

**Is the Church Still in Transition?, Part 1**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1369

This morning we're going to continue our message in the series we've been doing in the Charismatic movement and because I can't finish this particular theme this morning and I won't be able to next Lord's Day and the next one is Palm Sunday and the next one is Easter. I don't want to wait four weeks to finish the second half of the sermon. So I'm going to finish it tonight. This is a very vital portion of our study so I would just encourage you to be here tonight to get the second half. I hope that I'll interest you enough by the first half that you'll want to be here for the second half.

By way of introduction let me say this, that Paul gave Timothy a very basic definition of the ministry in 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 2. What Paul said was this, "Preach the word, be diligent in season and out of season - " and then I want you to notice these next two words " – reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." Notice the reproofing and the rebuking with doctrine aspect.

The ministry is not only positive, it is negative. I don't think we always like to admit that but it's true. It's just like raising a child. It's not all positive. It's a great deal negative as well. The same thing is true in raising spiritual children or administering in the church. An essential part of the ministry has to be the negative element. There must be reproof. There must be rebuke and it must be done on the basis of sound Biblical doctrine. That's essentially what we're endeavoring to do in our study here is to remind ourselves that there are things in the church that do not stand the test of true Biblical doctrine and to call your attention and the attention of those who have fallen into those errors to that fact.

In Acts chapter 20 verse 29 the apostle Paul is speaking to the elders of the assembly at Ephesus and he warns them in this fashion. "For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock - " that's outside people, outside wolves, outside false information, false leadership " - and of your own selves shall men arise." That's inside speaking perverse things to draw away disciplines after them. "Therefore watch and remember that for the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now brethren I commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up."

In other words, Paul says that he knows there will be false doctrine hitting from the outside. He knows there will be false doctrine arising from the inside and so he has for three years with tears warned those people. The ministry is not all positive. It is negative but the negative always has a positive in mind. It might all be summed up in the statement of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:15 when he said,

“We are to speak the truth in love.” It is not wrong. It is not unloving to speak what is true from the word of God. So we are endeavoring to speak the truth in love in this matter in order that we might call the believers in Christ to the attention of the word of God. It has two purposes to help the folks who may have fallen into these errors to see their errors and to help those of you who have not yet to make sure that you don't. So it is a loving ministry to call people to the truth of the word of God.

I want to show you an interesting passage that Rich Thompson and I were discussing this week in Proverbs chapter 27. I think it bears some weight on the approach that we're taking in the series although not directly on the series itself. You'll find a very helpful thought or two here from God that really will pull some of our thinking into perspective. There is commonly today this idea that if you speak against anything you're unloving and that loving people really just kind of keep it all quiet and the idea that if you really show love you just really don't make any issues. But I want you to notice something in verse 5 of Proverbs 27. “Open rebuke is better than secret love.” That's pretty clear, isn't it? “Open rebuke is better than secret love.”

Now let's assume that the open rebuke is from an enemy and that well could be the indication here because of the contrasts in the two verses. Since he contrasts in verse 6 friend and enemy it is possible that that is in his mind also in verse 5. So he says the open rebuke of an enemy is better than the secret love of someone who claims to be a friend if the contrast carries through that verse. But the principle is clear. Open rebuke is better than secret love. I think we could even say that the open rebuke of an enemy is better than secret love from a friend. In other words, an enemy is better serving you when he tells you the truth than a friend who loves you but doesn't.

Now verse six follows it up. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” Right? “The kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” Now I want to give you just a little quick thought here. There are four kinds of relationships in that verse and I'll put them in the order that they're the best as indicated. Open love, that would be at the beginning of verse 6 where the friend loves you enough to say the truth, open love. The second best relationship is open rebuke, verse 5. “Open rebuke is better.” In other words, even an enemy who speaks the truth is better than the third one which is closed love, secret love, at the end of verse 5 and the worst one is closed rebuke, an enemy who won't tell you the truth. So the best thing is a friend who speaks the truth. The next best is an enemy who speaks the truth. The next best is a friend who won't speak the truth and the worst is an enemy who won't speak the truth. But did you notice the two best are those who speak the truth? That's the point and that's what I'm trying to do is speak the truth as the word of God indicates it. To be accused of not being loving is I think from the Biblical viewpoint the opposite of what God is saying here.

