

## “THE CHURCH WHICH WAS AT JERUSALEM”

### INTRODUCTION

- A. *“The church which was at Jerusalem”* (Acts 8:1) is the first church we read of in the New Testament
- B. It fulfilled a number of prophecies.
- C. Being the first church, and the object of prophecy, *“the church which was at Jerusalem,”* serves as the model church in every respect.

### I. THE PROPHESED CHURCH

#### A. **Isaiah 2:2-3**

Hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed that *“in the latter days,”* *“the Lord’s house”* would *“be established,”* and *“the word of the Lord”* would *“go forth”* *“from Jerusalem”*.

#### 1. **Hebrews 1:1-2**

*“These”* are the *“last days.”*

#### 2. **Acts 2:16-18**

Preaching on the day of Pentecost, following the ascension of Christ, the apostle Peter declared the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-32) concerning *“the last days”*.

#### 3. **1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:15**

*“The house of God”* – a.k.a. *“the Lord’s house”* – is *“the church of the living God”*.

#### 4. **Zechariah 8:3**

Jerusalem is the *“mountain of the Lord”*.

#### 5. **Zechariah 1:16**

God was clear about where His house would be established.

#### 6. **Luke 24:44-53**

Immediately prior to His return to heaven, Christ opened the understanding of His apostles.

- a. He informed them that they were to preach about Him, *“beginning at Jerusalem”* (47).
- b. He ordered them to wait in that city until they were endowed with God’s power (49).
- c. The apostles were faithful to that command (52-53).

**B. Daniel 2:26-45**

Daniel interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, to mean that during the rule of the fourth world empire from Babylonia, an eternal kingdom, indestructible, and divine in origin would be established.

1. The order of the empires:
  - a. The Babylonian Empire which was succeeded by...
  - b. The Medo-Persian Empire which was conquered by...
  - c. The Greek Empire which was eventually replaced by...
  - d. The Roman Empire.
2. When Daniel prophesied that *“in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed”* he spoke of the Caesars, the emperors of Rome.

**a. Luke 2:1**

Caesar Augustus ordered the census which took Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem when Jesus was born.

**b. Luke 3:1**

Tiberius Caesar was ruling when John began preaching about Jesus.

**c. Acts 11:28**

During the reign of Claudius Caesar, a worldwide famine took place, which Agabus foretold.

**C. Mark 1:14-15**

During His days on earth, Jesus went about saying that the kingdom was soon to come.

1. **Mark 9:1**

He once told the people of His day that the Kingdom of God would be ushered in *“with power”* within their own lifetime.

2. **Acts 1:1-12**

The Lord informed His apostles that their power would come when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

D. **Acts 2:1-39**

1. Jerusalem was the setting as these events unfolded (**1:12; 2:5**).

a. *“For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem”* (**Isaiah 2:3b**).

b. *“Beginning at Jerusalem”* (**Luke 24:47**).

c. *“Tarry in the city of Jerusalem”* (**Luke 24:49**).

d. *“He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem”* (**Acts 1:4**).

e. *“You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem”* (**Acts 1:8**).

2. The Holy Spirit of God was poured out on the apostles of Christ at this time (**2:1-4, 33**).

a. *“I will pour out My spirit in those days”* (**Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18**).

b. *“The kingdom of God”* would present itself *“with power”* (**Mark 9:1**).

c. *“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you”* (**Acts 1:8**).

d. *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high”* (**Luke 24:49**).

e. *“You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now”* (**Acts 1:5**).

3. The message presented by the apostles in Jerusalem that day was heard by “men from every nation under heaven” (2:5-12).
  - a. “And all nations shall flow into it” (Isaiah 2:2-3).
  - b. “Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord...’” (Micah 4:2).
  - c. “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).
  - d. “You shall be witnesses to Me... to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
  
4. The message pertained to that which Christ had instructed them to preach (2:36-38).
  - a. “That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name” (Luke 24:47).
  - b. **Acts 2:41, 47**  
 Membership in “the church which was at Jerusalem” was attained in baptism. The church today must maintain that same old Jerusalem gospel! Will you obey it?

## II. THE MODEL CHURCH

Being the first church, and the object of prophecy, “the church which was at Jerusalem” serves as the model church in every respect.

