

Paul - Critical Questions of ChronologyIII

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Date: 15 April 2012

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- [0 : 00] I would like you to please turn to the Gospel of Luke, and this morning we'll be in Luke chapter 7, verses 24 through 35.
- When the messengers of John had left, he began to speak to the crowds about John.
- What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see?
- A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces.
- But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet.
- [1 : 22] This is the one about whom it is written. Behold, I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.
- I say to you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John. Yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.
- When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John.
- But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.
- To what, then, shall I compare the men of this generation? And what are they like? They are like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another.
- [2 : 39] And they say, we played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We sang a dirge, and you did not weep.
- For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, he has a demon.
- The Son of Man has come eating and drinking. And you say, behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.
- Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children. It was a really fickle crowd that Jesus was talking about.
- And I'm not at all convinced that fickle crowds were limited to his day and time. I think they tend to characterize just about every generation that comes along. What Jesus is saying here, in essence, is this.
- [3 : 47] You people just refuse to be satisfied. You are implacable. Somebody who is implacable simply means they cannot be placated.
- They criticize John for not eating and drinking. They criticize Jesus for eating and drinking. In other words, some people don't look at anything except to find something to pick at, something to criticize.

And it was so with Jesus. The problem with the religious establishment was that Jesus did not meet their predetermined, preconceived criteria for what a Messiah ought to look like and sound like.

So, when John introduced Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, they dismissed him. Didn't measure up to their qualifications.

And that's precisely what he's talking about when he says that the scribes and Pharisees, the religious establishment, rejected the counsel of God against themselves, against their own best interests, not being baptized by John.

[5 : 12] And the reason they weren't baptized by John was they rejected John's message. John says, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and here is the king.

And their response was, no, he isn't. And they simply rejected his claims to be the Messiah. So, everyone formulates decisions and courses of actions based upon what they perceive to be true.

That's the only way we can function. That's the only way anyone operates. And it was not any different with them. And that, of course, means that makes the dissemination of information and the accuracy of it extremely critical.

Hosea said, through the Spirit of God, my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. They were deficient of information.

If you don't have the information you need to process the data to reach the conclusion, you're going to make wrong decisions. And that's the basis for many wrong decisions made by just about every generation.

[6 : 34] Now, as so far as who knew what and when did they know it and what difference did it make or does it make today, the answer is impossible to exaggerate.

Because when you look upon the messages that attend these different individuals, like John the Baptist and like Jesus in his earthly ministry and like Peter in the Twelve and so on, and you take into consideration the information that they had at the time and how they disseminated it and how that information is going to be increased and added to by new developments, which often are lost sight of, with people going back to the earlier items of information and discounting the things that came later, you're going to find yourself laboring with old, outdated material.

That is in drastic need of an update. And where does the update come from? The update arrives on the other side of the cross.

This side of the cross. It originated on the other side of the cross, but the cross updated it. And the resurrection updated that. And the ascension updated that.

And the abundance of revelations that Christ revealed to Paul the Apostle, updated those. But these are the ones, I contend, that are so often ignored or overlooked because it is thought that's not what Jesus said.

[8 : 22] What Jesus said is back in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Well, you could not get any more direct words of Jesus than what he gave to Paul in the abundance of revelations that Paul wrote in his epistles.

They all constitute an ongoing update. And the example that we're going to look at this morning as to how critical this is goes all the way back to the book of Acts.

And I want you to turn, if you will, please, to Acts chapter 2. Because the critical questions of chronology and who knew what and when did they know it are of great importance.

The reason they are is because the message they did or did not proclaim was necessarily determined by what they did or did not know. And let me just inject this here too because this is very, very important.

Very important. I remember this vividly because it was a mistake that I frequently made shortly after I became a Christian and got serious about Bible study.

[9 : 31] There is a natural tendency, there is a natural tendency for us to take biblical information that we know now and read it back into the events as they happened and assume that those who lived through those times and experienced those times certainly knew all we know and a whole lot more.

And it's only logical that they would because they lived through it. Surely they understood all of these things. No, they didn't. That's the whole point.

