

20-21 Bible Study #4

10/6/20

Setting the Stage for a Study of Acts and Paul

Review of Last Week

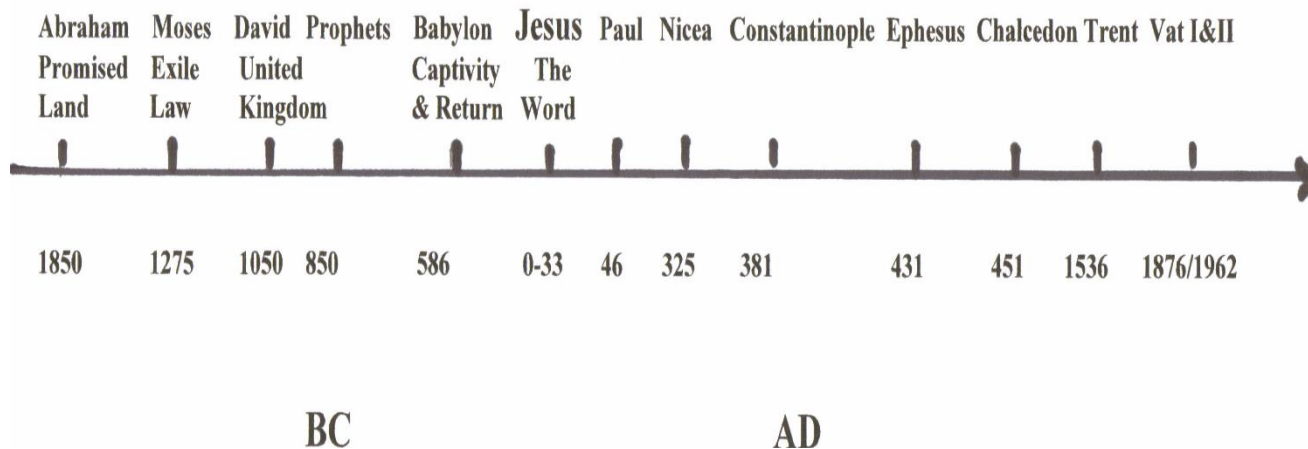
- Last week we looked at an overview of the Synoptic Gospel of Matthew
- We conducted a brief look at key dates that impacted on Matthew's gospel
- We discussed the literary technique of the Chiasm and how it appears that he used it for the entire scroll
- Then we looked at each of the five books he used to divide his text

Why am I (and most of you) Christian today?

- Because my parents were Christians
- Because God:
 - Established a Covenant with Abraham and his descendants
 - Land, people, savior
 - Gave Moses the “Law” after calling His chosen people out of Egypt
 - Allowed Israel to become a kingdom
 - Saul, David, Solomon
 - Punished Israel for disobedience
 - 10 Tribes of Israel dispersed by the Assyrians (**The Diaspora**)
 - Judah exiled to Babylon
 - Used the four beasts of Daniel to keep Israel dispersed
 - Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome
 - Inspired the Roman Empire to accept Christianity

God's Divine Plan

God's Divine Plan of Salvation History – (*Economea*)



Jesus calls the 12

- And he called to him his **twelve** disciples and **gave them authority** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity. The names of the **twelve apostles** are these: first, ***Simon***, who is called Peter, and ***Andrew*** his brother; ***James*** the son of Zebedee, and ***John*** his brother ***Philip*** and ***Bartholomew***; ***Thomas*** and ***Matthew*** the tax collector; ***James*** the son of Alphaeus and ***Thaddaeus***; ***Simon*** the Cananaean and ***Judas*** Iscariot, who betrayed him and was replaced by Matthias. (**Mt 10:1-4**)

Who Were the Apostles?

- The 12 who were called and sent by Jesus to preach the Gospel to the whole world
- **All were Jews** who spent approximately 3 years living with Jesus
- Most were from Galilee
- Many were fishermen
- Some were married
- Some were related to each other

What Did the Apostles Experience?

