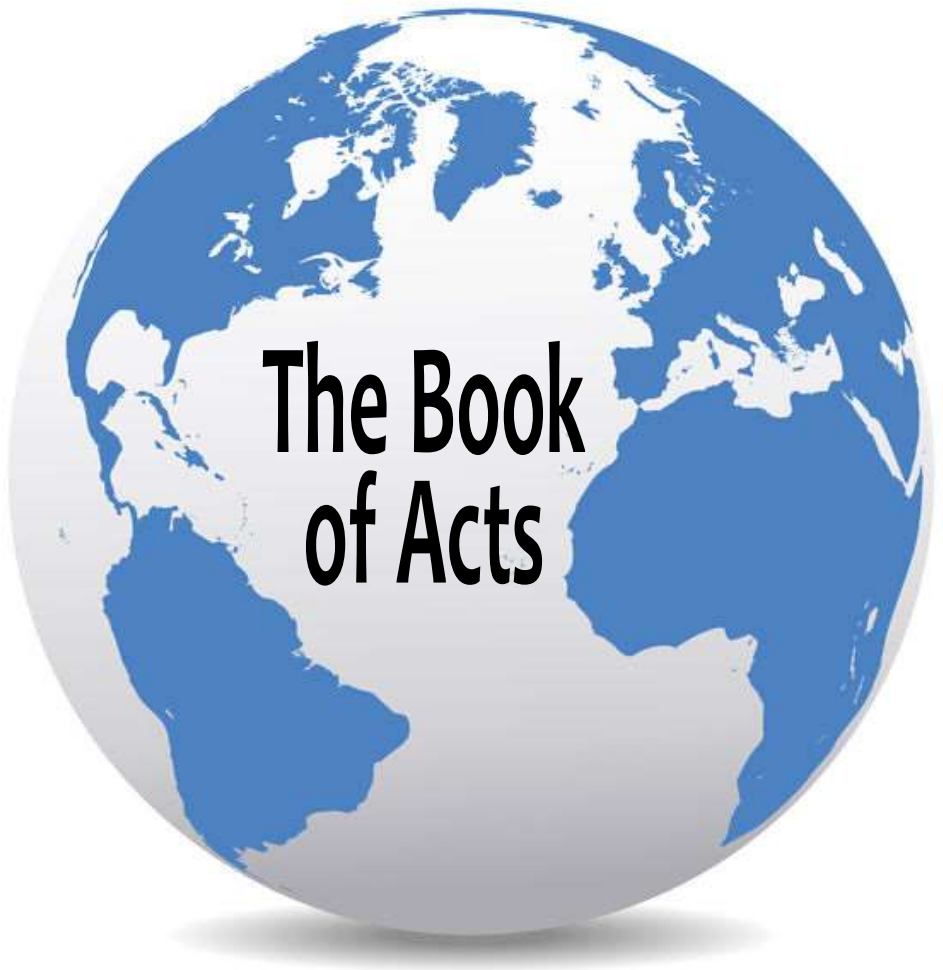


Let's Worship God

5th-10th March 2018
Acts





The Book of ACTS

Monday - Acts 12 - He Gave Not God the Glory

How unfathomable are the ways of God! Herod killed James but the Lord preserved Peter and judged Herod. How powerful also is the grace of God in the souls of His people! Peter could sleep in prison the night before he was due to be brought forth and he had to be rather roughly awakened (v.7). "... so he giveth his beloved sleep" (Ps. 127:5).

But what was it that brought this outstanding Divine judgment upon Herod? He was certainly a very wicked man in a multitude of ways, but what is specifically mentioned is that when he gave his oration, "he gave not God the glory" (v.23). That which makes all sin so sinful is the failure to treat God as God.

