiated at His return.

Luke 1:31-33 - *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.*

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Underline the seven “shalls”.

c. He is coming to judge His enemies and to usher in an eternity of blessing for all who love and belong to Him.

How solemn this is!

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 - *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

2 Thessalonians 2:8 - *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

2 Peter 3:7 - *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

Revelation 21:8 - *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

Also read **Revelation chapter 20.**

How glorious is the prospect for God's people!

Revelation 22:1-5 - *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 22:20 - *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

In view of the Lord's present exaltation and imminent return, we need to heed -

2 Peter 3:9-14 - *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens

shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Even now while we taste of His love
We are filled with delight at His Name:
But what will it be when above
We shall join in the song of the Lamb.

MATTHIAS CHOSEN IN THE PLACE

JUDAS

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:15-26

The decision to choose Matthias to take the place of Judas Iscariot was evidently an important one, as twelve verses are given to a description of all that took place. In this section of scripture, we have an account of the first business meeting held by the Lord's followers.

In this connection read -

Matthew 19:27-28 - *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?*

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Twelve in scripture is a number of perfect administration. Our Lord chose twelve disciples to be with Him. These He commissioned to take the gospel to the whole world.

Mark 3:13-14 - *And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.*

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

But now there were only eleven, for Judas who betrayed Him was missing.

Thus it was that Peter urged the action described in -

Acts 1:15-22 - *And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)*

16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 *And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.*

20 *For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take.*

21 *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,*

22 *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

We are told of the method adopted and of the actual appointment of Matthias to take the place of Judas in -

Acts 1:23-26 - *And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.*

24 *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen,*

25 *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.*

26 *And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

What are the lessons to be learned from this section of scripture?

1#. Throughout the subsequent history of the Church, there has been lively discussion as to whether Peter was right or wrong in acting as he did.

There are those who say that he was right.

There are those who say he was wrong, that he acted carnally, that he was impetuous and was not directed by the Lord. Anyway, they say, the principle of selection was wrong. Surely it was wrong to choose two and then to cast lots, even though they did pray before they cast lots.

We lean to the view, however, that Peter was right in what he did. We cannot be dogmatic about this.

We must remember, however, that it was to Peter that the Lord said

Matthew 19:27-28 - *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?*

28 *And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also*

shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Although it has been stated that Paul was selected in order to make up the number of the twelve apostles, in actual fact, his name is never associated with the other eleven. To those who say that “after this we never hear of Matthias again”, this does not prove anything, for neither do we hear of some of the other disciples.

As a matter of fact, we do hear about Matthias, though not actually by name.

Acts 2:14 - *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

Acts 6:2 - *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*

Peter stood up “with the eleven”, and “the twelve called the disciples together”.

But surely it is wrong to cast lots? Not necessarily, for these disciples were still acting under the old dispensation.

Leviticus 16:8 - *And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.*

Proverbs 16:33 - *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.*

2. Is it not possible that the Holy Spirit has recorded this incident because of the valuable lesson it contains in relation to Church administration?

There are three lessons in particular. All who are engaged in the Lord’s work would do well to heed them.

a. *The business of the Church must always be conducted in the atmosphere of prayer.*

We learn this from -

Acts 1:12-14 - *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.*

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of

James.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Those who took part in this business meeting had been present at the prayer meeting. It is only in this way that we can know the mind of the Lord and enjoy the unity of the Spirit.

The business of the Church is not our business - it is God's business.

Luke 2:49 - *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

He is the Director of His work. Therefore it is essential for us to know His mind in order that we may do His will.

The place for all this is in "the upper room".

Acts 1:13 - *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

b. We must guard against making our plans and then asking God's blessing upon them.

It is significant that we learn from -

Acts 1:24 - *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen,*

that they did not choose Matthias and then say, "Now, Lord, bless him!".

They prayed first and committed the whole matter to the Lord, and then they trusted Him to direct them and to give the answer that would be glorifying to Him.

It is very easy to arrange and to plan our service for the Lord and then to ask Him to bless our efforts. Need we wonder why the blessing does not come when we have acted in this way?

c. God has the plan for His Church and for His work.

We get this clearly brought before us in -

Acts 1:24 - *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all*

men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen,

There was an admission on the part of the people who were praying that they did not know what God's will was.

Jeremiah 10:23 - *O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

But they did believe that God had a plan and a purpose and that He was willing to reveal this to them. So, they prayed for His will to be made known.

James 1:5 - *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

All this emphasizes the supreme importance of the prayer life of the Church.

When there is no prayer, there is no blessing.

When there is little prayer, there is little blessing.

When there is more prayer, there is more blessing.

And when there is much prayer, there is much blessing.

3. Notice the kind of man who was needed to fill this office.

The question is this: What is the supreme and all-inclusive qualification for a servant of God, whether he be a minister, a missionary, a pastor, a deacon, or a Sunday School teacher?

He must be, first and foremost "a witness of the resurrection".

Acts 1:22 - *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

In other words, he must have had a vision of the risen Lord Jesus. There must be a recognition of Who Jesus is and a surrender to Jesus as Lord and Master.

Romans 10:9-10 - *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Or, to put it concisely, the kind of men and women needed for Christian service are:

a. Those who are thoroughly converted.

That is to say, they must be men and women who have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ personally and who have entered into a saving experience of His grace - like Saul of Tarsus.

Acts 9:3-6 - *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

b. Those who show forth the risen Lord in their lives.

For an illustration of one in whose life the risen Lord very evidently manifested His presence and power, read about Stephen in -

Acts 6:8-15 - *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Acts 7:54-60 - *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

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

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 *And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*

59 *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*

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

c. *Those who are living as a risen man should live.*

To get the force of this turn to and study **Colossians 3:1-4** and then the verses which follow - **Colossians 3:5-25**.

