

## Scripturalism vs Judaism XVII

### The Acts of the Apostles

Fred R. Coulter—January 17, 1998

There's an awful lot that is going to be happening in which Judaism is going to impact the Churches of God in a very particular way. There was a meeting over the so-called Christmas vacation where it was sponsored by one of the evangelical spin-offs of the Church of God down in Wagner, Oklahoma, which turned out to be a sacred names, a calendar thing and also how to have the Passover like the Jewish Seder. It's going to impact the Church a great deal.

We need to understand that from the very, very beginning when John the Baptist came and started his ministry, that there was a separation and division of Judaism that began at that time, because Judaism is not and was not the religion of Moses.

Let's do just a little review, however, in time order, you will not understand the four-year gap necessarily, because from #16-17 you won't realize there has been four years in-between.

Let's see the prophecy concerning John the Baptist. Let's understand something very important concerning John the Baptist, because this will help us lead up to the time of the beginning of the Church. John the Baptist was a son of a priest. That means that John the Baptist would have been a priest at the temple had he went ahead with his life without God intervening. We also know that when God does something very special in the world He particularly chooses that person in a particular way. Let's go back and think of Abraham. He called Abraham—correct? Isaac was the *son of promise* and God not only chose him, but actually created him with an impossible miracle with Abraham and Sarah.

Then when we come down through time we have Moses. He was chosen for a particular purpose from the very time that he was born. We come down to the time of Jeremiah. God said that He 'formed him' for this particular purpose. Then we come to the time of John the Baptist and God formed him for this particular purpose; for his mission that he was to do. He was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. He was to 'prepare the way for the Lord.' In this case again, John the Baptist's mother was old.

Luke 1:57: "Now, Elizabeth's time was fulfilled that she should give birth, and she bore a son. And her neighbors and kinfolk heard that *the* Lord had magnified His mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her.... [I imagine that they were all there to witness the event.] ...And it came to pass on the eighth day *that* they came to circumcise the little child; and they were calling him Zacharias, after the

name of his father. Then his mother answered *and* said, 'No! But he shall be named John'" (vs 57-60). God also names the individuals for what they are.

Verse 61: "And they said to her, '*There* is no one among your kinfolk who is called by this name.' Then they made signs to his father *as to* what he desired him to be named. And after signaling for a writing tablet, he wrote, saying, 'John is his name.' And they were all amazed. Then his mouth was immediately opened..." (vs 61-64). Here John the Baptist's father was dumb and couldn't speak all during the time that Elizabeth was pregnant, because he didn't believe God when God said, 'You will have a son.'

Now, the son is born, circumcised, Zacharias' mouth is opened, "...and his tongue *was loosed*; and he spoke, praising God. And fear came upon all those who dwelt around them..." (vs 64-65). That's why God had many witnesses. There's also something we need to understand about how God does things that are very important. He has many, many witnesses. It's not done in a corner.

"...and in the entire hill country of Judea, all these things were being talked about. And all who heard *these things* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, 'What then will this little child be?' And *the* hand of *the* Lord was with him. And Zacharias his father was filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, 'Blessed be *the* Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and has worked redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; exactly as He spoke by *the* mouth of His Holy prophets since the world began; salvation from our enemies and from *the* hand of all those who hate us; to fulfill *the promise* of mercy *made* to our fathers, and to remember His Holy covenant, *the* oath that He swore to Abraham our father..." (vs 65-73).

In *The Christian Passover* book we see how much the Passover is related to the covenants with Abraham, and how many times in the New Testament it goes back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob over and over again. There's a reason for that.

"...to grant us *that*, being saved from *the* hand of our enemies, we might serve Him without fear, *walking* in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our lives. And you, little child, shall be called *the* prophet of *the* Highest..." (vs 73-76). Jesus said that there was 'no man greater than John the Baptist'—prophet of the Highest! That's quite a calling.

“...for you shall go before *the* face of *the* Lord, to prepare His ways; to give *the* knowledge of salvation to His people by *the* remission of their sins, through *the* deep inner compassions of our God; in which *the* dayspring from on high has visited us, to shine upon those who are sitting in darkness and in *the* shadow of death, to direct our feet into *the* way of peace.’ And the little child grew and was strengthened in spirit; and he was in the wilderness until *the* day of his appearing to Israel” (vs 76-80).

Currently there are a lot of people who believe that John the Baptist went to the Essene community where the Cumron caves are. I do not think so. I believe this: Since he was specially chosen by God, I feel that he was specially taught by God, just as Jesus was. He was prepared by studying the Scriptures. God also had to give him whatever he needed in way of visions and understanding to know what he was going to do. He was in the desert. It doesn't say he was in the Cumron community. It doesn't say he was with the Essenes. The more that they find out about the Essenes, the more that they understand that they had a Gospel of hate. If you weren't with them you were an enemy.