Few have the opportunity for self-glorification that Herod had. We do it in more mundane fashion. We 'do out own thing' in so many ways. Instead of fulfilling our chief end which is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever, we defy His right to tell us how to act, speak and think. This begins with pretending God is not really as He says. If we faced up to God as being the holy, sin-hating and sin-punishing God that He really is, we would be truly alarmed at what this means for us; we are guilty before God. But we smother such thoughts with false ideas about God - to convince ourselves that all is well. Then, we set up our own standards of right and wrong. We assume the role of lawgiver, which properly belongs to God. We do not give Him the glory! Having set up our false god in our minds, we set up false standards to go with it. Christ condemns lustful thoughts (Matt.5:27-28), for example, but we excuse it. We set the test and tell ourselves we have passed.

But perhaps God has changed you from what you are by nature. How can we tell? Have you been brought heartily to accept that God is as He says He is? And that His Law is the only real standard of right and wrong and that we are guilty and Hell-deserving? Have you been brought to whole-hearted dependence upon Christ, the sin-bearing substitute of sinners for acceptance with God? Do you see that God is right to be as He is, to require what He requires and to save the way He saves - through Christ alone. Have you begun to "glory in the Lord" (1Cor.1:31)?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would give God the glory.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Praise: Psalm 1A:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Tuesday - Acts 13:1-13 - Presbyterianism & Evangelism

Sometimes people get impatient with Presbyterian Church Government, and we sometimes don't make it easy by our use of "presbyspeak", but the Biblical principles are worth conserving and our forefathers suffered and died for them as given by the Saviour to His Church in wisdom and love. This Presbytery at Antioch was the means God used to direct the Church as to who should do what. It was the means of evangelism among the unbelievers. This needs to be underlined in a day when many look to other organisations for these things. Although we do not look for special revelation, as the Bible is complete, we do look to God to lead us in the infallible Word.

Paul and Barnabas didn't assume that a man of Sergius Paulus' intelligence would see the falseness of Elymas' pagan claims, but neither did they give up straightaway. They were given a judgmental miracle to perform. They pre-announced what was going to happen and only God could do it. The miracles of the apostles included some judgmental miracles pointing to the next great event; the judgment to come.

Questions

1. Have we read the signs; the apostolic miracles? There is a Saviour who has come and who will come again to judge.
2. Have we learned patience with Presbyterianism when we see the Scripturalness of its principles?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the elders and ministers.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Praise: Psalm 122:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



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Wednesday - Acts 13:14-52 - The Lord Breaking Off and Grafting In

Paul preached the Gospel in Pisidian Antioch (not to be confused with the other Antioch). As usual, he began at the synagogue. He preached the free offer of the Gospel (v.26) depending on the eternal, electing love of God for the results (v.48). But he had turned to the Gentiles (v 46). Why?

Apparent openness to the Gospel can turn sour. The Jews at Antioch in Pisidia seemed ready to listen at first, but when their prestige and position were in danger of being eclipsed, their unregenerate hearts broke out into open opposition to the Gospel (v.45). Men can seem unperturbed by the Gospel until some treasured sin seems under threat, and then they show their true colours. The Gospel was "to the Jew first" (Rom.1:16). They had been the visible church of God in the Old Testament - but the situation was changing. "Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt.21:43).

Even their outward position was to be taken away from them. Certainly, they continued to 'play church' - clinging on to the redundant signs of circumcision and Passover and rejecting the Divine replacements of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They adhered to the Sanhedrin and despised the Apostles and elders of the continuing church of God.

But many of the Gentiles listened and believed. But the evidence of this saving grace is not mere church attendance. The Jews attended the synagogue and had, hitherto, been part of the outward membership of the church of God. As the message of the Risen Christ was preached among them, however, their true state became all too obvious. It is right to attend the 'means of grace', especially the preaching of the Word, but we must not trust in those means - "means must be neither trusted nor neglected" (John Trapp) - but we must use them to see Christ the Saviour as the true object of our faith and trust. "Neither be idle in the means, nor make an idol of the means" (William Secker).

