

The Church – Part 13 The Book of Acts

We've been studying God's church, and, in particular, the last few times we've been studying the purpose of the local church. The last time, I made mention of the fact that Peter and John were placed in jail because of their testimony for the Lord. But let me make this clear that they were placed there because they were standing up for our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Why did they go to jail? Once again, they stood up for the Lord, but in particular in chapter 3 of the book of Acts, it talks about Peter and John going up to the temple. And there was a fellow there out in front of the temple, and it says in verse 3, *Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.* Now, some people believe that he was asking for money or food or whatever. I believe he was asking specifically for money here.

And it says in Acts 3:4, *⁴And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. ⁵And the man gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.* And this next verse is the reason I believe that he was speaking of money; he wanted money. It says, *⁶Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. ⁷And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

This was a great miracle that took place, and if you keep on reading there, you'll see that people saw this and because of that, it opened the door for Peter and John to preach the Gospel. And because they did preach the Gospel, it says in chapter 4 and verse 1, *And as they spake unto the people... this would be Peter and John... the priests, and the captain*

of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, ²Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

So we see, because God healed this man through these men, that they got to preach the Word of God, and because they were preaching the Word of God, they were persecuted. Now, notice what happened as we continue on in chapter 4 of Acts. We see that these Sadducees and the priests and whoever was involved in this arrest of Peter and John couldn't hold them because they really didn't have anything to charge them with and also because the people had seen a great miracle taking place there. In verse 23 of chapter 4, it says, *And being let go... This was Peter and John... they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.*

I read this verse the last time that we were together, and verse 24 says, *And when they... That's the people... heard that... In other words, they heard about what had taken place with Peter and John, that they had been let go; it says... they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.*

What took place there was a great miracle. Not only did the impotent man get healed. He couldn't walk and Peter said, "Rise up and walk." He helped him up and the ankle bones, it says, received strength and he was able to walk. And because of that, Peter and John were able to preach the Gospel, and because they preached the Gospel, they got arrested, but

later on they were let go because they couldn't be held, because they had done nothing wrong.

Then we see that the people, when they heard all of this, they rejoiced that Peter and John had been released from jail, but they rejoiced that Jesus Christ had been exalted once again and people got saved as a result.

I want to remind you that all of this was accomplished by the power of God through the local church at Jerusalem. I believe that everything that is accomplished for the Lord today is sanctioned and accomplished through the local church. You mean, if you don't belong to a local church, you can't see people saved? I didn't say that. What I'm saying is that God wants to bless you to the fullest, and he wants to bless you through the local church that you're a member of.

God has sanctioned His local church, to do the job today on this Earth. If you are not a member of a local Bible-believing, Bible-preaching local church, you need to join one. You need to find one that's standing on the Word of God. Use the Bible. Follow along and make sure that preacher, teacher, or whoever it is that's in that local church who is in charge is following the Scripture one hundred percent. Do not deviate from the Word of God.

The purpose of the local church, as we've said, is to train believers and, in turn, those believers win the lost. Once again, let me remind you that I'm not saying people coming into the local church shouldn't or couldn't be saved. This is something that, when God's Word is preached, things happen. People do get saved in local churches, but the prime goal of the local church is to train workers to go forth and bring in the harvest to see and get people saved through the preaching of the Word of God, through witnessing for the Lord.

Now, let's continue on about the local church, God's church, and let me ask the question: Where do we fit in God's local church?

Now, in Acts 13:1-5, the Bible says, ¹*Now there were in the church that was at Antioch... There we see another local assembly at Antioch... certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.* ²*As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* ³*And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* ⁴*So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.* ⁵*And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.*

And some have asked the question: Why would they go to the synagogue? We know that the Lord had saved them and that they were on their way to Heaven. Why did they go to the synagogue? Well, they went to the synagogue because that's where the people were located. That's where the most people would be so that this would be a great opportunity to present the Word of God to as many people as possible, those people who were gathered at the synagogue.

Now, I want you to notice a couple of things with me. First of all, God calls each worker by name. You'll notice there in Acts 13:2, the Bible says there, "Separate me Paul and Barnabas." God spoke specifically about Paul and Barnabas. He calls people by name, now, not necessarily audibly. I believe that God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit, through His Word, and I do not believe that God speaks

audibly to us today. I believe that He speaks through His Word by the Holy Spirit. But God calls each worker by name.

Now, notice each worker. First of all, every person in this world is born individually. In Job 14:1, it says, *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.* Man has to be born from a woman. You say, what about this cloning that I've heard about? How does that work? Does that require a woman? Yes, it does. Now, if it were possible for that to be taking place with a human being... I've heard about it happening with animals, but let's say that it is possible that a human being could be cloned. I guarantee you that there's a woman involved somewhere along the line. And there has to be a man. God does not deviate from the plan of procreation. There has to be male and female in order for a person to be born.

The primary thing I want you to see here is that every person born into this world is born individually. Then, when a person is saved, that person is born again, individually, not as a group, not as a family, born again individually. John 3:4 says, *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?* And John 3:7 says, *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

So, every person that is saved is born again individually, and some people think because they grow up in a so-called Christian home that that makes them Christian. That's not the case. The person must receive Jesus Christ individually. That person must receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They must come to Jesus Christ, realizing they cannot save themselves, that there's only one way to Heaven, and that one way is through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself said that He is the only way. He says, "I am the way, the truth,

and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me." That's as plain as the Bible can be. That's the Bible. That's not simply what I believe, and I do believe that, but it's what God says and I believe God.

So we see that every person is born individually, and every person in this world who is saved is born again individually, and we see now about workers, that each worker is called individually. You notice up there, "Separate me Barnabas and Paul," or Saul. And that's what the Bible is teaching here in Acts 9:4 it says, *And he fell to the earth.* This is talking about Paul who was Saul at that time. He was persecuting the church, but he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

In verse 4 there it says, *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

And then we see in Acts 13:9 of Acts, it says, *Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him.* And we see that as Paul, who had been called Saul, from Acts 9 to Acts 13, we see a great thing taking place in his life. He realized he was saved; he realized he was called to do something individually, and he preached the Word of God, we see, within that period of time. Paul was called. He saw Jesus on that road to Damascus. He received Him as Savior, and then, by Acts 13, he was preaching the Word of God.

And in Acts 9:17, we see once again that *Ananias went his way... the Bible says... and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*

So, God calls people individually, and we see how that Paul, who was Saul, was called of God to get saved. And we read on how that even Jesus was called. In Luke 1:31, it says, *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.*

Do you know Him today as your Savior? Ask Him to come into your heart if you've never trusted Him. And if you are saved, you need to be living for Him, working for Him, and doing His will.

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Until next time, this is Doug Anderson reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly is our prayer.