



Global College of Ministry

EXPLAIN

The Christian and the Bible Doctrine

Doctrine Matters

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”

(Acts 2:42).

A mother remarked to her small son, “This Sunday we get to start new Sunday school lessons on doctrine.”

The boy replied, “Doctrine! Yuk! It sounds like something for adults; not for kids.”

When the pastor announces a series or message on doctrine a number of things go through the minds of some of the members. Boring. Snoring. Doctrine—bad-tasting medicine. (Ever notice that the worst tasting medicine is usually the medicine that is best for you?) Some people hope they can use it as an excuse to visit in-laws or to stay home from church and wash clothes or clean house. But the study of doctrine is important. It does not have to be mind-numbing. The verdict of whether the teaching is boring or interesting depends on the lips of the speaker and the heart of the hearer.

Preachers and teachers can present doctrine and theology in simple, practical ways. Do not put your people to sleep.

Do not attempt to teach or preach above the heads (or above the understanding) of your people. Some think that proves superior intelligence. It doesn't.

James Denney said, “The man who shoots above the target does not thereby prove that he has superior ammunition. He simply proves that he is not an accurate shot.”

Paul said, “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12).

Some like doctrine—new doctrine. They are like the people of Athens who said, “May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?” (Acts 17:19).

“For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21).

The preacher in Ecclesiastes said, “There is no new thing under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:3).

Every new doctrine that man manufactures tends to be the rebirth of some ancient heresy.

Paul advised Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16).

What is doctrine?

“Doctrine” is defined as “teaching.” What a church teaches is considered to be their doctrine.

The apostle’s doctrine was the teaching of the apostles.

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine” (Acts 2:42).

They continued teaching and preaching doctrine until it spread throughout Jerusalem.

“Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us” (Acts 5:28).

Later the rulers of one city lamented, crying this testimony, “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts 17:6).

Every activity of the church can basically be divided into one of two categories.

Evangelism	Gospel or Good News.	Getting people saved.
Edification	Doctrine.	Keeping people saved.

Where does doctrine come from?

Doctrine is derived from the Word of God. The word “doctrine” is mentioned fifty-six times throughout its pages.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Someone has explained this verse as follows:

Doctrine	What is right?
Reproof	What is not right?
Correction	How to get right?
Instruction	How to stay right?

Why study doctrine?

There is safety in knowing what you believe. What you believe is of eternal significance. When you know what you believe, you will not fall into the pit of false doctrine. Your convictions and beliefs will protect and direct you. The knowledge of what is right will quickly uncover what is wrong.

“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe” (Philippians 3:1).

Doctrines become roots in our lives. They provide us with a strong anchor. No one wants to be a tree without roots, or a house built on the sand.

People, churches, and organizations can drift from the truth. One man made a remark to a friend that a Christian college was now teaching all the branches of learning.

His young friend responded, “Yes, it now has all of the branches and none of the roots.”

It is possible to teach and preach things that are only branches of the tree—non-essential but what people like to hear. It is imperative to preach on subjects that are roots and anchors of Christianity.

“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Colossians 1:23).

Doctrine helps find God’s way and illuminates His plan and will for man.

A study of doctrine should answer:

- What is truth?
- What do I believe?
- Why do I believe this?
- What difference does it make?
- How do I explain this to others?

Paul had these instructions for the young preachers he trained:

- “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:3).
- “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:13).
- “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3).

- “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).
- “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1).

Why is doctrine important?

Richard Davis in *Bible Doctrine: Foundation of the Church* comments on the importance of doctrine: “It’s as important as water to fish, giving them a channel in which they may navigate and live and find sustenance. It is as important as an engine to an automobile, enabling it to be operative and useful. It is as important as a map to a person who is lost, enabling him to find his way.”

Phillips Brooks in *Yale Lectures on Preaching* says this concerning doctrinal preaching.

“No preaching ever had any strong power that was not the preaching of doctrine. The preachers that have moved and held men have always preached doctrine...Preach doctrine, preach all the doctrine you know, and learn forever more and more; but preach it always, not that men may believe it, but that men may be saved by believing it.”