Of course, the whole Gospel of Christ is one of repentance, forgiveness, mercy and kindness—not one of hatred. This is why there had to be a separation from Judaism and the Gospel of Christ. Let's go back to Matt. 3 and let's see how this separation began right from the beginning of the preaching of John the Baptist with his ministry of repentance to believe on the one who should follow after him.

We'll see later that John the Baptist was Elijah, there's going to be, I believe, another Elijah at the end-time that's going to come in the same way that John the Baptist did. I personally feel that he is going to be the one who is going to minister to the children of Israel—those in the Near East—who come to repentance as a result of the two witnesses: the high priest and the governor of Judea. Also, I think the two witnesses are going to do quite a bit in helping and inspiring the Churches of God, because I think God is going to pour out His Spirit upon the churches at that time in a way that He hasn't since the time of the beginning of the Church.

Matthew 3:1: “Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.’ For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘*The* voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of *the* Lord, make straight His paths”’” (vs 1-3). He had to know his mission; he had to know what he was doing. He had to know that he was preparing the way for Christ.

Let's see where this prophecy was given. We will see that not everything was fulfilled. What John the Baptist did was prepare the way for Christ, which was a partial fulfillment of Isa. 40. But when we read it, we're going to see there's a whole lot more that has to be fulfilled in Isaiah before it is complete.

Isaiah 40:1: “‘Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people,’ says your God. ‘Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned...’” (vs 1-2). When you read the last verse of Matt. 23, when Jesus wept over Jerusalem and He knew that it was going to be destroyed, and He said, ‘I shall not speak to you again until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ And the warfare for Judah has been anything but completed. Look at Jerusalem right now. It's a constant warfare!

- Threat from without!
- Terrorists from within!
- Jew against Jew!
- Palestinian against Arab!
- Jordanians against the Palestinians!
- Iranians against all of them!

It's just sitting there as a big tinderbox, and whenever they get peace—temporarily over in Jerusalem—it's going to be so tenuous it's going to be most difficult indeed!

“...her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.’ A voice is calling out in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’” (vs 2-3). That's what John the Baptist did, right there.

Matthew 3:3: “...‘*The* voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of *the* Lord, make straight His paths.”’ Notice why this has to have end-time setting:

Isaiah 40:4: “‘Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’.... [but it's going to] ...A voice says, ‘Cry!’.... [this also tells us of the direct teaching of John the Baptist] ...And he said, ‘What shall I cry? “All flesh *is* grass, and all the beauty of it *is* as the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people *are* grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever”’” (vs 4-8). I'm sure that's part of John the Baptist's message in preaching repentance.

Verse 9: “Go up for yourself on the high mountain; O you that brings good tidings to Zion.

Lift up your voice with strength, O you who tell good tidings to Jerusalem; lift up, do not be afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’ That had to be Christ coming the first time. It has an application also the second time.

Verse 10: “Behold, the Lord GOD will come with a strong *hand*, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward *is* with Him, and His work before Him.... [then it talks about the Church]: ...He shall feed His flock like a shepherd...” (vs 10-11).

You can see how some of these prophecies are intertwined between the first coming and the second coming, and I believe in this case, between John the Baptist who was Elijah at that time and who is going to be the coming John the Baptist who will be an Elijah at the end.

Matthew 3:4: “Now, John himself wore a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather belt around his waist...” He was a Nazarite from birth. He drank no wine; ate no grapes; nothing from the fruit of the vine at all—period! He had this long hair, and I imagine he was a real tough looking person. Everyone knew this was a strange event that was taking place with this man out there doing that.

“...and his food was locusts and wild honey” (v 4). Regular locust you just pluck them out and their nice and crispy. They are clean to eat. That doesn’t mean that’s all he ate. I’m sure that was a major portion of what he ate.

Verse 5: “Then went out to him *those from* Jerusalem, and all Judea...” Remember all of these prophecies and all of the notoriety with his birth. Now they’re going out to see him in his ministry.

“...and all the country around the Jordan, and were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them...” (vs 5-7). Hooray! I’m glad you’re here; I’ve always wanted to baptize a priest. *No!* The separation began immediately! God wanted it to be known that Judaism was not going to be the foundation upon which the Gospel would be built.

What is the foundation to be built upon? *Christ!* {see sermon series: *Who was Jesus?*} Many people say Jesus was a Jew; Jesus was a Pharisee; all of His disciples were Pharisees, let’s go back to Pharisaic Judaism. When you start going back to Pharisaic Judaism you actually end up denying Christ because they do not believe that Christ was God before He became a human being in the flesh. They don’t tell you that right away.

