

Bible Study: Acts

(Part 2- Chapters 3-4)

by Gary T. Panell

Chapter 3

(1) As we start this chapter we notice that the Christians were still praying in the temple. This particular day they went up to the temple to pray at about 3:00 P.M. in the afternoon. "The three stated times of prayer for later Judaism were midmorning (the third hour, 9:00 A.M.), the time of the evening sacrifice (the ninth hour, 3:00 P.M.) and sunset." (The NIV Study Bible) It seems that Christians continued to worship much the same as they did before the Day of Pentecost and the beginning of the Church Age, except with the added services on Sundays and during the week in the homes. At these other meetings they had fellowship while eating together, teaching the word, praying, and having the Holy Communion (Acts 2:46). Peter, James, and John had been close to Jesus when He was here on earth, now it is not surprising that they are leading apostles as the Church starts out.

"Note that the apostles and their converts continued in the regular practices of the Jewish religion, in addition to their new activities as Christian witnesses. In reality, they were not seeking to establish a new religion but rather to extend and fulfill all that their Biblical faith and practice had been promising would take place when the Messiah came." (The Defender's Bible) Paul too, made sure that he remained faithful to the temple worship, so that he could reach out to the Jews with the gospel. I believe this is also why Paul always started at the Jewish synagogue when he went to a new area. He says in his own words:

"For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law; to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

There has been a transition in the Christian Church from the Jewish worship to what we have today. It was not until the destruction of the temple by Titus in 70 A.D. that some of the Jewish "trappings" fell off of the Church. We still have remnants of the Jewish system in some denominations today. To a certain extent I believe this is because there is a basic misunderstanding of what the Church is really all about.

In the Church Age, we don't have a temple today, because our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?" Our shepherds or pastors don't have to wear priestly robes, because we are all priests in the Age of Grace, not that it is a sin to wear robes, but they are not necessary. "Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a

holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2: 4-5; 9-10)

In other words, in the Church Age there is no distinction between the "laity" and the leadership, because there is no such thing as laity, so we should not be using these terms. We are all priests. Yes, we do have different gifts of the Holy Spirit with which to serve, but that does not mean that the one who has been given the gift of pastor-teacher is any better, or more important than the person who has the gift of teaching or evangelism.

This does not mean that we should not be submissive to our leaders; we should be, because Scripture says, "Obey those who rule over you and be submissive, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17) However, we need to see the difference between what was in Judaism, where only some of the believers were priests, and what God has for the Church Age. I believe this is one reason God allowed for the Jewish temple to be destroyed.

We don't have animal sacrifices like the Jews had, because Christ is our sacrifice, and He died once for all, and said it is finished. "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." (John 19:30) "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3:18)

We do have the Holy Communion as a remembrance of that sacrifice. In the Millennial reign of Christ there will be animal sacrifices again for believers, but this will be by way of remembrance. Just as people looked forward to the coming Savior and His sacrifice in the Old Testament, they will look back at the cross in the Millennial Reign, by sacrificing animals again. The difference is, Old Testament saints were only covered temporarily by the animal sacrifices that were offered before the cross, but once Christ died, Church Age believers don't have animal sacrifices.

"But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." (Hebrews 9:11)

These "things" that I spoke about earlier, that are still hanging onto the Church can hinder the work of God. For example when fancy buildings are thought of as necessary, it takes a lot of money away from getting the gospel out, and helping the needy. Nowhere in the New Testament will you see that buildings are mentioned as being built for meetings. They met in homes or rented buildings. I believe personally, it is not "necessary" to have a building that belongs to the congregation. That does not mean that it is wrong or a sin to have a building, just that, since we believe that the Lord Jesus is returning soon, why build so many buildings to be left behind for the antichrist's group?

Also, in many countries today the enemy is doing all he can to burn, bomb, or destroy church buildings. Why not just meet in homes or in secret in these countries where this is happening? Save the money to

get the gospel out rather than allowing the enemies of Christ to destroy all you have worked for. In western countries we are not at this stage, yet, but who knows how long it will be until we are subjected to such things here as well.

Again, I am not saying it is wrong for the church to own a building. However, in the future, why not consider whether or not owning a building is really all that necessary, or would a rented building do just as well. Could we meet in homes for most of the week and come together on the Lord's Day? After all the building is not the Church, as so many Christians think, but the Church is the Holy Spirit in the Christians. Rather than saying I'm going to go to church, you should say I am going to the church building. That is if you still own a building that the church meets in. Not only that, keep in mind your congregation is just a small part of the Church (Universal). (See our article on the [Holy Catholic Church](#))

I know these thoughts seem far out now, but they may not be thought of as so strange in the future. Also, since we are on this subject, is it good for us to hang onto the non-profit tax deductible status, or recognition from the government? This has become almost a "sacred cow," but look at the requirements the government is starting to put on the churches that have this status. What regulations will the government come up with in the future for the churches? For example, you may have to hire homosexuals, and not be allowed to speak out against abortion, and so on.

(2-9) Here is the first recorded apostolic miracle, after the resurrection of Christ. Let's look at its characteristics. The man had an incurable sickness, being born unable to walk. Probably he was deformed in his legs. Pearlman in his, *Through the Bible Book by Book*, in his Acts study asks? "Were the actions of the healed man in the temple very dignified? In New Testament times, when people wanted or received something from God the Lord, did they always consult their dignity? "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan." (Luke 17:15-17) [Doing things decently and in order may allow for rejoicing!]

"And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way." (Luke 19:3-4) So too, when this lame man was healed he began to jump and to praise God [probably with a loud voice]. "So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them-walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God." (Acts 3:8-9) Why is it alright to get excited at a sports event, but wrong to get excited when God is doing something special?