Questions

1. Are you a church-goer and no more or a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Why did these Gentiles believe, whereas the Jews, with all their outward advantages, did not?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the salvation you have in Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Praise: Psalm 65B:1-6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Thursday - Acts 14:1-18 - Truth Divides

The city was divided at Iconium (v.4). 'Doctrine divides' is the complaint of many. The question should be whether particular doctrines are true according to the Scriptures. A Gospel that is doctrine-free is without content and is no Gospel at all. The conversion of the Romans to Christ is described as 'obeying from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered unto you' (Rom.6:17). The Gospel is doctrinal. But truth does divide. Since the fall of man into sin, mankind has been divided into two. Those who are born again of the Spirit of God and respond to the truth while others resent it. The first death recorded in Scripture when Cain killed Abel was not only a murder, but a martyrdom for the truth's sake.

Noticeably, those who were most zealous against the truth were the unbelieving Jews who "stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren" (v.2). The more pride invested in false, religious, self-righteousness, the more venomous the enmity to the truth.

The 'Jews' were those leaders who rejected Christ and remained part of that body which was no longer to be the true church of God on earth. The apostles led the continuing church of the Lord. The unbelieving 'natural branches' (Rom.11:17-25) were being broken off while Gentile 'wild branches' were being grafted into the continuing olive tree of the professing church of God made up, as always, of those who 'profess the true religion, together with their children' (Westminster Confession 25:2).

The transition from the Old Testament phase of the church to the New reached its completion with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70 foretold by Christ. Godly Jews who lived through the period of Christ's earthly life continued, along with their children, within the church as they abandoned the unbelieving Israelite Sanhedrin and eldership and followed the apostles and embraced the replacement sacraments of the New Testament.

Sometimes, however, the division between those who love the truth and those who do not remains below the surface within the outward form of the church. There are those whose consciences will not allow them to deny the truth in which they have been nurtured since they were born, but they don't love the truth as it is in Jesus.

Questions

1. Do you know the truth or do you also love it?
2. What was Paul and Barnabas' reaction when the people of Lystra were ready to worship them because of the miracle?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the truth.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Praise: Psalm 83:2-6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Friday - Acts 14:19-28 - Consolidation

Paul and Barnabas broke new ground. Often Paul left one of his assistants to continue ministering to the young churches. Timothy and Titus belonged to this category and they may have been called Evangelists (1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 4:5; Titus 1:5). But this time they went back themselves (v21). They preached the word (v.22). Continuing appetite for the word is a sign of being born again (1 Peter 2:2-3).

They also ordained elders (v. 23). Paul was concerned that the church on Crete should have elders who would protect the flock there (Titus 1:10). At least one of these elders should be a minister of the word (1 Timothy 5:17).

To be part of a congregation with faithful overseers/elders must be highly important. It is Christ's loving provision. The floating Christian may seem spiritual, but he is really guilty of pride, thinking he knows better than the Lord.

Questions

1. Do you esteem faithful elders for their works' sake and as the Lord's provision?
2. Do you have an appetite for the word of God?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that the Lord would provide men to lead His church.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 13 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Saturday - Acts 15:1-28 - Apples of God for Church Assemblies

Verse 28 is crucial and tells us the attitude that prevailed centuries ago in the council of Jerusalem whose proceedings are recorded in this chapter. The problem in the church at Antioch was a serious one. Behind the question of the terms of Gentile admission to the church was the fundamental doctrine of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. The apostles and elders did what every body of church officers should do. They listened to God's Word. God had given revelation to Peter recorded in chapter 10 and Peter refers to this in verses 7-11 of our chapter. James appeals to the Old Testament quoting from Amos 9:11-12 and applying it to the reviving and expansion of the church of Christ, not to a literal raising up of the temple or rebuilding of the temple (see verses 13-18).

The decision made had the approval of the Holy Spirit and imposed only 'necessary things'. These were firstly, avoidance of things sinful in themselves to which the Gentiles were prone, such as fornication, and secondly, practices not essentially sinful but which, when used in a manner that stumbled the consciences of other brethren, became sinful as contrary to love to our neighbour. Such careful decision-making reflects submission to Christ's kingship over His own church and results in the strengthening of the churches as the sequel shows (see ch.16: 4-5). Such pastoral care in the government of the flock of God should meet with the acceptance of all who love Christ and unite His true sheep in the things He Himself has appointed.

Questions

1. The Church is united by submission to God's Word - is this true?
2. Should this apply to Congregations, Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 16 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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