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**Pleading for a
total return to
New Testament
principles.**

**contend earnestly
for the faith
Jude 1:3**

Scripture Standard
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HIS HOUR **The Mystery of Love** Allan Ashurst, Stretford

Words from an old popular song:

“Alfie? What’s it all about? What is this thing called love?”

Here is real Love: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Do we sometimes ask ourselves,
“Why do I exist?” “What is it all about?”

The very existence of the entire universe is **all by Jesus and for Him.**

For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created **by Him, and for Him.**
Colossians 1:16

Jesus came into the world for a specific purpose, a supremely traumatic period of strife which He called: “**my hour**”. His mockers scoffed. To them it appeared to be His hour of disaster. "He saved others - Himself he cannot save!"

But it was His hour of glory:
His hour of triumph!

Greeks ... came ... saying ... we would see Jesus... Andrew and Philip **tell Jesus** ... **Jesus** answered them saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should **be glorified**. Verily, verily, I say to you, Except a corn of wheat falls into the ground and **dies**, it abides alone: but **if it dies**, it brings forth much fruit.

...and **I**, if **I** be **lifted up** from the earth, will draw all to me.

John 12:20-24;32

Behold: **I** and the children which **God hath given me**.

Hebrews 2:13

He was not satisfied until it - "His hour," was accomplished.

I have a **baptism to be baptised with**; and **how am I straitened** until it be accomplished! Luke 12:50

His hour began the moment Judas left the room:

Therefore, when Judas was gone out, Jesus said, **Now** is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. John 13:31

His Hour was triggered into action by Judas leaving the room to betray Him.

His Hour completed: He shouted triumphantly: "it is finished!"

After this, Jesus **knowing that all things were now accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled**,

said, I thirst...they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. Therefore, when Jesus had received the vinegar, **He said, "It is finished!"** And he bowed his head, and **gave up the spirit.** John 19:28-30

He **accomplished first**, then thought about His thirst.

Before returning to the Father, He shouted again in triumph,

Jesus, when He had cried again **with a loud voice**, yielded up the spirit. Matthew 27:50

Jesus lifted up is the drawing power

Preach Jesus and Him crucified. God's way produces fruit.

In Acts 8:26-39 the Ethiopian was reading these words in Isaiah:

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. Isaiah 53:7-8

He was bewildered and wanted to know about whom was it talking? Philip told the eunuch that it was about the Lord Jesus being crucified and explained the way of salvation (see Acts 2:36-39). Learning of Jesus being lifted up led him to believe with all his heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and to desire being baptised in water for his sins to be forgiven.

I WOULD RATHER BE A DOORKEEPER

Mark Ashurst, Kentucky

Aaron and Moses were brothers. Korah was their cousin. They were all the great-grandsons of Levi (Exodus 6:16,18, 20-21). Through Moses and Aaron, God had delivered His people from Egypt. Moses had received the law, and Aaron had been made high priest. Korah was in a group of Levites called Kohathites. Whenever it was time for the Israelites to continue their journey through the wilderness, Aaron and his sons entered the tabernacle and covered the holy items. Only after this could the other Kohathites come and carry the items. They weren't allowed to see or touch the holy things in the tabernacle, but they were given the special responsibility and privilege of transporting them (Numbers 3:31; 4:1-20).

In Numbers 16, Korah and 250 men accused Moses and Aaron of overstepping their authority: "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" Moses turned it back on them: "You have gone too far, sons of Levi!" The Levites had been given the

privilege of serving God in special ways, but these Levites weren't content with what they had been given. Moses had not exalted himself; God had exalted Moses. And God had used Moses in important ways, just as he wanted to use all the Levites in a variety of important ways. The holy items in the tabernacle were not random decorations. They represented spiritual realities that would eventually be revealed through Christ (Hebrews 8:5). In abandoning his responsibilities regarding these physical items, Korah was also ignoring significant spiritual truths.

Two men named Dathan and Abiram were also involved in this uprising, and they weren't even Levites! Claiming that Egypt was actually the "land flowing with milk and honey," these men accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to kill them.