“...‘*You* brood of vipers... [There was no love lost there—right?] ...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce

fruits worthy of repentance...” (vs 7-8). That’s what God wants: *repentance!* What he’s saying is that it doesn’t matter if you’re a Pharisee or a Sadducee or a scribe or whatever, you have to repent!

Verse 9: “And do not think to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham *for our father*’...” Now when the promise of Abraham comes to the world through Christ, it goes to all nations. God had a purpose with Israel down to the time of Christ, but when Christ died He extinguished the Old Covenant so that now the Word of God could go to the whole world. We’re going to see the conflict that this had with Judaism. Not only did preaching the Gospel conflict right there with Judaism with the disciples of Christ, but when it started going to different peoples and nations it created a monstrous conflict with Judaism, but also within the Church. Don’t rely on your *bloodline*.

Verse 9: “And do not think to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham *for our father*’... [Just put in there John 8 and read that.] ...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into *the fire*” (vs 9-10). What did Jesus say about trees? *You shall know them by their fruits!* Does a fig tree bring forth thistles? *No!* Do thistles bring forth grapes? *No!* It’s going to be cut down and cast into the fire.

Verse 11: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the one Who *is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the Holy Spirit*, and with fire.” That is referring to the Lake of Fire. So, this whole thing of Pentecostals saying the baptism of fire is no more than a demonic, satanic counterfeit of evil gibberish, saying it is baptism by fire. I guess there’s a famous saying, ‘Have you been baptized by fire?’ *NO!* You don’t want to be baptized by fire! Whenever I read that I think of this molten lava running down off Mt. Kilauea over there in Hawaii and that is a lake of fire. It turns you into ashes just instantly.

Verse 12: “Whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor... [What happens when you do that?] ...and will gather His wheat into the granary; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire.” No man is going to put it out! Put in your notes: Matt. 13—the sower sowing the wheat; the harvest and all the parables there.

Verse 13: “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I have need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?’ Then Jesus

answered and said to him, ‘You must permit *it* at this time; for in this manner it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted Him *to be baptized*. And after He was baptized, Jesus came up immediately out of the water...” (vs 13-16). This shows that it was deep water for a complete emersion.

“...and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And lo, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I have *great* delight’” (vs 16-17). John had that sign, knowing that this was the Son of God; knowing that this was the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29)—so John *knew* who Christ was without a doubt!

Let’s understand that John had second thoughts about that because some of the prophecies concerning Christ were that He would save them from their enemies. But he wasn’t raising up an army; he wasn’t doing some of the things that it says there of the prophecy, which I’m sure he read about himself and the coming of Christ. So, John was put into prison.

Matthew 11:1: “And it came to pass *that*, when Jesus had finished commanding His twelve disciples, He left there to teach and to preach in their cities. Now John, having heard in prison *of* the works of Christ, sent two of his disciples, saying to Him, ‘Are You the one Who is coming, or are we to look for another?’” (vs 1-3). This also tells us that God will accomplish things in ways where sometimes it doesn’t look like He’s doing what He said He would do. In particular at that time, because He was not doing everything that all the prophecies said that the Messiah would do. So, John had questions.

Verse 4: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and report to John what you hear and see: *The* blind receive sight, and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed, and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised, and *the* poor are evangelized. And blessed is everyone who shall not be offended in Me’” (vs 4-6). That was the only answer He gave.

Verse 7: “And as they were leaving, Jesus said to the multitudes concerning John, ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by *the* wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings’ houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and *one* more excellent than a prophet. For this is *he* of whom it is written, “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who shall prepare Your way before You.”’” (vs 7-10). Again, He quoted just that one verse, the same verse that John the Baptist quoted.

Verse 11: “Truly I say to you, there has not arisen among *those* born of women *anyone* greater than John the Baptist. But the one who *is* least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. For from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven is taken with a *great* struggle, and *the* zealous *ones* lay hold on it. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John’” (vs 11-13). And this is the stickler that most people don’t understand. Protestants read this and say, ‘Well, after John then, no law; no commandments; just love and feel good and everything is fine.’ NO! It doesn’t mean that!

Luke 16:14: “Now the Pharisees who were also covetous, heard all these things; and they ridiculed Him. And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify themselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination before God. The Law and the Prophets *were* until John; from that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone zealously strives to enter it. But **it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail**’” (vs 14-17).

He’s not doing away with the Law whatsoever. What He is saying here, very clearly, is that the standard of preaching until John the Baptist could be no higher than the Law and the Prophets; there was nothing greater than that. There was no greater word than the Law and the Prophets. Now John the Baptist comes and what is he doing? *He’s preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, repentance, and believing on the One Who was to come: Jesus!* Now there is a higher standard from which these things are preached. These are now preached with a higher standard of Christ, with the spiritual application, spiritual meaning.