In Leviticus chapter 19 – you don't need to look it up but it says this – “You shall not hate - ” I think it's verse 17 or 18 “ – you shall not hate your fellow countrymen in your heart.” “You shall not hate your fellow countrymen in your heart. You may surely reprove your neighbor but shall not incur sin because of him. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” So you don't hate your neighbor. You may

reprove your neighbor but don't let it deteriorate into hatred because you are to love. So the point of the summation is loving reproof is what God is after. Love really does reprove. If you love your child what will you do? Reprove your child, discipline your child. The same is true.

So again, this morning, as we approach the thought of what are the errors of the Charismatic movement it is with a sense of Biblical reproof that we do so which is always couched in love. Now we've been looking at several elements of the movement that we felt needed to be discussed, the issue of revelation, the issue of interpretation and last time, the issue of apostolic uniqueness. This morning we're coming to a fourth, the issue of historical transition; the issue of historical transition. I'm glad to say that I have received a commitment from a publisher to publish this material in a book and if the Lord wills and everything goes well it'll be available to have in your hand by January. There are others who feel that these themes are Biblical and need to be published.

But the issue of historical transition is very important. Charismatic teaching finds its core in the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts is a book of historical transition. So when I talk about the issue of historical transition we are going immediately to the Book of Acts. You can do that right now if you will. The second chapter is a good place to just kind of rest for a second, Acts 2. Now you're going to find this to be another one of those messages that's going to make you think. But you know what is so exciting to me? I've been in Seattle the last couple of days. I flew up Friday and flew back and spoke to pastors three or four times. What is really exciting to me is that they all ask me the same thing, "How come you can talk for such a long time and teach theology and people keep coming?" I just say, "I haven't got any idea but they do. It's exciting." Really I'm just thrilled that you have this kind of an appetite for the things of the word of God. It's a challenge to my heart and believe me, it's becoming a challenge to the hearts of pastors all over America to know that places in this country where people are really teaching the deep things of God that the Spirit wants to reveal to His people and the people are really eating it up. It's exciting. I just say that because you're wonderful and I love you and I want you to know that.

Acts chapter 2 verse 4 is a place that we have to start in discussing historical transition. It says this, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues - " or languages literally " – as the Spirit gave them utterance." Now that is a very famous verse today because of the implications in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. I wanted you to know that this is the core truth in the New Testament for the Pentecostal or Charismatic person. This is it. Acts 2:4 is home plate. It is the touch stone. It is the launching pad. It is the base of operation. It is the headquarters. This is where it all begins. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages that the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now Pentecostals and Charismatics teach. This has only been true since the 1900 but this is where their doctrine comes from. They teach that the Christian receives the Holy Spirit at conversion in a limited way, in a less than full way. But later on at a subsequent time in a subsequent experience the

Christian receives the fullness of the Spirit and they call it being baptized with the Spirit. Now when this second and subsequent thing occurs the person is supernaturally and experientially and in full consciousness submerged and immersed in the power of the Spirit of God. This occasion is accompanied by speaking in tongues and results in power that even can do the miraculous. Now that is a basic, distinctive doctrine of Charismatism. The doctrine that you are saved here and you receive the Spirit in a limited way but subsequently at some time interval later in life and for some of us it never happens because we never get to baptism but those who seek it will get it and it is attended by speaking in tongues and the release of power even extending to the miraculous.

In the issue of Pentecost, issue number 34 in December of 1955 which will tell you that this is at least a 20 year old doctrine they've had Donald Gee who is a leading Pentecostal said, "What is the unique thing that makes the Pentecostal movement a definitely separate entity? It is the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives us utterance." In other words, he is saying that the doctrine of salvation here and subsequent baptism of the Spirit with tongues is the definite definition of Pentecostalism. This is echoed today in everything they write. I would like you to think of it in terms of the doctrine of subsequence. Salvation here and subsequent to salvation or at a later time the baptism of the Spirit.

Bruner says in his Theology of the Holy Spirit, "Pentecostals believe that the Spirit has baptized every believer into Christ but that Christ has not yet baptized every believer into the Spirit." They say that this is something the Christian must seek. Now Bruner summarizes this entire thing in this paragraph. "The most important characteristics of the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism of the Spirit are, one, that the event is usually distinct from and subsequent to the new birth, two, that it is evidenced initially by the sign of speaking in other tongues and, three, that it must be earnestly sought." So the three elements of the Pentecostal or Charismatic doctrine are, one, the baptism of the Spirit is subsequent to the new birth, that is at a later time, two, that it's evidence is speaking in tongues, three, that it's requirements are seeking it. So we would say subsequence, evidence and requirements sum up their specific doctrine.