- Miraculous birth of Jesus
- His Baptism by John the Baptist (S)
- Wedding feast at Cana (S)
- Sermon on the Mount
- Mighty deeds
 - Healing the sick and infirmed (S)
 - Raising the dead
 - Feeding the 5000
 - Walking on water
 - Forgiveness of sins (S)

What Did the Apostles Experience? (Cont)

- Proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of God
- The Transfiguration
- The Last Supper
 - Institution of the priesthood (S)
 - Institution of the Eucharist (S)
- Trial, Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection of Jesus
- The commissioning of the Apostles and disciples
- The Ascension of Jesus
- The descent of the Holy Spirit (S)

The Calling of the 12 Apostles

Mt 10:1-4 & Lk 6:12-16 (Cont)

- **Simon:** Peter – Son of Jonah; leader of the 12, a married fisherman, member of the inner circle, always listed first, lived in Bethsaida & Capernaum
- **Andrew:** Peter's brother, Son of Jonah, a fisherman, lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum, original disciple of John the Baptist, brought his brother to Jesus
- **James:** The greater (the elder), son of Zebedee and Salome, *Boanerges*, brother of John, a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum & Jerusalem, member of the inner circle
- **John:** Son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of James, the beloved disciple, a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum & Jerusalem, member of the inner circle, wrote gospel of John, letters and Revelations, given the Blessed Mother by Jesus

The Calling of the 12 Apostles

Mt 10:1-4 & Lk 6:12-16 (Cont)

- **Philip:** Friend of Andrew, a fisherman, lived in Bethsaida
- **Bartholomew:** Nathanael, Son of Talmai, lived in Cana of Galilee
- **Thomas:** Didymus, doubting Thomas, lived in Galilee
- **Matthew:** Levi, Son of Alpheus, a tax collector, author of 1st Gospel, brother of James and Jude, lived in Capernaum
- **James:** The lesser, younger, just, son of Alphaeus and Mary, brother of Jude, and Matthew, Bishop of Jerusalem, wrote Epistle of James, lived in Galilee

The Calling of the 12 Apostles (Mt 10:1-4 & Lk 6:12-16; Acts 1:23-26)

- **Thaddaeus:** Judas (Jude) son of Alpheus & Mary, brother of James the younger, and Matthew, lived in Galilee
- **Simon:** The Cananaean, the Zealot, lived in Galilee
- **Judas Iscariot:** Traitor who betrayed Jesus, son of Simon, a Judean, a violent Jewish nationalist, from city near Jericho in Judea
- **[Matthias:** May have been one of the 72, selected by lots to replace Judas after having been with Jesus from His baptism until His ascension. Believed to have preached in *Cappadocia* and the coast of the *Caspian Sea*]

What Did the Apostles (and Paul) Preach?

- **The *Kerygma*** – To proclaim the initial and essential proclamation of the gospel message
- **The Apostles Creed** – 12 articles attributed to the Apostles
- **The *Didache*** – The teaching of the 12 Apostles
- **Eucharistic celebration**
- **Baptismal liturgies**
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The Kerygma – Based on Peter's speeches in Acts (Prof C. H. Dodd)

- 1. The Age of Fulfillment has dawned, the latter days foretold by the prophets.
- 2. This has taken place through the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- 3. By virtue of the resurrection, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God as Messianic head of the new Israel.
- 4. The Holy Spirit in the church is the sign of Christ's present power and glory.
- 5. The Messianic Age will reach its consummation in the return of Christ.
- 6. An appeal is made for repentance with the offer of forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, and salvation.

Expanded Summary of the Kerygma

- The promises of God made in the OT have now been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus the Messiah
- Jesus was anointed by God at his baptism as Messiah
- Jesus began his ministry in Galilee after his baptism
- He conducted a beneficent ministry, doing good and performing mighty works by the power of God
- The Messiah was crucified according to the purpose of God

Expanded Summary of the Kerygma (Cont)

- He was raised from the dead and appeared to his disciples
- Jesus was exalted by God and given the name “Lord”
- He gave the Holy Spirit to form the new community of God
- He will come again for judgment and the restoration of all things
- All who hear the message should repent and be baptized

Apostles Creed

- Then 12 articles of the **Apostles Creed** outline the fundamentals doctrines of Christianity
- It is a faithful summary of the Apostles' faith
- It is considered the oldest Roman catechism
- A tradition from the Middle Ages holds that on Pentecost, while under the influence of the Holy Spirit, each Apostle composed a separate article
- This creed is used in prayers like the Rosary and was expanded into the Nicene Creed

