

Sunday September 2nd 2018
The Word of God
A Survey of the Bible – Part 11E
'Men and Brethren, What Shall We Do?'

1). Ge 1:26 ¶ *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion.*

Isa 43:1 ¶ *But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.*

Mt 3:16 *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*
4:1 ¶ *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

Immediately following His participation in John's baptism, as the Lord came from beneath the water, so the heavens were opened to Him and the Holy Spirit descended 'like a dove' and alighted upon Him and from the opened heaven came a voice saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'.

a). And the statement from the opened heaven that Jesus is God's Son not only takes us to 2 Samuel Chapter 7 and the Son promised to David – 2Sa 7:12 *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

Ac 2:29 *"Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to*

him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

But, this statement also makes abundantly clear that this Jesus is the Son whom God has chosen to be the One to rule over the earth from the heavens in the place of Satan. Jesus is the Son then to whom rulership is given. The only begotten firstborn Son; the One who is - Col 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn over all creation.***

b). Now, Jesus is also described as the 'second man', the 'last Adam' and as such His worthiness to take the scepter from Satan had to be tested, just as it was with the first man, the first Adam – and this testing is exactly what takes place following God's statement that Jesus is His chosen Son as He is led up by the Spirit into the wilderness.

c). Satan knew exactly who Jesus is and knew exactly what God's statement concerning 'Sonship' meant, hence the challenge to God's statement Mt 4:3 *Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God.....*

And knowing who Jesus is and His status as a firstborn Son explains the offer Satan makes of rulership but under his authority - Mt 4:8 *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."*

It really was not possible for 'the last Adam' to fail the test but nevertheless having proved Himself worthy and having been appointed by God to be the only begotten firstborn Son who will rule, the Lord does not immediately take the position that is rightfully His. Instead - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Instead of instantly ascending the throne in Satan's place the Lord went to God's adopted firstborn son, the unique creation in Jacob, the nation of Israel - Ex 4:22 *"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.*

The Lord went to Israel to offer this nation, God's other firstborn son, the opportunity to ascend the throne with Him, to rule with Him from the

Kingdom of the Heavens over the Gentile nations following Israel's national repentance, the earthly realm of the Kingdom already being theirs having been covenanted to David.

d). But as we know this offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens was rejected under the direction of Israel's religious leaders, and the King was crucified –one son had slain the other - all of course in complete keeping with the OT types and other related prophetic scriptures – Lu 24:25 *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"*

Then on the Day of Pentecost, following the Lord's ascension, the Holy Spirit was poured out, beginning to fulfill Joel's prophecy, firstly upon 120 of those who had embraced the baptism of John, having believed that Jesus is the Christ from before Calvary with a view to rulership in the Messianic Kingdom, as also seen in Joel's prophecy.

e). The Christ could no longer make the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to Israel as He was no longer in their midst, but on that Day of Pentecost He had brought into being a new, unique creation who could. And it was the embryonic Church, with a focus on Peter, who brought a message to God's adopted firstborn son concerning God's only begotten firstborn Son, the One God had appointed to rule in Satan's place. A message with a view to bringing the nation, as a whole, to repentance, to change their mind about Jesus, to enable the rulership offered to them to then take place –
Ac 2:14 ¶ *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 "For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:..... 30 "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that*

God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 ¶ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Here then is the call for Israel to change its mind concerning Jesus, the call for them to believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God alongside a re-offering of rulership with Him from the heavens over the Gentile nations of the earth, which had to continue to be made to those in possession of eternal life.

f). And if we remember that only firstborn sons will rule in God's Kingdom we will realize that there was no other firstborn son at this time to whom this offer could have been made, no other eternally saved people who could receive it. But the plan for an eternally saved third firstborn son, who would also be adopted, who would be able to rule, was already underway, having already been set out in the OT scriptures.

g). Although the message to the Jews in the Book of Acts is essentially the same as that in the Gospels there was now a difference with regards to the scope of its delivery.

h). We will remember this from the Gospels - Mt 10:5 ¶ *These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.*

Before the Lord's crucifixion the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens was exclusively to the Jews, to an eternally saved people already adopted as a firstborn son, but following the Lord's resurrection the parameters for the dissemination of the message changed - Ac 1:8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

It would still be to the Jew first, but now the Gentile world is brought into the picture with a view to receiving the message of the King and His Kingdom, something that would only be possible because of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection.

i). And although the opening chapters of the Book of Acts focus exclusively on Israel and the re-offer of the Kingdom to them, there would come a change of focus – from Jew to Gentile, from Israel to the Church, from Peter to Paul. As we shall see.