Andrew Blackwood (as quoted in *Biblical Preaching for Today’s World* by Lloyd M. Perry) said, “In the past every evangelistic movement blessed of God has come largely through preaching doctrine.”

Do you want to make an impact on the world? Do you want to be prepared for heaven? Doctrine matters!

Kevin J. Conner in *The Foundations of Christian Doctrine* was helpful in the formation of this lesson. He says believers need to know:

- “WHO they believe.
- WHAT they believe, and
- WHY they believe it.”

He further explains that all religions are founded on doctrines and that the “teachings received, believed, obeyed, and continually practiced determine:

1. Character—what we are.
2. Behavior—what we do.
3. Destiny—where we go.

Strong character is determined by strong beliefs, and clearly defined doctrine makes for clear cut convictions.”

According to Conner all doctrine proceeds from three sources: God, man, and Satan. A close look at Matthew 16:13-23 will illustrate this point.

- **God:** (Matthew 16:16-17). See also Proverbs 4:2; Hebrews 6:1; Titus 2:10; Matthew 7:28.
- **Man:** (Matthew 16:13-14). See also Matthew 15:9; Hebrews 13:9; Colossians 2:8.
- **Satan:** (Matthew 16:21-23). See also 1 Timothy 4:1-3

Study Questions

1. Why do you think some people find listening to lessons on doctrine to be boring? _____

2. Write out one Scripture that would encourage someone to teach and/or preach in a simplistic way. _____

3. How does James Denney’s quote relate to our study on preaching and teaching doctrine?

4. Why do you think some like “new” doctrine? _____

5. What happens when you give heed to the doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16)? _____

6. What is doctrine? _____

7. Every activity in the church can be divided into what two categories? _____

8. What four things is Scripture profitable for according to 2 Timothy 3:16?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

9. Why should we study Bible doctrine? _____

10. What should a study of doctrine answer? _____

11. What instructions did Paul give young preachers concerning doctrine? _____

12. What did Phillips Brooks say concerning doctrinal preaching? _____

13. What did Kevin J. Connors say believers need to know? _____

14. What does doctrine believed and obeyed determine? _____

15. Doctrine comes from what three sources?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Only One Way

“And the same time there arose no small stir about that way”
(Acts 19:23).

A Japanese proverb states that many roads lead up Mount Fuji and all reach the top. This is a way of expressing that all religions have the same results. Many feel they are free to pick their own paths to heaven. Some world religions promote the concept that all doctrinal routes eventually lead to the same God. God allows us the right to choose, but the direction chosen either leads toward God or away from Him.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luke 13:24).

How many times have you heard someone say, “We are all worshipping the same God anyway”?

The early church knew the way, went the way, and led others in the way. “The Way” was one of the earliest names given to the Christian church.

In a world of many choices, people find it difficult to understand that there is only one way.

Paul and the One Way Road

Paul persecuted “The Way” until his roadside encounter with the Lord.

“And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:2).

“And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4).

Paul eventually followed “The Way.”

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets” (Acts 24:14).

Paul was called upon to defend himself. He knew Felix was familiar with "The Way." Having knowledge about truth is not the same as embracing it. It is possible to know what the Bible teaches, but not do what it commands. Each person is responsible for the truth he hears.

The *Life Application Bible Commentary (Acts)* suggests three reasons people reject Jesus as the only way.

1. **They are satisfied with their own way.** Like people in a smoke-filled building because they doubt there is a fire, they insist on finding their own way out.
2. **They deny their lostness.** The people in the smoke-filled building insist on debating whether there is a fire.
3. **They believe that there are several valid ways to get to heaven.** They reluctantly agree that there may be a fire in the smoke-filled building, but they think that one escape route is as good as any other. Jesus is the only way to the Father. Some may argue that the way is too narrow. However, it is wide enough for anyone and everyone to enter.