The next day, the same 250 men stood with Moses and Aaron before the Tent of Meeting. Korah even "assembled all the congregation against them." Perhaps he thought this would be his moment of vindication. It was not. Moses urged the people: "Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men." The people obeyed while Dathan and Abiram stood at the door of their own tents with their families. Moses declared that if the earth swallowed them up, it would be proof that they had "despised the LORD." That's exactly what happened. The ground itself opened up and swallowed them, their families, their possessions—their tents. Also, the fire of God destroyed the 250 men standing by the Tent of Meeting (Numbers 16:1-35).

Thus, Korah died. He was a Levite who could have been wonderfully used by God. Instead, by his own decisions, he put himself in the same league as Cain and Balaam (Jude 11). Rather than appreciate God's plan, Korah rebelled and encouraged others to do the same.

However, ten chapters later, we learn something very interesting. Numbers 26:11 says, "But the sons of Korah did not die."

If you keep reading through the Bible, you'll learn that Korah's descendants (the Korahites) served God as musicians and temple gatekeepers. Keep that in mind: they served as gatekeepers

(1 Chronicles 9:17-27; 26:1-19). Eleven of the Psalms are “of the sons of Korah” (Psalms 42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88). You could substitute “sons of Korah” with the phrase “descendants of the rebellious cousin of Moses and Aaron.” The progeny of the rebel became worship leaders who penned some of the most beautiful words in the Bible. For example, in Psalm 46, they declared,

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way.

Psalm 46:1-2

I wonder if Korah’s descendants, when they wrote those words, were thinking of the events of Numbers 16—when the earth literally did give way.

Psalm 84 is another beautiful psalm by the sons of Korah:

For a day in your courts is better
than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Psalm 84:10

The Septuagint has it this way: “I would rather be an abject in the house of God, than dwell in the tents of sinners”—an abject, without dignity or honour, thrown aside, in the low place. So, the sons of Korah embraced what their ancestor rejected. They would willingly take a job no one else wanted—as long as they could do it in the Tent of God, far from the tents of wickedness.

Does “tents of wickedness” sound familiar? What did Moses urge the people to do? He said, “Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men.” Then Korah’s tents were swallowed by the earth. But the sons of Korah survived, and his descendants learned: better to be least in the House of God than greatest in the house of rebels.

God has something for each of us to do in His Kingdom. Does your “something” seem small and insignificant at times? Perhaps the work of others appears to be more important and appreciated.

Life is so daily, and we can easily become discouraged. But God can be glorified in all of our days, whether those days are memorable or tiring, exciting or difficult, peaceful or chaotic. You are God's temple now. And one day with the Lord is better than a thousand without Him, even if that day is spent doing the "mundane" tasks you must do wherever you must do them.

1 Chronicles 9:28-31 lists some of the other Levitical duties besides gatekeeping, from counting "utensils of service" to "being appointed over the furniture." One Korahite is even mentioned by name: Mattithiah, who "was entrusted with making the flat cakes." And all of this was important enough to God that He put it in the Bible. The fact is, these Levitical duties were important. This is all a reminder: what we might see as insignificant work can be valuable service in the Kingdom. Andrée Seu Peterson said it well: "if the king tells you to go conquer the hinterlands one day, and tells you to shoe his horse the next day, you should do them both without slacking. He is the king."

This week, read one of the psalms of the sons of Korah (42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88), and thank God for His mercy in preserving Korah's descendants. Thank God for these men who glorified Him with their words and their lives. We can do the same.

There was another descendant of Korah. His name was Samuel (1 Chronicles 6:22-28, 33-37; 1 Samuel 1:1). Samuel had the honour of anointing David king of Israel, and it was through David's line that the Messiah Himself came. Because of that Messiah, we have been redeemed. We who were once rebels against God have been given a place in His Kingdom.

