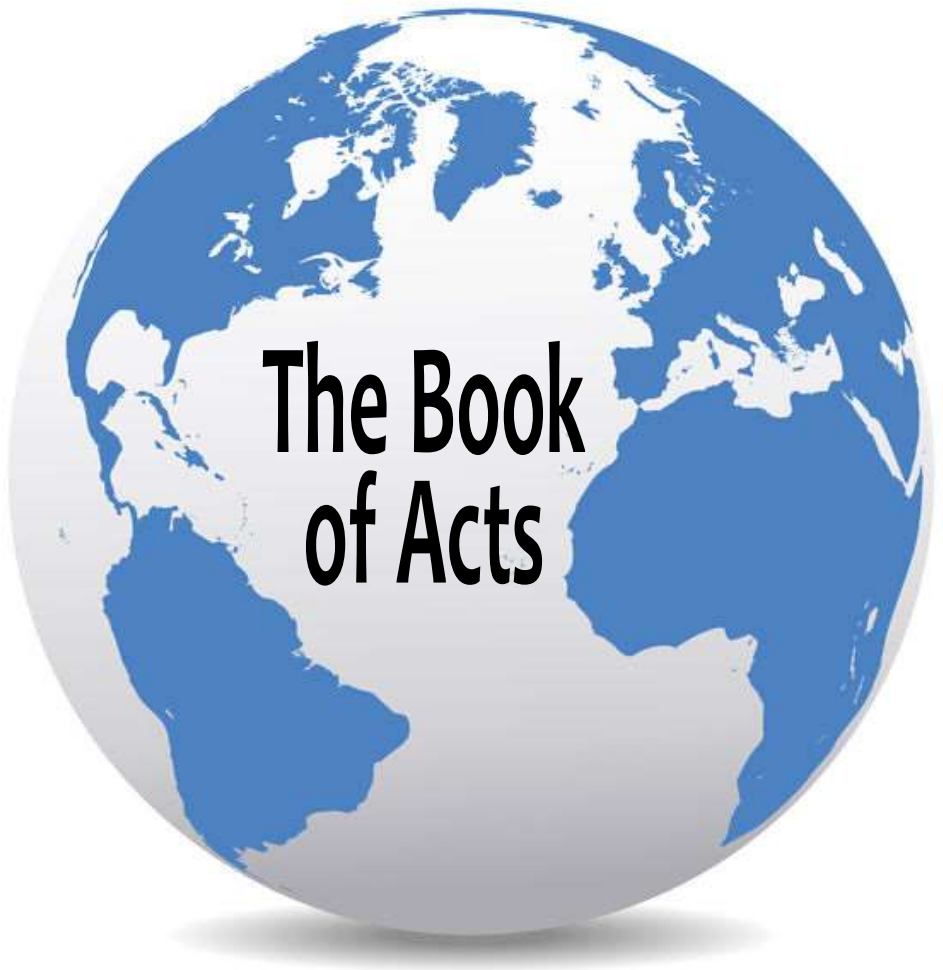


Let's Worship God

12th-17th March 2018
Acts





The Book of ACTS

Monday - Acts 15:29-41 - Disunity Minimised

Paul and Barnabas cared about these churches (v.36). They didn't just 'hit and run'. But caring can bring collisions and it did. Magnanimity is easy when we don't really care. Barnabas was related to Mark (Colossians 4:10). He cared about discouraging this, perhaps timid Christian. Paul wanted someone reliable which he thought Mark was not. The disagreement was real; sharp even. But it was not a matter of truth against error. It was a matter of judgement. Whilst we are not to rejoice in iniquity, we can take comfort that such good men had differences of opinion.

Paul was coming to the fore and perhaps Mark found this difficult to bear; we just don't know. What we do know is that they didn't form separate churches back-to-back. They didn't race each other to existing churches to maximise their personal influence nor were long-term brotherly relations broken (1 Corinthians 9:6; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11; Colossians 4:10). In short, they did not let this matter have a more divisive effect on the Church than need be. Rom 14:7 applies.