- It *requires conversion*, not just circumcision
- It *requires complete dedication*

—not just being a citizen of Israel. The standard is a whole lot higher. Then He emphasizes that the law is not done away! Is not the Kingdom of God a higher standard than just the Law? *Yes, it is!* It requires total dedication!

Let’s see some things concerning what God was going to do as we get over to the time of the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost. Why did God start the Church at the temple on the Day of Pentecost?

1. The Law at Mt. Sinai was given on Pentecost!
2. The Holy Spirit was given at the temple on Pentecost!
  - Why the temple?
  - Why did not God choose Galilee?
  - Why not, as the Mormons say, that Jesus

came over and visited the Indians and the Mayan peninsula during His ministry and now the Gospel is preached from the Mayan Empire?

- Why should it begin at the temple?
- Why should it be in Jerusalem?

Let's understand that God, in fulfilling His prophecies, also followed through on the authority that He gave—did He not? Who was in charge of things concerning the religion to Israel? *The priests!* That's why John the Baptist was a son of a priest, so that it would come through the priesthood. That's very important to realize. God didn't start it over here completely like just having a group of people in the Ozarks and now they finally have their own religion. *No!* He started through John the Baptist who was a son of a priest and whose father worked at the temple and whose angel Gabriel came from God to speak to Zacharias and tell him that he would have a son. All of these things were done at the temple.

Here's the reason: We find at the dedication of the temple God put His presence there, His visible presence in the temple. You don't see God, but at this point He made it visible for everyone to see that God put His presence in the temple.

2-Chronicles 5:11: "And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the Holy *place* (for all the priests present were sanctified, and did not wait by course), and the Levitical singers—all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* clothed in white linen, and having cymbals and with harps and lyres—stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with silver trumpets... [this was really quite a tremendous noise that was going on there] ...it came to pass, as the trumpeters and the singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the silver trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, 'For He is good, for His steadfast love *endures* forever,' that the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God!" (vs 11-14).

That shows that the presence of God was right there in the temple. God showing that He had chosen Jerusalem; He had chosen the temple; He approved of it and put His presence in it. Then Solomon gave this prayer:

2-Chronicles 6:1: "Then Solomon said, 'The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. Now I have built a house for You to live in, and a place for Your dwelling forever.' And the

king turned around and blessed the whole congregation of Israel. And all the congregation of Israel stood. And he said, 'Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel Who has with His hands fulfilled that which He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, "From the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt I have not chosen any city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, so that My name might be there. Nor have I chosen any man to be a ruler over My people Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem, so that My name might be there, and now I have chosen David to be over My people Israel."' (vs 1-6).

We're also going to see when we come to Acts 2 that Peter mentions David on the Day of Pentecost. The links/connections are very important to show that this is coming from the true God.

Verse 7: "And it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. But the LORD said to David my father, 'Because it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well in that it was in your heart. But you shall not build the house. Now your son, who shall come forth out of your loins, shall build the house for My name.' And the LORD has performed His word that He has spoken, for I have risen up in place of David my father and am set on the throne of Israel as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And I have *caused* the ark *to be* placed in it, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with the children of Israel' (vs 7-11).

We will see why Christ told them what to do, and why He told them to do it. Let's understand the things that took place at the time leading up to the crucifixion. Great miracles were performed; Lazarus was raised from the death, which was a great and a fantastic notoriety. It was known everywhere. So much so that the priests said that when 'we kill Christ, we're going to kill Lazarus, too.' Christ was finally arrested, crucified, all the events that took place with that: the darkness, the earthquake, the graves opening up and those who, after Christ had risen from the death, came back alive and appeared to many in the city. There was this great tremendous thing that had taken place.

- the whole community was in great confusion
- the tomb was empty
- they could not produce the body
- the apostles were accused of taking His body and hiding it someplace

Even today, the Japanese say that their religion is based on Jesus because He came to Japan and died at 112-years-old, and that's how the Shinto religion

began. So much for fairytales.

All of these things had taken place. The soldiers were paid a great sum of money to say that the body was taken, but no one could answer the question: Where was the body? He was raised from the dead. The disciples saw Him for 40 days and 40 nights and He did tremendous miracles during that time. But the first time they really saw Him was here, and I want to follow this on, because this ties right into the very first chapter of the book of Acts:

Luke 24:35: “Then they related the things that had happened *to them* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Now, as they were telling these things, Jesus Himself stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace *be* to you.’” (vs 35-36). Here’s a good way to get very inspired. You can imagine that none of the apostles ever forgot these things.