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

(Hebrews 1:8-9, quoting Psalm 45, a maskil of the sons of Korah)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Allan Ashurst, Stretford

The following is edited from a lesson given to the congregation meeting at the Green Hut at Stretford. You can hear the complete lesson at <https://youtu.be/ID7RdkdWmtQ>

A Prayer

We pray that God will bless us this day, that the Word will strengthen us. Help us to understand the salvation we have with deeper gratitude, and to be prepared to share it with others, without which they are lost. Grateful to God for the knowledge of salvation, willing and ready to share it with others.

The Foundation

Jesus would speak in Aramaic, which is a kind of dialect of Hebrew. They would call it Hebrew, but the rabbis and the Scriptures were written in ancient Hebrew. So, it's sometimes difficult to decide whether they're referring to ancient Hebrew as in the Scriptures, or to the Aramaic of the day, which was spoken in Palestine. So, when He gave Peter a name, Jesus wouldn't use the Greek word petros, which the translators have used in Matthew 16, but He would use the Aramaic word, which was cephas. Jesus had told Peter that He would give him that name. Son of John was to have the name Cephas (John 1:42).

It means a chunk of rock. So, when Jesus said to him, "You are Cephas (a chunk of rock) and on this rock I will build my church," the second word rock is a different word which means bedrock - what you build buildings on. Jesus was from the building background, and He knew that to lay a good foundation, you had to get down to bedrock. And this church that Jesus is building is built on the bedrock of: He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

When considering becoming a Christian, it's important to understand that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus said, "I will build my church." Churches started by any other are not Jesus' churches. If we want to be sure about salvation, and be sure we're on the bedrock, we must first believe

and trust Him, having repented of our sins, and then to make sure that we understand what Jesus means when He says, “I will build my church.” We can’t join the church, like we join a denomination or we might join a club. Jesus adds us to His building. He uses living stones, living lumps of rock, human beings that are not shaped. They are unshapen just as the altar was built from unshapen stones on which Jesus is represented by the sacrifice of the lamb on the altar. Jesus, in a figurative way, is somehow represented as sacrificed upon us as living stones. He gave his life up for us. He sacrificed himself for us.

The Gospels

In the four gospel accounts, we have two very similar ones. Matthew’s account is mainly aimed at Jews, because of its many references to the Old Testament Scriptures. It helps them to understand that Jesus is the Messiah. Matthew begins with Jesus’ lineage, then takes you right through to after the crucifixion and resurrection, when Jesus gives them the great commission to go. “All authority is given unto me, therefore go and teach all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:18-19) That was their commission and Jesus ascends to heaven and we’re left at the end of Matthew with that commission. What happened next? How did they carry that out?

The gospel according to Mark is similar, but it seems to be aimed more at Gentiles. It takes you right through Jesus’ ministry, His crucifixion, His resurrection, and when He meets His disciples for the last time before ascending to heaven. Similarly, to the end of Matthew, Jesus gives them their commission, “Go into all the world, preach the gospel (the good news) to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” (Mark 16:15-16) So, we’re left at the end of Mark with them waiting in Jerusalem for the power that was going to come from on high to enable them to carry out that mission of preaching the good news, which people would be required to take note of and thus become Christians. We wonder what happens next?

The Gospel according to Luke is quite different. Whereas Matthew and Mark were Galileans, Luke was a different person altogether. Matthew and Mark were recognised by their Galilean accent just like North Country people in England are recognised from those in the South by their accent. Luke was a very educated man. He was a doctor. Doctors are very concerned to see that they get everything right as far as possible, and that they know the subject inside out for the benefit of those that they talk to, and teach and guide. This comes out in Luke's gospel. Even historians remark, even though they might not agree that it is Scripture, that the Gospel according to Luke, is amazingly accurate when compared with the history of the time. This used to be a problem when people thought that Jesus was born in 1 AD. But now that we realize from the evidence that He was born in 5 BC, before Herod died, everything fits into place around that time in Israel just as Luke recorded. Now, we believe for another reason, 'Because holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.' Knowing Luke to be such a holy man of God, then what he spake, what he wrote, was as moved by the Holy Spirit. Thus, we have a more important reason for relying on the accuracy of what he tells us.