Now you know in other areas of theology they really are not that distinct, just in this area. Of course the idea that once this happens the ramifications are all miraculous. Now the doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit as they discuss it we have covered in great detail in our tape on 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. I would just invite you to go back to that if you want to get a full understanding of what the Bible is really saying about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But let's deal with their view of it, their understanding of it and try to show you how they try to support it with what difficulty that effort takes place.

There's only one source for this Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence and evidence and requirements and that is the Book of Acts. The teaching of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 13 is useless to them because it doesn't relate at all to what they're claiming. The baptism

of the Spirit that occurs in 1 Corinthians 12 simply says, "The Spirit baptizes every believer into the body of Christ at the point of salvation." There is no indication of seeking it. There is no subsequence. There is no evidence and there's no requirements. So they can't use that one. Also they are unable to use 1 Corinthians 14 to discuss the ideas of subsequence, evidence and requirements because there is absolutely nothing in the entire Corinthian letter that says anything about how a Christian receives the Holy Spirit or the power of the Spirit. It only describes the abuses of such spiritual gifts. So the only place left to support this doctrine of subsequence, evidence and requirements that it comes later accompanied with tongues and must be sought is the Book of Acts. This is where they try to establish that. They are the first to admit and you can find this in their own writings that Acts is the only place where this can be supported.

You say, "Well MacArthur, for goodness sakes, what's wrong with Acts?" Well there's nothing wrong with Acts but I want to take you in there and see if in fact it is supported there because this is the only place really that they have to look. The gospels and the epistles have no such records so Acts is very crucial to them and they have based frankly the entire movement on the Book of Acts. They conclude this. Now listen. They conclude this. This is the basic conclusion. Studying the Book of Acts they conclude, one, that in Acts 2 the reception of the Spirit came but the people had been saved long before. So there's the subsequence. That it came with tongues, there's the evidence. The one missing ingredient is there's no requirements. They can't find that anywhere in Acts. Then they go to Acts 8 and they say in Acts 8 they received the Holy Spirit and there's the evidence, tongues.

But what's interesting and of course they had been saved earlier under Philip. So they say, "Look, Acts 2 you've got saved people." They probably were saved – and we'll talk about that tonight – earlier. They weren't baptized in the Spirit until later. In Acts 8 they were saved earlier but they weren't baptized until later. So they say there's the doctrine of subsequence. Then they go to chapter 10 and they say, "You see? When the Spirit of God descended upon Cornelius and he was baptized by the Spirit tongues occurred. There it is again. Then in Acts 19 the disciples of John the Baptist come, they're baptized in the Spirit and tongues occur." So they say, "What you have there is subsequence and evidence."

Let me show you something interesting. Think with me. You want to know what's interesting? You take those four things, Acts 2, 8, 10 and 19. In Acts 2 and 8 you have subsequence. That's right, you do. In Acts 10, no subsequence. They were baptized as soon as they believe. In Acts 19, no subsequence. They were baptized as soon as they believed. So to say that it's normative for all Christians to have that subsequence can't even be defended from the Book of Acts. That is only true of Acts 2 and Acts 8, not of Acts 10 and Acts 19. They say on the other hand, evidence, they spoke in tongues. You want to hear something interesting? They spoke in Acts 2, in Acts 10 and Acts 19. There's no record of tongues in Acts 8. Thirdly, as far as requirements go they didn't seek in 2, they didn't seek in 8, they didn't seek in 10 and they didn't seek in 19. So that is pure conjecture.

Now what am I saying? I'm saying that to say that the Book of Acts presents the normal pattern for receiving the Spirit is not even consistent in the Book of Acts let alone to say that that's the way it should be for every Christian, that we should be saved here, baptized later accompanied by tongues. Listen, that is so foreign to Christian theology that it wasn't even invented until 1900. Are we to believe that the whole church for 1800 years never experienced the power of the Holy Spirit? I would hate to think that that were true of Martin Luther and the reformers if they were acting in the flesh or without the fullness of the power of the Spirit. I think maybe we better go back and study history a little bit better.

