

# Church History - Session 1 (The Book of Acts 2)

by Edgar F. Parkyns

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*The sermon explores the early church's struggles with prejudice and its limitations, but ultimately highlights the sovereignty of God and His power to break through human barriers.*

**Duration:** 49:15

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Acts 9:3-5, Acts 11:25-26, Galatians 1:15-18, Ephesians 2:14

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Gentile Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts the story of Peter and Cornelius from the book of Acts in the Bible. Peter, a Jew, receives a vision from God three times, which he initially struggles to understand. Meanwhile, Cornelius, a Roman centurion, is also visited by an angel and sends messengers to invite Peter to his house. Peter eventually realizes that he is meant to go to Cornelius and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. He preaches about Jesus, emphasizing that God accepts all who hear Him and do His righteousness. As Peter speaks, the Holy Spirit falls upon Cornelius and his household, and they begin speaking in tongues and praising God. Peter is amazed and realizes that God has accepted the Gentiles into the faith.

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## Transcript

Thanks. And then they were come up out of the water. The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.

I would rather think there's a touch of the Holy Spirit now, wouldn't you? Praise the Lord. Went down into Africa, and the impact of his work has remained to this day. You know that, don't you? They're the vestiges of the Ethiopian missionary work to his own people, there, to this day.

And as for Philip, he had a free trip. Didn't have to pay the airlines anything. He was taken up to Azotus, about ten miles north.

Preached until he came to Sigiriya on the coast. So there, I'll have to tell my African brethren this, when the Lord turned from the Jews to the Gentile world, the first man who knew the divine fable was a black man. Glory.

Hallelujah. What fun it is to tell my Nigerian brethren that. And then chapter nine.

Saul comes from Tarsus in Asia. He is a son of Shem. Although he is a Jew, he is called to be the apostle, the chosen apostle, to the Gentiles.

He is the central figure in the trilogy. Poor fellow. He had a rough time after the stoning of Stephen.

He couldn't sleep much. Jesus said, it is hard for thee to kick against the goads. You know, he's had a rough time.

I imagine every time he went to sleep, or tried to, he saw the face of Stephen shining like an angel. And he remembers Stephen saying, I see heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And you can almost see a young Saul of Tarsus starting up from sleep and saying, never, it's a lie.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord, and those who have none other God before me. You can almost imagine the parasite violence with which he would protest against the forcing of the goads upon his spirit. No wonder he persecuted.

He wanted to wipe out every Christian in Jerusalem. And if there were any in hiding, they had to run. All who kept the apostles, of course, because they were so good at hiding.

Yes, he was on the road to Damascus. What a tremendous thing it was. Just when he had come in view of that great valley where Damascus lies like a gem in the midst of the desert.

Down where the great rivers of Anna and Papua are meeting. There is that city with its border of greenery. And just when he thought, I'll get them there, suddenly came the light from heaven.

The Old Testament shaken aglory, broken upon him in awesome terror. And he fell to the ground and he heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he asked the most unparasitic question that anybody could ever have asked. What nonsense for a well-taught young Pharisee who has sat at the feet of Gamaliel to say, who art thou Lord? Oh, it shows the ghost has been getting deep into him, doesn't it? He could never, never get out of his spirit.

The declaration of Stephen, I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Oh, he fought against it, fought against it, tried to expunge it from his memory by every means possible. But you know, the more you try to forget something, the more you remember it, don't you? Like the poor fellow who was told by the Indian Thakir, who was a bit of a faker, of a way to make gold.

And when he had sold all the apparatus to his victim, he said, now there's one thing you must be careful of when you're mixing up the mixture. Do not think of a green monkey. And every time the poor fellow took the stick to make the mixture, he thought of the green monkey.

So he never got any gold. And I've no doubt that the more Saul tried to forget the faith of Stephen, the more vividly it was photographed upon his spirit. I see Jesus.

Hence the question, who art thou Lord? Squeezed out of him under intense pleasure, the last thing he ever wanted to say. Don't tell Gamaliel. Who art thou Lord? I am Jesus.

Wonderful. Whom thou persecutest. And that great zealot, young zealot was broken, broken, broken utterly.

Hallelujah. Broken and blinded and smashed and matched. Oh, what a glorious thing it is to have a conversion in which you're totally broken all at once.

And if you weren't totally broken at conversion, then the Lord has it for you. Praise the Lord. He has to break us all before he can make us.