And one of the great fallacies of the way so many Christians, well-meaning, well-intentioned Christians, interpret their Bible today is they just assume, well, if I know these things and I'm a couple of thousand years removed from these people, I didn't live through them.

I didn't see the things that they saw. I didn't experience what they did. I wasn't there and heard the gracious words of Jesus like they were. Surely these people who actually lived that then, they understood everything that I do and a whole lot more.

No, they didn't. You've got to understand that. As clear as Jesus could make it as to what was going to befall him when he arrived at Jerusalem, they didn't understand that.

[10 : 57] Yes, they heard him say that, but they didn't understand that. In fact, they even repudiated him. They denied it. Well, of course, when he died on the cross, they all knew that three days later he was coming back.

No, they didn't. They didn't have a clue. But didn't he tell them? And after the third day he was raised, yes, he did. But do you know what? They heard him say that, but he didn't mean that.

He couldn't have meant that. But he did. And it didn't really register with them. But you know, that's what he told us.

We didn't think he meant that. We didn't think he really... In other words, we didn't take it literally. But it was to be taken literally. So what I'm saying is this.

Don't make the fallacious assumption that these people who lived back then, they understood all of this stuff because they lived then. No, they didn't.

[12 : 04] You and I understand far more than they did. Can you believe that? And the reason we do is because we have a completed revelation in the Bible that they did not have.

We are the advantaged ones. We are the enlightened ones. We have access to information that was beyond their wildest dreams. Keep that in mind when you read the scriptures.

You cannot formulate a message based on what you do not know, but only by what and upon what you do know. And the only exception would be prophecy.

And even then, when these prophets made these various predictions under the Spirit of God, they didn't know these things. Certainly they hadn't experienced them because they were future.

They didn't know them. And the only reason they wrote them is because they were revealed to them. They received them by revelation, not by knowledge and understanding, but by direct revelation from the Spirit of God.

[13 : 18] The same is true of us today as it was of them 2,000 years ago. And that is, you can only formulate a message based on what you know.

The message we proclaim today should be based on the latest information available, not upon earlier information that has since been superseded.

Example, the early apostles, and this is a very important point, the early apostles never had the death of Christ to proclaim until it actually happened.

All right? I think everybody is square with that. Of course, you can't preach the death of Christ until the death of Christ was a reality. After the fact, Peter, in Acts 2 and 3, proclaimed the death of Christ, Israel's Messiah, and he charged the nation with a responsibility for it.

Now, let's look, first of all, at Acts 2 and verse 23. Some would say, or ask the question, did Peter really preach the gospel on the day of Pentecost?

[14 : 43] When I first heard that question asked, my response was, well, of course. that's what Acts 2 and the day of Pentecost is all about, is Peter preaching the gospel.

Then you have to ask yourself another question. Well, exactly what is the gospel? What are the components of the gospel of the grace of God?

And, did they have those components in place here in Acts 2? 2? And, you know, I searched this passage in vain and I could not find the gospel of the grace of God.

What I did find was a straightforward indictment, accusation, a charge to the nation of Israel for having rejected and crucified their Messiah.

That's not the gospel. The gospel of the grace of God boils down to what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, I delivered unto you that which first of all I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.

[16 : 17] That is the gospel. But the fact that you crucified the Messiah, that's not the gospel. That's true.

That was an accusation that needed to be leveled, and Peter leveled it, and he was right on in what he said, and he was inspired by the Spirit of God as he stood up and delivered this powerful message on the day of Pentecost.

But it did not include the gospel. And something else that needs to be clarified that we will see in some of these passages, to say, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

That's not the gospel either. The gospel has to have the components death, burial, resurrection of Christ.

That's the gospel. That's the gospel in a nutshell. It cannot be abbreviated any more than that. And there are lots of ramifications and additions that we could make to that by way of clarification, but that is the bare bones essence of the gospel.

[17 : 28] Death, burial, resurrection of Christ for our sins. Anything less than that is not the gospel. And to say, I believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

That's not the gospel. to say, I believe he was the Son of God. That's not the gospel. You have got to get into not only identifying who Jesus is, not only his person, but his work.

And his work is what saves. That's where redemption is. It isn't just in who he was, but it is in what he did.