But you see there is – that's what essentially they're saying. I hope you understand what I'm driving at. They are saying that the subsequence, evidence, requirements that they see in the Book of Acts are the normal for every Christian today when the fact of the matter is there's no even a real consistency of those things in the Book of Acts. That's because from chapter 2 of Acts to the end of the Book of Acts you have transitions taking place and things are changing even then.

Now there is a major error in this doctrine of theirs based on the misinterpretation of the Book of Acts. Now if you get this – boy, somebody said if you can get this in your head you've got it in a nutshell but if you can get this basically and get a good grasp on the concept of the interpretation of the Book of Acts you're really going to stand on some solid ground. I'm going to help you to do that this morning and tonight. Now it is true the Christians at Pentecost, chapter 2, the Samaritans, chapter 8, the Gentiles, chapter 10 received the Spirit and tongues followed and chapter 19. In some of those cases it was subsequent but it does not necessarily mean that because that happened once in history that it is to become the standard and the pattern and the absolute for every other Christian who ever lives.

In fact I would add this. None of the passages, 2, 8, 10 or 19 that deal with this none of them ever makes a command that such an experience be had by anybody else, none ever makes a statement that it is normal and none ever suggests that it is to be sought. It is without editorial comment that the historical record is made. It would be a perfect place for the Holy Spirit to interject, "And this is the way it is yet to be," or, "And thus it should be with all of you in the ages to come," but it never says that. Rather every incidence is simply recorded, no application, no editorial comment. On to the next thing.

Now the key to the whole thing is to understand the issue of historical transition. The Book of Acts is a transitional book. I mean it really is a transitional book and by the time we're done you'll see what I mean. The period, for example, of the Old Testament gives way to the New Testament. The old covenant fades away, the new covenant comes. We go from the synagogue to the church, from law to grace, from Old Testament saints to New Testament saints, from a body of Jewish believers to the body of the church, Jew and Gentile. The middle wall is being broken down, Ephesians 2, and one new man is being made and there's some transition in there. The only thing you can take out of Acts

for absolute doctrine is that which is doctrinally confirmed elsewhere in the scripture.

Now let me illustrate. We know this is a unique period. We saw that in our last study, didn't we, when we discussed apostolic uniqueness. But let me give you some illustrations of the transitional nature of the Book of Acts. Turn to the third chapter. Now I want to show you the significance of the third chapter and to do that I just want you to listen to me for a minute and I want to remind you about some things that go way back to John the Baptist. Okay? John the Baptist arrived on the scene. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, right, announcing the Messiah. John the Baptist had a simple, short message. This was it, "Repent for the" what? "Kingdom is at hand." Okay?

John was saying to Jews and in fact in those days the Bible says that he was come only for the lost sheep of what? The house of Israel. So this is the Jewish Messiah and he comes. John is the forerunner. John says, "Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." It is imminent. It's now. It's going to happen. He's getting ready. He's preparing a people for the Lord. Some of the people, the messianic ones, the ones who had the great messianic anticipation and hope they flocked out to the Jordan where John was preaching and they were being baptized in a Jewish symbol of cleansing as they prepared their hearts for the coming of them Messiah who would set up his kingdom. They were the real remnant. They were kingdom people getting ready.

John was saying, "The kingdom is coming." The people were identifying with that and repenting and identifying with a cleansing of their heart by baptism in the Jewish custom of washing. He was preparing a people for the kingdom and then came the king. What was the message of Jesus? Repent for the kingdom is at hand. Same message. Read the Book of Matthew, the first 11 chapters. He's a king offering Israel a kingdom. This was the Jewish kingdom. Then in chapter 12 all of a sudden the terrible rejection. As soon as the rejection crystallizes in Matthew 12 in Matthew 13 you have the introduction of the church. All of a sudden a big change takes place, dramatic change. Chapter 16, Jesus pops out and says, "And I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Something's changing. Israel is being set aside. The church is being planned.

No more talk about Israel and the kingdom. Israel is rejected. Israel has been set aside and now there's something new, the church. You know what finally happened? The Jews went so far as to cry, "Crucify him, crucify him. We will not have this man to - " what? Reign over us. They didn't want the king. They didn't get the king. And it was over. After he arose from the dead, ascended into Heaven he founded his church. The issue of Israel was dead. The church was born.