And sometimes he has to do it over and over again. But I have an idea that Paul had such a dosage that day, that he didn't need much working over after. Yes, there he was broken and led on to Damascus.

And there, dear old or young, as it may have been, Ananias was sent to him. And he said to the men who had been sent to persecute him, Brothers all, brothers all, the Lord, even Jesus, who appears to be here to be on the way, has sent me. And how does it go on? That thou mightest receive my sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been stale. He received sight for it arose and was baptized, strengthened. Amazing conversion.

After many days they sent him off to Jerusalem. Probably in the interval he spent those three years in the desert. At Jerusalem he tried to join the church there, which was now enjoying a certain amount of peace.

And they soon got rid of him. He was too hot. Why, if he had stayed there much longer, they would have given him persecution again.

So they sent him home, back to Tarsus. And then, that's the son of Shem. And then in chapter 10, the son of Japheth.

The first man was converted on the road that leads south from Jerusalem to the continent of Africa. The second man was converted on the road that leads northeast from Jerusalem towards the continent of Asia. The third man is to be converted at the port of Caesarea, where the ships that go to Europe come in.

Quite significant, isn't it? Each one on the outgoing route from Jerusalem. Peter is graciously chosen to be the agent. He at last has left Jerusalem.

And has increased the service of his ministry. Has got as far as Galilee, his own hometown. That's pretty good.

And on the coast as far as Joppa. And the further he gets away from Jerusalem, the more miracle power returns to him. Isn't that interesting? In fact, when he gets to Lydda, there's someone raised from the dead.

And at Joppa, he's really moving on. And then, he stays at the house of one Simon, a tanner. I used to have a tannery in my town.

Just a quarter of a mile away. I think they take more care chemically these days. But, tanneries have a bad reputation.

One's, what do you call them? One of those senses of smell? Old factory senses get slightly offended. Within a quarter of a mile of a tannery. And the Jews weren't very keen on that kind of work.

This fellow had his tannery by the sea, and I guess there are plenty of fish out there to pick up the effluents from the factory. And good old Peter, he stays with a rather low caste fellow. Really, you're at the bottom when you're running a tannery.

That's a Jew. He's on the rooftop, praying. From below are coming the sweet smells of a dinner being prepared, and the usual smells of a tannery.

He's on the rooftop, asleep. And lo and behold, the smells of the sale hymn become part of his vision. He sees a great sheet let down from heaven, and rising up anxiously to obey the command, rise, Peter, slay and eat, he finds to his horror that all the filthy creatures that are forbidden in the law are there, rearing at him over the edge of the sheet.

Pigs and tigers, frogs and snakes and whatnot, they're all there. Rise, Peter, says the angel with the utmost cheerfulness, slay and eat. And he is deeply religious and quite sharp, and says, not so, Lord, I've never touched anything common or unclean.

I'm a Jew, and I'm obedient to the law. And so he loses sight of the sheet. The same thing takes place three times.

And at the third time, when he's scratching his head and wondering what on earth the crippled repetition of such a dream means, there's a little group of people knocking at the door. For the Lord has already stirred the household of Cornelius the Santerian, and his messengers are there at the gate. And Peter, realizing that he has to do something in line with the vision, instead of retreating from the sight of Gentiles at the gate, welcomes them in, bless his heart, he is learning.

Alleluia. They travel together in good companionship. These servants of Cornelius and Peter and his friends make their journey.

It takes over two days to go north to Caesarea from Joppa. And they arrive at that Roman town and find Cornelius the captain of the Italian band. He's not just a common sergeant major, he's a real officer type.

He's a high class officer, especially being at Caesarea, the military capital of the whole area. And to this house Peter is conducted. See how deeply religious Cornelius is.

See how already he has turned aside, turned away from the many gods of Rome. He's interested in Jewish faith. He's fasting and praying and giving alms as a good proselyte of the gate.

Hungry for God. So favored of the Lord that an angel has appeared to him and said, Your alms and prayers have come up before God. And has already given him instruction.

See God working at both ends to arrange this meeting. When Peter comes in, Cornelius, bless his heart, who's always been used to have a hundred men saluting him, falls down at the feet of this smelly fisherman who's smelling the tannery where he's been living. Oh, the Romans were most particular.

They had baths every day, hot baths if possible. They, you know, they were really hot on sanitation. They didn't like to carry any D.O. Here comes Peter from the tannery.

And Cornelius falls down at his feet to worship him. And Peter took him by the hand, took him up saying, Stand up, I also am a man. They went in together and Peter began to apologize for being there.