Questions

1. We all like to call everything we have strong views about a matter of principle. What constitutes a real matter of principle?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for unity within the congregation.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

Praise: Psalm 87:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Tuesday - Acts 16:1-13 - Synodical Care

The decisions of the Council of Jerusalem are attributed to the Apostles and Elders (v.4). Not the Apostles only, nor the brethren who are included in the greeting (ch. 15:23). Later on they are attributed to the Elders by James (probably James, the brother of the Lord), the Apostles being absent (Acts 21:25). In other words, when there are no Apostles, this kind of gathering belongs to the eldership. In any case, the Apostles were elders (1 Peter 5:1). The eldership is the correct link between congregations after the apostolic age. The governing eldership is given for the good of the whole body (1 Corinthians 12:28).

This gathering of Ministers and other elders had stuck to the word of God so the result was that all the churches were strengthened (v.5). When the courts of the church do what is right and Biblical the people of God rejoice, and the church is built up.

The rest of these verses are taken up with the journey and extraordinary call to Macedonia, though little did Paul and Silas know, perhaps, that their early contact was with a woman of Thyatira, at Philippi the chief city of Macedonia. It was a very Roman city and perhaps at this time the Emperor had banished all male Jews which is why this meeting place for women was the nearest thing to a synagogue in the city. At any rate, the Synodical decisions were not just "Church talk", but closely connected with the advance of the Gospel, especially among the Gentiles.

Questions

1. Do we see Presbyterian Church government as a blessing Christ, our King, has given His Church?
2. Do we appreciate the fellowship of the saints?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the fellowship we have among believers.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

Praise: Psalm 47:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Wednesday - Acts 16:14-40 - Conviction and Conversion

The experiences of the elect of God in being brought to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ vary widely. John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, suffered prolonged and severe conviction of sin before coming to a settled assurance of forgiveness in Christ. John Newton, the slave-trader, on the other hand, had only a mild sense of sin prior to his conversion to Christ - though much more awareness of sin came afterwards. It seems that Lydia also had a much gentler experience of conversion than the Philippian jailor. Sometimes Christians can struggle with assurance of salvation. One cause can be that their experience does not match up to that of some worthy of the past of whose experience they have read. This makes them ask - 'am I converted at all?'

God's providence brought Lydia under the sound of the Gospel. God's providence brought the Gospel to the jailor also and even shook him to the core. He was ready to kill himself when he thought the prisoners had fled. But when reassured that this concern was unfounded, a deeper question remained - 'What must I do to be saved?'. Temporal trouble does not always lead to this question. The keepers who were terrified by the angel at the tomb of Christ soon went back to their ways when the fear had passed (Matthew 28:4 & 15). But the Holy Spirit was working mightily in this man in the midst of all these God-ordained circumstances.

But what of our earlier question? Though Christ is offered to all sinners, what conviction of sin is necessary before anyone ever truly comes to Christ? The answer is - such conviction as causes him to give up all hope except in Christ. We must say, 'There is no hope' (Isaiah 57:10) - except in the Saviour.

Questions

1. Our forefathers distinguished between the "warrant of faith" and "the way of faith", the first being the grounds of trusting Christ - the free offer of the Gospel and the other being God's way of convicting us of sin so we see our need of Christ. Is any special degree of conviction of sin necessary?
2. Are we content with God's way of salvation?

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 they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

Praise: Psalm 51A:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Thursday - Acts 17:1-15 - Gospel Preaching

We are given here an example of preaching. We have the courage to continue instead of looking for peace and quiet after all that had gone on (vs, 1-2). The Scriptures were opened (v 2), and the plan of God in redemption (from which the necessity of the atonement follows) and the proclamation of the risen Christ (v. 3). Many believed (v. 4).

But there was opposition as well. It began among the Jews (v. 5). Often those who have most exposure to the truth or even been part of the professing Church but turn away from the Gospel are the most vehement in their opposition (Psalm 83:5-12). Once again, to stir up the people, even these Jews become defenders of Caesar! They also say one thing that is true - they spoke of "another king" (v.7). The enemies of the Gospel tried to make it a political charge but the fact is that our Lord Jesus is King over all things in existence and all events, and by the Kingdom of grace He by His Spirit through the Word is making the unwitting subjects of the kingdom of His power into the willing subjects also of the Kingdom of His grace.