Another thing, did Peter and John ask for money or make money on this miracle? No! A thousand times NO! The preaching of the gospel is not about getting money, as some are teaching, preaching, and practicing today. It is just the opposite; it is about giving freely what God has so freely given to us! If there is a ministry that you are supporting that is emphasizing money, stop supporting it! Also, I would find another more biblical fellowship to attend. God doesn't need your money to do miracles for you, or anyone else! Those that are making a profit out of the gospel will be judged by God one day.

Some unread letters were found washed up from the ocean. It turns out that there were about 300 in all, sent to a New Jersey minister, but they ended up dumped in the ocean, most of them unopened. Some were heartbreaking, a girl asking forgiveness for an abortion (she prayed 'Lord, I know that I have had an abortion, and I killed one of your angels'), an unwed mother pleading with God to make the baby's father marry her, etc.

Evidently the letters addressed to Rev.-----, were intended to be placed on the church's altar and prayed over by the minister and or congregation. Other documents in the bag, including bank statements and canceled checks, also listed Rev. ----- who had died in 2000. So often the gospel is used for a "scam" to make money. I say again, God will judge all such who use the gospel this way. The early apostles were not interested in money; they were interested in saving souls and healing bodies and lives for free!

(10-11) "The apostles proceeded through the vast Court of the Gentiles to the gate called Beautiful, which led into the Court of the Women, where they found a lame man who was laid there day after day to beg. His shouts drew a crowd of people, who were amazed to behold the man whom they had daily seen at the Beautiful Gate now jumping up and down with joy. Peter used this miracle as another occasion to bear witness to the saving power of Jesus. Apparently, after the service of prayer and sacrifice, Peter and John, together with the lame man, proceeded to the covered colonnade on the eastern side of the Court of the Gentiles, which was called Solomon's porch (AV) or portico (RSV). Here the crowd gathered and Peter addressed them." (The Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

"From the outer court, nine gates led into the inner courts. *Solomon's Colonnade*. A porch along the inner side of the wall enclosing the outer court, with rows of 27-foot-high stone columns and a roof of cedar..." (The NIV Study Bible)

(12) To whom did Peter point the people, to himself or to the Lord? "So when Peter saw *it* [all the people ran together to them, greatly amazed] he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?" So healing is not a result of our own power, nor is it because of our godliness, then what is it from or how does it happen?

(13-16) We find the answer in verses 13-16 as to how the man was healed. "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus [Son (AV) is better translated Servant, because the word refers to the Servant of the Lord, prophesied about in Isaiah 52:13-53:12] whom you delivered up. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

I have seen only a few miracles of healing in my life, but I have heard of many others, and it has not been done to bring glory to any individual, other than the Lord Jesus Christ. If you or I every see or hear of someone getting the glory, other than the Lord Jesus Christ, I believe we have reason to doubt the source of the healing. The New Testament warns that in the last days there will be lying wonders. Even false cults see healing, so be discerning. "The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10) That is not to say that God is not doing miracles today, He is, but we need to be on our guard that we are not taken in by false miracles.

You may not be aware that God is truly doing the same types of miracles today that He did in the book of Acts. As the gospel goes out all over the world God confirms His word with signs and wonders. Here is just one true story of the many I could pick out to prove my point. This miracle happened with the Gospel for Asia missionaries, and is recorded in the fourth quarter 2006 issue of [Gospel for Asia](#) News Magazine.

"Getting to Know the Great Physician: When Shilu was given a chance to join Gospel for Asia's Bridge of Hope program, it was the first time he had a chance for a real future. And although he didn't know yet, it was also his first chance to find hope. Shilu's parents rejoiced that he was even receiving an education. He now had a safe place to play and learn. He was so happy with the other children. But their hearts ached as they watched him limp around the schoolyard. An illness had left Shilu crippled in one leg. Doctors told them it was paralyzed, and they had no money to treat their little son.

"Pastor Pakoli, the GFA missionary who served at the Bridge of Hope center, knew about Shilu's crippled leg. He also knew of the gods and goddesses Shilu's parents worshipped who could do nothing. With compassion, Pastor Pakoli went to visit the family with a story about the Great Physician.

"Peter and John went up together to the temple,' he read from Acts chapter three, describing the encounter they had with the lame man who begged at the gate. Then came Peter's challenge: 'Silver and gold I do not have,' Pastor Pakoli read, 'but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.'

"The story gave Shilu's parents new hope. They learned that Jesus Christ was not a god whose powers could be bought through sacrifices or offerings. As Pastor Pakoli explained God's love and desire to redeem their lives through His Son's sacrifice, Shilu's parents trusted Christ to heal their son. Pastor Pakoli prayed for Shilu's healing, and the little boy jumped to his feet, walking normally.

"As in the story in Acts, Shilu now ran and played with the other children, 'walking, leaping, and praising God,' for his miracle. Three days later, he stood in front of all the children at his Bridge of Hope center to tell about-and show-what God had done in his life. 'No one present could stop praising God,' wrote a field correspondent. 'Praise God for healing Shilu and making him a witness to many.'"

(17) Getting back to the text, we see God did this miracle, not just for the individual's sake, but also that many others could hear about the power of God and be saved. So the result of the miracle should tell us also where it is from. Look what happened here as a result of this miracle. It was an occasion for a witness to Jesus as the Savior of the world. Peter was able to preach a message of salvation. Notice he did not preach hell fire and brimstone, however sometimes there is a need for this type of message too, but he preached the love of Christ and a need for repentance.