He said, You know, it is unlawful for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation. Imagine a civil Jew speaking to this magnificent Roman officer in such condescending tones. But God has showed me that I shouldn't call any man common or unclean.

Therefore I came unto you without gain saying, as soon as I was sent forth, Why have you sent me? Cornelius told his tale. And then Peter began to preach and said, I see that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that heareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. Accepted in what sense? Accepted as worthy to hear the gospel and receive Jesus Christ.

Not accepted to salvation, but accepted as worthy to hear the gospel. And receive it. So Peter went on to preach and told in brief terms the coming of Christ and the baptism of John, the anointing of our Lord with the Holy Ghost in power, his healing and doing good, his death, that you slew him and hanged him on a tree, God raised him up and showed him openly to witnesses who were chosen, commanded us to preach to the people that it is he which is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and the dead.

I'm glad that Jesus is judge, aren't you? There are some questions about the judgment which puzzle us and almost cause us dismay, but one thing we do know, we know who the judge is. And he won't make any mistake, hallelujah, in truth and righteousness will he judge. Now when our Lord was giving Peter a part of his commission, he gave him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, do you remember that? I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

He gave him the power of the keys. Now I don't think Peter intended to use the keys at this point, because later on when he was explaining his misbehavior at Jerusalem, he said, while I yet began to speak, I was interrupted. That is, he had just got through introduction and point one, and the rest of his sermon was still in note form, and he never had a chance to preach it.

He was interrupted. But he was interrupted at the point where he inadvertently, I think, used the keys. The Holy Ghost was upon him, and he spoke words which, as a natural man, he wouldn't have spoken.

He said to him, that is to Jesus, give all the prophets witness that whosoever. He learned, he of the kingdom, believe it, he of the kingdom, on him shall receive remission of sins, the keys of the kingdom. And before he knew what had happened, the whole crowd of them were rushing into the kingdom.

Cornelius and all the like, Cornelius, that very respectable Roman officer, who had sat down in order with all his household tidily around him, and some of his military men too, who God hears listening carefully to the words of this Jewish fisherman. And Cornelius had introduced the speaker, and was sat down there, quite respectable, would never interrupt. But alas, he did interrupt.

He tried to keep quiet. But whosoever, that means me? Remission of sin? I've been praying for it for years. I can receive that? I do believe.

And all the glory of God broke in upon his soul. And the fountains of the great deep were released within him. And he felt the surgings of unutterable joy rising up within him.

My, I can imagine him holding the cross back and sort of keeping quiet. But it was too much. And he burst out in praise and tongues and prophecy.

And everybody else let go all at once, and the whole meeting was on fire. And God filled them with the Holy Ghost. Peter was amazed.

He hadn't intended to use the keys quite like that. He didn't know they were so eager. The Lord didn't even give him a chance to refer to the committee at Jerusalem.

They all came rushing in. And he looked at the company that was with him, and he was so bewildered. He said, well what can we do now? Who can forbid water that needs to be baptized? To receive the Holy Spirit as we did at the beginning.

And not only that, he was so overwhelmed that he actually ate food with Gentiles. Horrible breach of etiquette. When he got back to Jerusalem, and as yet that he did, he was up before the committee.

The whole church. Peter, we have heard that thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. Peter said, it wasn't my fault, I'll tell you how it happened.

And told his version in some detail. And he said, then I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water, but he baptized with the Holy Ghost. For as much then as God gave them the right gifts as he did to us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things they held their peace and glorified God saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Amazing discovery. Outstanding proclamation in the church at Jerusalem. Made, reluctantly made with surprise, but made with divine revelation.

Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Tremendous thing. So what did they do about it? They stayed there.

They came to a magnificent conclusion, but did nothing about it. Theory, but no practice. The commission which Jesus had given to the twelve to go to the uttermost house of the earth, they conveniently laid aside.

Well, the Lord of Glory didn't wait for them any longer. His purposes go on even when his best apostles don't move with him. He is not dependent on any man.

He is sovereign. He is Lord. Now, verse 19.

Those who were scattered abroad about the persecution of the Rose of Bethlehem travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word unto none but to the Jews only. Notice the prejudice. They had discovered that God has granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life, but still they won't act.

Even these who are scattered abroad are narrowed in their vision and they won't share the gospel with people like you and me. It's still to none but the Jews only. They moved to Cyprus, the island in the Mediterranean, lovely little island.