The 12 Articles of the Apostles Creed

- I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
- I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
- He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
- He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
- He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.
- He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

The 12 Articles of the Apostle's Creed (Cont)

- He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
- I believe in the Holy Spirit,
- The holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
- The forgiveness of sins,
- The resurrection of the body,
- And the life everlasting. Amen

The Didache – The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles

- A brief early Christian treatise dated from the mid to late 1st century
- The Greek manuscript was rediscovered in 1873
- It is the oldest surviving written catechism containing 3 main sections:
 - Christian ethics
 - Rituals (Baptism and Eucharist)

Church organization (considered the first example of the Church Orders)

The Didache – The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles (Cont)

- Although anonymous, it is considered part of the category of second-generation Christian writings known as the **Apostolic Fathers**
- It is a pastoral manual which reveals more about how Jewish-Christians saw themselves and how they adapted their Judaism for gentiles
- The contents can be divided into 4 parts:
 - Two Ways, the Way of Life and the Way of Death
 - A ritual dealing with **Baptism**, fasting, and **Communion**
 - The ministry and how to deal with traveling prophets
 - A brief apocalypse
 - * *The Hidden Manna* p. 18-19

The Teachings of Apostolic Fathers

- What are the qualities that distinguish an Apostolic Father?
 - Those who came right after the Apostles and who were directly acquainted with them
 - They were instructed by the Apostles
 - Their writings coincide with the end of the writings of the NT between 80-100 A.D.
- Who were the Apostolic Fathers?
 - **St. Clement** – Peter and Paul
 - **St. Ignatius of Antioch** - John
 - **St. Polycarp** – John
- Other document attributed to the Apostolic Fathers
 - The *Didache*

The Explosion of Christianity

- 12 Apostles
- Grew to over
- 2.18 Billion Christians
- In the World by
 - 2010

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Part I: The Profession of Faith
- Part II: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery
- Part III: Life in Christ
- Part IV: Christian Prayer

Preview of Acts

- **To set the stage for Acts 1 we need to look at the end of Luke's gospel (Lk 24:36-53) which Luke must have assumed you would have access to as he only summarizes these teachings in Acts 1:1-5**
 - **Approximate dates for the completion of Luke's two books are:**
 - 60-69 A.D. Luke's Gospel
 - 62-68 A.D. Acts of the Apostles

JOSEPH RATZINGER
POPE
BENEDICT
XVI



JESUS
OF NAZARETH

HOLY WEEK:
FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM
TO THE RESURRECTION

IGNATIUS

Luke 24

- **Lk 24:36** *“Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them Peace to you.”* Then he asked for some fish which he ate so they would realize that he was not a ghost.
 - **Acts 1:3** Jesus presented himself alive.. during forty days
- **Lk 24:44** Jesus said to them, *“These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was with you, that everything written about me in the **law...prophets** and the **psalms** must be fulfilled”*
 - Remember how the hearts of the two disciples on the road were on fire when he discussed the scriptures with them?
 - Here, the “prophets” means the rest of the inspired scriptures (prophets, historical books, Wisdom and the Psalms – the rest of our Old Testament canon)

Luke 24 (Cont)

- The Sadducees only believed the Law was inspired
- The Pharisees believed that all of the scripture including the Psalms were inspired
- Luke, and Paul (and therefore the rest of Christianity) accept the position of the Pharisees
- Jesus quotes from the prophets and Psalms when talking to the Pharisees but only from the Law with the Sadducees
- This division becomes a major flash point for Paul

Luke 24 (Cont)

- **Lk 24:45-47** “Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,... to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem”
 - What about his command to the disciples to go to Galilee?
 - He did tell the women to instruct the disciples to go to Galilee
 - He appeared to the disciples many times during the 40 days there
 - But, he instructed them to return to Jerusalem for it was from there he would ascend into heaven across the Kidron Valley on the Mount of Olives
- Again, we will see this call for the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem in **Acts 1:8**

Luke 24 (Cont)

- **Lk 24:49** We find his promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit “*coming from on high*”
 - This again being filled with the Holy Spirit is be promised in **Acts 1:5**