When a man has really seen the risen Lord, has been captivated by Him and has yielded fully to Him, everything becomes changed. He then knows what it is to be a new creature in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

And to live for the Lord from day to day.

Colossians 3:17 - *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

4. Notice the confidence that these believers had in the scriptures.

This is important. We must ever be impressed with the fact that these disciples of the Lord were very well versed in the Old Testament. When he stood up to make his speech, Peter immediately referred back to -

Psalms 41:9 - *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*

Psalms 69:25 - *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.*

Psalms 109:8 - *Let his days be few; and let another take his office.*

He said, "*These scriptures must needs have been fulfilled*". He also attributed the scriptures to which he referred to "the Holy Ghost".

2 Peter 1:21 - *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Again, in -

Acts 1:20 - *For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take.*

he was quick to say, "It is written in the Psalms".
Is the Bible the Word of God? Indeed it is!

2 Timothy 3:16 - *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

5. Finally, notice the title of our Saviour in -

Acts 1:21 - *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,*

Who was it that Peter and the other disciples had come to follow and love? It was "the Lord Jesus". This is the Christian testimony.

1 Corinthians 12:3 - *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

Not just "Jesus" (though that is His saving Name); not just "Christ" (though that is His official Name); but "the Lord Jesus".

Always think of Him and speak of Him as the Lord Jesus.

THE HISTORY OF JUDAS SUMMARIZED

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: Acts 1:15-26

The most tragic name in human history is that of Judas Iscariot. This name is a synonym for all that is traitorous, treacherous and unholy. Of all the sad stories in God's Word, what we are told about Judas makes the saddest reading. We can think of the folly and sin of Cain, David, Saul, Samson, Ananias and Sapphira - but Judas! What a chill that name sends through one's spirit.

We are told about Judas in a number of places in the four Gospels, but here in **Acts 1:15- 26** we have this man's history summarized. The following points are clearly stated.

1#. JUDAS NEVER WAS A CONVERTED MAN.

This is not the case of a backslider, of one who really knew and belonged to the Lord and who became side-tracked.

The word "fell", in -

Acts 1:25 - *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.*

means that Judas fell from his privileged position and office - not that he fell from or out of grace. That is not possible -

John 10:28-29 - *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Judas was a professor but not a possessor.

2 Timothy 3:5 - *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

2. JESUS KNEW ALL ABOUT JUDAS WHEN HE CHOSE HIM.

There is a reference in -

Acts 1:16 - *Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.*

to

Psalm 41:9 - *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*

which should be read in conjunction with -

John 2:25 - *And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.*

John 6:64 - *But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.*

John 6:70 - *Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?*

There is a great mystery here, but we are left in no doubt about the fact that, from the beginning, Jesus knew all about Judas. Compare -

Psalm 139:23-24 - *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:*

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

John 1:47-48 - *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

3. JUDAS WAS CHOSEN AS ONE OF THE TWELVE.

We are told this in -

Acts 1:17 - *For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.*

The question arises: Why did Jesus choose Judas? Joseph Parker's answer to the question was, "The greater mystery is, why did Jesus choose me?" We cannot tell why Judas was chosen, but we can be, and should be, warned by all that we know

about Judas.

4. JUDAS SOLD THE LORD FOR A PALTRY SUM OF MONEY.

This is referred to in -

Acts 1:18 - *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.*

which should be read in conjunction with -

Zechariah 11:12-13 - *And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.*

13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

Matthew 26:14-16 - *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,*

15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

Matthew 26:21-25 - *And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Matthew 26:47-50 - *And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.*

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and

laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, for thirty pieces of silver - the price in those days, of a slave.

5. JUDAS BETRAYED THE LORD WITH A KISS.

We read in -

Acts 1:16 - *Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.*

that he “was guide to them that took Jesus”. How would the soldiers have known who Jesus was, so that they could arrest the right one? Ah! Judas would kiss Jesus. Think of it!

6. JUDAS, FILLED WITH REMORSE, HANGED HIMSELF.

One of the most solemn verses in the whole Bible is -

Acts 1:18 - *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.*

Should this verse be read in conjunction with -

Matthew 18:3-8 - *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Try to feel the remorse of Judas as you read -

Matthew 27:3-10 - *Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,*

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

7. JUDAS DIED AND WENT TO HELL

There is a clear statement about this in -

Acts 1:25 - *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.*

This verse ends the sad record of Judas Iscariot. How different his end was from that of the repentant thief.

Luke 23:42-43 - *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

How sad it was in the light of -

John 14:2 - *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

Thus, we have seen in this portion of scripture and in short compass, a summary of the life, death and destiny of Judas Iscariot.

What lessons should we learn from all this?

Consider the following.

8. HELPFUL ENVIRONMENT, SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES AND BENEFITS ALONE DO NOT PRODUCE CHANGED HEARTS.

Think of the privileges and benefits Judas had in being with the Lord and His disciples for three years. Yet his heart was unchanged. We must always thank God for the privileges of Church membership and of Christian fellowship. But, it is possible to “enjoy” these and still be lost.

Mathew 7:21-23 - *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

9. THERE IS NO SALVATION IN OUTWARD MORALITY.

Outwardly, at any rate, Judas was a most moral and good living man. The disciples evidently never suspected him. He was even chosen to be their treasurer, an office which is always filled with special care! But, morality and status do not save.

Compare -

John 3:3 - *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 3:5 - *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Ephesians 2:8-10 - *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Titus 3:5 - *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

10. OFTEN, VERY LITTLE VALUE IS PUT UPON THE LORD JESUS AND HIS LOVE.

Judas was willing to sell the Lord for a very small sum. How much is He worth to you? Sometimes He is denied and His love and grace are spurned by a small thing such as a friendship or a business deal. What little things keep some people away from the Lord!