(18) "You killed. God raised. We are witnesses. A recurring theme in the speeches of Acts (see 2:23-24; 4:10; 5:30-32; 10:39-41; 13:28-29; cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-4). 'foretold through all the prophets,' echoes what Jesus had said (Luke 24:26-27). The suffering was prophesied (compare Isaiah 53:7-8 with Acts 8:32-33; Ps. 2:1-2 with Acts 4:25-26; Psalm 22:1 with Matthew 27:46; see also 1 Peter 1:11)" (The NIV Study Bible)

(19-20) "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before." The "times of refreshing," beginning with the first coming of Christ, are a foreshadowing of the "times of restitution" in (Acts 3:21) at His second coming. The Greek word for "refreshing," used only here, literally means "reviving," or "breathing again," referring evidently to the new birth which results from repentance and conversion.

"Note also that, when Peter here urged listeners to repent and be converted, 'that your sins may be blotted out,' he did not add, 'be baptized,' as he had in his first sermon (Acts 2:38). This further indicates that baptism is not required for salvation and forgiveness, though its importance and immediacy are undoubtedly still assumed." (The Defender's Study Bible)

"Repentance is a change of mind and will arising from sorrow for sin and leading to transformation of life." (*The NIV Study Bible*) "METANOEO̅, lit., to perceive afterwards (meta, after, implying change, noeó, to perceive; nous, the mind, the seat of moral reflection), in contrast to pronoeó, to perceive beforehand, hence signifies to change one's mind or purpose, always, in the N.T., involving a change for the better, an amendment, and always, except in Luke 17:3,4, of repentance from sin. The word is found in the Synoptic Gospels (in Luke, nine times), in Acts five times, in the Apocalypse twelve times, eight in the messages to the churches." (*Vine's*)

As far as the nation of Israel is concerned, which Peter was speaking to as well: "This would mean reversing their verdict about Jesus and confessing him as God's Messiah. The result would be the **blotting out** of their sins and the enjoyment of the **times of refreshment** promised by the OT prophets. The conversion of Israel will mean the return of the Messiah. It is the purpose of God to bring salvation to Israel before the coming of God's kingdom, and Peter pled with Israel to receive this salvation." (Wycliffe) "And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.'" (Romans 11:26)

"Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you." (Deuteronomy 30:1-3)

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hada Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves." (Zechariah 12:10-14)

(21) Peter again weaves the message of the death burial and resurrection into his message. He also shows how prophecy was fulfilled in Christ. He shows how Christ was spoken of as coming from the very beginning of time, and as coming again. "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

"Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension are not the end of his redemptive work. He is to come again in power and to establish a new order free from evil and sin. This restoration will include the redemption of nature as well as the perfecting of human society when God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. **The times of refreshing** are a present blessing; the **establishing of all that God spoke by his**

holy prophets is a future blessing [in The Millennial Reign of Christ]; but both are the result of the redeeming work of the Messiah." (Wycliffe)

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:18-23)

"**times of restitution** [AV]" "Restitution" is from a Greek word used only this one time in the New Testament, though it is closely related to a word meaning "restore." The promise thus means that, when Christ comes again, He will restore all things to their primeval perfection, before sin and the curse came into the world (compare Revelation 21:5; 22:3).

"**since the world began.** Note that God's prophets have been prophesying the restoration of all things ever "since the world began," not just beginning some four billion years after the world began, as evolutionists would allege. There is no Biblical basis whatever for the notion of vast ages since creation (Mark 10:6; Luke 1:70). It should be recognized that there is no scientific proof that the world is older than the few thousand years of recorded history." (The Defender's Study Bible)

"The word "restitution" is rendered from the Greek noun *apokatastasis* meaning *restoration to a former state* (cp. Acts 1:6). The meaning is limited by the words: "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets." The prophets speak of the restoration of Israel to the land (see Israel, Gen. 12:2-3; Rom. 11:26; also Palestinian Covenant, Dt. 30:3, note); and of the restoration of the theocracy under David's Son (see Davidic Covenant, 2 Sam. 7:16." (*New Scofield Reference Edition*)

(22-23) Peter shows how Moses prophesied concerning Christ Jesus, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'" (Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

(24) He also goes on to say that "all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days." This is amazing statement; every Old Testament book has some message of Christ for us, by way of type, shadow, or actual prophecy. All the more reason why we should study these Old Testament prophets to dig out those nuggets of gold about Christ! "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:16)

(25) "Peter reminds the Jewish leaders that the Abrahamic covenant promise of Genesis 12:1-3 show that God never intended to limit His covenant blessing to the Jewish bloodline of Abraham's family." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*) "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)

(26) Jesus was sent to the Jews **first**, but then He was also sent to the Gentiles. What was the reason He was sent? Was it not that He might bless the world with Salvation from our sins, as we turn away from

them in repentance? This is what repentance means, a turning away from sin to Jesus as our God and Savior. "Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 13:46)

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek [Gentile]." Romans 1:16

Chapter 4

(1) Here we find out about the first persecution of the apostles by the religious leaders. Anytime God truly does a miracle, God's enemies are not happy about it. The priests, the captain of the police force, and the Sadducees were very upset with the apostles. There is a saying about the Sadducees, and that is: "they are sad you see because they don't believe in the resurrection." They not only did not believe in the resurrection, they also did not believe in the existence of angels or demons. It is hard to understand what they did believe. We have religious people like this today, and also those that are upset when God does miracles today. To them, God can't do miracles; in fact, He couldn't create the universe except with the help of evil-ution. (Check out our [articles on creation.](#))

(2-11) Everything Satan does against the Lord's people will "backfire" or boomerang. Here many more people believed, bringing the total from about 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost to now about 5,000 believers.

The biggest thing they were disturbed about was that the apostles were teaching the people that Jesus had risen from the dead. I'm sure this made the Sadducees really upset, since they said this sort of thing was impossible. "Peter, with John, preached with great boldness, even accusing the chief priests that had manipulated the crucifixion of Jesus just a few weeks before. This same Peter had once been so fearful of his life that he denied Christ three times. The amazing transformation in Peter can only be explained in one way: he knew beyond any question that Jesus had triumphed over death and was now energizing him by His indwelling Spirit.

