

Episode #1120 Acts 2 Part 9-Unity Among Believers

I. Acts is unique in the New Testament. Rather than the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, it focuses on what came after, when the Lord had ascended back into heaven. The Lord left His disciples with many commands to carry out, and Acts tells us how they did them.

II. Unity Among the Believers. Acts 2:42-47.

- A. Acts 2:42. They did not continue their daily lives, just going to a church meeting once a week on Sunday. These men had dedicated their lives to Jesus Christ, and knew they would face persecution for that. John 7:13, John 9:22, John 12:42, Matthew 10:25, and Luke 21:16. They did not and could not live the rest of their lives as if nothing had changed. From this point on, their lives and activities centered around the temple, the apostles, and their new life in Christ. They continued steadfastly in four things.
 - 1. The apostles' doctrine. Doctrine is teaching. They were all being taught by the twelve men who had first been taught by Christ. Before they did not teach, only proclaimed, Matthew 10:7. If they divided into 12 groups, each would be about 260 people, a large but manageable group for one man to teach.
 - 2. The fellowship. This is not the apostles' fellowship. While the Lord was on earth, the Lord and His disciples had lived off of a common purse, John 12:6. He sent them out the same way he had been sent, John 20:21. Now, this much larger group of people followed these same orders. Acts 2:44-45, and Acts 4:32. This was "the fellowship."
 - 3. The breaking of the bread. Not a bread and wine ritual. Scripture makes it clear that the breaking of bread meant sharing of the common meal. For an Israelite to share a meal with someone meant a close connection with that person. Stand or fall, they were in this together, and on the side of the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom they served.
 - 4. In the prayers. There were three common times of prayer in the temple: approximately 9:00AM, noon, and 3:00PM. Acts 3:1.
- B. Verse 43. It was not the believers who feared, but those who came in contact with them. This was multiplied by the fact that the signs and wonders continued beyond Pentecost. *Fear* means awe and respect, not terror. *Soul* is used here for people in general. The soul is particularly associated with the seat of emotions in us.
- C. Verse 44. This shows the fellowship. They were constantly together. They probably only returned to their homes to sleep. They had all things in common, whether they had been poor or wealthy before they believed. This was a truly socialistic arrangement, yet since it was ordered by God Himself, it did not fall into the corruption and oppression that socialism results in today. No wonder men marveled at this fellowship of believers! What was going on among them could have been nothing short of divine.
- D. Verse 45. This fellowship went far beyond whatever cash they had to all their possessions and goods. Those who claim that Pentecost was the birthday of the church, and that we should get back to the way things were in Acts, are generally not willing to extend their statements to this, and sell all their possessions to share with their fellow believers. Rather than trying to get back to Acts, let us move forward to learn and believe the truth He has for us today, and dedicate our lives to His plan for

us in this dispensation of grace. This is according to what the Lord had said of the kingdom of God. Matthew 13:45-46. This is exactly what these men were doing, and they did assure themselves a place in that kingdom by becoming a part of this company.

- E. Verse 46. Every one of these was an Israelite who believed, and when they believed, they did not give up the heritage of their fathers, but continued to meet daily in their temple. Breaking bread from house to house did not refer to going to each other's homes, but had to do with "houses" in the temple. They did not become twelve separate groups that did not mix with each other, but they all stayed in harmony. Christ's prayer in John 17:20-23 had been answered. The work that the Lord began was being continued and fulfilled by these men. This is not the way it is today, as those who believe today are not one, as is evident to us on every side. God has not become weaker since Acts 2. He is not doing the same work today as He was then.
- F. Verse 47. True appreciation of God's work will always turn the hearts of His people to praise and thanksgiving. Their reputation was impeccable. The Lord was adding to them daily, so they were now larger than 3,120. He was building the *ekklesia* ("church") he had spoken of in Matthew 16:18. So far, it was entirely Jewish, like that in Acts 7:38. Every one of these believed that he was a part of a movement of God within the nation of Israel. Acts 11:19. When Peter went to Cornelius in Acts 10, they were all shocked. How, then, could this chapter be the beginning of God's work today? It cannot have begun like this.

III. Conclusion: The entirely-Jewish believers in Acts 2 did not just come to faith in Christ and then continue on with their daily lives. They gathered together in a great unity, and all shared and shared alike everything they possessed. Their newfound faith in Christ dominated everything in their lives. Their hearts beat as one; they had one heart and one soul. The Lord's prayer that not only His disciples would be one, but that those who believed on Him through their word would also be one, was completely and dramatically answered. Praise God for His glorious work in the Great Unity of Jerusalem!