

## Episode #1049 The Flow of Truth Part 10-The Confirmation of the Message

I. All truth flows out of the Old Testament into the gospels. It flows out of the gospels into the book of Acts. It flows out of the book of Acts into Paul's final epistles. That is the flow of truth. We are studying this flow and how it can teach us about God's work with us today and how it differs from His work with others in the past and future.

II. What is the difference between the salvation-bringing message proclaimed in Acts and the salvation-bringing message which is proclaimed today? For a short time I want to deal with what might be called: The confirmation of the message.

- A. Acts 4:29-31. The background: Acts 4:18-22. When they got back to their fellows, they began to pray. In the course of their prayer, they said. They have threatened us. They have told us not to speak in this name, we will probably be rearrested and put to death....I am sure that God answered their prayer, and that signs and wonders were done in the name of His holy Servant Jesus.
- B. Acts 5:12-16. After people had witnessed the death of Ananias and Sapphira, they were afraid to link up with this group. Note: No exceptions. They were healed every one, even by a shadow! The situation is not difficult to imagine. Peter had become an outstanding man in Jerusalem, and they watched his movements. They knew at certain times he went to the temple to pray, and when the hour of prayer was over he would return. Therefore, they brought the sick into the streets and laid them there on beds and couches one after another that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them, and I believe with all my heart that men were healed as this shadow fell upon them. The Lord Jesus Christ said the works that I do shall ye do also. He never did something like this. There is no record that His shadow passing over anyone healed him. But in the case of Peter, the word was fulfilled, greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to My Father. The result was a great multitude on the cities round about Jerusalem came bringing sick folks and those that were vexed with unclean spirits. What was the result? Were they sent home disappointed? Were they told they didn't have enough faith, or that there was sin in their lives? Not at all! Every one of them was healed, no exceptions. That is the Word of God, and I believe it!
- C. Acts 6:8. We are beyond the eleven or twelve apostles, and here we are with Stephen. Stephen is called a deacon. They would like to make him a church officer. I've known a lot of deacons, but I've never known a man like Stephen. When Stephen spoke, God always confirmed his message with signs following. You didn't have to just believe what Stephen said. Stephen had to credential his message, and God saw to it that it was credentialed, and when Stephen spoke full of faith and power, he did great wonders and miracles among the people.
- D. Acts 8:2-8. They were scattered by the persecution Saul was doing. They went everywhere proclaiming the word. (But remember Acts 11:19: they proclaimed to none but Jews only. But we will not deal with that here, that is a different study.) Philip proclaimed the Christ to them. He went to the city of Samaria. These Samaritans were not Gentiles. They listened, not just hearing but seeing the miracles he did. God always confirmed the word with signs following!
- E. Acts 14:3. Paul and Barnabas are in the city of Iconium (verses 1-2). They spoke the word of His grace, and God gave testimony to the word of His grace by the signs and

- wonders done by their hands. Because in the Acts period, they didn't just hear. You had to hear, and you had to see. God testified by these miracles. In the Acts period, you could not believe just by hearing the word. You saw!
- F. Acts 19:11-12. Paul was in Ephesus, a peculiarly wicked city. I am sometimes inclined to think from my studies that there was perhaps more darkness there than in any other city on earth at that time, and more immorality there. When they brought from Paul's body these handkerchiefs and aprons, the diseases and evil spirits went out of them. It wasn't something they tried and it didn't work. Right here in the city of Ephesus these great miracles were worked by Paul, since God always confirmed the word with signs following.
  - G. There are those who teach that miracles waned. At the beginning of Acts there were many miracles, and they try to tell us that miracles waned as we come near to the close of the Acts period. But that is not the truth!
  - H. Acts 28:1-9. God had said they shall take up serpents. He shook it off and there was no harm. They knew how this poison would typically act. This shows how fallible the reasoning of men can be! He was not a murderer, and he was not a god. Publius showed great hospitality. A bloody flux = a bloody dysentery, and the fever would probably indicate that this was typhoid. Paul laid hands on the sick and he recovered. God had said before the Acts period ever opened, He said through Jesus Christ, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Here in the last chapter of Acts, these miracles are still being performed. The way this is stated, not a one of them went home sick or went home still bothered with his trouble or went home with weakness from his illness. They were healed. That is how God did it in the Acts period.
  - I. Romans 15:17-20. The last book written in the Acts period. Paul tells about his ministry among the Gentiles. In the Acts period, Paul was the only man commissioned by God to make an offer of life and salvation by means of the life-giving and salvation-bringing message to Gentiles. In the Acts period, when Paul preached to a Gentile, God did not intend that they should hear and believe, but that they should hear and see and then believe. These Gentiles were to be made obedient to the faith both by word and by deed. They were a special company... When Paul proclaimed God's salvation-bringing, life-giving message to the nations, there were deeds as well as words, and mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit that he fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.
  - J. I Corinthians 1:4-8. Paul speaks here now to the Corinthians. These people had believed during the Acts period. My conviction is that these are Jews that believed, but whatever they are, we know the testimony of Christ confirmed in them. ... There they were, these Corinthians. The testimony of Christ confirmed in them. How? They came behind in no gift. Healing? Miracles? Languages? They came behind in no gift.
  - K. Galatians 3:5. Supplies = dispenses. This was an actual thing in the Acts period. In the Acts period, the Spirit was always given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. Do you see the argument Paul was able to bring to these people? He was contrasting the hearing of faith with doing the works of the law. He could say to them that the one who dispensed to them the Spirit of God (by laying hands on them) and did miracles among you, how did he do it? Did he do it by the works of the law or the hearing of faith? So miracles were done among them.