Now Luke starts earlier on than the others in the sense that he takes you to the birth of John the Baptist, then through the birth of Jesus, and then to Jesus being introduced in the Temple. Also, Jesus begins his ministry, and starts collecting together his disciples, and teaching them concerning the coming Kingdom. Eventually, we come to Jesus being taken to the cross, and nailed to the tree, and dying for our sins. These events are all recorded in Luke. Then we have Jesus meeting with them for the last time before He ascends to heaven, as in the other accounts, but in this case, Jesus is anxious that they should remain in Jerusalem until they're instructed in what they should do. Luke doesn't record the great commission but Jesus tells the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they are endued with power from on high. The Holy Spirit would guide them in what they should do next.

The book of Luke is written to one person. Now, some have

argued whether it was a person or whether it was a made-up name, Theophilus, meaning lover of God. But I don't think so. I think he was writing to a person. Let's have a look at the introduction.

“Inasmuch as many of us have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which are most surely believed among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.” Luke 1:1-4

What an amazing introduction to a letter to somebody who he respected so much as to say, most excellent Theophilus. Whether talking of Christians at large as most excellent lovers of God, or an individual, which I think it is, it's an exceptional way to begin a letter.

We can go through the letter of Luke and see just exactly how it happened, as he delivers it to us. At the end of the last chapter, he wants them to understand the fulfillment of the Psalms and the Prophets.

‘Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up his hands and He blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.’ Luke 24:46-53

With the three gospels, we're left wondering what happened next. Luke has not even spelt out the great commission. As far as Luke

was concerned, what's going to happen next? You can imagine that Theophilus was hoping to learn from Luke what happened next.

And so, we go to the Acts of the Apostles, also written by Luke.

Now we know that the titles of these books were written by human beings who added them after the Scriptures. The inspired Scriptures are the actual words as they were recorded. But the chapter and verse divisions have been added so we can say John 3:16,

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Sometimes the verses are split up in bad places that spoils the flow of thought, and even chapters are split up in the wrong place, where the end of one chapter really continues straight into the beginning of the next.

Earlier on, the Acts of the Apostles was called Praxeis, which means Acts. It doesn't say acts of whom. And somebody added, of the apostles. But when we go through the Acts of the Apostles, we have all the apostles mentioned at the beginning. Later there are less apostles mentioned, such as Peter and John. Then you have Paul coming along, who becomes an apostle in the letter. And at the end you finish up with Paul in a Roman prison, talking about the Lord Jesus to visiting Jews who are curious as to what he is doing in Rome (Acts 28:22).

It's not exactly, then, the Acts of the Apostles. There's very little mentioned, on the whole, of what the apostles did afterwards. But it is about action. It is about what happened. It is what Luke was leading up to when he finished off his first letter, his first treatise.

'The former treatise (or former account) I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the date in which he was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen...'

We're going to see how Jesus had made himself known to them

after He rose from the dead when He had given them instructions to stay in Jerusalem. We'll also see how on the day of Pentecost, we have Peter preaching in the temple, people being amazed at what had been happening, which provoked Peter to make his address. We have men talking languages fluently, that were not their own languages. They have North Country men speaking different languages. When you read the list of languages in chapter two, and look at the list of countries, you see that there are about 12 languages represented, which would fit in very well with what it says at the end of chapter one and at the beginning of chapter two. If you look at the end of chapter one they found a man to take the place of Judas Iscariot, and he was accepted amongst them and this was recognized later. So, chapter one, verse 23,

'They were choosing and they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, Oh Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry (this service) and apostleship (which is the work of an envoy, an apostle is an envoy of Jesus) from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.' This is the end of the chapter.

Who was numbered with the eleven apostles? Matthias. How many were numbered with eleven? One. How many does that make? Twelve.

Pentecost

Then going to chapter two,

'When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.'

Who is they? Well, it's just been talking about the twelve. The eleven, to whom have been added Matthias.

