



SERMON NOTES

US N°. 93

Date: March 17th, 2013

Title: Intro to the Book

#1 in the Series on the Acts of the Apostles

1. Back story

a. Israel and Temple theology

- i. The primacy of the Temple and Jerusalem as opposed to the pagan religions around them.
- ii. The Temple was where heaven was on earth, from whence heaven would come onto earth.
 1. Is. 6:3, *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"*
 2. Ps. 72:17-19, *"His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen."*
- iii. Babylonian captivity and the rise of synagogues and Torah.
- iv. 2nd Temple; Is. 29:13, *"Therefore the Lord said: 'Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men...'"*

b. Jesus and the Church

i. The Church is...

1. Mt. 16:18, *"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."* It will outlast and move beyond our lifetime.
2. *"Ecclesia"* is *"the totality of those who are called out."* Was used to designate assemblies (e.g. the civil, governing assembly in Athens), and it was never conceived as an *organizational*, but rather as a *theological* entity.
3. The Church is those called out but is for those who are in to come out; church is for the unchurched. When churches become more for the church, the unchurched feel uncomfortable and hesitate from coming in. James counsel in Acts 15:19, *"Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God..."*

ii. Church / Temple

1. Zech. 6:12-13, *"Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: 'Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the LORD; Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.'"*
2. Col. 1:19-20, *"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."*
3. Is. 66:1-2, *"Thus says the LORD: 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has*

made, and all those things exist," says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."

iii. Jesus is the master craftsman. Mark 6:3, *"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him."* But Jesus was more than a carpenter; "tekton" which is usually translated as carpenter in the New Testament, can also refer to a builder, construction laborer, craftsman, or even stone mason.

1. *Sepphoris* is strikingly situated on a 920-foot-high hill in the Lower Galilee, midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee and about 4 miles from Nazareth. According to the Babylonian Talmud, it was named Zippori *"because it is perched on the top of a mountain like a bird (Hebrew tzipor)." Archaeological finds indicate that Sepphoris had a population of 40,000 at the time of Jesus, a little over half the size of modern Nazareth. From ancient literary sources we know that it was a sophisticated Jewish city with ten synagogues, paved and colonnaded streets, a city wall, a mint (Sepphoris minted its own coins), an extensive aqueduct system, an elaborate reservoir, a cemetery, two market places, multistory buildings and other major public structures. Known as the "ornament of the Galilee", Sepphoris was wealthy, sophisticated and predominately Jewish. An elaborate system of water works kept residents supplied with fresh water; satellite villages such as Nazareth may have kept it supplied with food. Flavius Josephus described the city as "the strongest city of Galilee" (Wars of the Jews, book 2, chapter 18:11). Herod Antipas, who inherited Galilee under his father's will, undertook a massive building campaign to transform the ruined city into a major center of government, commerce, finance and culture, and restore it to its former status as district capital. Because the rebuilding of the Sepphoris created a demand for workers and craftsman from the surrounding area, Joseph could easily have traveled the short distance to the city to find work as a construction laborer. Probably Jesus accompanied him as an apprentice to learn and practice his trade. (Did all or some of his younger brothers, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas, go with him?).*

2. Mt. 21:42, *"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'?"*

3. Jn. 2:19-22, *"Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."*

4. 1 Pet. 2:4-8, *"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. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE," and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed."*

iv. The Church is the Body of Christ doing His ministry here and now.

c. Dr. Luke

- i. Background
 - 1. Written by a companion of Paul; use of the 1st person plural.
 - 2. Irenaeus (180AD) named Luke as author; Greek gentile.
 - 3. In Col. 4:14, Luke is described as "*the beloved physician*" and is with Paul in his imprisonment in Rome. In 2 Tim. 4:11, Luke is the only one who is still with Paul.
- ii. The Gospels record what Jesus said and did. The Epistles reflect more deeply on the significance of Christ's death and resurrection than the Gospels do and the implications of the fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus Christ are explored and applied to the readers in the Epistles.
- iii. His two books
 - 1. The Gospel of Luke was most likely written during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (e.g. Acts 25) around 60AD (destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD)
 - 2. Written prior to 64AD; persecution by Nero
 - 3. The gospel of Luke combined with the book of Acts takes up 28% of the NT.
 - 4. Acts is the bridge of the continuing ministry of Jesus from the gospels to the epistles.
 - 5. Acts is divided into two parts, ministry towards the Jews (chs. 1-12) which ends with the death of the present king of the Jews, Herod, and goes onto ministry towards the Gentiles (chs. 13-28). Part 1 focuses on Peter, part 2 focuses on Paul.
- d. Major themes of Acts
 - i. The story of how the Gospel of Christ spread outward.
 - ii. All testimonies, personal conversions, each church planting, and each revival are intrinsically linked with the doings and sayings of Jesus. None can be authentic or genuine apart from what He did and said.
 - iii. As believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit, they bear witness to the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. This is how the church is established and continues to grow. He provides the resources, enthusiasm, vision, motivation, courage and ability to accomplish the work, by the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
 - iv. Opposition is to be expected; we read about imprisonments, beatings, stoning and plots to kill the apostles. Rejection of the gospel and persecution of its messengers, works to accelerate the church's growth.
- e. The ecclesiastical weight of Acts
 - i. The "*Early Church*" as the authentic church.
 - ii. Why is what we read is not what we see?
- f. The Resurrection; 1 Cor. 15:13-14, 17, "*But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty... And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!*"
 - i. 1 Cor. 15:5-8, "*He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.*"
 - ii. False theories of the resurrection: Theft, Swoon, Vision, Telegram, & Legendary
- 2. Acts 1:1-3

- a. Place and Time; Jerusalem 40 days after the Passover. Most of the disciples of Jesus were not from Jerusalem, but Jerusalem was the Holy City of David upon whose throne the Messiah would sit and rule from.
 - b. People
 - i. Apostles; the 12 disciples that walked with Jesus are now elevated to the designation of apostles.
 - ii. Other disciples.
 - 1. A small knit group of the 11 plus a few others at the ascension.
 - 2. 120 disciples in the upper room.
3. Jesus does the building of the Church; Mt. 16:18, *"I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."* Mt. 28:19, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"* Acts 1:8, *"you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*
- a. Jesus came and did what Adam and Israel could not fulfill. Recognizing and seeing the Jewish roots of the Church helps us to understand what God intends, but we are not limited by Judaism.
 - i. Jews in Christianity did not see themselves as converts, but Gentiles did see themselves as converts, but not a conversion to Judaism
 - ii. How do you become a convert to the Jewish Messiah without becoming Jewish? Jews were consequently offended, Gentiles converts showing up at the synagogues and wanting to participate, but they knew nothing about the Sabbath, ceremonial cleansing, or any of the other traditions (600 commandments + commentary) - it was messy.
 - iii. The logical conclusion was for the G's to become Jews represented by circumcision (Acts 15:1).
 - iv. James & Peter speak out (Acts 15:19) and reduce it down 2-3 rules. Grace.
 - b. No one comes unless the Father draws him, God does the adopting; therefore love!
 - c. Move to legalism and a church for the church. KOG v KOI or KOA
 - d. All testimonies, personal conversions, each church planting, and each revival are intrinsically linked with the doings and sayings of Jesus. None can be authentic or genuine apart from what He did and said. We are to be witnesses of what He said (says) and did (does).
 - e. Sunday meetings DO NOT replace personal relationship. We must have something that we can be witnesses of. Jesus is alive, therefore, He talks to us and we need to listen; silence is either Him waiting for us to accomplish what He's already told what to do, or an impediment between us and Him, usually of our making.