2). In Acts Chapter 3 Peter and John went up to the Temple at the 9th hour, the hour of prayer, where they encountered a man 'lame from his mother's womb', about 40 years, seeking alms at 'the gate which is called Beautiful' – Ac 3:6 *Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."* 7 *And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.* 8 *So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them--walking, leaping, and praising God.* 9 *And all the people saw him walking and praising God.* 10 *Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.* 11 *Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.*

And so, as we look at this supernatural sign of healing let's remind ourselves of two important things we have seen in past weeks. Firstly, let's recall the reason why supernatural signs were given to the Jews as shown to us in John's Gospel - Joh 20:30 *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written **that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life** [for the age to come] **in His name.***

And secondly, let's recall the Lord's response to John the Baptist, when John asked if Jesus really was the Christ or if they should look for another – Lu 7:22 *Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, **the lame walk**, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

The sign we have just seen at the beginning of Acts Chapter 3 is for the same purpose as the signs recorded in John's Gospel, attesting to Jesus' identity as seen in Luke - Ac 3:12 ¶ *So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 "But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 "and killed the Prince of life,*

whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16 "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

All the people who ran together to Solomon's porch, greatly amazed, would have witnessed the signs that Jesus did prior to His death as He offered them positions of rulership with Him in the heavens, they would have witnessed the events of the Day of Pentecost and heard Peter's message that day about the King and His Kingdom and Peter made clear to them on this occasion in Solomon's porch that it is the same Jesus who they 'delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate', 'the Prince of life' whom they killed, who had been raised from the dead, who was responsible for the lame man's healing – Ac 3:17 *"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. 22 "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 "Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 "You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 "To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."*

And because of Peter's preaching at Solomon's porch - Ac 4:4 *However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*

Some of the Jewish nation then on this particular day who had not previously believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God during the Lord's earthly ministry and had not changed their minds about Him through the events of

Pentecost, now believed through the sign of the healing of the lame man and Peter's words – they changed their minds.

a). And this 5000 were added to those who had believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God from before the Lord's death, they were added to those who believed on the Day of Pentecost following His ascension and they were part of the number the Lord was adding daily to those who were being saved from a perverse generation.

b). And as we will see there was a sharp contrast between the response of the 5000 and the nation's religious leaders to the sign given that day –
Ac 4:1 ¶ *Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.*

The Sadducees, one of Israel's prominent religious sects, denied resurrection and so were more intent it would seem on preserving their belief system than viewing the evidence before their eyes - Ac 4:5 ¶ *And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 "let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

Peter, 'filled with the Holy Spirit' is very direct in his address to the religious leaders, the same leaders remember who were responsible for rejecting and crucifying their King, the same leaders who had cried out 'away with Him, away with Him, we have no king but Caesar'. Peter's address brought these leaders face to face with what they had done with the possibility that they could acknowledge their fault and repent - Ac 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and*

untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 ¶ But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 "But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name." 18 And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

c). Even though the leaders recognized that ‘a notable miracle had been done’ and they could not deny it and even though they marveled that Peter and John were ‘uneducated and untrained men’ and yet spoke with such power, and although they realized that they had been with Jesus the One who had performed innumerable signs of a like nature in their presence, and despite the events of Pentecost and all that Jesus had said to them prior to His crucifixion, their reaction remained unchanged - *they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, severely threatening them.*

This of course Peter and John did not do and as a result there was an increased intensity and fervor that surrounded the preaching that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God - *Ac 5:14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. 17 ¶ Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, 18 and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.*

d). The supernatural signs being manifested during this time reached an unprecedented level giving validity to the messengers and veracity to the message that Jesus is the Christ - *Joh 14:12 ¶ "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.*

And along with this fever pitch surrounding the message was an escalation in the hostility of the religious leaders toward it, who were now 'filled with indignation' - Ac 5:27 *And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 "Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." 33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.*

Rather than seeing their sin and turning from it they reverted to their default reaction – kill them. Just as they had done with the Lord - Lu 22:2 *And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.*

e). And it is only through the intervention of Gamaliel, Paul's teacher, that Peter and John are spared - Ac 5:38 *"And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 "but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God." 40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

f). And as the teaching and preaching that Jesus is the Christ continued in Jerusalem there was a result that would have rocked the very core of the religious establishment causing them to turn back from Gamaliel's advice – Ac 6:7 *Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and **a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.***

The significance of this will have to wait until next time though – if the Lord is willing.