Luke 9:57-62 - *And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

11. ONE SIN UNREPENTED OF MAY LEAD TO PERDITION.

Was it in Judas' case the love of money? He was certainly not a notorious sinner in the sense that he had committed a long list of crimes. His was the sin of covetousness and of hypocrisy.

Matthew 6:19-23 - *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

John 12:6 - *This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*

12. OPPORTUNITIES AND WARNINGS PERSISTENTLY SPURNED SPELL FINAL DISASTER.

No man had more or better opportunities for knowing and loving the Lord, yet Judas was lost.

Proverbs 27:1 - *Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

Face up to -

2 Corinthians 13:5 - *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

13. AT DEATH WE SHALL GO TO A PREPARED PLACE FOR WHICH WE ARE PREPARED!

God has two prepared places. Turn to and compare -

John 14:2 - *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

Matthew 25:41 - *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:*

Then turn to -

Revelation 20:11-15 - *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of

fire.

Revelation 22:1-5 - *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

14. ALL OF US ARE KNOWN FOR SOMETHING!

Acts 1:19 - *And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.*

This verse gives us a word picture of the tombstone over Judas' grave. What a memorial!

Dr. J. Stuart Holden once said, "What a warning flare is the story of this man, a flare whose warning none of us dare disregard!"

If we do so, it is at our peril. For, unhappily, there is nothing very exceptional in a divided heart on the part of those who profess the faith of Christ.

Judas only did what many another does and seems to get away with. But, thank God, no one need ever tread this dreadful path to Hell. Indeed, no truly saved soul ever will.

If you are not sure of your own salvation, you can make sure now!

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 5:24 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

John 6:36 - *But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

John 10:9 - *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go*

in and out, and find pasture.

Romans 10:9-13 - *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

THE MEANING OF PENTECOST

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: Acts 2:1-21

Acts 2:12 - *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*

In this verse in this section of scripture a very important question is asked - "*What meaneth this?*" If we had been in Jerusalem on this particular day we would have asked the same question, for something tremendous had happened.

Jerusalem was packed with people. Many had come to present the first fruits of the harvest of the year. They had come from many different places.

The Lord Jesus had completed His earthly ministry, having died, risen and ascended. But before going back to Heaven, He had given a command and a promise to His own disciples.

Acts 1:4-5 - *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

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

In simple obedience, these disciples met together to wait upon the Lord. They did this for ten days.

Acts 1:13-14 - *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Acts 2:1-3 - *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Then something very wonderful happened. We read of this in **Acts 2:1-3**. In the opening part of **verse 4**, we read of the essential thing which happened.

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

They were all filled in known languages (though unknown to themselves) so that people from foreign countries heard God's message in their own native tongue.

Acts 2:4-12 - *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

But what did all this mean? What does Pentecost mean? Here are some straightforward scriptural answers to that question.

1#. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL HAVE TO DO WITH CERTAIN GREAT FACTS OF HISTORY, GREAT ACTS OF GOD.

It is in this respect that Christianity differs from, and is superior to, every other religious system. The Christian gospel is not just a lovely story, although it is that. It is the story of something great and wonderful that God has done in history. He has sent His own Son into this world.

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

1 Timothy 1:15 - *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

In the fulness of time Jesus came, died, rose, ascended and went back to the right hand of God.

Galatians 4:4-6 - *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

The other wonderful thing that God has done in history is this. He has sent the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower His own people.

In this **second chapter of Acts** we have a record of this.

2. PENTECOST MEANS THAT GOD IS WORKING FOR THE REDEMPTION OF MEN AND WOMEN ACCORDING TO A CAREFULLY PRE-ORDAINED PLAN OR PROGRAM.

There is nothing haphazard about God. As one of our hymns reminds us: “God is working His purpose out.....”. Pentecost teaches us this.

From -

Acts 2:1 - *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

we learn that Pentecost was a pre-determined epoch in the mind of God. The Holy Spirit was not poured out as the result of the prayer meeting that was held by the disciples.

In -

Leviticus 23:15-16 - *And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:*

16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

we read of the feast of Pentecost, or “the day of first fruits”, which was to take place fifty days after the Passover feast. The Lord Jesus ascended into Heaven forty days after His resurrection. Then, ten days after that came the day of Pentecost.

It is also important to notice in -

Acts 2:13-17 - *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

that Pentecost was the first fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy which had been made 850 years previously.

Joel 2:28-32 - *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:*

29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

3. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHO IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TIMES CAME UPON SOME OF GOD’S SERVANTS TO EMPOWER THEM, HAS NOW COME TO DWELL FOREVER WITHIN EVERY CHRISTIAN.

In many of His sayings, the Lord Jesus anticipated the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell every Christian.

Here are two -

John 7:37-39 - *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

John 14:16-17 - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

He promised that the Holy Spirit would come to indwell (all) Christians.

At Pentecost that is exactly what happened -

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

Since the Day of Pentecost, immediately a man becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit takes up residence within him. This is the distinctive mark of a real Christian.

Compare:-

Romans 8:9 - *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

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

4. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO INDWELLS EVERY CHRISTIAN, WAITS AND WANTS TO FILL EVERY CHRISTIAN.

If you look again carefully at -

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

you will notice that they were “all filled.....”. All of them, which means young and old, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, preachers and pray-ers, mothers and

fathers, were filled. This is God's plan and provision for every one of His children. This is to be the normal experience for Christians in this dispensation.

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

Acts 9:17 - *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 13:52 - *And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.*

5. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE POWER OF GOD IS AVAILABLE TO ENABLE EVERY CHRISTIAN TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND TO SERVE GOD EFFECTIVELY.

The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost.

He indwells and empowers God's people today to make actual in their experience all that the Lord Jesus died, rose, and ascended to make possible.

