

Acts Chapter 28

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Date: 11 December 2013

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we welcome you to our December 11 class, and I want to remind you that we will be meeting next week, which will be, of course, the 18th, and then the following Thursday, we will all be with loved ones or family for Christmas Day, and Collier's will be closed on Christmas Day.

But we plan to return and start the new year off right with January 1, and the restaurant will be open for business as per usual. So if you didn't stay up too late on New Year's Eve, and you're able to drag yourself out for that Thursday morning of January 1, we welcome you to be with us, and we are going to commence a new study.

We will be in Paul's epistle to the Galatians, and I can promise you it will be eye-popping in many ways. So for now, and without your scripture sheet this morning, we want to return to the book of Acts.

And I want to remind you that even though we have covered the entire book over the last few years, verse by verse, we wanted to just revisit a couple of things, and use this as a kind of review session.

So we'll do this for just today, and then for next Thursday, which will be the 18th, and then we will consider ourselves as having concluded with the book of Acts, and we'll be ready then for Galatians.

[1 : 3 1] I've pointed out to you a number of times, and I want to reemphasize it, that the Acts of the Apostles encompassed a period of about three decades.

We are talking about 30 years approximately from the time Acts opens until it closes. And there are tremendous watershed issues that occur during those 30 years.

And sometimes they are lost upon us by not recognizing how much time is actually involved. Items, for instance, to keep in mind, something like this.

The Apostle Paul's conversion in Acts chapter 9 was not followed by his first missionary journey until he had been a believer for about 15 years.

So he was operating in and around Israel for approximately 15 years before he took that first missionary journey. And an item like that is something that we really need to keep in mind.

[2 : 3 9] And then when we open with Acts, we noted earlier about our Lord's ascension and the commission that he gave to the Twelve. But the important thing I want to point out about that is, and this too is often lost on many audiences, but I don't want it to be lost on you, that when the Apostle Paul was commissioned in Acts chapter 9 to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, they never had an Apostle.

There had been twelve apostles chosen by our Lord, and they went forth and preached the kingdom of heaven is at hand, just like John the Baptist did and just like Jesus did.

But that's not a message that you preach to Gentiles. That's a completely different message. That's the message that was preached to the nation of Israel. And in Matthew 10, when the Lord called the twelve apostles, He told them, Don't go to the Gentiles.

Don't go to the Samaritans. Confine your ministry, limit your ministry, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now that's there in Matthew 10, when He called the twelve.

And that's really significant, guys. It's very significant. Then, as we noted also in Acts chapter 1, with the passing off the scene of Judas, because of his betrayal of the Lord, and his subsequent death, they were obligated to choose a new Apostle.

[4 : 2 2] And they were functioning under authority that Christ had already given them. And they chose Matthias. You know, they cast the lots in accordance with the usual Jewish way of doing it.

And they considered that Matthias was God's choice. And I'm surprised that there are a number of Bible teachers who says that these eleven were out of the will of God, that they should have waited,

and God would have replaced the twelfth Apostle with Paul.

And that is complete nonsense in connection with the whole record. Because Paul was never given a commission to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

He was given a commission, go to the Gentiles. In fact, from the time he was first called back in Acts chapter 9, Ananias was informed that I've raised him up and sent him to the Gentiles.

And he has given the designation, the Apostle to the Gentiles, to the Goyim. And Matthias replaced Judas, and they were to carry on that mission to the twelve.

[5 : 39] And as far as we know, they did. So this is an entirely different thing, and as I pointed out to you so many times, it is a failure to recognize these distinctions that has caused so much division in the Christian church.

And doctrinally speaking, we're all over the map. And if you look at the major things that divide most denominations, you will decide, you will discover, that by and large, most of them, most of those divisions, are due to a misunderstanding of the Acts of the Apostles.

And when we come to Acts chapter 2, and the account that is given of the day of Pentecost, this is a glaring example. I don't know how many of you are aware of it, probably most of you, but let me just point it out.

We have a denomination today. In fact, it did not really come into existence as an official recognized denomination until something like 1908 in San Francisco, California at the Azusa Street Mission when a phenomena, believed to be a phenomena, of an outbreak in the speaking of tongues, took place, speaking in languages not known, only it was in actual languages and still isn't. But it was out of that experience, the Azusa Street Mission, that what we know as the Pentecostal denomination has developed. I think it was 1908, maybe 1907, but somewhere in that area.

[7 : 19] And prior to that time, a group known as Pentecostals did not exist. Today, they are a worldwide assembly, very, very large, and very influential, especially in South America and here in the United States.

And the assemblies of God are part of that group, split off of the original Pentecostal group that started back. But anyway, they all base their doctrine, their teaching, their practices, etc., on Acts chapter 2 and the day of Pentecost.

And that, of course, is where our Pentecostal brethren get their name. That's their origin. Now, these are lovely people. They know and love the Lord. They are committed to the principles of Christ.

They teach salvation by grace, etc. But we just differ with them regarding the issue of tongues and healing and so on. And our position is that those things were very much in vogue and were provided as a kind of a stopgap measure for early believers back in the Acts.