'And they were all of one accord in one place.'

Now, some will refer you right back, earlier in chapter one, to when there were 120 present and the discussion began about who was going to take the place of Judas. And they will think that what now happened in chapter two from verse two onwards was happening to the 120. But no, it happened to Matthias and the other eleven,

‘Who were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came down from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting.’

They were assembled in the house (that is, in an alcove of a courtyard of the Temple) where others could see what was going on and become amazed and witness this remarkable event of the Holy Spirit baptising the apostles. So much so that the confusion brought people together to hear what was happening. And they could hear those twelve men speaking in their own languages. Some would be speaking in one, some in another. Those that didn’t understand the language that they were nearest to would probably say, “There is something wrong with these people, what are they going on about.” And so, some mocking said, “They are full of new wine.” And later Peter pointed out in verse 15 that it was a bit early in the day for somebody to be drunk from new wine. So, these people who were speaking in different languages were twelve in number. It was not all the 120 who were baptised in the Holy Spirit.

The twelve, on this occasion, were baptised in the Holy Spirit and it enabled them to deliver the good news of Jesus Christ and His resurrection to these people from so many countries. What a blessing!

When they heard Peter explaining that this man, Jesus, of whom they had shouted, Crucify Him, crucify Him, was executed and was the very man who was the Messiah they had been waiting for down the centuries, their Promised Messiah,

They were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Acts 2:37

Now you might hear preachers in some groups say, “Cast your

burden down, cast your deadly doings down. Jesus has done it all.” It's not what Peter said. They said, “What shall we do?” And he told them what to do. But they will insist (these people) that we don't save ourselves. Jesus saves us. That is correct. It's Jesus' death on the cross that saves us. But did you notice that we don't add ourselves to His church? Jesus is adding people to His church. We'll come to that later on in this chapter. “I will build my church.” He does the building. He said, “And I, if I am lifted up will draw all men unto me.” Do you remember that before He was crucified? What draws us to Jesus? Jesus being lifted up. That's our message. That's what we preach.

Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”

For your sins to be discounted, not counted up against you. As far as God is concerned, there's no record. “And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” not the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gift which every Christian receives, when he becomes a Christian. He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. “For the promise is to you, (so he is talking to Jews who are listening) to your children, (he is talking to their offspring) to all who are far off,” (he is talking to the scattered Jews) as many as the Lord our God will call (and we learn later on in the epistle that we are called through the gospel).

They hear the gospel. They hear the call of God. It's not that God is going to talk to their inner ear. As we'll see in other cases, they hear someone tell them the Word (or read it) and then they respond to the Word, the gospel, because the gospel is calling them. We see Jesus dying on the cross for us and that calls us. ‘And with many other words he did testify and exhort, saying, “Be saved from this crooked and perverse generation.” Those who gladly received his Word were baptised, and that day about 3,000 souls were added to them.’

So about 3,000 souls on that very first day became Christians hearing the preaching of the gospel. Added to them. Who did they add? It doesn't say that they added themselves. So, who did the adding?

‘And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, the fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers.’

There is a study in itself. How will they continue steadfastly?

And as we go down the chapter, we see, verse 46, they continue daily with one accord in the Temple, breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people (and in the King James and the New King James). And the Lord added to **the church** daily those who were being saved.’

Who does the adding? The Lord Jesus Christ. He added those who were being saved, who repented, and were baptised for the remission of sins. They were added by Jesus to His church. So, how do we recognize His church, His Church universal, down the ages, from when it started on Pentecost to when Jesus comes again? How do we recognize it? People are added to it by Jesus. Who? Those who repent and are baptised, (which we know means immersion), repent and are immersed for the forgiveness of sins are added by Jesus to His church. That's His church. It's not a denomination in the denomination sense. It's Jesus building His church. So, when we're preaching the gospel, don't preach anything that sounds like a denomination. You're preaching about Jesus adding people to His church, and if we are not added to His church, we're not added to His church. So, the only way to be sure we are in Jesus' church is, having obeyed Him, He has added us to His church. It's as simple as that. We tend to make it complicated, but it's as simple as that.