"He quoted Psalm 118:22 ["The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."] to them, exactly as Jesus had done earlier (Matthew 21:23,42) ["Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"], applying it directly against them." (*The Defender's Bible*)

"There is no record that here or at any later time the Sanhedrin [70 leaders of Israel] ever attempted to deny the fact of Christ' resurrection. [They did try to spread a lie about Jesus' resurrection. "some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." (Matthew 28:11-

15)] The Sanhedrin could not deny that a miracle had been done, but they would not admit it either."
(*New Scofield Reference Edition*)

You understand that these are the same religious leaders that had Christ crucified. Now they have to mop up some more from the mess that they had made earlier. Again God uses all this to bring souls to himself. If you think about it, it seems almost laughable; people are in trouble for making a man well who has never walked in his life. This has got to be a terrible crime, really?! This is how Satan blinds the minds of the lost. I have heard of relatives that have gotten upset because someone in their family got saved and stopped drinking and fighting like they used to. If these relatives were thinking clearly they would be glad that one of their family members was living the way they should, but Satan has a way of making good look evil, and evil look good.

This time Peter did just what Jesus had told him to do when the time of persecution came. He was to wait for the Holy Spirit to give him the words to say. "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them [Jews] and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." (Matthew 10:16-20) This is good advice for us today when persecution comes, we need to look to the Holy Spirit to put His words in our mouth, and He will!

"One of the main purposes of Acts is to show that the Jews who rejected and crucified Jesus continued their rebellion against God by rejecting the gospel of the resurrected and ascended Jesus proclaimed by the apostles. This chapter describes the beginning of this opposition, which culminated with the plots of the Jews to kill Paul on his last visit to Jerusalem (23:12-15; 25:1-3)." (*Wycliffe*)

(12) "This is one of the clearest statements that can be found anywhere setting forth the one way of salvation. Only Christ can save, for He both created and sustains all things. He Himself has made this plain (Jesus said to Him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6) As offensive as such a truth may be to non-Christians, we must continually make it clear in our witness to them, for without Christ they are lost and bound for hell." (*The Defender's Bible*)

(13) Just being with Jesus those three and one half years had turned the disciples of Jesus from uneducated fishermen into giants of the faith. Now with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the false religious leaders were no match for God's power being shown through the apostles. We put so much emphasis today on education, but if that education (as important as it can be) does not draw us closer to Jesus, we would be better off just studying the word of God ourselves. Don't get me wrong here, I should be the last to say this concerning education, but I want to thank God that my education has drawn me closer to the Lord. Some Christian colleges and seminaries today have just the opposite effect on Christians. If you are going to study at an accredited college or university make sure you are grounded in the word of God first!

(14-18) It was a little hard to think of something to say against a healed man standing there with them. Instead of believing, though, the false religious leaders of Israel commanded the apostles to stop preaching Jesus. Anytime there is a false cult, this is exactly what they will say to you. Look at the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, the whatever false cult you want to speak about they do not want

you to tell people Jesus is God, and He is the only one who can save you. They have another way to be saved, and they want to preach and teach this.

(19-20) Anytime it is a government that opposes the truth of the gospel, you know where that government is from. It is from the devil, who does not want the truth to get out. Should we obey the law that says we cannot tell people about salvation through Jesus alone? No, a thousand times, "no" we must tell people the truth even if it cost us persecution and death! Look what Peter said to the false religious leaders: "But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'" There is a higher law than human government, God's law, and when human government tells us to not do something that God tells us to do, we have to obey God instead! Paul makes it clear in Romans 13 that we are to pay our taxes and be good citizens, but when it comes to preaching Jesus we have to do this no matter what anyone says!

(21-22) This man was in this condition from his mother's womb, forty years, everyone was rejoicing, except the false religious leaders. Also many were saved as a result of this wonderful miracle God did for him and for us as well, praise God! "'For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor *are* your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" (Isaiah 55:8,9)

(23-30) The apostles went back to the other brothers and sisters and said, in so many words, 'check this out' see what God has done. Then they all had a wonderful praise meeting. As they were praising the Lord, this prophecy came forth from them, which it says they all quoted together in unison: "Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ.' (Psalm 2:1-2) For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

I personally believe this is what God wants us to pray today in the Church (If you would like to hear a message on Jesus' Model Prayer Matt. 6:9-13 [.wma format](#) or [.mp3 format](#)). We have gotten so far away from this, it is hard to imagine, but in these last days before Jesus returns, God wants us to get back to the **Blueprint** of the book of Acts!!!

If you have not read *Anointed for Burial* by Todd and DeAnn Burke you need to read this book. I was filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of studying Scripture on the subject of the filling, and after reading this book. It is: "A thrilling eyewitness account of the last days of Cambodia, 1973-the dying days of Cambodia's last regime! Todd and DeAnn Burke share the powerful testimony of the Khmer people and offer an exciting chronicle of life before the nation fell. They reveal the wondrous intervention of God in Cambodia, and offer proof of the power of simple faith."