Verse 37: “But they were terrified and filled with fear, thinking *that* they beheld a spirit [a demon]. Then He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I. Touch Me and see *for yourselves*; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see Me having.’” (vs 37-39). A demon cannot manifest itself to appear to have flesh and bones. That’s what it means there.

Verse 40: “And after saying this, He showed them *His* hands and *His* feet. But while they were still disbelieving and wondering for joy, He said to them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ Then they gave Him part of a broiled fish and a *piece* of honeycomb. And He took these *and* ate in their presence. And He said to them, ‘These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses... [Again, it goes back to the Word of God. What God does always follows the same trail: fulfills His Word, brings it to the conclusion that God wants.] ...and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (vs 40-45).

This is vitally important to understand, brethren. This is where people get wrapped up in Judaism. They begin knocking the New Testament and throwing it away because they say that the only way you can understand the Scriptures is to understand the Old Testament. Well, that’s exactly backward! The New Testament opens the Old Testament. Christ’s Spirit gives understanding of the Old Testament. Just like He did to His disciples here: He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. That’s why the New Testament becomes key and important when we go back and examine the things in the Old Testament.

Verse 46: “And said to them, ‘According as it is

written, it was necessary [obligatory] for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from *the* dead the third day. And in His name, repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (vs 46-47). Why? *Because*

- that’s where God put His name
- that’s where His Spirit was
- that’s where the temple was

It had to begin at Jerusalem!

Verse 48: “For you are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but remain in the city of Jerusalem until you have been clothed with power from on high.” (vs 48-49). Then He rose and went up into heaven.

Acts 1—you will see how this then begins the rest of the story. We will begin to see how that the preaching of the Gospel with the disciples and Judaism was in constant conflict. It had to start in Jerusalem, because if it started in any other country, the religious leaders could have said, ‘Look, this is from the gods of the Assyrians, or from the gods of India, or Mayan.’ It had to start in Jerusalem! There’s really quite a bit in here for us. You really get the feeling of it as you read, this is really quite exciting stuff.

Acts 1:1: “The first account I indeed have written, O Theophilus... [lover of God] ...concerning all things that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after giving command by *the* Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen; to whom also, by many infallible proofs, He presented Himself alive after He had suffered, being seen by them for forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God” (vs 1-3). He was not only seen of just the apostles, but we’re going to see that He was seen of 500 of the disciples.

(go to the next track)

1-Corinthians 15:1: “Now I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* Gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now standing; by which you are also being saved... [present tense] ...if you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you; otherwise you have believed in vain. For in the first place, I delivered to you what I also had received: that Christ died for our sins, **according to the Scriptures**; and that He was buried; and that He was raised the third day, **according to the Scriptures**” (vs 1-4)—must be New Testament Scripture.

When you talk about Jonah in the Old Testament—three days and three nights—there is no prophecy anywhere in Old Testament Scripture that says that Christ will be raised the third day. This has to be a reference to New Testament Scripture, which

means the Gospel was already written and they had it there to read.

Verse 5: And that He appeared to Cephas, *and* then to the twelve.... [Don't we have that in the Gospels? Isn't that Scripture? *Yes!*] ...Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time... [there were many witnesses] ...of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen sleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage” (vs 5-8). So, Christ manifested Himself to them for *40 days*; time of trial. It makes you wonder what were many of the infallible proofs that He showed them. I think one of them was walking through walls. Who could do that? The wounds in the hands and the feet. Those we know, but what were the other many infallible proofs? *I don't know!*

Acts 1:4: “And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem... [the emphasis is on Jerusalem for the starting of the preaching of the Gospel] ...but to ‘await the promise of the Father, which,’ *He said*, ‘you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.’ So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?’” (vs 4-6). Why would they ask that question? *Because every prophecy concerning the Messiah was to restore the Kingdom! And His answer? Don't worry, kids, it's 2,000 years down the road! NO! He didn't say that!*

Verse 7: “And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority... [God the Father is going to do it. They really didn't have too much of a clue until the book of Revelation was given. That's when they first began to understand, and not until then.] ...but you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth’” (vs 7-8).

Obviously, that would be way beyond their lifetime. The truth is, we only have one lifetime, so we better be zealous in this lifetime, because we don't know when the end will be.

Verse 9: “And after saying these things, *as* they were looking at *Him*, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Now while they were gazing intently up into heaven...” (vs 9-10). That would be a sight to see—wouldn't it? They didn't have such things as airplanes or helicopters or such things like we have today. To be standing there talking to Jesus and all of a sudden, ‘Goodbye’ and

up He goes! They're standing there looking.

“...as He was going up, two men in white apparel suddenly stood by them, who also said, ‘You men of Galilee, why do you stand *here* looking up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in exactly the same manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.’ Then they returned to Jerusalem from *the mountain* called Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, being *about* the distance of a Sabbath's journey” (vs 10-12).