And that Acts chapter 2 and the account that is given of the day of Pentecost was never intended to be a pattern for today's local church.

[8 : 42] But that's the way many interpret it. In fact, that was the way I interpreted it for years. And with my Baptist background, I bought wholesale the whole concept of Acts chapter 2 and the day of Pentecost and the Spirit of God coming as He did and the miraculous phenomena that took place only being the good Baptist that I was, I rejected the tongues concept.

And that's what most of our Baptist brethren do today. But of course, no matter how you slice it, that's kind of inconsistent. If you're going to take the whole package like the Pentecostals do, you ought to take the whole package.

But we want to kind of pick and choose. Well, when you really examine the evidence and look at it carefully, fellas, you cannot, I think, reach any other conclusion than the day of Pentecost that is so often and so emphatically taught as the birthday of the church was in reality nothing of the kind. It was not the beginning of something new. It was the fulfillment of a promise that was made back in Joel chapter 2 and Peter made that so crystal clear when they couldn't understand what all of this was about and these people were speaking in languages that they had not learned so that everybody could understand and hear them in their own tongue.

People were saying, what is this? What's going on? What are these people doing anyway? And some said, oh, they're just drunk with wine. They're sloshed.

[10 : 29] That's what's wrong. And Peter stood up and said, these men are not drunk as you suppose, seeing it's only the third hour of the morning. It's only nine o'clock in the morning.

These people aren't drunk. And then Peter says, this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. This is the fulfillment of prophecy.

This is something that God has promised. That's what's taking place here. And then they went on and Peter preached that message about Israel having crucified their Messiah and God raised him from the dead and now we are appealing to you even though we as a nation crucified the Messiah, God raised him from the dead and you know what?

God still wants you to put your faith and trust in that Messiah so that even though we were responsible for crucifying him, if we repent, if we change our mind about who Jesus Christ really is because earlier you said he wasn't the Messiah.

You said he was an imposter. you said crucify him, crucify him. And that's what you did. Now you need to reverse yourself.

[11 : 57] That's what repentance means. It means change your mind. You change your position. You turn your back on what you previously believed and you embrace this new truth.

Why should you? Because it's true. And we are told that 3,000 saw the light and they did that. And as a result they were baptized and why was that part of the package? Well because it was part of the package that John had preached and that Jesus had preached.

it was repent and be baptized for the remission of sins you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And they did that. And they received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This is Acts chapter 2. And then when we read in the very next chapter Peter is preaching a follow-up message and it's the same thing and let's turn to that for just a moment if we will in chapter 3 and I want you to remember that it follows hard on the heels of the Pentecostal experience and in Acts chapter 3 this follows the healing of this man who was lame from his mother's womb laying at the gate beautiful and Peter and John healed the man through miraculous powers given to them by the risen Christ they healed him and and this guy was just I mean he had been sitting there this was his this was his chosen begging spot for years and years he had been there alms alms and this guy couldn't walk and people would come by and out of the generosity of their heart they'd throw in a few shekels and that's the way he supported himself and when they used the power of God and healed him and said the guy was expecting some money from him and Peter says silver and gold have we none but such as we have give we unto you rise up and walk and they took that guy by the hand and lifted him up and strength surged through those withered legs and ankles and he stood on his own two feet

[14 : 27] I could see him in my mind's eye with his mouth wide open and his eyes so big as saucers he looks down at those legs that he's never stood on and he stomps around and he walks and he starts jumping up and down and he is absolutely elated and all the people standing around says what is this what's going on here hey what isn't that yeah that's him how's he what and all these questions start germinating and a huge crowd begins to gather and these people are coming in because there's a lot of commotion going on over there and everybody sees this guy that has been a permanent fixture there at that gate of the temple for decades they've been used to seeing him there and now he's standing and jumping and leaping and he hugs Peter and he hugs John and he looks down at his legs again he can't believe that he's actually walking meanwhile the crowd is growing and it's getting bigger and bigger and verse 11 tells us in chapter 3 that while he was clinging to Peter and John oh the gratitude the exuberation the joy of this man is incredible try to picture that if you will you've never walked a day in your life never stood on your own two feet lame from your mother's womb what was the guy was almost 40 years old why

I wouldn't let go of Peter and John either I tell you he was clinging to and all the people ran together to them at the so called portico of Solomon full of amazement full of well they ought to be full of amazement whoever saw anything like this before when Peter saw this he replied to the people men of Israel why does he call them that because that's who they are these are not a bunch of dumb Gentiles these are not a bunch of non-Jewish people these are all Jews and they are there in the temple because they're Jews they're there to worship and to pray and to do business with God and he says men of Israel why do you marvel at this or why do you gaze at us as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk this is not about us the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob you see that formula again see the three names not just the God of Abraham but the