Here is a modern miracle story right out of the book of Acts! People raised from the dead and miraculous healings are told about in this story bloodied and persecuted the church still survives through the grace of God. Todd Burke called of God to a unique ministry of what properly can be called

a pioneer, apostolic work. Strange things happen[ed] to him for which there is no explanation but God. Todd exercises a risky, daring kind of faith which God honors." (*Logos International*)

I believe because the time was short for the people of Cambodia God allowed them to experience a similar outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we see in the book of Acts. But I also believe that this is His perfect will for us as the Church, in these last days, before the rapture of the Church. I hope you will read the book, but here is a little taste of what happened there, and what can happen when the Church follows the **Blueprint** of the book of Acts. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6b)

Todd and DeAnn Burke were relatively new Christians, they did not know the language of Cambodia, but through the Holy Spirit they were able to win many to Christ in that country before it fell. Todd only had a seven day permit to be in the country, but he was able to get a stadium to hold a crusade in, during war time. God rewarded Todd and his wife DeAnn for their simple child like faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is an example of what God can do when we allow Him to work through us by His Holy Spirit:

"During the Bible classes that day, I shared with the students the news of the upcoming crusade. As far as I was concerned, my getting a diplomatic visa was a greater miracle than obtaining the use of the arena, but the students couldn't comprehend immigration problems since they had never been outside their own country. However, their excitement over the crusade was electrifying, and they assured me they would do everything they could to contribute to its success.

"We advertised the crusade as "The Way To Life" and printed thousands of posters and handbills in the Khmer language. The publicity read: "Bring your sick, blind, and lame and believe God for healing." Ordinarily, I would have been reluctant to say something like that, much less print it and post it all over the city. But seeing God's evident hand in all the arrangements up to now, I felt the boldness of faith to publicize the crusade in this way.

"The meeting was to begin at two o'clock on Friday, September 28th. We were rushing around, still making final preparations, when people began entering the area. Military guards frisked everyone at the door, checking for concealed weapons.

"As the hour approached, we took our seats on the platform under the large banner, "The Way To Life." People were still flooding into the arena and the choice seats were already filled. Others crowded the exits and massed behind the platform on a second-level terrace. Children swarmed around us, chattering and watching the Luminares [singers] in their colorful outfits. It was no doubt the first time most of them had ever seen American performers.

"Though we had tried to prevent them, vendors made their way through the crowd hawking sliced sugar cane and pineapple chunks on sticks. Over the public-address system I tried to bring order out of the chaos, but finally decided just to sit down and pray with Nou Thay [the interpreter] and the Luminares about the problem. We agreed in prayer that the Lord's will would be done in the meeting; after all, He had made the whole thing possible.

"Shouldn't we go ahead and begin?" I asked Thay. "No," he answered. "They're still arriving at two o'clock, Cambodian time," he smiled and explained. "That means any time between two-thirty and

three." "But shouldn't we try to get the people to sit down?" "No," he said with assurance. "When the Luminares begin to sing they will all quiet down and find seats."

"He was right. As soon as Jimmy Carothers sat down at the upright piano and the Luminares gathered around the microphones, the crowd settled down and listened intently. They weren't all in seats, however. Many were sitting on the floor and others stood against the walls. It reminded me of a rock concert in the States.

"Before each song, one of the group would give a testimony and explain the lyrics of their next number while Thay interpreted. Just so the music of Luminares seemed to cleanse the oppressive atmosphere and prepare the crowd for the preaching of the word.

"About five thousand people were in the audience, most of them middle and lower class people. Among them was a large number of refugees. Seated to my left was a whole section of soldiers dressed in battle fatigues. Many of them had been wounded or had suffered the loss of a limb and I was touched by the look of hope written on their attentive faces.

"When the Luminares finished their last song, I stepped to the microphone beside Thay. "Many of you are wondering why we are here," I began. "It can be said in one word: Jesus. We've left our country to share with the world the salvation all people can have in Him." Thay was interpreting phrase by phrase and we seemed to have the people's attention. "I can't prove to you that Jesus offers more than you have in Buddha or in any other religion. Only Jesus can prove that to you as He did in the days when He walked the earth.

"Then I began to relate the story of the paralytic man who had been healed by Jesus. During Thay's interpretation I prayed silently that the Holy Spirit would breathe life into those words and cause them to pierce each individual heart.

"The confidence I felt radiating from Thay as he interpreted encouraged me that the Khmers were really comprehending what we were saying. Holding up the Bible in my left hand (as I had seen Billy Graham do on TV many times), I pointed to it and said; "Jesus proved who He was by what He did. When Jesus spoke, that paralytic stood up, picked up his pallet and walked out before the eyes of everyone. The people, including the scoffing religious leaders, were amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!' I pray you will be making this same statement before you leave this place today."

"The Luminares were behind me on the platform, backing up every sentence with prayer and amens. Their support was invaluable. With a sweeping gesture taking in the whole crowd, I said, 'Every one of you has come here with a problem in his life. But there is one here who is greater than your problems, Who loves you and wants to forgive your sins. It is Jesus. He can heal your bodies and bring peace and joy to your lives, even in the midst of this war that is tearing apart your country. Give Him a chance to prove to you that He is Lord and Savior.

"With a silent prayer, I continued, 'All of you who would like to know whether Jesus is Lord and has this power to save you and to heal you, please raise your hands.' They went up all over the stadium; an air of restlessness crept over the crowd.

Slowly I prayed a simple prayer so They could interpret every word clearly. Behind me the Luminaires were praying softly in their heavenly languages and I felt a surging confidence that the Holy Spirit was doing a mighty work at that moment.

"I raised my head and looked out over the crowd, hesitating a moment because I was not sure what to do next. Then a thought came to me, Why not ask those who feel they've received a touch from God to come forward and share what had happened to them?"

"I made this appeal over the microphone, expecting that a few would leave their seats. At first there was silence, then laughter broke out here and there. I was bewildered. "Maybe they don't understand," They suggested. "Let me ask them once again." After he made the appeal again, a few began walking toward the front. Then it seemed as though someone had lifted a floodgate; hundreds streamed down the walkways. I looked on in amazement, wondering, could all these have been healed?"

"The Luminaires brought a woman onto the platform who said she had been healed of blindness. They listened to her story, then told me excitedly, "She's been totally blind for many years, but found she could see clearly right after we prayed!"