God. Because that is what really affected our salvation. And as you look this passage over, here in Acts chapter 2, and in verse 23, well, look at verse 22.

Men of Israel, listen to these words, Jesus of Nazarene, the man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know, this man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you, and he's talking about his corporate audience there, consisting of thousands of people out in front of him, and they're all standing, they're all standing, wondering, what is this all about?

[18 : 58] They're there because they heard this enormous, overpowering, noise that sounded like a tornado going by, and it was coming from over there, and everybody ran over there, thousands of people, and the crowd is congregating, and people are looking at one another and saying, what is this?

What's happening here? What's going on? What are all these people doing? What was that noise? Where was that coming? Who did that? What is it? And somebody spoke up and said, oh, there's just a bunch of drunks that's on Peterson.

No, no, he's been our drunk, but the third hour of the day, this that you are experiencing, this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel hundreds of years ago, and now it is coming to pass right before your very eyes.

prophets. This is what Joel was talking about. Now, they were all familiar with Joel. He was one of their beloved minor prophets, and Joel spoke of this time, and Peter goes on to quote from Joel in chapter 2 here, and then his conclusion is, this magnificent verse, in verse 23, where we find a marriage between divine sovereignty in that it was God, his father, who delivered up his son, but it was man and his evil machinations that put him on the cross.

So, God is responsible, and behind this whole thing, orchestrating the death of his son, God so loved the world that he gave, and man is responsible and culpable.

[20 : 52] He is not a programmed robot who could do nothing but crucify Christ. He is fully culpable. And both of these things are brought out in this verse.

And as you read on through the passage, verse 32 concludes with, this Jesus, this one whom you crucified, God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

Who's he talking about here? I think he's talking about himself and the eleven other apostles who were there, Judas now having been replaced by Matthias, and they're all standing there together, kind of providing moral support for Peter, and Peter steps forth as the spokesman, and he delivers this message here in Acts chapter 2, and Peter says, and we all are witnesses, and here's the eleven others standing there behind him, nodding their heads, yeah, yeah, that's right, that's right, amen, Peter, and this crowd is looking on, trying to figure out all of this, and what's going on, and then he says, therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God, and he's talking about his ascension that they experienced just ten days earlier, and having received from the Father the promise of the

Holy Spirit, he has poured forth this, which you both see and hear, and he's talking about the phenomena there on the day of Pentecost, and the speaking in tongues, and the miraculous manifestations that accompanied with it, you people are right here and now, witnessing this by what you're seeing, and what you're hearing, you are making history, for it was not David who ascended into heaven, but David himself said, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet, well, what in the world does that mean?

What kind of double talk is that? The Lord said to my Lord, what's he talking to himself? this is the Father speaking to the Son, and Peter is identifying Jesus Christ as Lord, the Son of the Father.

[23 : 31] This is a two-way conversation between Father and Son, and when the Son ascended to heaven after the resurrection, after 40 days and 40 nights on earth, he was received by his Father, in heaven, and the Father said to the Son, have a seat, Son, and sit right here at my right hand, and you won't have anything to do by way of return until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

that means bring all the opposition in submission to you. That is precisely what God is about today, and that is what ultimately is going to take place.

And then Peter comes back with this great therefore. In light of everything I just told you, let all the house of Israel know for who is all the house of Israel?

Who is that? That is all the twelve tribes, and all the descendants of the twelve tribes. That is the whole house of Israel, all the sons of Jacob.

Let them all know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

[25 : 12] And they just look at each other. What? Is this true? Is what this guy just said true?

Is this what Joel was talking about? What is the explanation of this noise? And these people speaking in all of these languages that they have never learned. Has he nailed this?

Is he right? Did we really do what he said? Did we crucify the Messiah? Was Jesus of Nazareth really the one?

And we didn't know it. We rejected him. And you know what? At least 3,000 people in that crowd and I don't know how many were there because we're not told.

There may have been 30,000 there. But at least 3,000 people in that crowd said, man, he's right. He is right.

[26 : 24] We really blew it. we are guilty. We did that. How could we miss him? How could we not see it?

But we didn't. And we can't undo what we did. It's over and done. You can't uncrucify somebody. Where do we go from here?