If you study our Lord's pattern for Christian living and serving, you will find that Christians are to be new people.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

They are to be love-filled.

John 13:34-35 - *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.
35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

They are to be holy.

1 Peter 1:15 - *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;*

They are to be courageous.

Acts 4:13 - *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

They are to be willing to suffer.

Acts 5:41 - *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

They are to witness with power.

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

They are to take the gospel to the ends of the world.

Matthew 28:19 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

But how is all this possible? It is only possible in one way, as we learn from -

Zechariah 4:6 - *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*

6. PENTECOST MEANS THAT CHRISTIANS ARE NOT ISOLATED UNITS BUT ARE JOINED TOGETHER AS MEMBERS OF ONE GLORIOUS BODY, THE CHURCH.

In this connection, read -

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 - *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Notice that there is only one body.....there are many members.....all Christians have been baptized or united into the one body.....and all Christians have received the Holy Spirit.

This is true ecumenicity!

It is the Holy Spirit Who creates the true unity of the Spirit and Who unites believers.

Ephesians 4:3 - *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

7. PENTECOST MEANS THAT THE GOSPEL IS FOR EVERYBODY AND THAT ANYBODY, ANYWHERE, MAY BE SAVED BY FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We get this clearly brought before us in -

Acts 2:21 - *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

What a wonderful thing it is that provision has been made by the Lord for “whosoever will to know the Lord Jesus Christ as the living Saviour and the Holy Spirit as the abiding, indwelling Comforter!

Oh, fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,
Until my very heart o’erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

THE EXPERIENCE AND EVIDENCE OF PENTECOST

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: Acts 2:1-4

The experience of Pentecost is indicated by the words, “*They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.....*”.

The evidence of Pentecost is indicated by the words, “*and began.....*”.

The experience came to about 120 who were in the upper room, a wonderful and a transforming experience which since that day has come to multitudes of God’s people. But we read not only of the experience of Pentecost but of the evidence of Pentecost when, because they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they “*began.....*”.

Whenever God fills the heart, life and personality of any one of His children with the Holy Spirit, there will always be the evidence. The evidence here is indicated by the fact that those who were filled.....began.

In this study we shall see that the historical event of over 1900 years ago may, and must, become a personal experience in our individual lives.

1#. THE EXPERIENCE OF PENTECOST.

Acts 2:1-4 - *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This portion contains the record of what actually happened on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus had promised the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell and infill His people.

Acts 1:4-5 - *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

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

In obedience to His command, about 120 of His first followers were awaiting the fulfilment of His promise.

Acts 1:12-14 - *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.*

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Then, suddenly He came! - and “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost”. But, was this wondrous gift and blessing only for these first disciples? No!

a. *The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, is just as real an experience for us today as it was for those first disciples.*

The Spirit-filled life is God’s command.

Ephesians 5:18 - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

It is meant to be the normal experience of God’s people. It is so definite and real that one knows whether or not one has entered into the experience. Compare -

Acts 4:8 - *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,*

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

Acts 6:3 - *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

Acts 6:5 - *And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:*

Acts 7:55 - *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*

Acts 9:17 - *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 11:24 - *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

Acts 13:9 - *Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,*

Acts 13:52 - *And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.*

b. The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, is for every Christian everywhere.

Notice the significance of the little word “all” in -

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

No one was excluded -

Acts 2:39 - *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

Some of those present that day are mentioned in -

Acts 1:13-14 - *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

There were all kinds of people - and all were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit-filled life is God’s provision for every one of His children in order to make vital Christian living and effective Christian service possible.

c. The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, frequently comes subsequently to conversion.

We are not basing this statement upon the experience of these first disciples, because they lived through a period of transition - before Calvary, after Calvary, before the

Ascension, after the Ascension, before Pentecost and after Pentecost.

There is no parallel to this in our experience. Judicially, as far as God is concerned, we get all at conversion.

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

but we do not necessarily know this or enter into God's plan and purpose for us when we are first converted.

To put it another way: every Christian has the Holy Spirit -

Romans 8:9 - *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

But not every Christian is filled, possessed by the Holy Spirit.

d. *The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, is an experience greater than that of conversion.*

Life abundant is more than life.

John 10:10 - *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Fullness of joy is greater than joy.

John 15:11 - *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

Power for service is greater than and different from the "power" to enter God's family. Compare -

John 1:12 - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Undoubtedly the greatest day in Peter's life was the Day of Pentecost.

There are many who can say the same today.

e. The experience of Pentecost, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, is a radical experience.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit implies being emptied of every “unholy” spirit - of everything that is unlike the Lord and that is displeasing to Him.

It is only when we are willing to be emptied of sin and self, and cleansed in the blood of Christ that the Holy Spirit can fill us.

2. THE EVIDENCE OF PENTECOST.

When these first disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit”, we read that they “began”. There was immediate evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power in their lives.

Consider the following questions that arise in this connection.

a. WHAT did they begin?

In the narrative we read that “they began to speak in tongues”. This was IMPORTANT.

This did happen, but it was not the only thing. The essential thing is that they began to be vital and effective.

They began -

to live and work for Christ,

Acts 4:33 - And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

to speak for Christ,

Acts 8:4 - Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

to suffer for Christ,

Acts 5:41 - And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

How mightily they were transformed when “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost”!

After Pentecost they were completely different people from what they had been before Pentecost.

b. *WHEN did they begin?*

The answer is, when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and not before. Here we see one cause of much of our ineffective service. How often we go forth to serve the Lord. We go in our own strength, forgetting the truth of -

Zechariah 4:6 - *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*

These first followers began to witness for the Lord after Pentecost, not before.

Compare-

Luke 24:49 - *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Acts 1:4-5 - *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

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

We are only ready to live for the Lord and to serve the Lord when we are filled with the Spirit.

c. *WHERE did they begin?*

In Jerusalem. When God fills us with His Spirit, it is in order that we may first of all be effective witnesses among our own people.