The fly that refuses to heed advice
follows the corpse to the grave.
(African Proverb)

Howard Hendricks in *Color Outside the Lines* gives an excellent illustration of what can happen to those who refuse to heed advice. A boat made its way toward its destination. On board were 1,358 people enjoying an afternoon outing. Thirty minutes after leaving the shore, a fire broke out. People started shouting, fearing their lives would be lost. Although the ship was close to shore, the captain steadily kept his course. No one knows why he did not return to land for help. Some say he did not understand the severity of what was taking place. Others say he thought the crew could take care of the situation. He refused to pay attention to the fire alarms, the screaming people, or the smoke and flames. The tragedy resulted in the loss of over a thousand lives. Investigations revealed the crew was unskillful and inspectors had been bribed. Fire buckets had been filled with garbage, and life vests had rotted.

We have been warned of impending fire in hell. We cannot be saved on our own. Salvation through Jesus Christ has provided a way of escape. Shall we heed the Savior's call?

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:3).

-  God sees sin.
-  God sees the sinner.
-  God judges sin and sinners.
-  He provides only one way of escape (salvation).

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Jesus is:

-  The Way
-  The Truth
-  The Life

Instead of worrying about how limited it sounds to have only one way, we should be saying, “Thank you, God, for providing a sure way to get to you!”
(Acts Commentary)

Faith in Jesus and obedience to His commands is the only way to heaven. Obedience leads us upward to heaven. Disobedience leads us downward to hell.

There is no other way to heaven besides Jesus Christ. He is the truth, and we should obey His teachings. He alone provides eternal life.

Man would prefer to choose his own path to heaven. Many try to do that, but it leads to a dead-end street. There are no options. Jesus Christ is the only way.

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

Peter confronted the religious leaders with this undeniable fact—

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

His clear voice echoes through centuries and can still be heard. Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5).

The Bible is very clear that there are only two kinds of people (both in life and in death). (See Romans 3:9-31; 6.) They are:

-  Saved
-  Lost

Jesus tells us people will be judged because they have not believed on “the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

Only those who call on the name will be saved (Romans 10:13-15). Peter’s Pentecost message contained these words, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21).

How do we call on the name of the Lord? Peter further explained, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

Through baptism in Jesus’ name, we call on the name of the Lord.

“Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:20-21).

Noah lived in a sin-filled world. God instructed him to build an ark. He was about to destroy the world by a flood. Noah followed each instruction in detail. He preached and invited people to repent, warning them of the soon coming judgment. They mocked him and thought he was crazy. Up until then, rain had never fallen. Our world is similar. People do not take the soon coming of the Lord seriously. (See 2 Peter 3:4, 9-10; Matthew 24:37-39.)

There was only one door into the ark. Noah and his family entered the ark along with the animals. We have an ark of safety. Jesus Christ is the door.

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved”
(John 10:9).

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Galatians 1:3-5).

Study Questions

1. God gives us the right to choose. Where can choices (made in spiritual areas) lead us?

2. What is implied by “many roads lead up Mount Fuji and all reach the top”? _____

3. What concept is promoted by many world religions? _____

4. Where does the strait gate lead us? _____

5. What was one of the earliest names given to the Christian church? _____

6. List three reasons people reject Jesus as the only way. _____

7. What does Hebrews 2:3 say? _____

8. According to John 14:6, what is Jesus? _____

9. Where does disobedience lead us? _____

10. What did Peter say in Acts 4:12? _____

11. Name the two types of people mentioned in this lesson. _____

12. How do we call upon the name of the Lord (in salvation)? _____

"A Good Name Is Rather to be Chosen" (Proverbs 22:1).

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

One Old Testament prophecy after another predicted the coming of Jesus Christ long before He ever arrived. The most important of these, Isaiah 9:6 was written six hundred years before the birth of Jesus. In another verse, Isaiah prophesied, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

The name, "Immanuel" shows the truth of the story of Jesus Christ's birth. It literally means, "God with us." The baby to be born would be God in human form. Everything surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ can be summed up in those three words, "God with us." You see this truth brought to light again when you read John 1:1-14. The baby who was born, and placed in the manger was the omnipotent (all powerful) Creator of the heavens and earth.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Wilmington's Guide to the Bible gave an interesting illustration concerning Jesus Christ (Page 187). "From the very dawn of history this wicked world has desperately sought to employ the services of someone (or something) who could heal the hurt of the human soul and usher in the long stream of universal righteousness. Many persons have applied for this position, and numerous methods have been employed, but all have led to bitter disappointment and despair. But here the prophet Isaiah introduces a special candidate. What are his qualifications? Can he satisfy the five key positions?"