Questions

1. Can you explain the difference between the Kingdom of Christ's power and the Kingdom of Christ's grace?
2. What is the connection between the two (Ephesians 1:22)?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for those believers being persecuted in different places.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Friday - Acts 17:16-34 - Repent

At Thessalonica the Jews accused Paul and Silas of preaching 'another king, one Jesus' (v.7). Pilate had once heard of this kingship and shrugged his shoulders and walked away (John 18:37-38). He had used it to mock the Jews, 'Behold your king' (John 18:14). He had insisted on including it in the superscription on the cross (John 18:19-22). But here this matter of kingship still hasn't gone away.

After going to Berea, Paul comes to Athens and preaches to the thinkers of Mars hill. Much is often made - perhaps too much - of the fact that he begins 'where they are', with their altar to the unknown God. He very quickly moves to where they needed to be - hearing of the risen Saviour who would judge the world. God commands these men - and all men - to repent; to turn around from sin to the Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no trusting in Jesus Christ and dependence upon Him for acceptance with God without turning from the proud desire to be as gods and especially to be the god of our own salvation. No-one can have Christ as their Saviour without also bowing the knee to Him as Lord. Unregenerate men dream of happiness in the world to come, without turning from sin in the present. This cannot be. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Repentance does not merit acceptance before God, but it is the invariable accompaniment of faith in Christ and acceptance on account of His merits. Christ governs all by His power in providence, but in His kingdom of grace, He brings sinners into willing subjection through the Gospel.

The issue of Christ's kingship never will disappear. God will judge by Jesus. The Father "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:27). As the Incarnate Mediator and King, all enemies shall be put under His feet. The redeemed willingly bow to Him, imperfectly in this world and fully in the next. The rest will be brought into subjection under His wrath. Every knee shall bow (Philippians 2:10). Blessed are all they that trust in Him!

Questions

1. Why does the Shorter Catechism call "justification" an act of God and "sanctification" a work of God?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that the Lord would bring the men and women around us to faith in Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

Praise: Psalm 110:3-7 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



The Book of ACTS

Saturday - Acts 18:1-11 - Electing Love Amidst Turmoil

We often imagine that we know the kind of circumstances in which God will work in the conversion of sinners. This is one of many ways in which, in our pride, we overreach ourselves. The ministry of the apostle Paul in Corinth shows how foolish is such guesswork. Paul had not received a tremendously encouraging response in Athens. He came to Corinth and faced the hostility of the Jews. He then began separate meetings right next door to the synagogue. Imagine if a minister did that today! One can almost hear the howls of condemnation - 'how insensitive!'; 'how provocative and, indeed, unloving!' But the apostle evangelised 'head on'. And the Lord appeared to him in a night vision. To do what? Tell him to go easy and soft peddle a bit for a while? No, he is to preach boldly. He would be kept safe because the Lord had many for whom He died in that place, having been chosen of God the Father in eternity and given to the Son to redeem, who were now about to be effectually drawn to Christ. Then, amidst circumstances that were anything but tranquil, over the next eighteen months sinners were converted to Christ in pagan Corinth and a church was established.

Later in the chapter, we read of those in Achaia (of which Corinth was the main city) who had 'believed through grace' (v.27). Believing is a human activity, but it is one that is only performed by the grace of God - when the Holy Spirit gives not only understanding but also a willing heart that desires Christ.

The Lord who sent Paul to plant, also sent Apollos to water in Corinth (1 Corinthians 3:6). Apollos 'helped them much' (v.27). The Lord was building His church and providing the ministry of the Word for it. The believers had tasted that the Lord is good and desired more of His truth. Thus was the love of God in election being worked out. The Lord had many He was going to save there (v. 10).

Questions

1. Were those in Corinth who believed in any way naturally better than those who did not?
2. Can we know who are God's elect before they are converted?

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 they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

Praise: Psalm 53:all - 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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