- L. I Thessalonians 1:5. The gospel didn't just come to them in word. There were deeds to back it up. The word was confirmed to every one who heard it in Thessalonica.
- M. Hebrews 2:2-4. Therefore, anyone who believes the Word of God will recognize the unique character of the Acts period. For 33 years upon this earth, commissioned men, men commissioned by God (apostles) (there were 12 special apostles, but everyone to whom the word of God came for someone else was commissioned to speak that word to the one for whom it came) and for 33 years God commissioned, God authorized men. They went forth and spoke a God-given message. The message would change according to the needs of the people. Let me see if I can illustrate that. Often times, when I go before a group, I see people whom I know will be hearing me for the first time, and I wonder if those will know what I am talking about. Then I see those who have been hearing me for thirty years. I try to adjust the message to what they need and know, and it is almost impossible to do it. But in the Acts period they didn't have to think about that, for they spoke a God-inspired message. Though I might pray there is something in every message for everyone there, those who preached in the Acts period they could be sure that there would be something in every message for everyone there, for they spoke by inspiration. Then as these God-commissioned men spoke their God-inspired message, God always confirmed the word by signs following. That is what you see in this verse 4.

III. Conclusion: The difference we see in the salvation bringing message as it was proclaimed in Acts and the salvation bringing message as it is proclaimed today is the confirmation of the word. In Acts, the word was always confirmed by signs following. No one was expected to believe without seeing proof. Yet today, we are those who believe without seeing. John 20:29 tells us we are blessed because of it. This is a great difference between God's work today and the Acts period.

Acts 4: <sup>18</sup> So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” <sup>21</sup> So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. <sup>22</sup> For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

Acts 4: <sup>29</sup> Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, <sup>30</sup> by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

<sup>31</sup> 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.

Acts 5: <sup>12</sup> And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. <sup>13</sup> Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. <sup>14</sup> And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, <sup>15</sup> so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. <sup>16</sup> Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Acts 6: <sup>8</sup> And Stephen, full of <sup>[b]</sup>faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

Acts 8: <sup>3</sup> As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. <sup>5</sup> Then Philip went down to <sup>[a]</sup>the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. <sup>6</sup> And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. <sup>7</sup> For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. <sup>8</sup> And there was great joy in that city.

Acts 14: <sup>1</sup> Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. <sup>2</sup> But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and <sup>[a]</sup>poisoned their <sup>[b]</sup>minds against the brethren. <sup>3</sup> Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Acts 19: <sup>11</sup> Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, <sup>12</sup> so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

Acts 28: <sup>1</sup> Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. <sup>2</sup> And the natives<sup>[a]</sup> showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. <sup>3</sup> But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. <sup>4</sup> So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.” <sup>5</sup> But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. <sup>6</sup> However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

<sup>7</sup> In that region there was an estate of the <sup>[b]</sup>leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. <sup>8</sup> And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. <sup>9</sup> So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.

Romans 15: <sup>17</sup> Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain to* God. <sup>18</sup> For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient— <sup>19</sup> in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. <sup>20</sup> And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation,

I Corinthians 1 <sup>4</sup> I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that you were enriched in everything by Him in all <sup>[b]</sup>utterance and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup> even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed <sup>[c]</sup>in you, <sup>7</sup> so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3: <sup>5</sup> Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—

I Thessalonians 1: <sup>5</sup> For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

Hebrews 2: <sup>2</sup> For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just <sup>[b]</sup>reward, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, <sup>4</sup> God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts <sup>[c]</sup> of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?