We're going to notice several things here as we go along, and I want to emphasize a couple of these, because there have been some mistaken conclusions that have been drawn by some people promoting women preaching.

Verse 13: “And after entering *Jerusalem*, they went up into the upper chamber, where both Peter and James were staying; and John and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James, *the son of* Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Jude, *the brother of* James.” There were eleven apostles at this time; Judas had fallen. Let's understand something else that is important, which I can bring in at this point:

Go back and study the calling of all of the 12 apostles, 11 of them were from Galilee. They were basically Benjaminites. They spoke Greek; they wrote Greek; and as far as the religious establishment was concerned, they were unlearned and ignorant men, meaning they never went to any of the Pharisee schools, Sadducee schools, Essene schools. Christ called those who were basically secular men, removed from any of the religion of that time, to separate Judaism from the Gospel. That's why He did it.

Verse 14: “**All** these... [I want to emphasize ‘all’ because some try and make this include all the 120 that were there.] ...were steadfastly continuing with one accord in prayer and supplications, *together* with *the* women... [the *all* refers to the apostles; the *all* does not refer to the women] ...including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. And in those days, Peter stood up in *the* midst of the ...” (vs 14-15) and so forth. Then they chose Mathis. It shows how they did that, selecting him by lot.

Verse 22: “Beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which He was taken up from us, one of these shall become a witness with us of His resurrection.’.... [they had to select two who had been with them from the baptism of John all the way through] ...Then they put forth two: Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus; and Matthias” (vs 22-23).

Verse 26: “Then they cast their lots; and the

lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” Now they had 12.

Who were to be the witnesses. *The 12 apostles!* We saw in v 14: “All these...” and named them (v 13); the eleven. Now the ‘all’ would include the new one, the 12. That’s important.

Acts 2:1: “And when the day of *Pentecost*, the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled, they were **all** with one accord in the same place.” Which *all* were to preach? Were the women to preach? Were they to speak in tongues? Were all the 120 disciples to be witnesses in the same way that the apostles were? Why call the 12 apostles? ‘*All*’ refers to the 12 apostles, with *Matthis* added in to take the place of *Judas!*

Verse 2: “And suddenly *there* came from heaven... [I want you to see the parallel between 2-Chron. 5 and the Holy Spirit coming in the form of a cloud to fill the temple *and* the Holy Spirit coming to fill them with the Holy Spirit to preach.] ...a sound like *the* rushing of a powerful wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and sat upon each one of them” (vs 2-3). This is not literally fire, but just appeared as fire. God was manifesting it in a way so that it would also be a witness to the rest of the disciples that these 12 receive the Holy Spirit in a particular and special way.

Verse 4: “And they were **all**... [the apostles] ...filled with *the* Holy Spirit; and they began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them *the words* to proclaim.” It had to be the apostles doing the speaking. Were there more than just the 12 there at that time? *It doesn’t say, but if ‘all’ refers to the 12, there could be the 12 there without any reference to the rest of those who may have been in company with them!* It doesn’t mention the 120 here, so the *all* definitely refers to the 12 apostles. We can conclude that if the rest of the 120 were there, that they Holy Spirit came upon the apostles the visible way only. They were the ones who were to do the preaching.

Verse 5: “Now *there* were *many* Jews who were sojourning in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven”—because all the events leading up to it. I’m sure that God inspired many to come just for this Pentecost wanting to know what happened, hearing that Jesus was raised from the dead. They made a special effort to come.

Verse 6: “And when word of this went out, the multitude came together and were confounded, because each one heard them... [referring to the 12 apostles] ...speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Behold, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it *that* we hear each one in

our own language in which we were born?’.... [Then it lists all the nations where the Jews were scattered]: ...Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and those who inhabit Mesopotamia, and Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia” (vs 6-9)—all of the major countries around the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

How long was the appearance of the flame? *I don’t know!* I think it would be not too long. It would be during the time that they were gathered together in that one room. Then when they went out to preach, I think they were all amazed because they heard them speaking in their own language, not that they saw the appearance of a flame on their head. Later they even ridiculed saying, ‘What does this mean, are they drunk?’ I would say that others did not see the Holy Spirit in the form of flame upon them.

Verse 11: “...we hear them speaking in our own languages the great things of God.’ And they were all amazed and greatly perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others were mocking *and* saying, ‘They are full of new wine’” (vs 11-12). I would have to assume by that statement that the other people could not have seen the Holy Spirit in the form of a flame of fire sitting upon their heads. Otherwise, they may have had a different attitude.