"I heard someone shouting from my left, and turned to see Khemara, one of our new students, escorting a man toward the platform. They beckoned him to the microphone, and he told how he had been carried into the meeting lame. After prayer he sensed strength coming to his limbs. Stepping out, he found to his amazement that he could walk again. He strutted, did some knee bends and ran across the platform to everyone's delight.

"In spite of the chaos, many miracles had taken place; lives had been touched and changed by the power of God. Jesus had confirmed His word with signs following. We encouraged everyone to return the next two days and to spread the news about the crusade.

"The second meeting, following the same format as the first, went much more smoothly since we were now able to maintain order. We ministered with confidence, feeling certain the Holy Spirit was at work in the hearts of the Khmers to confirm what they were hearing and seeing.

"When we had prayer with the people, so many miracles took place we couldn't record them all. As people were healed they came forward to testify of what God had done for them. The listeners grew more and more excited as the stream of witnesses continued. (*Anointed for Burial*)

This is just a little taste of what God the Holy Spirit did there; He has not stopped working miracles in the Church. The Bible says He is the same today as He was in the book of Acts. "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

Before Jesus went back to heaven this is what He said to the Church, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." (Mark 16:15-18)

We see these things happening in the book of Acts, the "Blueprint" for the Church. These things happened throughout Church history, and we will see all these things happen in the future as we live holy lives and believe God's word.

(31) "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." The main purpose for the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to help us speak the word of God with boldness!

Let me encourage you to read about the need of the continual "filling of the Holy Spirit," just as the early disciples experienced. Also about the need for prayer and what it can accomplish. (Look at our Ephesians study, especially starting at Chapter 5 and verse 18, through the end of the book, but here is a little bit of it.)

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18)
"The first command here could better be translated: 'Do not begin to be drunk with wine.' Since even a small amount of an intoxicant has a damaging effect on the brain, this command in effect calls for total abstinence from alcohol. Proverbs 23:31 warns against even looking on the wine, lest it tempt one to drink."

"The connotation of 'filled' here is 'being filled.' That is, the filling with the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience, like the baptism of the Spirit into the body of Christ [1 Corinthians 12:13]. Instead, we are urged to continually be filled with the Spirit-controlled by the Spirit. In a way analogous to how alcohol may control a person's thoughts and actions, the better way is to allow the Holy Spirit to have control." (*The Defender's Study Bible*, Dr. Henry M. Morris)

The filling of the Holy Spirit comes all of faith-for one who is a Christian, and requests the filling. Laying on of hands with prayer for the individual may accompany the filling; however, laying hands on an individual is not required.

We were saved by faith when we asked God to forgive our sins, and we received Christ as our personal Savior. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9). We have the Holy Spirit living in our lives from that time forward. "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." (Romans 8:9)

"All Christians have the Holy Spirit within them. Anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit within is not a Christian. Though Paul says that Christians are in the Spirit, he also warns that they can from time to time live 'according to the flesh' (v.13)." (*Spirit Filled Bible*)

"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints- (Ephesians 6:18)

I believe this verse is part of our weaponry. In the military we would often have a dagger in our pant leg. The praying in the Holy Spirit is also spoken of in other places like these verses in Jude. "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 20-21)

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*." (Romans 8:26-27)

I believe this praying in the Holy Spirit is using our prayer language, and praying with the understanding is praying in our own language, otherwise it would just say praying. "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding." (1 Corinthians 14:14-15)

Paul said that he prayed more than anyone else in tongues, in his private prayer life. "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all." (1 Corinthians 14:18) I have seen the Lord accomplish mighty miracles through prayer, in my private devotional life. In fact, I doubt that I would be writing this commentary except for answers to praying in the Spirit. (For this study look at our [1 Corinthians Bible Study-part four](#).)

Also on prayer, here are some thoughts from the book *Why Revival Tarries* by Leonard Ravenhill:

"Present-day preaching, with its pale interpretation of divine truths, causes us to mistake action for unction, commotion for creation, and rattles for revivals. The secret of praying is praying in secret. A sinning man will stop praying, and a praying man will stop sinning.

Prayer is profoundly simple and simply profound. 'Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try,' and yet so sublime that it outranges all speech and exhausts man's vocabulary. A Niagara of burning words does not mean that God is either impressed or moved. One of the most profound of Old Testament intercessors had no language-"Her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." No linguist here! There are "groanings which cannot be uttered."

No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. The pulpit can be a shop-window to display one's talents; the prayer closet allows no showing off. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere.

The two prerequisites to successful Christian living are vision and passion, both of which are born in and maintained by prayer. The ministry of preaching is open to a few; the ministry of prayer-the highest ministry of all human offices, is open to all. Spiritual adolescents say, 'I'll not go tonight, it's only the prayer meeting.' Whole days and WEEKS have I spent prostrate on the ground in silent or vocal prayer."
-George Whitefield.

The world is not waiting for a new definition of the Gospel, but for a new demonstration of the power of the Gospel.

One of these days some simple soul will pick up the Book of God, read it *and believe it*. Then the rest of us will be embarrassed. We have adopted the convenient theory that the Bible is a Book to be explained, whereas first and foremost it is a Book to be believed (and after that to be obeyed).

If we displease God, does it matter whom we please? If we please Him, does it matter whom we displease? "The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." If any of us know God, "then watch out, Lucifer!"

We surely need again to climb Calvary's hill on our knees, to survey the wondrous Cross in an attitude of humiliation and adoration. The Church must first repent; then the world will break! The Church must first weep; then our altars will be filled with weeping penitents.

The Church that is man-managed instead of God-governed is doomed to failure. A ministry that is college-trained but not Spirit-filled works no miracles.-Samuel Chadwick

The "old nature" may dodge the *water* baptism, but it is destroyed in the *fire* baptism, for He shall "burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Until they were fire-purged, the miracle-working disciples who beheld His resurrection glory, were held back from ministering the Cross.