How can we pick up the pieces? What can we do to redress this? And Peter said, I'll tell you what you can do.

You can reverse yourself. You change your position. You admit you were wrong. Acknowledge it.

Take responsibility. Step up to the plate and say, it's me. I was wrong. I was wrong. When you do that, that's repenting.

[27 : 30] And if your repentance is genuine, you will not have a bit of a problem being baptized in the name of this one whom you rejected earlier.

And remember when John preached Jesus was the Messiah and was baptizing people as they repented of their sins? You wouldn't. you rejected him. Now are you ready to reverse yourself?

And there were 3,000 of them that said yes. And they were baptized and please don't say, this is Christian, there is nothing Christian about this.

This is as Jewish as a bar mitzvah. There is nothing Christian about this. This is the baptism of John. John. This is what John had been doing.

This is what he was sent to do. This is what the twelve were sent to do. Preach the gospel of the kingdom and water baptism in the name of Jesus the Messiah.

[28 : 33] The message has not changed. Now it is true, and this is really important, there has been a new component added, and the new component is death, burial, and resurrection.

But here, I want you to get this distinction because this is really important, and I trust I'm not splitting hairs or reading something into this that isn't there. They are preaching.

Israel crucified the Messiah. God raised him from the dead. He has ascended to heaven. God has made him Lord and Christ. But there is no indication here in Peter's message that in connection with that, that is how God has arranged for the forgiveness of sin.

It is through the substitutionary death of Christ for the sins of the whole world. We will not read here in Acts 2, God was in Christ reconciling the whole world to himself.

Don't read that into Acts 2. It isn't there. Peter isn't saying that. Peter is saying, you're guilty of crucifying the Messiah. God raised him from the dead.

[29 : 57] Now, insofar as the forgiveness of sins being predicated upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, that was not always the case.

And I'll tell you why. Because when Christ was here, and we won't take time to turn to it, but if you're making notes, I believe it's Mark chapter three, where the disciples, where the man on the stretcher, born of four, was let down through the roof because the crowd was so great at the entrance, they couldn't get in the house, and they went around, went up the steps on the side and let the guy down.

And you remember what Jesus said to him? He said, Son, thy sins be forgiven. And immediately, the religious establishment pounced on that and said, did you hear what he said?

Who can forgive sins but God only? This man makes himself to be God, saying, your sins are forgiven. Well, the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins apart from his death, burial, and resurrection.

And he did it in Acts 3. And he did it when the woman came to him and confessed her sin and he said, he healed her and said, go and sin no more, lest the worst thing befall thee.

[31 : 31] Christ in his regal authority as the Son of God could and did forgive sins on the other side of the cross, simply because he had power to do so.

And I would also inject that. Ultimately, that which became the basis for the forgiveness of all human sin will be the substitutionary death of Christ.

But that was future to this time. Now here, Peter is not saying, in Acts chapter 2, he is not saying, what you need to do is place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior who died for your sin on the cross.

He's not saying that. That's not Peter's message here. I am convinced it's going to become his message, but it isn't his message here. Because I don't think he made the connection at this point in time.

You see, here is a very important thing to understand. When Jesus Christ died on that cross and said, it is finished, I don't believe there was anybody there in the audience under that cross, including his own mother, including the Apostle John, including anyone else who may have been there.

[32 : 51] I don't think any of them understood what was meant by that phrase. It is finished. We just automatically think, like I said earlier, they were living then, experiencing then, surely they knew it, they understood it, they didn't.

You do, but they didn't. For all they knew, he was saying, I am finished. And he died, but he said, it was finished.

It. It. What was the it? it was the great transaction that he came to transact in his own body of flesh.

It was finished, was that redemption that was worked out through his yielding up his life on that cross. That became the basis for reconciling man and God.

it was that transaction. It is finished. That was the cup that he drank. When he prayed, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

[34 : 07] The cup he was talking about was the cup of separation, the cup of pain, the cup of shame and ignominy that he was going to experience in the death and the separation from his father for sin.

This was the purpose for which he came in. Remember, in the garden of Gethsemane, when he prayed and he said, what shall I ask?

Sweating great drops of blood, what shall I pray? Shall I pray, Father, save me from this hour? hour? But it's for this very hour that I came into the world.