- A. What about his personality and character? It is wonderful.
- B. What about his education? He knows all things and is therefore the supreme Counselor.
- C. What about his nationality? He is the Mighty God.
- D. What about his previous work experience? He both planned for and carried out the creation of this universe and is therefore called the Father of Eternity.
- E. What is his special talent? As the God-man, he is able to reconcile man with God, and is therefore the Prince of Peace.

In view of all this, Isaiah (along with Peter, Paul, John, and a host of others) earnestly exhorts all sinners to hire this heavenly Candidate immediately" (See Isaiah 1:18).

The name of Jesus is mentioned 600 times in the Bible. This shows us how important it is to use His name.

When Can We Use the Name of Jesus?

In Prayer...

“Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14:12-14).

In Preaching...

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

When in Need...

“That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:16).

To Receive Eternal Life...

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

When Healing Is Needed...

“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk.

And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong whom ye see and know” (Acts 3:6, 16).

“By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?...Be it known unto you all... that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole...But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:7,10, 17-18).

In Salvation...

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

In Deliverance from Demons...

“And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour” (Acts 16:18).

In Water Baptism...

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

“For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16).

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5).

In Everything...

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).

David Livingstone, the great pioneer missionary to Africa, declared concerning the name of Jesus: “It is the word of a Gentleman of the most strict and sacred honour.”

He came as the Word (John 1:1, 14)
and left the Word.
He came with a name and left His name.
Who shall proclaim His name if the
church fails to do it.
Take the name of Jesus with you, and use it!

Study Questions

1. What does the name “Immanuel” mean? _____

2. Everything about the birth (and life on earth) of Jesus Christ can be summed up using what three words? _____

3. How did Jesus meet the five points that sometimes make up a job interview? _____

Questions Asked in the Book of Acts

“...May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?”
Acts 17:19

There was once a very intelligent professor that went around to different towns giving lectures. He was an atheist and he often shared his views hoping that others would agree with him in his thinking. He was so knowledgeable that at the end of every lecture he would open it up for questions. He had all confidence that he would be able to answer any question. On one occasion when he opened it up for questions a man rose and came to the front. He reached into his pocket and took out an orange and began to peel it. The professor inquired concerning his question. There was no response. The man just continued to peel his orange. Once it was peeled he began to eat it. The professor became annoyed and told the man, “Either ask your question or sit down!”

The man responded, “Can you tell me whether this orange is bitter or sweet?”

The professor growing more annoyed with each moment answered, “How do I know whether the orange is bitter or sweet? I have not tasted it!”

The man replied, “That is my point. How can you stand there and tell this group of people what Jesus tastes like unless you have tasted Him for yourself?”

“O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” (Psalm 34:8)

This lesson is about a variety of questions in the Book of Acts that were asked by people who have tried (tasted) the goodness of the Lord or those who needed to do so.

Do You Understand?

In Acts 8 we find a deacon (local church leader) directed by the Spirit to draw closer to an Ethiopian in a chariot. The deacon heard him reading the Bible and asked, “Understandest thou what thou readest?”

The Ethiopian answered with a question, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” (8:31) He invited Philip into his chariot.

The Ethiopian had been reading from Isaiah 53:7-8 and asked, “I pray thee, of whom speakest the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?” (8:34)

The deacon having a wealth of knowledge of the Scriptures and an anointing of the Spirit, began to preach JESUS at the very same Scripture.

Obviously the deacon talked of the salvation plan because the Ethiopian said, "Here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?" (8:36)

That day the Ethiopian was baptized right there. Perhaps, this man was responsible for taking the gospel back to Ethiopia. Look at the tremendous revival the nation of Ethiopia is experiencing now.

In Acts 2 we see that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is poured out on about one hundred and twenty who waited for it in an upper room in Jerusalem. Such excitement was created when they heard them speaking in tongues in languages from all over the world. In addition, a great atmosphere of praise and worship was manifested on that day.

An Honest Question – An Honest Answer

These happenings caused the Jews to ask, "...What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:12) The answer became the first sermon preached in the New Testament Church.