We are tired of men in soft raiment and softer speech who use rivers of words with but a spoonful of unction. These know more about competition than consecration, about promotion than prayer. They substitute propaganda for [proclamation] and care more for their church's happiness than for its holiness!

O for a passionate passion for souls,
O for a pity that yearns!
O for the love that loves unto death,
O for the fire that burns!
O for the pure prayer-power that prevails,
That pours itself out for the lost!
Victorious prayer in the Conqueror's Name, O for a PENTECOST!
--Amy Wilson Carmichael

Let me burn out for God. After all, whatever God may appoint, prayer is the great thing. Oh, that I may be a man of prayer! -Henry Martyn

"Christ was not willing that *any* should perish." Preachers, people go by the millions to hell-fire today because we have *lost Holy Ghost fire!*

[We live like we are in heaven already, while others go to hell! -Gary Panell]

This generation of preachers is responsible for this generation of sinners. At the very doors of our churches are the masses-unwon because they are unreached, unreached because they are unloved. Thank God for all that is being done for missions overseas. Yet it is strangely true that we can get more "apparent" concern for people across the world than for our perishing neighbors across the street!

Unctioned by the Spirit's might, John cried, "Repent!" And they did! Repentance is not a few hot tears at the penitent form. It is not emotion or remorse or reformation. Repentance is a change of mind about God, about sin, and about hell!

[Over] two hundred years ago, *Charles Wesley* sang:

"O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow!"

Dr. Hatch cried,

"Breathe on me Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine."

An automobile will never move until it has ignition -fire; some men [and women] are neither moved nor moving because they have everything except fire.

Nature's two greatest forces are fire and wind, and these two were wedded on the Day of Pentecost. Thus, just like wind and fire, that blessed "upper room" company were irresistible, uncontrollable, unpredictable-- Then their fire started missionary fires, quenched the violence of fire, lit martyr fires, and started revival fires!

Beloved brethren, there is to be a special judgment for preachers; they shall receive the greater condemnation (James 3:1). Can it be possible that as they stand condemned before the bar of God, men will turn on some and say, "Preacher, if you had had Holy Ghost fire, I should not now be going to hell-fire." Like Wesley, I believe in the need for repentance in the believer.

The promise of the Father is for *you*. Just now, on your knees in that lonely mission station, or by your chair in that comfortable home, or in the pastor's study crushed and almost ready to give up, make this your prayer:

To make my weak heart strong and brave,
Send the fire!
To live a dying world to save, send the fire!
Oh, see me on Thy altar lay
My life, my all, this very day;
To crown the offering now, I pray:
Send the Fire!
--*F. de L. Booth-Tucker*

We have a cold Church in a cold world because the preachers are cold. Therefore, "Lord, send the Fire!"

Revival is no more a miracle than a crop of wheat. Revival comes from heaven when heroic souls enter the conflict determined to win or die-or if need be, to win and die! "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." --*Charles G. Finney*

Prayer is the sovereign remedy. -*Robert Hall*

Prayer is the acid test of devotion. -*Samuel Chadwick*

At the judgment seat the most embarrassing thing the believer will face will be the smallness of his praying.

In "that great day," the fire of judgment is going to test the **sort**, not the size of the work we have done. That which is born in prayer will survive the test. Prayer does business with God. Prayer creates hunger for souls; hunger for souls creates prayer.

The Church *began* with these men [and women] in the "upper room" agonizing-and today is *ending* [until revival comes] with men [and women] in the supper room organizing. The Church began in revival; we are ending [at this point] in ritual. We started virile; we are ending sterile [God help us!]. Charter members of the Church were men of heat and no degrees; today many hold degrees, but have no heat! Ah, [brothers] and [sisters], flame hearted [Christians] are the crying need of the hour!

Perhaps we should get near Patrick Henry's language this way: "Is life's span so dear and are home comforts so engrossing as to be purchased with my unfaithfulness and dry-eyed prayerlessness? At the final bar of God, shall the perishing millions accuse me of materialism, coated with a few Scripture verses?"

"Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, GIVE ME REVIVAL in my soul and in my church and in my nation-or GIVE ME DEATH!"

"Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." --*Jesus*

Lord, even demons are subject unto us in Thy name. -*The Seventy*

When today the church has paid, the church is taken, but in the early church when they had prayed, the place was shaken!

These quotes were taken from this book:

Why Revival Tarries and it was written by Leonard Ravenhill. The forward is by A.W. Tozer who says of this book, "Not all books not even all good books, come as a voice from above, but I feel that this one does."--*Tozer*

"I highly suggest that we read this book on our knees." -*Gary T. Panell*

If you have not been filled with the Holy Spirit pastor, church leader, Christian, you need to be now. Just in simple faith pray God fill me with your Holy Spirit, in Jesus name amen.

(32) So often today in churches we hardly know each other. This was not so in the early Church. It says, "Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common." Until this happens in the church again we will not see all that God wants to do through the Church.

How is this to happen in a busy society where we all have our lives, our jobs, our families? Maybe you say, this was just for the early Church, maybe this part of the blueprint doesn't apply to us today. I believe if we leave out any part of the blueprint the building will not be complete or correct.

"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is." (1 Corinthians 9-13)

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22)

God has a perfect blueprint for the Church and it is given in the book of Acts. The letters such as the Paul's epistles and Peter, John, James and Jude's books are the specific details that have to be followed in the building plan.

Verse 32 of Acts cannot be left out or the Church will not function as it should. We as believers in each congregation and denomination have to get along well with each other in the family of God. In the past each local church, and each denomination felt they needed to get along with each other and that that was enough, but God is showing us today that is not enough. The whole body of Christ has to get along, not only get along, but love each other like Christ loves the Church! (I have tried to show this in the [commentary on Ephesians](#).) We have to realize that Christ's return is soon and we need to obey His commands, just as the early Church did in Acts.