Now I know there's another translation that says in the last verse, ‘And the Lord added to **their number** daily those who were being saved.’ But these words are taken from rather questionable texts, which were rediscovered in Egypt, the Alexandrian texts, which are full of mistakes and stumbling blocks caused by bad copyists, who probably didn't even understand the language they were copying. They were professional copyists, apparently, so that they didn't realise they were making mistakes as they were copying. Usually as one person read, the others would copy.

The Byzantine texts, however, are the texts that have been faithfully copied right down the centuries until the present day. Byzantine texts were being copied by many, many people in different places and direct translations were made from them into Latin. So we can be sure these are the words that were there, 'The Lord added daily to **the church**, those who were being saved.'

In preaching the gospel, if we look at the Acts of the Apostles, we'll see how people became Christians. This is the book that tells us how they became Christians.

Jesus said, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And that is true. But those books were written, probably before this and were written for Christians initially, who already knew of a great commission, and had obeyed a great commission. This book, the Acts of the Apostles, was written so that such as Theophilus might know how the church began, and how the gospel was preached. We have worked examples, in other words: acts. We have this one in Acts 2 where about 3,000 were baptised, and we have others later on in Acts.

We shall briefly mention them. Please go through the Acts of the Apostles noting how people became Christians so that we can show others how Jesus can also add them to his church.

The Samaritans

The next one we might come across after that is the Samaritans in Acts chapter eight. They saw Philip performing miracles. Philip himself didn't have the ability to pass on the miracles, only the apostles could do that. That was the seal of Paul's apostleship: that he had passed on the power to work miracles to people in Corinth.

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized Acts 8:12

The Eunuch

And then you have Phillip and the eunuch in Acts 8:26-39. The eunuch had been to Jerusalem to worship, so he was a Jew; he might have been a proselyte, but he was a Jew. As he returns home, he refers to Isaiah 53, which is a marvelous prophecy, and one we should use when trying to show people who Jesus is. The eunuch says to Phillip, "Who is this man speaking about? Is he speaking about himself or somebody else?" And Phillip gets up in the carriage and says it's speaking of Jesus.

The eunuch was convinced about Jesus the first time he heard of him, and he was convinced that he was a fulfillment of that prophecy. He then asked Phillip, "What is stopping me from being baptised?" Now Phillip had told him about baptism, but it only mentions he told him about Jesus. So, if you're talking about Jesus, you're going to introduce baptism. He said, "What is stopping me from being baptised?" And Phillip replied in Acts 8:37, "If you believe with all your heart, you may."

And the eunuch said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And so, they stopped the chariot and they both went down into the water, in order that Phillip might be able to baptise him. When they both came up out of the water, the Spirit caught Phillip away and the eunuch never saw him again. We might worry, do we talk to people about Jesus when we might never see them again? If you get the opportunity to explain Jesus to anyone, explain that he died for them, and how they can be added to His church. So, the eunuch might know nothing else about the church and its organization, but he was added to Jesus' church.

Cornelius

Cornelius was the first Gentile to be added in Acts chapter 10. He was a soldier, a devout man who believed in God and impressed the Jews. Now he had a vision telling him to send for Peter. Peter was in Joppa on the housetop of Simon, a tanner when he had a vision of the let-down sheet containing clean and unclean animals. He was told, "What God hath cleansed, don't call that common," which prepared him for going to the Gentiles, who were

considered common. When the people from Cornelius arrived, Peter went with them and he told them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Cornelius even got his neighbors into the house, that they might hear what the Lord had commanded to tell them.

All the prophets, Peter explained to Cornelius, testified about Jesus, and everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name. Oh, he doesn't mention baptism there. Perhaps he didn't, we don't know, perhaps he had already mentioned it. But if we're believing in His name, really believing in what it means, Jehovah is salvation, then nothing's going to stop us from wanting to do what He wants us to do. And if we back off, then we don't really believe in Him. We notice with these people, 'And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.'