Peter began to explain that they were not drunk but this was the promise spoken by Joel in Joel 2:28-29. His sermon concluded with the salvation plan in Acts 2:38.

This plan was only given after a group of convicted people were pricked in their heart and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)

The same answer can be given to any one who becomes convicted of their sins and asks, "What shall we do?"

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:37-39).

There Are Three Ingredients:

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Repentance |
| 2. | Baptism in the name of the Jesus Christ |
| 3. | The infilling of the Holy Ghost |

In Acts 4:7, members of the Jewish Counsel asked Peter and John, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" These men knew quite well in whose name this miracle had been accomplished. In Acts 4:2 we see that they were grieved that they preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. Peter begins to preach a sermon on the name of Jesus concluding with "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) The disciples were convinced that salvation could only be found in the name of Jesus Christ.

Who Are You?

In Acts 9:4 it is Jesus who asks a question. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul asks, "Who art thou, LORD?" (It seems like he already knew the answer before he asked the question, doesn't it?) Jesus responds, "I am JESUS whom thou persecutest."

Is There Anything More?

In Acts 10 we see the Holy Spirit being poured out on Cornelius and those gathered in his house. It was the man of God who asked the question, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" The response is in the action recorded in Acts 10:48, "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Have You Received the Holy Ghost?

Anyone who has the baptism of the Holy Spirit should go one step further and be baptized in Jesus name as commanded in Acts 2:38 and Acts 10:48.

On the other hand, not being baptized in Jesus name could be a hindrance to some receiving the Holy Ghost. In Acts 19 Paul met some believers and said to them, "Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Verse 2) These people hadn't even heard of the Holy Ghost. This meant that they had not heard that the Spirit was being poured out on believers. Paul, in trying to figure out how they might not have heard of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, asked the second important question. "Unto what then were ye baptized?" (19:3) These disciples had been baptized under John's ministry. In Acts 19:5 we read that "...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." As a result, they immediately received the Holy Ghost.

The Phillipian Jailer received a great testimony of God's power when a great earthquake took place, and the prison doors were thrown open (Acts 16:25-34).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

His question was, "...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (16:30) Millions of people have asked this question throughout history.

This man was instructed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31). That very night, he and his entire household were baptized.

As you study through the Book of Acts you will come to the understanding of the answer to the question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" You must believe, repent of your sins, be baptized in Jesus name, and receive the Holy Spirit.

I trust that you will not be like the last individual we want to mention in this lesson. He is mentioned in Acts 26:27-29. The Apostle Paul is being tried before King Agrippa. However, it

seems that King Agrippa is really the one on trial. Paul says, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" (26:27) Agrippa answers, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (26: 28) Paul's answer is suitable for both Agrippa and all of us, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." (26: 29)

It's time to be totally persuaded! Jesus is coming soon!

Study Questions

Answer the following questions given in the Book of Acts. Use both the answers given in Acts and/or your own words. Where appropriate, also record the action or response involved.

1. "Men and brethren, What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37) Response: _____

2. "Who art thou, Lord?" (Acts 9:5) _____

3. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" (Acts 10:47) Response/Action: _____

4. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Response/Action (Acts 19:2) _____

5. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Response/Action) (Acts 16:30) _____

Almost, Later, or Altogether

“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.
Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.
And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both
almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”
(Acts 26:27-29)

That's Not For Me

A pastor was troubled by one of the Deacons in his church. This man was lazy and refused to live correctly. The pastor, hoping that the Word of God would bring about a change in the deacon, preached a sermon designed with him in mind. As the deacon left the church, he commented to the pastor, “Pastor, you really told them today!”

One Sunday only a few members showed up at church. As usual, the deacon was present. The pastor thought, “I’ve really got him today!” and proceeded to preach a message with the deacon in mind. As the deacon left, he said, “Oh, pastor, you really told them today!” The pastor couldn’t believe it.

Finally it happened. It rained so hard that no one showed up for church, except the deacon. The pastor was so excited. Today the deacon would know that the message was for him and he would hopefully respond accordingly. The pastor began preaching with great enthusiasm. He preached against all of the shortcomings of the deacon. As the deacon left the church that day, he said to the pastor, “Oh, pastor! If they had been here, you would have really told them today.” Many times people allow the preaching (of the gospel) to go over their heads and hit their neighbor instead. Our response is, “This is for someone else. It is not for me!”