Here are the commands Jesus has given us: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34)

"And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment." (1 John 3:23)

"I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. And now I plead with you, lady [Church], not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it." (2 John 1:4-6)

I'm sure that there are those out there who are thinking and probably saying, he is teaching some heretical new doctrine. As you see from Scripture this not a new doctrine, but it is as old as the Church herself! However, we should not fellowship with those who call themselves Christians, but do not follow the teachings of God's word.

For example, a person who calls themselves a Christian, but does not believe that Jesus is God, we are not to fellowship with this type of person. "For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." (2 John 1:7-11)

Also we are not to fellowship with those who are living immoral lives. "I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet *I* certainly *did* not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner-not even to eat with such a person." (1 Corinthians 5:9-11) (See our 1 Corinthians study for more on this subject.)

There are groups today that claim to be Christians, but they are homosexuals, bisexuals, and transvestites, etc. We are not to fellowship with these groups. I could give the names of these groups, but their names will surely change. We are not to fellowship with these. Some think that we are to make these welcome in our churches to minister to them. That is acceptable if they have come to hear the truth, but the minute they start to teach others that these sins are alright then they are out. God loves them and we love them, but God hates their sin, and we hate their sin, and we certainly don't want this cancer getting us. So ask them to leave as soon as they stop listening and start telling others to join them in their evil deeds.

Now back to the positive, we are to love each other in the Church like brothers and sisters. We are to fellowship often. We are to share material things with each other, and meet the needs of each other. In our church we have meals together at least once a month, and I know other churches practice this. We are to pray together, and have Bible studies together; we are to help others that are in need. We have a prayer chain, and meals for families in need, and so on. I think you get the picture, not just a Sunday go to meeting type of situation.

Jesus prayed in John 17: "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those who You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We *are*. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me..

And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You love Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:9-26)

Jesus was praying for you and I in the Church and I believe this prayer will be answered before the Church is taken to heaven. The reason again for this is so we can be a testimony to the world of Jesus' love in the Trinity, and His love for us in the Church, and the lost of the world!

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Look at how pure the Church was to begin with, then we see sin enter in at chapter 5, and at other times. It does seem from this above passage in Ephesians, that there is going to be a revival of God's word in the last days. True "born again" believers will work together once again to get the gospel out. I don't know if persecution will bring us together, last times events or true revival, I just know that it will happen! Jesus' prayer will be answered! That means we have to respond to this message because we have a free will and God is not going to force us. We have to want to study the word, pray together, fellowship together in order to get to know other Christians, not just those in our own denomination, but others as well! Just like in the book of Acts before there were denominations.

(33) "And with great **power** the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great **grace** was upon them all." "**power**, *dunamis* (doo-nam-is); Strong's #1411: One of four great power words. The others are *exousias*, delegated authority; *ischuros*, great strength (especially physical); and *kratos*, dominion authority. *Dunamis* means energy, power, might, great force, great ability, strength. It is sometimes used to describe the powers of the world to come at work upon the Earth and divine power overcoming all resistance. (Compare "dynamic," "dynamite," and "dynamometer.") The *dunamis* in Jesus resulted in dramatic transformations. This is the norm for the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led church. (New Spirit Filled Life Bible)

"**Grace**" is the hallmark of God's work, we don't deserve grace, but God imparts it anyway. Someone has said GRACE means, God's Riches At Christ's Expense. We see it later in the book also when people had just received the Lord. "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord." (Acts 11:21-24)

My father-in-law penned this poem about God's salvation:

I am free, yes, I am free.
For Jesus died on Calvary;
There He shed His precious blood for me.
I am free, for Jesus dwells within my heart,
And now I'm free.
Jesus dwells within my heart and now I'm free.

I am free, Yes I am free.
If obedient I will be.
Then with Him I'll spend eternity;
I am free, for Jesus dwells within my heart,
And now I'm free.
Jesus dwells within my heart and now I'm free.

I am free, for I took Jesus
As my Savior as you see;
And everlasting life He gives to me.
I am free, for Jesus dwells within my heart
And now I'm free.
Jesus dwells within my heart and now I'm free.

I am free, for Jesus takes
Me by the hand and pilots me;
And He promised very near He'd always be;
I am free, for in the hollow of His hand
He covers me.
In the hollow of His hand He covers me.

I am free, for in His Word,
He promised never to leave me;
And Jesus always keeps His Word, you see;
I am free for Jesus lives within my heart
And I know I'm free.
Jesus lives within my heart and I know I'm free.
--by *Merlyn Toland*

As we started out this book with our key verse now we see it actually taking place just like Jesus said it would when the Holy Spirit had come upon them. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

They were witnessing to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It could not be disproved and the very fact that they were transformed people from before the resurrection to afterward speaks volumes. (See our study on the resurrection of Christ: [*I dare you to disprove the resurrection of Christ.*](#))

(34-37) "One of the outstanding characteristics of this Spirit-filled church was unity, a sense of oneness that manifested itself in the sharing of material resources. **34.** To meet the needs of poor Christians, the more wealthy believers sold their lands or house and brought the money to be used for the common welfare. **35.** The apostles supervised this ministry of love, which was carried out not on the basis of equality but on the basis of personal need. **36,37.** One Christian is singled out for special attention: **Joseph**, a Jewish Christian from the island of Cyprus, who had relatives in Jerusalem (cf. 12:12; Col. 4:10). His surname, **Barnabas** may mean either *son of consolation* or *son of encouragement* or *exhortation*. Such surnames were often given to people to indicate their character." (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

There is such a great need for spirit-filled Christians and spirit-filled churches in our day if we are to reach the lost of our time!

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