They obeyed and were baptised and were added by Jesus to His church. Later, there were questions raised when Peter talked about this to the Jewish members of the church, because they weren't really sure it was meant for non-Jews. Surely, they had to become Jewish first. This was a problem in their minds. After Peter explained to them what happened with the household of Cornelius, they had no further objections and praised God saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

The seventy times seven years prophesied by Daniel was completed with Peter preaching to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles becoming Christians (Daniel 9:24-27).

Lydia

In Acts 16:13-15 we read of Lydia who worshipped God. Her heart was open as she responded to Paul's message. You notice each one is told the message. Even those that are not told the message directly, when they are told directly, they are told where to go to hear the message or for someone to go and tell them the message. In the New Testament, you do not have an incident of anyone hearing the way of salvation and how to become a Christian directly from the Holy Spirit in the inner man. They all had to learn the message. But they did get directed in the right

direction by the Holy Spirit. She and all her household were baptised. So, that was a household being baptised.

Doesn't a household being baptised mean babies being baptised, because you have them in households? Well, until my friends here, brothers and sisters in Christ, came to this house, we didn't have any babies in this household. We have not had babies in this household for many, many years. So, we shouldn't jump to the conclusion that they must have baptised babies in the household.

The Jailer

After Lydia in Acts 16, we come to the Philippian jailer. The prison doors are miraculously opened and the prisoners are free. So, the jailer is about to take his own life, because he thought he let the prisoners go free, and he would have been executed publicly in a shameful way. But Paul (and Silas) said, "Do yourself no harm." Then they proceeded to explain the way of the Lord Jesus to him, told him about salvation, and said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

Again, believing, in this sense, is not just saying, "Oh, yes, there's a bus here and it's going to Manchester and if I get on that bus, I'll go to Manchester." I want to go to Manchester, but I won't get on the bus because I really believe that the bus will take me to Manchester. So, faith alone didn't get me to Manchester, I would have to get on the bus. The same with the Lord Jesus Christ; believing on the Lord Jesus Christ means taking notice of what he asks and what he wants.

Acts 16:31 continues,

You will be saved, you and your household.

Oh, a case of household baptism. We have people preaching household baptism. The father, and probably the father and mother, become Christians, so, all the family are Christians. People born into a Christian family are born Christians. No, it's not teaching household baptism. They would be saved if they and their household were baptised. That very hour of the night, we

learn that the jailer took the wounded Christians and washed their wounds, and he and all his family were baptised. It wasn't a question of a household being Christian, and therefore, the rest of the household, if one is baptised, becoming Christians.

More Examples

Here we see in the Acts of the Apostles, examples of those who hear the gospel preached and how it worked out. In Acts 18:8 there was Crispas, the synagogue ruler, whose entire household believed in the Lord. And there were many of the Corinthians who heard him and believed and were baptised.

To the Ephesians, Paul explained that it was not John's baptism that now saves. Once Jesus had died on the cross, it became Jesus' baptism that saves. John the Baptist's baptism was a baptism of repentance.

Then Paul said, "John indeed baptised with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19:4

In other words, we wear Christ's name. We become part of His family, just like in Matthew 28:18-20, where Jesus says, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and upon earth, go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have one name. The name is singular. Baptising them into the name is talking of being baptised into one name, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Remember that when you're talking to Jehovah's Witnesses, because it says the same in the New World Translation that they put around.

'Baptised into the one name' starts them thinking, which could give you the opportunity to teach them the way of salvation. It's not done to catch them out; it's to make them think, in order that they might turn to what the Lord really wants them to do.

Saul

And the last one is Saul, who is now known as Paul in Acts 22. Ananias is sent to him, and explains why he's sent to him, so that Paul can hear what is intended for him. He's not converted on the road to Damascus. How can I say that? He heard the voice from heaven, but the voice told him to go into Damascus and there it would be told him what to do. So, up until then he had not been told.