That's the transaction he was talking about. And when the sun was blotted out and there was darkness over the earth for the space of three hours and a huge earthquake took place and was trembling and shaking and everyone was scared witless and the darkness ascended over the whole place, it was then that Christ was being made sin for the world.

That's the transaction that was finished. Nobody understood that. Nobody understood, well, that's what's happening. It's Christ is being made sin for us and all of nature is rebelling, but don't lose hope, three days later he'll be back alive again.

[35 : 36] No, no, no, no, no. Nobody had a handle on that. Nobody understood that. Nobody. Now, Peter says, you repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

That sounds like the same thing John was saying. Well, it is the same thing John was saying. This is John's message. It hasn't changed. Nothing's changed about it. This is business as usual.

They're just continuing right on. Don't lose the continuity between the Gospels and the Acts. Don't come to the book of Acts and say, oh, now here is where everything is different.

No, this is where things are fulfilled. This is the continuation of the story. This is not a new story. This is a continuation of an ongoing story.

And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[36 : 43] For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to himself.

Who are these that are far off? These are Jews. Jews that aren't there in Israel. These are the scattered, the diaspora, the scattered abroad ones who have left the country.

But they are all belonging to the house of Israel and the promises to them because it was to their fathers. And we are told in verse 41, those who had received his word, them.

Does that imply there were those who didn't? I think it does. There were still people who would, when Peter preached this message and the 3,000 believed, there were still multitudes who stood there and said, I don't buy it.

I don't buy it. I don't believe that at all. And they continued that way. Many of them did. Now, when you come over a couple of other chapters, you'll see that the 3,000 become 5,000.

[37 : 59] And the number is increasing. Why is that? Because the word continues to go out about the resurrection of Christ, and more and more people are being convinced and coming online.

And you know something? They are all Jews. All of them. There are no Gentiles in the picture until you get all the way up to Acts chapter 9.

Years after the crucifixion. And then Peter was not in favor of including Cornelius because Cornelius was not a Jew.

And Peter is thinking, this is only for Jews. Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. He came to Israel and he did not have the big picture.

This is what was manifested in the sheet let down from heaven wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts. And Peter saw all of these different animals together, clean and unclean.

[39 : 11] What was that saying? It was saying that God has put them all together now. There is a commonality in all of these animals no longer clean and unclean. Which by the way also means the sacrificial system, it's gone.

It's passé. Because the sacrificial system of Israel officially ended with the ultimate last sacrifice. That was that of Jesus Christ.

So now with Christ having made payment for the sins of the world, the barrier distinction between Jew and Gentile is effectively cut.

And that's why you've got all of these animals in this vision in Acts 10 together making no separation between clean and unclean animals. And the reason that's important is because for a Jew, only a clean animal could be offered in sacrifice.

Unclean animals were unacceptable. You couldn't offer a dog. It was a sacrifice, a pig. It had to be a certain prescribed animal. And that sheet let down from heaven is saying the distinction is gone, the barrier is gone.

[40 : 29] And the middle wall of partition is broken down because Christ became the new and living way in his flesh. He became the new veil that separated man from God in the holy place.

Incredible. Absolutely incredible. But do you think Peter understood this in Acts chapter 2? Don't you think that for a minute. This was not at all clear to Peter.

That's why he rebelled and God had to do this thing with the sheet and the animals three times before. Peter had a hard head. You know that? Peter said, no, I'm not going to do that.

I've never done it that way. I've never done it that way. I've always believed this. And the third time, Peter finally got the message.

And he said, okay. And then when he went to Cornelius, he wasn't comfortable going there. He wasn't comfortable when he got there. Stepped inside the door and he said, you know how it's unlawful for a man who is a Jew to be here.

[41 : 35] and all of Peter's friends would have said, what's a nice Jewish boy like you doing in a place like this? And he went on and he proclaimed this gospel with another dimension to Cornelius, a non-Jew.

And everything's changed. When he reports this back to his Jewish brethren, they had criticized him for going to Cornelius.

And Peter told them the whole story, everything that happened. And these guys are standing there scratching their head and saying, well, how can this be?