Then Peter gets up and really starts speaking. I won’t go through the whole thing except to say that he really gave a tremendous sermon about how that Jesus was delivered up by those who were in charge. God raised Him from the dead. He talks about David (v 25).

“...concerning the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day” (v 29). He talks about how Jesus was raised up, and v 32: “...whereof we all are witnesses.” Peter then

- preached repentance
- receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit
- save yourselves from this untoward generation

Three thousand were baptized in that same day, and the Church really started off with a tremendous and fantastic boost. Then they all stayed at Jerusalem after Pentecost. How long after Pentecost? *I don’t know!* But they stayed there for a great deal of time. By some accounts, as we are going along, I think they stayed there hoping Christ would return if they were in Jerusalem, because that’s where Christ was to return.

Then we have the confrontation with Judaism beginning in Acts 3. This is a witness and a testimony to the priests, Judaism—the whole thing.



We're going to see how this builds and builds between here at this point and when Stephen is killed. It comes to a crescendo at the death of Stephen. Three thousand were baptized, but there were probably 40-50 thousand there; this was quite a witness. When it started, it wasn't done in a corner. It was done publicly, right out in the open before thousands and thousands of people.

Acts 3:1—we have a healing here that takes place: “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *which was* the ninth hour [3 pm]; and a certain man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried, whom they placed daily at the temple door which is called Beautiful, to beg alms from those who were going into the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. But Peter and John, intently observing him, said, ‘Look on us.’ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have; but what I do have, this I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, rise up and walk.’” (vs 1-6).

Notice again, a public thing! This is what you would say is notorious; it's right out in the open, there can be no doubt about it. This was one who was born lame and there can be no question about the fact that he was the man, because they put him there every day.

{Discussion about the time when the Holy Spirit was given that if there were women there with them, they certainly would have received the Holy Spirit, but not for witnessing and preaching. It was the apostles that received that. God certainly would not withhold the Holy Spirit from the women. After all that's the whole purpose of the Day of Pentecost so they would receive the Holy Spirit. We find no account of women preaching.}

There can't be any question about this miracle that was done, and we see quite a few things take place here as a result of it.

Verse 7: “Then taking him by the right hand, he raised *him* up; and immediately his feet and anklebones were strengthened. And leaping up, he stood and walked; and he entered into the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. Now all the people saw him walking and praising God” (vs 7-9). This was really quite a situation that took place.

Peter used this as an opportunity to preach Christ; preach repentance, v 16: “And through faith in His name, this *man* whom you see and know was made strong in His name; and the faith that *is* through Him gave this complete soundness to him in the presence of you all.”

Now comes the confrontation; here it

begins, Acts 4:1: “Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests and *the* captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being dismayed because they were teaching the people, and preaching through Jesus the resurrection from *the* dead” (vs 1-2). Why would they be especially grieved? *Because*:

- they paid 30 pieces of silver that He might be betrayed
- they paid lots of money to the guards to have them say that the disciples stole the body
- they didn't want to have anymore of this continue on

—and now it's completely backfiring in their face and it's coming up against them in such a way that it's going to be really quite a thing here.

Verse 3: “And they arrested them and put *them* in the hold [jail] until the morning; for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed, and the number of men was about five thousand” (vs 3-4). We're seeing a mass exodus from the 'religion' of Judaism to that of Christ. They're losing people by the thousands. The whole city was in a great uproar. This confrontation was really amazing!

Verse 5: “Now it came to pass in the morning *that* their rulers and elders and scribes were assembled together in Jerusalem... [brought them before the Sanhedrin] ...and Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander... [those who sentence Christ to death] ...and as many as were of *the* high priest's lineage. And after placing them in the midst [middle], they inquired, ‘By what power or in what name did you do this?’” (vs 5-7). Here is a witness, directly, to the rulers who crucified Him. This is a powerful witness.

Verse 8: “Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what *power* he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, *but* Whom God has raised from *the* dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole.... [quite a testimony; and it is Jesus Christ; and these were Galileans and they were speaking in Greek] ...This is the Stone that was **set at naught** by you, the builders... [you rejected] ...which has become the Head of *the* corner. And there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (vs 8-12). This ties right in with John 14:6—‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.’ No other way! He is the One!

Verse 13: “Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they

were unlettered and uninstructed men... [never having gone to any of their schools; no degrees in their hands] ...they were amazed; and they took note of them, that they had been with Jesus. Yet, seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they said nothing to oppose *them*" (vs 13-14). They could saying nothing against them. What are you going to say?