Then he (Ananias) said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

Acts 22:14-16

Paul is being told by Ananias to see the Righteous One: Paul, this is what it's all about, you should see the Righteous One (which he did) and hear words from his mouth (which he did). Jesus told Paul to go into Damascus and he would learn there what he should do. Ananias continued,

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord"
(appealing to God, in other words)

So, was he saved on the road to Damascus?

No, he was saved when he obeyed Ananias and was baptised and washed away his sins.

A Blessing

Now I hope these references to the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles has helped you to think about and appreciate how you can bring the gospel to the world in the way that it was brought to the world in New Testament times.

And may God add his blessing to his Word.

MISSY CHRISTIAN

Ashursts, Kentucky

After our neighbour, Missy Christian, told us that she wanted to be baptised, we listened to *A Brief History Of The Early Church* with her (see the article printed above). This is a great study for anyone to use in teaching the way that Jesus has determined we come to Him.

On 13 September, Bart Rogers, an elder at the North Lexington congregation, came over to our house to study with Missy. He found that she had studied herself into a correct understanding of the role of baptism in our salvation. When she had approached different denominations asking to be baptised, they had refused her the waters of baptism, because she did not want to join their denomination. She was seeking the truth and simply wanted to obey Christ. She wanted to be in Christ's church and was not ready to join a man-made church. Bart explained how the denominations separate baptism from their teaching on how to be saved. They use baptism as a way to join their local assembly. This causes confusion, because people doubt their salvation. Jesus' ways are always best.

Missy loves the Word, so following scriptural example, she was baptised "that same hour of the night". Normally she finds it difficult to sleep, but that night she slept like a baby.

Rejoice with us and Missy and the angels now that she has been added to the Lord's church – a living stone. Also, pray for her as she continues to reflect the love and grace of Jesus in her life.

A GOOD DAY

Ashursts, Kentucky

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them,
And I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord,
Through which the righteous shall enter.

I will praise You,

For You have answered me,

And have become my salvation

Psalm 118:19-21

On 24 August we awoke to the news that our grandson, **Thaddeus Demas** (John and Monique's son) was going to be baptised. He especially wanted to share his good news with us, and we encouraged him and blessed him, wishing we could be there. He wanted the church that his family meets with in Montgomery, Alabama to be present, so texts were sent and preparations made. His Grandma Janice was also there. On entering the church building, Thaddeus who is ten, greeted Bill Robinson with the insight, "I am so glad I am going to be part of this community." As Bill took his confession, Bill was moved to tears which got Thaddeus crying also. After his father, John had baptised Thaddeus and he came up out of the water, Thaddeus shouted, "Towel!"

It was a double celebration when his Grandma **Janice Lindner** decided to be baptised, too. What a wonderful day with many tears of joy!

Please pray for them both and please remember the influence we have on each other. Let it always be a positive influence as we pull, push and prod one another closer to our beloved Jesus.

The stone which the builders rejected

Has become the chief cornerstone.

This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day the Lord has made;

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:22-24

OBITUARY

James Grant, Wallacestone, Scotland

We chronicle the death of brother James Grant, who passed away on the 7th of August, 2021 at Bo'ness Community Hospital at the age of 92. He had been a faithful member for 69 years. He was a familiar figure in the Slamannan District churches through his preaching and teaching. He was also well-known among a number of saints in the States. We extend our condolences to his wife of 65 years – sister Isa and to his sons David and James. (Sadly, his eldest son Charles predeceased him.) Condolences

too to the grandchildren Ashleigh and Nikki and to the great grandchildren Charlie, Lyra, Elissa and Fraser. We are saddened by his passing, but rejoice in the fact that he died in the Lord. He was a great example to all of Christian faithfulness. The writer conducted the funeral at Falkirk and at Grandsable Cemetery, Polmont, near the family home.

Ian Davidson, Motherwell

GHANA APPEAL

The Church of Christ at Dennyloanhead is very grateful to all sister churches, individual brothers and sisters who contribute to the Ghana Appeal. Please send donations to:

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