God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob the God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus the one whom you I can see Peter pointing his finger at that crowd the one whom you disowned you wouldn't claim him you rejected him the one whom you disowned in the presence of Pilate when he

had decided to release him some of these people were in that crowd Peter says well I'll tell you what I don't find anything worthy of death in this man I'm going to turn him loose he hasn't broken any Roman laws and I'm not concerned about your religious law crucify him crucify him and they started in a little chant you know how crowds do crucify him crucify him you want me to crucify your king we have no king but Caesar crucify him wow you disowned the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you

Barabbas hey guys remember how we've emphasized fallen man thinks with a warped intellect is this choice of Barabbas ever an illustration of man thinking with a warped intellect crucify him give us Barabbas crazy but that's what a fallen mind is like ok see you Larry hey enjoy Florida yeah sure this guy at the gate was healed got up and walked it seems that later on there's scripture of Peter talking faith in God is what raised him and did this faith but it seems like it's Peter and John's faith that did it not his it doesn't indicate that he somehow had faith in Jesus or did he no I don't think he did that's an excellent point

I don't think this guy had a clue there's no indication that they had preached to this lame man now if you put your faith and trust in Jesus then we will you know you will be healed there's no indication that they said that no indication that he believed that in fact we don't have any idea where this guy was in connection with Jesus we don't know if he had been able to stand and walk we don't know if he would have been one in the crowd yelling crucify him although I think that came primarily from the religious establishment we don't know where he was but we do know that they saw him there they knew that he couldn't walk and let's see what the text says actually says it doesn't say anything granted 16 and on the basis of faith in his name it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know and the faith which comes through him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all well we still don't really know we do know that

[20 : 42] Christ was the basis and his power was the basis for it but the text simply doesn't indicate Peter is making it quite clear through the power of Christ that this is realized and there's no question that Peter and John had this faith but in verse 6 Peter simply said well let's look at the account in verse 4 says Peter along with John fixed his gaze upon him and said look at us and he began to give them his attention expecting to receive something from them I think this guy was just sitting there with his hat hanging out or his bowl or whatever and he was just looking he was making eye contact with people who come by because if you're expecting something from somebody and you want to appeal to them it's good to be able to make eye contact with them get their attention they're more likely to drop something in the pot and he's trying to make eye contact with everybody that comes by he's looking at this one and looking at that one looking for some ray of interest and then he can put on his somber face you know and appeal to them and he's looking and looking and

Peter says to him look at us and he takes his gaze away from trying to make eye contact with everyone to focusing on Peter when he says look on us and the text and the text says and he began to give them his attention expecting to receive something from them in other words ah I've struck it rich here these guys are going to do something for me but he has no idea what it's going to be and expecting to receive something from him and Peter said I do not possess silver and gold but what I do have I give to you in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene walk and then we are told that he seizes him by the right hand raised him up and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened

Mike absolutely absolutely in fact the question was isn't this a pattern that Jesus followed in giving the Jews a sign that's a principle thing that applied to the nation of Israel they are people of a sign of a miracle and this is why Paul said when he wrote to the Corinthians the Jews require a sign but we walk by faith not by sight when you get a sign that's by sight that's something you can see that's demonstrable right in front of you and that's the way the Jews cut their spiritual teeth they are a people born out of signs and it all started way back in Egypt when God established that nation on the basis of physical detectable observant miracles miracles miracles such that they simply could not deny

I mean right there it is in front of your eyes they can say I was there I saw the Red Sea part I walked over on that dry land I know what I was looking at I know what I saw and manna from heaven and water out of the rock and all the rest of it one miracle after another and all of those was here so the signs and the miracles that Christ wrought he wrought as an evidence or credentials or badge to demonstrate he was who he said he was yeah sure they did yeah and it was a very powerful object lesson and did it ever work

I mean he could have gone in and said hey everybody listen to me and probably a lot of people wouldn't have paid much attention but when they had something demonstrable there like that that was undeniable yeah it got their attention all right yeah absolutely when he said I give to you was that giving him the healing or did that give him the faith it was the faith transfer to the man who then became the Jesus was healed well it gave them that was the basis of the power that surged through his legs that came from Christ and what they were saying is we don't have any silver gold but we've got something else in the name of Jesus Christ and that was the key right there that's where the power lay and they said rise up and walk and the guy probably thought that's easy for you to say but Peter reached down and grabbed that guy by the right hand and yanked on him and he just came right up out of those lame legs and stood up

[26 : 25] I tell you it must have been something and as Don pointed out it was an attention getting device and it really worked and he said Christ said later woe unto you Chorazin Bethsaida those were Jewish cities those were Jewish cities he said for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon well where's Tyre and Sidon who are they they're Gentiles they're not Jews Tyre and Sidon Gentile territory over on the coast and Jesus said if the mighty works that have been done in you physical miracles Chorazin Bethsaida if the people in Tyre and Sidon had seen what you saw they would have repented in dust and ashes but not you so the miracles are a sign they are an evidence but let me put it this way if a person is intent to not believe you can find reasons not to and some of them did some of them did and you know what still goes on today if a person is looking for reasons not to believe he can find them and they'll be justifiable in his own mind now they won't fly with

God but they'll fly with him at least temporarily say well I appreciate you being here guys thanks again for your presence we'll see you next week how