Compare -

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Acts 9:26-30 - *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them*

how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

An experience of Pentecost should give us a burden for the salvation of our loved ones and friends. Spirit-filled witnesses begin to honour the Lord by living and working for Him among their own people.

d. WHY did they begin?

Because they could not help doing so! They were empowered and motivated by the Holy Spirit Who now possess them. They could not do otherwise.

Acts 4:20 - *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

Acts 5:42 - *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

e. HOW did they begin?

There is a very real sense in which “they” did not begin at all. It was the Lord from Heaven, by the Holy Ghost, Who began doing His gracious and glorious work.

Mark 16:19-20 - *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

PETER'S SERMON ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: Acts 2:14-36

It has been rightly said that Peter's pronouncement on the Day of Pentecost "was homiletically correct as well as doctrinally sound. This theme needed skillful development. Before getting to the heart of his subject, it was necessary for him to adjust to the excited minds of the people to whom he was giving the message".

There is valuable help here for all who would preach the gospel. To begin with, notice that Peter's sermon resolved itself into three distinct parts -

- (1) **The introduction.**
- (2) **The development.**
- (3) **The application.**

Each of these parts carries a pronoun for its title.

The introduction explains "This".

Acts 2:16 - *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;*

The development proclaims "Him".

Acts 2:23 - *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*

The application concerns "ye" or you.

Acts 2:36 - *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Here then is a model gospel address. The **Book of Acts** is the textbook on gospel preaching. Twenty-two sermons or speeches are recorded - nine by Peter, nine by Paul, and one each by Stephen, Philip, James, and Ananias.

Take a look at Peter as he preached the gospel on the Day of Pentecost and notice - the Method he adopted, the Message he proclaimed, the Miracle he witnessed.

1#. THE METHOD HE ADOPTED.

There is clear, down-to-earth instruction here for all who would preach the gospel - the Good News that God gives to sinful men and women.

There are five important things to notice about Peter's preaching.

a. It was short and straight to the point.

His speech was vital and urgent, with no unnecessary word and no enticing words.

1 Corinthians 2:4 - *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:*

There was no pointless repetition. His sermon, as we have it recorded, consisted of 520 words.

Notice also that it was directed to the mind - giving instruction: to the heart - producing enthusiasm: to the conscience - resulting in conviction: and to the will - leading to decision.

b. It was simple, plain and clear.

All in the congregation could understand exactly what Peter was saying. Although he was proclaiming the great and glorious and "new" message of the gospel, it was against the historical background with which his hearers would be familiar. It was a case of the masses of the people hearing Peter gladly.

Mark 12:37 - *David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.*

Peter spoke with great simplicity of speech.

2 Corinthians 3:12 - *Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:*

He also spoke clearly and loudly.

Acts 2:14 - *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

c. *It was instructive and informative.*

Peter's preaching was not merely "emotional evangelism". As a matter of fact, there is no such thing mentioned in the New Testament, though there is much of it about today.

In the New Testament, the appeal of the gospel is always an appeal to the mind, the heart, the conscience and the will.

Isaiah 1:18 - *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

The great need today is for a teaching evangelism.

This is true -

because God commands it -

Acts 5:42 - *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

because of man's need of being taught the truth -

1 Corinthians 2:14 - *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

d. *It was scriptural.*

Paul's injunction to Timothy was to "preach the Word" -

2 Timothy 4:2 - *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

Peter certainly did this here. Two hundred words in his sermon are words quoted from the Old Testament. His sermon was full of the prophetic word. This is a convincing method of preaching - to show that all fulfilled prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

Notice also that Peter's preaching was in its right dispensational context and setting. Peter was familiar with God's program for the days in which we are living. He was not expecting the conversion of the world, or the kingdom of God to come on earth now, but the calling out of the Church to be the Bride of Christ.

Acts 15:13-18 - *And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:*

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

e. It was bold, fearless and without apology.

This was a distinctive characteristic of New Testament preaching.

It was done with holy boldness as a result, of course, of the experience promised in -

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Acts 4:13 - *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

Acts 4:29 - *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,*

2. THE MESSAGE HE PROCLAIMED.

This is clearly stated in -

Acts 2:36 - *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

“Jesus.....both Lord and Christ”. Peter did not preach religion, a religious system or even a creed. He preached a living Person, the Person of God’s own Son and the work which He accomplished for guilty men and women. He preached the mighty acts of God - what God had done in His Son for the salvation of men and women.

a. He preached His incarnation.

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

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man.....”. He was the God-man, for He was the man Who was “approved of God”, a phrase which indicates His deity.

b. He preached His crucifixion.

Acts 2:23 - *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*

declares divine sovereignty and human responsibility and tells us that our Lord was born to die, and that His death was purposeful.

1 Peter 3:18 - *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

c. He preached His resurrection.

Acts 2:24 - *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

Acts 2:32 - *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

Peter showed that this was predicted in the Old Testament scriptures -

Acts 2:25-28 - *For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:*

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

This was always the great emphasis of apostolic teaching and preaching. Compare -

Psalms 16:8-11 - *I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right

hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Acts 17:18 - *Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.*

d. He preached His ascension.

This is implied in -

Acts 2:33 - *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

Compare -

John 20:17 - *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

Acts 1:9-11 - *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Epesians 4:8-10 - *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

e. He preached His exaltation.

Acts 2:33 - *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

Acts 2:36 - *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

What a triumphant conclusion this was to a great sermon! Thank God we proclaim a living and glorious Lord.