Transition

- Let us turn our attention to the beginning of the Book of Acts

20-21 Acts and Paul

Introduction to the Book of Acts

- **Author:** Luke
- **Composition:** It was written sometimes:
 - After Luke completed his Gospel
 - Before the death of Paul since it discusses Paul's first imprisonment (60 – 62 A.D.) in Rome, but not his death
- **Major Theme and Structure:**
 - Life in the early church
 - The resurrection of Jesus
 - Early church hierarchy (deacons, priests and bishops)

Introduction to the Book of Acts (Cont)

- Father Sebastian suggested that if all Christians read the **Book of Acts** all the divisions of Christianity would be eliminated
- There are many Protestants' misunderstandings concerning the *Epistle to the Galatians* and *the Romans* because of Martin Luther's lack of a critical understanding of the **Book of Acts**
- **Acts** could serve as the medicine for the sickness of modern Christianity to include its heresies and schisms

Acts 1

Acts 1

- **Acts 1:1-3** *“In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach...and speaking of the Kingdom of God”*
 - The first book was the *Gospel of Luke* where Luke first discussed **Theophilus**
 - This may be a term of endearment for his audience
 - As a reminder, the Kingdom of God is a reference for the Kingdom of David or the Kingdom of Israel
 - The people living during the time of the **Book of Acts** were waiting for the restoration of the Kingdom of David
 - For them, this was a very visible and physical thing
 - It was to be the Kingdom of God as referenced in the Old Testament, and promised by the prophets
 - Thus, the people asked Jesus if this was what he was going to do

Acts 1 (Cont)

- **Acts 1:4-5** *“And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, ‘you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”*
 - This was a Semitic way of speaking (meaning that not by water alone but also with the Holy Spirit)
 - We will see this kind of language in a number of places in the New Testament

Acts 1 (Cont)

- **Acts 1:6-8** *“So when they had come together they asked him, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’...‘and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.’”*
 - Again, we are talking about the return of the Kingdom of God
 - Father indicated that often when people ask about what is going to happen next in the church, or when Jesus will return, they usually refer to this passage
 - But, in fact, the answers to those questions are none of our business
 - Our job is to go out to the whole world and be witnesses by the power of the Holy Spirit of the Good News (Gospel)
 - We are to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus until he returns, by baptizing, teaching all He taught, and by making them disciples of Jesus

Acts 1 (Cont)

- **Acts 1:9** *“And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.”*
 - This idea of Jesus riding on a cloud should remind us of **Daniel 7:13** *“The son of man ascending on the clouds to the ancient of days”*
 - Further, **Daniel 7** followed this with the idea that when this happened it meant that the Kingdom of God was beginning to be established
 - Also, when this kingdom begins to come to power, it will fight for its territory

Acts 1 (Cont)

- Father pointed out the importance of our hearing the story of the death of Stephen knowing that **Daniel 7:21** was going on and **Daniel 7:22** was coming
- This is why the **Book of Revelations** begins with Jesus riding on the clouds, because we are going to hear about the persecutions of the Christians
- Further, the entire theme of the **Book of Revelations** is that although they were being persecuted, the tribulation was about to end

Acts 1 (Cont)

- Thus, when we hear about the persecution of Christians, we will see Jesus riding on the clouds
- This helped the early Christian cope as they looked back as to what happened in the **Book of Daniel**
- When this happened, the Romans dug in their heels to defend their territory via war
- Father asked that we look back at **Daniel 7: 21-22**

Daniel 7

- **Daniel 7:21-22** *“As I looked, the horn made war with the saints, and prevailed over them. Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgement was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints received the kingdom”*
 - These two verses were critical for the early Christians
 - They knew that they were living in the midst of **Daniel 7:21** and that **Daniel 7:22** was coming
 - This is why Luke began **Acts** in this manner
 - We will see the same image at the stoning of Stephen (**Acts 6:8-15**) when Stephen looks up and sees Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father

Daniel 7(Cont)

- Each succeeding empire defeated the previous empire down to the 4th empire – the Roman Empire
- This 5th kingdom, (the Church) as discussed by Daniel, (**Daniel 2 & 7**) will fight and defeat the Roman Empire
- This will be the kingdom of God and will begin when one like the son of man ascends on the clouds to the ancient of days enthroned as God
- Father pointed out that the **Book of Revelation** presents the same imagery as it deals with the same problem of the persecution of the Christians