But that's rather abrupt isn't it? Israel, bang, that's all over. The church, born. Yeah, it's a little too abrupt. If you look at Acts 3 I'll show you something that's really startling. It is to me and I never seen anybody treat it this way in this context but to me it is one of the most graphic illustrations of the transitional nature of the Book of Acts I've ever seen. Verse 12. Now remember this. This is after Pentecost. The church is born. The church is flourishing, 3,000 members added to the church. It's

rolling. The Passover has been turned in to the communion. It's a new dawn. It's a new day. It's a new age. The Spirit is there.

But look at this. This sounds like something out of Matthew chapter 8. It looks like we went backwards. "And when Peter saw it he answered the people, 'Ye men of Israel why marvel you at this?'" That is at the healing of the lame man. "Why look so earnestly on us as though by our own power or holiness we made this man walk. The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the God of our fathers." Stop right there. "Hey Peter, what are you doing here?" "Well I'm preaching a sermon to Israel." "Well Israel is a dead issue." Oh? I don't think Peter felt that way. Look at verse 17. "And now brethren - " now who is Peter's brethren? Jews. Look at verse 25. "You are still the sons of the prophets and the covenants which God made with our fathers saying to Abraham, 'And thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.'"

What is incredible here is that Peter is addressing the nation of Israel. Why does he address Israel as Israel, distinct from the church if the church has already been born and the only way that a Jew could be a part of God's kingdom would be to be in God's church? What is this uniqueness that he gives to Israel? Let me go a step further. Look at 13, Acts 3:13. He presents Jesus to Israel. "The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified his son Jesus whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let him go but you denied the holy one in the just and desired a murderer to be granted unto you and killed the Prince of Life whom God has raised from the dead of which we are witnesses."

Now what is he saying? He is saying, "I present to you Jesus, whom you have killed. He is the son of God. He is the holy one. He is the just one. He is the Prince of Life. He is the one God raised from the dead. We are witnesses to that." He is saying, "Hey folks, I want you to meet your Messiah, your God." He's presenting the king to Israel all over again.

Peter goes further in verse 17 and here he tells them that even though they rejected and crucified their own messiah, listen, they have not forfeited their opportunity to receive the kingdom. This is incredible. "And now brethren, I know that through ignorance you did as did also your rulers but those things which God before had shown by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffered he so fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out and the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord and he shall send Jesus Christ who before was preached to you whom the Heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the age began."

Now let me show you two things out of that. He says, "Repent and the kingdom will come." Verse 19, repent, your sins will be blotted out, the times of refreshing will come. Verse 21, the times of restitution of all things. Those are kingdom terms. Listen, Peter is actually saying, "There is still an opportunity to receive the kingdom but you must repent. The times of refreshing will come. Jesus, the



Messiah will be sent - " verse 20 " – he will send Jesus, Messiah." Christ is simply the Greek word for Messiah. "You can have your Messiah. You can have your kingdom if you'll repent." He confirmed the offer by referring to Moses in verse 22 and saying, "This is a fulfillment of the Mosaic promise that God would raise up a prophet like me. Him shall you hear."

Peter closes it out in verse 25 by saying, "Still, in spite of what you're done you are the sons of the prophets and the sons of the covenant." Now isn't that amazing? It's an amazing portion. You know what's going on? In Acts 2 the church is born and in Acts 3 Peter reoffers the kingdom to Israel. You say, "What's the deal MacArthur?" Well there is an overlap in the Book of Acts. That's all. God in his wonderful grace wanted the world to be sure about one fact, that the birth of the church did not mean the end of God's love for Israel. It just didn't. So there's the reoffer after the church just to make sure nobody misses the point.

But you know what's interesting for me? That's not normal for the rest of the church age. That's not normal. That's not the normative message of the rest of the church age. In fact if you read Romans you'll find out that Paul even says, "Israel has been set aside and for this time new branches have been - " what? "Grafted in." If you read Revelation there are many things that have to happen before the kingdom will ever come. Right? It can never come according to Romans 11 until the fullness of the Gentiles be fulfilled. So we can't be offering the kingdom of Israel yet because the church has to be fulfilled. The rapture has to happen. The tribulation has to happen. The second coming has to happen and then the kingdom.