Don't Call Me! I'll Call You!

“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”
(Acts 24:25)

Felix neglected the truth that Paul had given him and procrastinated (put it off until a later time). He was shocked by the penetrating power of the gospel, but when he saw the price of the commitment, he put it off. He wanted Paul to go away and leave him alone. We call his response the “don't call me, I will call you” response. People like this neglect and put off a response until it is a more convenient time. That time never comes! Neglect can be fatal. Some say, “I will not make a decision right now. I will decide later.” Without realizing it they have actually made a decision.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...” (Hebrews 2:3)

Preach For An Immediate Response

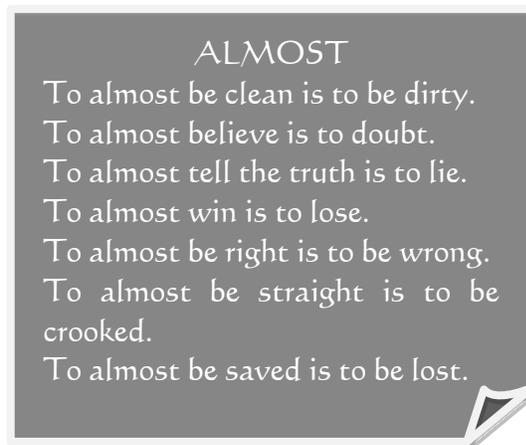
We don't need to be afraid to preach the gospel and press people for a decision. Their salvation is extremely important. It is a matter of life or death.

“...Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor 6:2)

Almost Persuaded Is Not Persuaded

Agrippa claimed to be “almost” persuaded. Some other words or phrases for “almost” are “nearly, not quite, just about, on the edge of, close to.” However, “almost” is not good enough.

We must be both “almost and altogether” (Acts 26:28-29) persuaded just like Paul. “To almost become a Christian is to remain a sinner.”



Just Let Me Keep My Traditions

Many people, when they hear the truth, decide to stay with their traditional religions and even defend them. (See Mark 7:3-9; 13) They remind us of the story in Jeremiah 36.

“Now the king sat in the winter house in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.

And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. Yet they were not afraid...” (Jeremiah 36:22-24)

Some people do basically the same thing. They cast away the portions of the Word of God that they want to neglect, or reject and fail to live according to what the Bible says. They don't even seem to be afraid of accepting part of the Word of God, while rejecting part. A much better

response would be to become like Apollos (Acts 18) and the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19). These people acknowledged and obeyed the further truth for serious seekers.

Blinded

Others seem to not even comprehend what is being preached. Because of their being blinded, they never seem to understand or respond to the gospel. How can this be? Satan has blinded them.

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Those That Quickly Received the Gospel

The Book of Acts is full of examples of people who quickly, gladly, received the Word of God; believed it and responded in obedience.

Peter’s First Sermon Brings Great Response

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:37) (This is one of the important questions in Acts.)

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41)

Even Religious Leaders Accept Truth

“...And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7)

Deacon Preaches; Samaria Responds

“And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake...” (Acts 8:6)

Preaching the Gospel to a Congregation of One

“...The eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36)

Surprise... Gentiles Get Saved

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” (Acts 10:44)

**People Respond to Gospel
Before Preachers Chased out of Town**

“...And so spake, that a great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.”
(Acts 14:1)

Business Woman Has Open Heart

“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple...which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened...” (Acts 16:14)

Jailer Has Earth Shaking Experience

“...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30) (Another of the important questions found in the Book of Acts. It is the most important question of all time.) See Acts 16:33.

**People Respond to Gospel
Before Preachers Chased Out of Town Again**

“And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.” (Acts 17:4)

Every Pastor’s Dream Congregation

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

Even Believers Believe Again

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”(Acts 19:5-6)

Study Questions

1. Why did the deacon not receive the preaching of the pastor for himself? _____

2. Why should we preach for an immediate response? _____

3. What type of response did Felix give to the preaching of Paul? _____