Hebrews 7:25 - *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

3. THE MIRACLE HE WITNESSED.

This is outlined for us in -

Acts 2:37-41 - *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

As the result of Peter's preaching, many who heard him were "cut to the heart", and asked the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" - **verse 37.**

Peter at once gave the answer - "Repent of your sin, identify yourselves with this Lord Jesus Christ by open commitment to Him, and receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost." - **verses 38-40.**

As a result of this, about three thousand souls were converted and declared their allegiance to the Lord Jesus by being baptized, by following on to know the Lord, and by entering into fellowship with His people. - **verses 41-47.**

Send forth the gospel! Tell it out!
Go, brothers, at the Master's call.
Prepare His way, Who comes to reign,
The King of kings, and Lord of all.

THE INNER LIFE OF THE CHURCH

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: Acts 2:41-47

Acts 2:41-47 - *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

In these verses we have a pattern for the whole dispensation of what the Church should be like.

If we ask the question: What should our local church be like? the answer is to be found here in this passage of scripture.

What are the marks or characteristics of a true church?

**1#. THIS CHURCH WAS SPIRITUALLY
CONSTITUTED BY CHRIST.**

That is to say, it was not the work of man but the work of God. He made this church. He constituted it and put it together.

Matthew 16:18 - *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

We have here our Lord's promise that He would do this.

If you will read -

Acts 2:41 - *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Acts 2:47 - *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

you will see that it was the Lord Who made this infant Church in Jerusalem by adding to it those who were saved.

How is a church formed?

Well, the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit produces conviction, the Word is received, the miracle of the new birth takes place, and those who are born again are added to the Lord.

Thus the Lord's church is constituted by Him of believers - those who have received His Word,

Acts 2:41 - *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

and who have been "added to the Church" by Him,

Acts 2:47 - *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

2. THIS CHURCH WAS OPENLY COMMITTED TO CHRIST.

These people of whom we read in this section of scripture had heard the gospel as Peter had preached it. They had been convicted of their sin and had repented and received the Word.

All this is described in -

Acts 2:37-40 - *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

But -

Acts 2:41 - *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

follows **Acts 2:40**.

In this verse we are told that those who received the Word “were baptized”. What a tremendous baptismal service that must have been, for about 3,000 were baptized! What a glorious testimony this was to the power and grace of God!

Here in these verses we have God’s blueprint, His picture of the early Church. We are told that, when 3,000 were converted, these 3,000 were baptized. All those who “gladly received His Word” were baptized. Why was this? They were baptized in obedience to the Lord’s command.

Matthew 28:19-20 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

They were also baptized as an open confession that they had renounced their old life and were now trusting Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Compare -

Acts 2:37 - *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

Acts 2:40 - *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

Baptism does not make Christians, nor does the New Testament teach adult baptism any more than we think it teaches infant baptism.

In the early Church when people believed, they were then baptized. Believing and baptism always went together. There is no case recorded in the **Acts** of an unbaptized believer.

3. THIS CHURCH WAS GLORIOUSLY UNITED IN CHRIST.

The keyword in -

Acts 2:44 - *And all that believed were together, and had all things common;*

is the word “together”. They were different in age, background and temperament, but now, having trusted Christ and been added to the Church, “all that believed were together”, which means that they were not only together in the sense that they were near to each other, with each other, in each other’s presence, but they were “all one in Christ Jesus” -

Galatians 3:28 - *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Notice how this “togetherness”, this true unity in Christ, is described.

a. *They grew together.*

Acts 2:42 - *And they continued stedfastly.....*

They were babies in the family of God. Together they “continued” and began to grow in grace.

2 Peter 3:18 - *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

What a grand thing it is when those who are converted go on to know the Lord!

b. *They fed upon the Word together.*

Acts 2:42 - *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.....*

They had no New Testament. They depended upon the teaching the apostles gave.

The greatest need today is for God’s people to be biblically indoctrinated.

c. *They spent much time together.*

Acts 2:42 - *And they continued.....in fellowship.....*

Malachi 3:16 - *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*

Do we make friends of God’s children? Do we get together? What do we talk about? Fellowship speaks of that which is our common inheritance in Christ.

d. *They remembered the Lord's death together.*

Act 2:42 -*in breaking of bread.....*

This was the very heart of their united worship. It should be the heart and hub of ours. At His table we look back to Calvary, up to the throne and on to His coming.

e. *They prayed together.*

Acts 2:42 - *And they continued.....in prayers.*

How we have drifted away from this early pattern! Read through **Acts** and recapture the emphasis which is given there on the power, privilege and possibilities of prayer.

f. *They shared together.*

This is brought before us in -

Acts 2:44 - *And all that believed were together, and had all things common;*
We read there of the grace of generosity that was very apparent among these early Christians. Is it a pattern for today?

Acts 20:35 - *I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

g. *They rejoiced together.*

What exciting reading is -

Acts 2:46-47 - *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*
47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Has your love for the Lord, for His people, for His house and His Word grown stale? Have you lost the thrill of being a Christian, the wonder of being "saved"?

**4. THIS CHURCH WAS DYNAMICALLY
 EMPOWERED THROUGH CHRIST.**

See what the apostle said in -

Philippians 4:13 - *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

This Church, which is pictured for us here in **Acts 2**, was what it was “through Christ”.

In **Acts 2:4** - *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

we have the record of the empowering which took place on the Day of Pentecost.

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

We read of a repetition of the Holy Spirit’s infilling in the hearts and lives of these Christians.

All we have seen of this Church was the manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s work. Christ from the throne, by the Holy Spirit, made this Church what it was. It was only what it was because of His empowering.

In closing this study, notice two special ways in which this empowering affected the members of the Church, and through them, the outside world.

(1) *The members of the Church were characterized by piety.*

This manifestly made a great impression upon all the people.

We learn this from -

Acts 2:43 - *And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

“And fear came upon every soul”. These early Christians were holy and Christ-like. They were characterized by godliness.