Verse 15: "But after commanding them to go outside the Sanhedrin... ['Ok, out of the chamber, we want to discuss this.'] ...they conferred with one another, saying, 'What shall we do to these men? For a remarkable miracle has indeed come to pass through them *and is* manifest to all those living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*... [Can't bribe the guards; can't buy your way out of this one; this is public, notorious, known everywhere.] ...But that it may spread no further among the people... [They were the ones who also had the authority to command.] ...let us warn them with a *severe* threat not to speak any more to anyone in this name.' And after summoning them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered *and* said to them, 'Whether it is right before God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge.'" (vs 15-19).

This is really getting at the heart and core the of the problem of Judaism. They figured that their word was greater than the Word of God. Here is the challenge:

"...you judge. For we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.' And after further threatening them... [That was really quite a raucous setting. Have you ever seen on television at the Knesset and they have their arguments and so forth, just picture that's what was going on right here, it's just like that.] ...they let them go, finding no means by which they might punish them, because of the people... [all the political consequences] ...for all were glorifying God on account of what had been done, because the man on whom this miraculous healing had been performed was over forty years *old*" (vs 19-22). So, they let them go, and they came back and thanked God, praised God, filled with joy and determination and they were praying, and then God added more of His Holy Spirit to them, to accomplish and to do more.

Verse 31: "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness." Brethren, that's what we need to ask God to help to come back to again, the same thing today.

- we don't need to have a gospel of apologetics
- we don't need to have a gospel of

psychology

- we don't need to have a gospel on all the social things that are going on

—but to preach "...the Word of God with boldness. And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul..." (vs 31-32). This must have been where there were a good number of the brethren. We know that there were at least 8,000 by that time, and probably many more. This is getting to be a big deal!

Verse 33: "And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." Then they pooled all of their resources together and it gives the account of it here, how they were all living in a community section there in Jerusalem. I would say that's what they were doing. It shows about Barnabus who was a Levite. He came and laid his money at the apostle's feet. We have the account of Ananias and Sapphira. We're going to see how this thing builds even more and more.

Acts 5:12: "And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch; and none of the others dared to join them, but the people magnified them" (vs 12-13). They were afraid; I guess between the miracles that were done and the threats of the religious leaders, it created some problems.

Verse 14: "And believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women), insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and* they were **all healed**" (vs 14-16).

It's almost like if you were Bill Clinton and you were at the Democratic National Convention and here were all of the delegates signing up for the Republican Party. That's about the closest analogy that I can draw.

Verse 17: "Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the* sect of the Sadducees; *and* they were filled with anger... [they were losing their power] ...And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the* public hold [prison]. But during the night an angel of *the* Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, 'Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.' And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught. Now, when the high priest and those with him came, they called together

the Sanhedrin...” (vs 17-21). Here’s a great huge meeting going on.

“...and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying, ‘We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.’ And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to. But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, ‘Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.’ Then the captain went with the officers *and* brought them without violence, so that they might not be stoned; for they feared the people” (vs 21-26). This is really a confrontation going on here, it’s something!

Verse 27: “And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man’s blood upon us.’” They were really enraged at this point.

Verse 29: “But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, ‘We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him.’ Now when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart*... [there’s the fight, right there] ...and took counsel to put them to death... [but God intervened]: ...But a certain man stood up, a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel by name, a teacher of the law *who was* honored by all the people, *and* commanded *that* the apostles be put out for a short while” (vs 29-34). Then Peter rehearsed several things about some of the rebellions that came along.

Verse 38—Gamaliel said: “And now I say to you, withdraw from these men... [let them alone] ...and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be from men, it will be overthrown; but **if it be from God, you do not have the power to overthrow it. Take heed**, lest you be found to be fighting even against God.’ And they were persuaded by him; and they called in the apostles *and*, after beating *them*... [they couldn’t just let them go, they had to beat them] ...commanded *them* not to speak in the name of Jesus; and they released them. Then they departed from *the* presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing *that*

they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and in the houses, they did not cease teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (vs 28-42). So, all it did was just cause it to grow and multiply even more.

We’ll see how the confrontation grows even more next time.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

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- 1) Luke 1:57-80
- 2) Matthew 3:1-3
- 3) Isaiah 40:1-3
- 4) Matthew 3:3
- 5) Isaiah 40:4-11
- 6) Matthew 3:4-17
- 7) Matthew 11:1-13
- 8) Luke 16:14-17
- 9) 2 Chronicles 5:11-14
- 10) 2 Chronicles 6:1-11
- 11) Luke 24:35-49
- 12) Acts 1:1-3
- 13) 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
- 14) Acts 1:4-15, 22-23, 26, 14
- 15) Acts 2:1-9, 11-12, 29, 32
- 16) Acts 3:1-9, 16
- 17) Acts 4:1-22, 31-33
- 18) Acts 5:12-34, 39-42

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- Matthew 23:39
- John 8
- Matthew 13
- John 1:29
- Acts 2:25
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