What's going on here? This doesn't make any sense. And Peter says, what did you want me to do? Tell God what he couldn't do?

Who was I that I could withstand God? I didn't have any choice in this thing. I had to do what he told me to do. And Peter says, well, golly, then God has also granted repentance to the Gentiles?

[43 : 01] Well, that's amazing. Whoever heard of such a thing? Well, that was what God had in mind all along.

That's exactly what Jesus was doing on that cross. reconciling the world. Not just Israel, the world. Reconciling all of them to God.

Never entered their mind. Never had a clue. And when Paul set out on his missionary journey, who did he get all the opposition from?

From fellow Jews who still didn't believe it. And they saw Paul as contrary to the law of Moses and to Judaism as we've always known and practiced it.

And we know of course that the law and the covenant is eternal. No, it isn't. That's why it was going to be replaced with a new covenant.

[43 : 59] Jeremiah 33. They didn't have a clue. Why is it so important as to what they knew and when they knew? Do you see how all of this starts coming together?

It becomes very important. So we have to take the latest update we have. And what is that? It is that which the risen Christ now ascended revealed in an abundance of revelations to Paul the apostle that updated Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and even the first several chapters of the book of Acts.

It was new information that nobody had before. And Paul says, there were an abundance of revelations and I wrote them down as the Spirit of God moved me and I sent the content in letters to the Corinthians and the Ephesians and the Philippians and the Colossians and to Timothy and to Titus.

I spelled out all of those abundance of revelations that were given to me. Through the inspiration of the Spirit of God and all of this is new information that the twelve didn't have when they were here with Jesus because he hadn't revealed it then.

He only revealed it after he ascended. And it's not just for Jew because in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, bond or free.

[45 : 41] you are all on one same plane in the body of Christ. Wow. It becomes very, very important.

I want to give you a couple of references before I let you go because this is too very, very important and I just want you to chapter five and verse verse.

I'm going to have to revise this for time's sake. Five and verse thirty one. Peter is speaking again and he is speaking so much because he was the appointed spokesperson.

Christ made him that. He was the delegated one. Verse thirty one. He Christ is the one whom God exalted to his right hand as a prince and a savior to grant repentance to whom?

To Israel. Am I suggesting that Peter was at this point in time so myopic in his theology that he could not see beyond the nation of Israel?

[47 : 03] That's exactly what he was seeing and that's what he's saying. Peter had tunnel vision. It was Israel, Israel, Israel. He was really plugged into that.

And if you knew this man's background and how he was raised and steeped and educated and inundated with Israel, you'd understand. To grant repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins and we are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.

What was their response? When they heard this, they repented and were baptized. No, they didn't, did they?

They were cut to the quick and intending to slay them. We'll kill these guys. When you can't defeat the message, kill the messenger.

That's what they're going to do later with Stephen. And they were going to put them to death and the only thing, the only reason they didn't was because of Gamaliel.

[48 : 18] Now look, if you will, at verse 42. And every day in the temple, what temple was this? This is the Jewish temple. It's the only temple there is there.

Every day in the temple and from house to house, this is Jewish house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching. What are they preaching and teaching?

Look at it. Look at it carefully. Jesus as the Christ. That was it. Jesus was the Messiah. They crucified the Messiah.

what about connecting the death of Christ with salvation for the sins of the world? No. Even though that was true and that was in place, it was not understood.

It was not appreciated. It was not embraced. That's later. And as you move on through the book of Acts, you've got to keep in mind that there are sometimes years involved between these chapters.

[49 : 22] chapters. Because the whole of the book of Acts encompasses 30 years, three decades in these 28 chapters. And sometimes we read these 28 chapters and we feel like all of this stuff took place in three or four months.

No, no. It's 30 years. Now, before I let you go, look at chapter 8 and verse 37. This is Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

And why is the Ethiopian eunuch in Jerusalem? He was there to worship. Why was he there to worship? He was a Jew.

He was a proselyte. He was a convert to Judaism. And he was there to observe one of the Jewish feast days. and Philip proclaimed to him the person of Christ.

And in verse 36, they went along the road, they came to some water and the eunuchs. Now, wait a minute, where does water come from? Why does it? Because of John.