Acts 2:47 - *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

tells us that they had “favour with all the people”.

(2) *The numbers of the Church were characterized by power.*

Acts 2:43 - *And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

tells us that “many wonders and signs were done by the apostles”.

Are we powerful or pitifully weak?

In **Acts 1:8** - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

We have the secret of power to live the gospel and to preach the gospel. May God give us a church like this today and make us like these early church members!

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He Whose word cannot be broken,
Formed thee for His own abode.

Saviour, if of Zion's city,
I, through grace, a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name.

THE OUTREACH AND MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

STUDY 11

Scripture Portion: Acts 3:1-11

If, at the end of **Acts 2**, we have a description of the inner life of the church, here in **Acts 3:1-11**, we have a picture of the outer activity of the church.

In these verses we see what is to be the Mission, the Might and the Method of the Church, or what is the job of the Church, what power is available to do the job, and the way to do it.

1#. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

What is it? From a study of -

Acts 2:41-47 - Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

we might get the impression that the church is to be a kind of mutual aid society! But the record does not end with **chapter 2**, it goes on into **chapter 3**. Here we learn that in terms of service, believers are saved to serve.

Their service consists of taking life to lame and helpless humanity.

Take a look at the man described in these verses. In him we see a picture of humanity without God. He is lame. He has been like this from birth. He is helpless, destitute and more concerned about material needs than about spiritual needs. He is near the temple, but outside it.

Peter and John took the gospel and offered salvation to this man. This is the job, the

mission of the church in the world. This was Jesus' program.

Luke 4:18-19 - *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,
19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

It is to be ours as well.

John 17:18 - *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

John 20:21 - *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

The mission of the church is to -

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the Mighty to save.

2. THE MIGHT OF THE CHURCH.

What is the church's power to deal with such a desperate need as lame and helpless humanity? It is certainly not material power - not the power of money as we learn from -

Acts 3:6 - *Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*
It is not the power of personality. This is made clear from -

Acts 3:4 - *And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.*

A reference to -

Acts 4:13 - *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

makes it clear also that the church's real power is not the power of human eloquence. The church's power is divine, spiritual power.

It is the power of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, as is made quite clear from -

Acts 3:6 - *Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

His Name signifies His Person - all that He, our risen, ascended and exalted Lord is.

Acts 3:12 - *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

Acts 3:16 - *And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*

The Church of God is only powerful as she lifts up, exalts and preaches the Lord Jesus.

Compare -

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

1 Corinthians 2:2 - *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

This is why it is not only foolish but sinful to make much of a movement or a denomination.

Our one great concern must be to make much of Christ, to exalt and honour Him, and to strip away from our service and activity everything that is inconsistent with His mighty Name.

A church is never great because of numbers or finance or good preaching or worldly reputation. The only true might any church has is the might of the Name and the might of the Lord Himself.

Acts 3:12 - *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

Acts 3:16 - *And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*

If the Mission of the Church is to go out to save men and women, and the Might of the Church is that power of the Lord Himself, what is the Method of the Church?

3. THE METHOD OF THE CHURCH.

a. Their Method was one of Divine Co-operation.

That is, it was the Lord on the Throne working with and through Peter and John, as we learn from -

Mark 16:19-20 - *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

The exalted Lord was doing His work (it was His work!) through human channels - in this case, Peter and John.

It was not Peter and John doing the work. They were available to the Lord and were simply the instruments in His hands.

b. Their Method was one of Human Co-operation.

It was not only a case of the Lord working with and through Peter and John, but of Peter and John working together. See this in the following verses.

Acts 3:1 - *Now Peter and John.....*

Acts 3:3-4 - *Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.*

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

Acts 3:11 - *And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.*

Here were the Doer and the Dreamer in harness! What a glorious partnership this was!

Acts 3:12 - *.....look.....on us.....* (Peter and John!).

There is variety in the Church. There is great need for the Lord's workers to respect one another's God-given ministry. Read **1 Corinthians 12:3-31**.

c. *Their Method consisted of going out to and making contact with the World.*

This is what Peter and John did.

Acts 3:6-7 - *Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

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

We are to take the gospel, the message of the love and grace of God to the people where they are. Then, we are to have contact with them ‘.....*he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up.....*’

Compare the following scriptures.

Psalm 126:6 - *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

Matthew 28:19 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

Mark 5:18-19 - *And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.*

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

Down in the human heart, crushed by the Tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving hand, wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

d. *Their Method was primarily spiritual in its activity.*

It was not only evangelical, it was evangelistic.

Acts 3:7-9 - *And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

He was healed physically, but more important than this, he was saved spiritually. The

gospel is a social matter, but primarily it is a spiritual matter. Our souls need healing before our bodies.

Mark 2:5-12 - *When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Thank God for every bit of social outreach that is carried on by the Church today!

The gospel has a social application. Of course it does!

But social activity, ministering to the physical, material and temporal needs of men and women, must always be undertaken as an extension and expression of evangelistic concern.

Mark 8:36 - *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

e. Their Method was empowered and made effective by prayer.

We learn this from -

Acts 3:1 - *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.*

Probably the “temple” prayer meeting was “dead” - but Peter and John were there. Here we see the secret of their power:

individual prayer “Peter”..... “John”.

Matthew 6:6 - *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

united prayer “Peter and John”.

Matthew 18:19 - *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

corporate prayer “at the hour of prayer”.

Acts 12:5 - *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

“The prayers of the saints are the decrees of God beginning to operate.” (Luther).

Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;
Strength for thy labour the Lord will provide:
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;
Tell the poor wanderer a Saviour has died.

PETER'S SECOND RECORDED SERMON

STUDY 12

Scripture Portion: Acts 3:12-16

Preaching is the primary task of the Church. This means that not only preachers but all who pray for preachers and who listen to preaching should be deeply interested in this Bible study.