### A. Model of Respectability

1. **Acts 2:46-47<sub>a</sub>; 4:21; 5:13<sub>b</sub>**

Though this church would later see persecution of the worst variety, it nevertheless commanded the respect of the community.

2. **Matthew 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:11-12**

Christians are required to be the type of people whose godly deeds prompt the interest of outsiders to the gospel.

### B. Model of Happiness

1. **Acts 2:46**

Contentment characterized the first Christians as they gathered in one another's homes to share their meals.

2. **Luke 11:3**

When God fulfills our requests for our daily food, we should receive it with gladness.

3. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:22, 34**

The home, not the church, is the appropriate setting for such a social occasion as the common meal. We must emphasize that churches should not intrude into the work of the home in this regard.

Nevertheless, members should gladly welcome opportunities to enjoy meals together.

**C. Model of Zeal**

1. **Acts 2:46**

The zeal of the church at Jerusalem is seen in that they met on a daily basis. While some aspects of worship are scripturally limited to the first day of the week, namely the Lord's Supper (**Acts 20:7**) and the collection (**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:1-2**), we acknowledge the precedent of the early church in meeting throughout the week.

2. **Hebrews 3:12-13**

We must encourage one another on a daily basis.

**D. Model of Unity in Purpose**

1. **Acts 2:46; 4:32**

They were "*with one accord*" and were "*of one heart and soul*".

2. **Romans 15:5-6; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:10**

Like-mindedness is repeatedly called for in scripture.

**E. Model of Prayerfulness**

1. **Acts 4:24**

*"Raised their voice to God with one accord."*

2. **Acts 12:5**  
*“Constant prayer offered to God... by the church.”*
3. **Acts 12:12**  
*“Many were gathered together praying.”*

#### **F. Model of Doctrinal Unity**

1. **Acts 2:42**  
The church at Jerusalem found agreement in the steadfast teaching of the apostles.
2. **Ephesians 4:11-15**  
Likewise, the church today must agree in steadfastly proclaiming the apostles’ doctrine. Christ arranged the church in such a way that we might find unity in faith, and to avoid wavering.
  - a. **1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:6, 13, 16**  
The work of every preacher is to present the doctrine of Christ, in order to save!
  - b. **1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:7-9**  
Elders who busy themselves in presenting this doctrine deserve every degree of honor.
3. **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16**  
This doctrine must be derived from no other source than the scripture.

#### **G. Model of Generosity**

1. **Acts 2:44-45**  
They *“had all things in common”*.
2. **Acts 4:32-37**  
To meet an enormous need at the time, these Christians surrendered their private property, giving it into a common treasury to enable the church to adequately address that need.

#### **H. Model of Perseverance**

1. **Acts 5:17-33**

The Sadducees plotted to kill the apostles.

2. **Acts 6:8-14; 7:54-8:3**

The Synagogue of the Freedmen and the Pharisees, including Saul of Tarsus, stoned Stephen to death.

3. **Acts 12:1-10, 18-19**

The government sought to do harm against the church, Herod ordering the execution of the apostles James and Peter; even killing the guards who were on duty when Peter escaped.

4. **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:12-19**

Christians must expect this kind of treatment.

**I. Model of Growth**

1. **Acts 2:40-41**

The church at Jerusalem grew when its preaching castigated popular trends as perverse.

2. **Acts 4:1-4**

The church at Jerusalem grew when it was severely persecuted.

3. **Acts 6:1-7**

The church at Jerusalem grew when internal problems were solved.

**J. Model of Organization**

1. **Acts 11:29-30; 15:1-6, 22-29**

The church at Jerusalem was duly organized, with elders overseeing finances and doctrine.

2. **Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5**

Paul saw to it that every church appointed elders. A church is considered lacking which does not have elders.

3. **Acts 20:28; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:1-4**

The work of elders is evident.

**K. Model of Evangelism**

1. **Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19-20**

Those in the church at Jerusalem who were scattered by persecution, proceeded to spread the gospel wherever they went.

2. **Acts 8:14; 11:21-23**

The church at Jerusalem saw fit to send preachers to churches elsewhere in order to strengthen them and continue to teach them.

**CONCLUSION**

**A. Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47**

Membership in *“the church which was at Jerusalem”* was attained in baptism.

**B. The church today must maintain that same old Jerusalem gospel!**