[50 : 33] John and John's baptism. And it was repeated again on the day of Pentecost. And no doubt, Philip told this Ethiopian about John and his ministry and baptism and those who received it and those who rejected it and the 3,000 that were baptized on the day of Pentecost.

I think Philip told this Ethiopian eunuch all about that. And they come to water and he says, hey, look, there's water. Why can't I be baptized?

And Philip said, well, if you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

That's not the gospel. He's right. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. But let me tell you something. Anybody today who thinks they are a Christian because they believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God is sadly mistaken.

there is more to it than that. It isn't merely identifying Jesus who he is, but you've got to understand what he did.

[51 : 47] This is called the person and work of Jesus Christ. His person is his identity. His work is the work of redemption that he accomplished on the cross.

Jesus Christ without the cross redeems no one. That's why it was so necessary.

This man believed in accordance with what he understood at the time. This is the same kind of belief as was in the gospels because everything then hinged upon the identity of Jesus.

Who is he? Who is he? is he really the messiah or is he an imposter? This man believed that he was the son of God and as a result he was baptized.

In chapter 9 and verse 19 after Saul's conversion he took food and was strengthened and for several days Saul of Tarsus this is right after his conversion he was with the disciples the people that he came to capture and take back to Jerusalem in irons he is now with them praying with them fellowshiping with them he is with the disciples who were at Damascus and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues where was he proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues what about first baptist church down in the corner didn't exist there were no first churches of anything all there were was

[53 : 53] Jewish synagogues and pagan temples nothing Christian I mean nothing Christian and when he went to the synagogues as a Jew to the Jews he proclaimed Jesus was Israel's Messiah and you do not find you do not find and God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself making salvation by grace through faith available to everyone in the whole world no no no that comes along later don't take your understanding of the gospel of the grace of God and read it back into this because it wasn't there it developed and it didn't come to be known until sometime later and that becomes very very clear and the last reference I want to give you is in chapter 10 of

Acts and this is where the breakthrough starts occurring and I think this is really significant because remember Peter was the one to whom the keys of the kingdom were given and Peter has already used those keys on the day of Pentecost and now he is going to use the key again and he's going to open the door a little bit further and this will involve Cornelius and this is dramatic stuff I'm not going to read from verse 36 on but I would recommend that you read it at your leisure I want to get to the climax and that's down in verse 42 where Peter says and he ordered us to preach to the people and solemnly to testify that this is the one who has been appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead of him all the prophets and who were the prophets they were all

Jews no such thing as a Gentile prophet the prophets bear witness that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins do you think maybe Peter is getting a message he didn't have before it looks like it doesn't it and while Peter was still speaking these words the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message and all the circumcised believers who were they they're Jews who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also what is this and Peter is just dumbfounded and later he clarifies to his Jewish audience what

God was doing so it becomes very very critical that we understand who knew what and when they knew it today we have a glorious updated message to proclaim that even the twelve apostles didn't have what kind of a job are we doing with it this is a message that is designed for everyone and you know something almost nobody believes it the first time they hear it and one reason is because it just sounds too good to be true but it really is that's what grace is all about pray with me please father we see the gradation here of this message developing and transpiring over time and we do not want to be guilty of misunderstanding it or of even proclaiming a message that is no longer valid we believe we must believe more than

Jesus being the son of God we need to believe that the word was made flesh and dwelt among us we beheld his glory and we crucified him and you raised him from the dead and through that incredible transaction that he accomplished on the cross you balanced the scales of justice and you made salvation available to whosoever will may come how grateful we are for this glorious gospel and we pray that in these moments as we close if there is anyone here boy or girl man or woman who has never really seriously considered what Jesus did on that cross let this be their day of decision may they even now say Lord Jesus you did that for the whole world and that includes me and I want to respond to what you did God will hear your prayer and he most surely will answer you want me to be and take this life and do with it whatever pleases you would you make that your prayer this morning

[59 : 30] God will hear your prayer and he most surely will answer because he's never turned away anyone who has come to him thank you father for this time to share today thank you for what is revealed and when it was revealed and when it was understood and appropriated we bless you for all of it in Christ's name amen