To Cyrene on the north coast of Africa and on to Antioch, that great wicked Gentile city where probably the prodigal son had gone in his heyday. And my, they're not going to preach this precious truth to anybody but Jews. They're not going to cast their pearls before swine, no fear.

Jesus told them not to. So why should they? And besides, you know, nobody's ever done it yet. Except one or two foul exceptions.

But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. And I guess they joined the ship as traders, you know, and were converted because they were Jewish traders. And they loved the Lord Jesus who had found them.

Oh, they were so glad to have found their Messiah. Their hearts were full of joy. But they didn't have time to be correctly instructed.

None but Jews, you know. To the Jew first, you know. Remember the rule.

Not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They hadn't heard all that. No one had had time to teach them.

They hadn't been to Jerusalem to be indoctrinated. All they had was the love of Jesus in their hearts. And when the ship touched at the coast and the port of Antioch, I've forgotten his name.

And they went up the Orontes Valley to the city. And they saw some people standing by and they said, Oh, we've had such a tremendous discovery. But he lived in our hearts.

And we want you to share him. We want you to know the salvation he brings. And the blessed touch of his spirit to change your life.

And the hand of the Lord was with them. Who were they? We don't even know their names. But the hand of the Lord was with them.

And a great multitude believed and turned to the Lord. While the apostles knew what they should do and weren't doing it. God raised up these non-entities to break open the Gentile world.

Hallelujah. Let me read it to you again. Some were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, actually the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them. And a great number believed and turned to the Lord. No one had commissioned them.

They had no titles. They weren't called even deacons. They'd never taken up the collection yet.

They hadn't been brought before the committee to see if they were worthy. All they had was the love of Jesus in their hearts. And the hand of the Lord was with them.

When they moved into the divine purposes without realizing it. Hallelujah. They say that the game of rugby football, which is the forefather of your American football, came about in this way.

Rugby school in England, about 1840 was, I've forgotten the exact year, was playing the old-fashioned game of soccer football with about 50 players on each side, as they played in those days. And the ball, which was badly misshapen. There was a strong wind blowing against the rugby team.

And every time they kicked the ball, it wobbled off in the wrong direction. And the wind was always carrying it away from the opposing goal. They got more and more frustrated and annoyed.

It was wet and rough. And one fellow, I've forgotten his name, was so stirred that he stooped down and picked up the ball and touched it under his arm and ran with it while the referee protested, ran with it to the opposing goal and pushed it down on the ground and cried, Goal! And everybody shouted, Goal! And the referee said, No, no! But the crowd won. The fellow broke the rules and changed the game forever.

Hallelujah. These men broke the rules, preaching the gospel none to none but the Jews. And they changed the game forever.

For the hand of the great referee was with them. And a great multitude turned to the Lord. Hallelujah.

They say that the church in Antioch rapidly reached the 50,000 mark. Praise the Lord. It was such a great revival that the news of it came 200 miles south to Jerusalem.

There's a Gentiles turning to the Lord up at Antioch. Peter, what shall we do? John, what do you think? Gentiles. Andrew, what do you think? Gentiles.

Well, you know, we are the twelve apostles who are going to sit on the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. You can't expect us to leave Jerusalem and go to Gentiles. But there's a fellow called Barnabas.

He's a big-hearted chap. He's half a Gentile anyway. He had property at Cyprus.

Let's send him up. And dear old Barnabas went away up north on that long and tiresome journey and reaching Antioch saw that great revival and saw that the hand of the Lord was with them. And when he came, he said, Now you must all be circumcised and become proper Jews and then you'll stand a chance of being saved.

No, not a bit of it. He was too big-hearted for that. Who when he came and had seen the grace of God was glad and exalted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Isn't that beautiful? For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and faith and much people was added to the Lord. He was such a good man that he knew his limitations. Happy the man who knows his limitations.

Happy the man who knows when a task is too big for him. And Barnabas realized that that task was too big. I think I'd better venture on a bit of geography at this point.

Antioch, Jerusalem. Now he needed help. And the obvious thing to do the obvious thing to do was to send down to Jerusalem.

Wasn't it to the apostles to say look here, I need some help. This revival is too big. But, sorry, so that I don't know much about these things.

Yes, the obvious thing to do would be to send down to Jerusalem and to the apostles and ask for help. After all there are twelve of them not doing much. Surely they can send someone to help him.

But, you know, he did not do that. He knew what kind of men were down there. No fear, he went exactly the opposite way.

Up to Tarsus. Now he didn't tell him to go. He didn't write down to the committee and say look, can I do this? No fear, he just went on.