Unfortunately, preaching is often looked upon as unimportant. Consequently many things have been put in the place of preaching.

Some have advocated the substitution of dialogue, discussion, films, and even of plays. There is no substitute for preaching itself. Preaching must come first, for this is the Church's primary task.

What is preaching? True preaching is the communication of divine truth through human personality in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Church's commission is to preach the gospel.

Matthew 28:18-20 - *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Preaching is the means by which faith is awakened in the hearer.

Romans 10:17 - *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Preaching is a necessity laid upon the preacher.

1 Corinthians 9:16 - *For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*

Compare this with -

Jeremiah 20:8-9 - *For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.*

9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

Acts 6:4 - *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*

Preaching is the means of salvation.

1 Corinthians 1:21 - *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

The history of the early Church demonstrates its importance and primacy. Read Peter's sermon recorded in **Acts 3:12-26**.

Notice seven things about it.

1#. THE OCCASION OF IT.

We usually preach at appointed times, but that was not the case here. Something happened which produced an opportunity for preaching. We read about this in **Acts 3:1- 11**.

In **Acts 3:12** - *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

We see how Peter quickly "cashed in" on the occasion and made it a glorious opportunity for presenting the message of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:9 - *For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*

How often did these early preachers preach? The answer is, whenever they got the opportunity.

Acts 5:42 - *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

Acts 6:4 - *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*

Acts 8:4-5 - *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*

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

If preaching is the communication of divine truth through human personality in the power of the Holy Ghost, how many times are we to do this?

2 Timothy 4:1-5 - *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;*

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

2. THE DIRECTNESS OF IT.

Notice how quickly Peter applied his message to his hearers.

He said -

Acts 3:12 - *“.....Ye men of Israel.....”*

Some preachers are so general in their approach and in their proclamation and application of the truth that one wonders to whom they are speaking! They do not take aim. They fire at random and hit nobody. Sometimes preachers are afraid to be too personal. The apostles were not like this.

Compare -

Acts 2:39 - *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

Acts 13:26 - *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.*

When Nathan came to David with a solemn message, he was not vague or indefinite in his application of the truth. He said “Thou art the man!” David knew full well that God’s word was meant for him and for him only.

Read **2 Samuel 12:1-13**. Particularly note -

2 Samuel 12:7 - *And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;*

2 Samuel 12:13 - *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

3. THE RELEVANCE OF IT.

How carefully Peter related his message to the people to whom he was speaking.

How quickly and skillfully he got on to their wave length by speaking about “Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” in -

Acts 3:13 - *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.*

and “the prophets” in -

Acts 3:18 - *But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

Compare also -

Acts 3:22-25 - *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*

23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

These people simply had to listen, because Peter was speaking about things with which they were familiar. He was speaking within the context of their own history.

We are to preach in terms that the people will understand and against the background of their knowledge and needs. This is the kind of preaching that God blesses.

4. THE HEART OF IT.

What was the central and dominant theme of Peter’s sermon? It was the love and grace of God revealed in His Son. Hardly had Peter started his sermon when he mentioned “Jesus”.

Acts 3:12-13 - *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

True preaching is all about Jesus. If you want to find out the heart of Peter's message notice the names which he gives to our Lord in this one brief sermon. These names reveal Who He is and what He is able to do for all who trust Him.

a. Acts 3:13 - *".....His Son Jesus....."*

declaring His eternal Sonship and His saving work.

John 1:1-2 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

John 1:14 - *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Matthew 1:21 - *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

b. Acts 3:14 - *".....the Holy One and the Just....."*

The testimony of God, of His friends and enemies, of angels, demons and of Himself was that He was sinless.

Hebrews 7:26 - *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

c. Acts 3:15 - *".....the Prince of life....."*

declaring that He is the One Who came to give life and that He slew death by dying and gives eternal life to all who trust Him.

1 John 5:11-12 - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

d. Acts 3:18 - *".....Christ....."*

The anointed One. This is His official title.

e. Acts 3:20 - “.....Jesus Christ.....”

The One Who was anointed to be Saviour.

Acts 4:12 - Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

f. Acts 3:26 - “.....His Son Jesus.....”

Here is the wonder of His perfect deity and true humanity.

This is the preacher’s message. It is the message of -

Christ’s incarnation (implied throughout the sermon).

His crucifixion declared in -

Acts 3:15 - And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

His resurrection presented in -

Acts 3:15 - And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

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

His glorification as stated in -

Acts 3:13 - The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

5. THE CHALLENGE OF IT.

Peter’s attitude was not, “Take it or leave it!” It was, rather, “You are guilty. You must do something about it!”

Acts 3:19 - Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who

are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Acts 3:26 - *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

These people were to repent and be converted. These are missing notes in much modern preaching, but they are essential notes in all true biblical preaching.

To repent and be converted is to be turned away from sin to faith in the Lord Jesus.

Acts 3:26 - *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

6. THE URGENCY OF IT.

When Peter preached, it was a matter of life or death for his hearers.

In -

Acts 3:23 - *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

he reminded them of the solemn danger of rejecting God's message.

There are only two classes of people.

Luke 19:10 - *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

There are only two ways.

Matthew 7:13-14 - *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

There are only two destinies.

Mathew 25:46 - *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

We need to recapture the urgent notes of warning in the following verses -

“perish” - **John 3:16** - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten*

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“wrath” - John 3:36 - He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

“die in your sins”- John 8:24 - I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

7. THE PREACHER OF IT!

Take a quick look at the preacher. He was a born again man, a Spirit-filled man, a Bible-believing man, but also he was -

a. A praying man.

Acts 3:1 - Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

b. A reliant man.

Acts 3:12 - And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

c. A faithful man, bold, courageous man.

Acts 20:27 - For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Pray that God will raise up preachers like this to preach sermons like this.