Came up to Tarsus and found Saul who had been sent home because he made such a nuisance of himself. And he said, Brother Saul, I have a great revival on my hands in Antioch. Oh? What kind of revival, Barnabas? It's big.

Never seen anything like it. Far too big for me to handle. They not only need the gospel, they need teaching, Brother.

What sort of people are there? Is it in the synagogue? No fear. What sort of people then? Right, there's Jews and Gentiles and barbarians and Scythians and bond and free. Go on.

And they're all one in Christ Jesus. Brother, says Paul, that's what God has been showing me. In all this waiting time, that's the vision God has given me.

I'll come. Hallelujah. And Paul and Barnabas went down together.

He found him and brought him to Antioch. And for a whole year they assembled themselves with the church and taught much people. Wouldn't you have liked to have been there in those Bible studies when Paul was giving face-to-face some of the glorious contents of those epistles that have come down to us? My, what meetings they must have been.

Fresh and full and powerful. The Gentile world being on fire. What a contrast.

Jerusalem with its religion, Antioch with its prophecy and sin. But God was favouring Antioch in those days. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Not at Jerusalem. They didn't know what to call themselves. Peter, what shall we call ourselves? Well, brother, let's call ourselves Nazarenes.

After all, we did come from Nazareth, didn't we? Jesus did come from Nazareth, didn't he? Well, brother, I think we should call ourselves the Way. They didn't know what to call themselves. No, not for many years.

But up at Antioch, they knew. And how did they know it? Some people say it was, and some commentaries say it was because the Gentiles used it as a nickname, Christ's men. But the word kaleo, call, they were called Christians, probably implies that it was divine calling.

And that the Lord gave utterance in the assembly of the name he would have his people called. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Probably a divinely given name.

Kaleo. Divine calling. For was it not written in Isaiah that the Jews would leave their name as a curse, and God said, I will call my people by another name? And that name, Christian, has stuck, hasn't it, all down through the centuries.

And at Antioch, in that old Gentile city full of wickedness, the disciples were called Christians first. Acts 12 gives us a significant look at Jerusalem in time. And we find that for the second time in his life, Peter is in prison.

The persecution has increased again. Peter's in prison, and he's due to be brought out for death. But the Lord had promised Peter old age, hadn't he? When thou art old, another shall gird thee.

So, of course, Herod couldn't possibly kill him. And once again, the angel of the Lord brought Peter out of prison as at the first. But on the first occasion, in the days of great blessing, the angel had said to Peter and the apostles, go into the temple and preach the words of this life.

And you remember that Peter and the others had gone and proclaimed with great joy and power the gospel in the temple again in those early days, and the officials were confused. But now, this is later, after the great change. Notice what happens.

The angel brings him out of prison, he goes through the streets of Jerusalem, half in a dream, wondering whether he's dreaming or awake. When he understands that he is awake, he comes to the house where the prayer meeting is going on, knocks at the door. When Rhoda comes, he puts his fingers to his lips.

Tell them I'm here, Peter. When at last, their objections are overridden and they crowd to the gate, he keeps his fingers to his lips. I'm going away.

Uh oh. At last Peter realizes that Jerusalem is no longer the place of blessing. See how very definite the contrast is between Acts 4 and 5 and Acts 12.

In the meantime, at Antioch, there's a lovely prayer meeting going on, Acts 13, verse 1. A cosmopolitan prayer meeting. And perhaps we can find in the names given here, some of those men of Africa and Cyprus. Now there were in the church at Antioch certain prophets and teachers as Barnabas and Simeon that was called Niger.

He's a black man. Simeon called Niger black. Lucius of Cyrene, another African.

Malian, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch. He's an Edomite. And Saul.

So they are the leaders of the prayer meeting. They're a mixed bunch, aren't they? Africans, Edomites, Jews. Cosmopolitan prayer meeting.

And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. Already the Holy Spirit had spoken the calling in their hearts. Now he made it known in the church.

And from Antioch, the missionary movement started. Uh oh. Look.

Jesus had given them the opportunity of sending the gospel out from Jerusalem to the end of the earth. Beginning at Jerusalem, going to Samaria, and reaching to the ends of the earth. But because they had dallied and dallied and delayed, instead of from Jerusalem, the gospel went out to the rest of the world from Antioch.

That Gentile church. And from then on, Antioch was the center of the missionary movement of the New Testament. Do you see then how these insignificant men whose names we're not sure of are of greater importance, because they moved in God, than the apostles who were called but failed to move in God's timing.

There it is. We saw that Peter had begun to move a little bit in the right direction. But if you will turn to Galatians chapter 1 you will see how still they came, pathetically short of that calling of God in the gospel which had been given to them.

Galatians 1.15 When it pleased God, who separated me, Paul, from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me. I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, abode with him fifteen days.

Other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother. Then he says, Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and was unknown by faith unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they heard only that He which persecuted us in time past now preaches the faith which He once destroyed, and they glorified God in me.

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me. That is as recorded in Acts 15. And the reason he went up to Jerusalem was this.

He had gone into the Gentile cities, preaching first to the Jewish synagogues, and then when he was driven out, preaching to the Gentiles the glorious news of free and full salvation. But close behind his heels came men who professed at any rate to come from Jerusalem, who got hold of his converts and said, We congratulate you on being converted to God and putting away your idols. But if you're to be really saved there's something more to do than just to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

You must be circumcised or else you're not in. They have their followers to this day, haven't they? People who want to add something to the gospel. This kind of thing comes on in all sorts of guises.

Someone comes on with what is called a new revelation, and says you've got to do it our way or else you're not in. And they follow close on the heels of a revival movement, and they disrupt, discourage and destroy, and lead away disciples after themselves. They zealously exclude you, that you might affect them.

Watch it. There's plenty of it going on, and here it was in Galatia. And as Paul found that not only was persecution led by Jews, but his gospel work was being hindered and disrupted and almost disannulled by these teachers who came along with their additions to the gospel.

Keep it simple, stupid. And he determined to track it down, and so after 14 years of preaching, 17 years after his conversion, he came back to Jerusalem. And I guess that's the first time the church of Jerusalem found out that they were to be called Christians.

And so he tells about that, and this is what he recalls. He says that neither Titus, oh, he says, I went up by revelation and communicated unto them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles privately to them that were of reputation, lest by any means I should run or had run in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised, and that because of false brethren unawares brought in who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bondage to whom we faced by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

But of those who seem to be somewhat whatsoever they were, it make it no matter to me, God accepteth no man's person, for they who seem to be somewhat incumbrance added nothing to me. But contrarywise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me as of the circumcision was to Peter, for he that wrought effectively in Peter to be a positive of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles, when James and Cephas and John who seemed to be pillars perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship that we should go to the heathen and they unto the circumcision. Still playing the game in the old narrow-minded way.

See that? Still to the Jews only. Isn't that a pathetic situation? When Jesus has said, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, their old prejudices still limited them. But worse was to follow.

When Peter was come to Antioch I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed. How's that for incannability? For before that certain came from James he did eat with the Gentiles but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissemination.

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all if thou being a Jew livest not for the manner of Gentiles and not as do the Jews, why comparest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews we who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles knowing that the man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. I think you can understand that passage.

Peter had come up to Antioch with a good heart but not a whole heart. He came up saying well God has received these Gentiles, I'll go and really have fellowship with them as the Lord showed me in that vision and he began to mingle with them, to share their meal time together and break bread together and minister among them and treat them as brethren but then from the Jerusalem church came other brethren who were closely associated with James the Lord's brother, who was a very strict man and when Peter saw them coming into the meeting he got scared he thought I'll be brought up before the committee again for eating with Gentiles and so he withdrew and the others said what happened to Peter he's not with us where's he gone oh Peter is only with the Jews he doesn't mix with the others anymore Barnabas said is that right perhaps we're doing wrong perhaps we ought to withdraw too, perhaps we've gone too far and even Barnabas who was the pioneer of that work drew back until Paul had to stand forward and rebuke Peter publicly in order to establish the truth well there it is written in the book I wonder if the twelve ever recovered I hope they did but not in the pages of Holy Lit you'll find that John did, John had a glorious ministry for the Gentiles at Ephesus but Peter even in his epistles is still writing to the strangers scattered abroad, that is to the Jews of dispersion, he's forfeited the blessed ministry that God intended for him isn't that tragic and Paul and others like him had to carry it forward so even Acts shows us that in the early church there was not only success, there was failure drawing back from the glorious vision that the Lord would have had his church possess drawing back from that free glad outreach that goes to the host forever in the name of Jesus and if corruption was already attacking some of the highest and best in the early church is it to be wondered at that in the long years of church history which we shall be looking at we shall see corruption coming in down through the years marring and almost destroying the purity of the gospel which Jesus died to give to his needy world we shall see thank you for listening

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