But you see, the point is this, people. Acts is not teaching us what is to be normative for all the church age for every Christian. It's just telling us what happened historically in the transition. Do you see? Very important. If you want to know what's normative then read the epistles.

Listen to this. The theology of the transition is in the Book of Hebrews. The history of the transition is in the Book of Acts. THE result of the transition is in the epistles and once the transition was over the epistles declare what is normative for the church. Very important to understand that.

So here you have an amazing reoffer of the kingdom to Israel simply because there's an overlap. The old is fading rather than whacking to an end. There is an overlap. The writer of Hebrews gives us the theology. He says Moses and David and Joshua and all the priests are done and a new high priest, Christ, is instated and that's Hebrews 10. The law is gone and grace is here and the rules are gone and the in-dwelling spirit is here. That's Hebrews 7 and 8. And Israel, God's people, give way to the church. That's chapter 10 verse 24 and 25. And the old sacrificial system gives way to the one final offering. That's 10:14. You see the transitional theology is in Hebrews. The transitional history is in Acts and the result of it all is defined and clarified in the epistles.

So when you go to the Book of Acts, listen to me. It is history with theology as a limited corollary. It is not teaching in every page what is absolute for the church throughout all its history.

You see, a Charismatic would have no reason today to accept tongues and not to go around reoffering the kingdom to Israel and saying if Israel nationally will right now repent and turn to Jesus Christ the kingdom will be here. That isn't how it's going to happen, is it? We know how they're going to turn to Christ and it isn't going to be because the church offers them that opportunity. It's going to be during the tribulations. Zechariah even said, "When they look on him whom they have pierced," and it isn't going to be till the second half of the trib – I mean we know when that's going to happen and it is not normative today to be offering the kingdom to Israel.

So I want you to understand that this is a book of transition history with theology as a limited corollary and the only theology you can draw here is what is implied and substantiated elsewhere in scripture. It's got some great theology reinforced here and magnified and elucidated and illustrated but some of it is transition history and you can't make an absolute, positive point for all time out of it.

You see, Acts is very important as a transition because the transition was so hard. If God has just whacked off Israel and whacked off everything and hadn't done some special things to connect things together that just would have been devastating to Israel. It's bad enough the way the church has treated Jews throughout history, the way "Christianity" has treated Jews throughout history and God anticipated that and knew that he needed to make sure that he wasn't treating them the same way. So do you know that throughout the Book of Acts the church and Israel are so closely knit together that the Roman government thought that Christianity was a sect of Judaism? And in a way God wanted it to be that way because there was such an intrinsic connection.

Boy, you know going from Judaism to Christianity was not easy. If you were a Jew that was a way of life, I mean absolutely a way of life. Judaism was not a religion. It was a heritage. It was a culture, a life, a lover, a point of pride, a divine institution, a sense of identity. A Jewish city no matter how close in proximity it was to a Gentile people had its unusual identity. You never went into a Jewish town or Jewish village without feeling as if you were in another world. It's true today if you go to the Orthodox section of Jerusalem. Believe me especially if you go there on the Sabbath. They throw rocks at you. The streets and the buildings and the arrangements of the houses and the rules for municipal and religious life, the manners and the customs of the people, the home and the family, everything was in marked contrast to every other society. There was evidence everywhere and still is in many hearts of many Jewish people that theirs is not a religion. It is not a creed. It is not a pile of laws but it is a way of life.

By the time of Christ the Old Testament law had added to it ceremonies and rituals and customs and rules and codes and all kinds of things that never ended. Every day and every moment of life and every act of life was circumscribed and prescribed by either the scriptures, the town or the Mishnah or

unwritten rabbinical sayings. There was one culture, politics, society, religion were all one ball of wax. The whole thing was constantly propagated by indelible procedures of teaching children because the key to the whole thing was Deuteronomy 6:4 to 6, the Shema where they were told to teach it to their children.

The Jewish people struggle with every fiber of their being to hold all of this stuff up because that's how they got to Heaven. A sadder picture could scarcely be drawn than that of the dying rabbi, Johanan ben Zakkai, the former president of the Sanhedrin who lived at the time of the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. We read in the Talmud that when his disciples came to him on his deathbed he burst into tears. Of course they were astonished at such display and said, "How can the light of Israel have such fear of death?"

This is what he said, "If I were now to be brought before an earthly king who lives today and dies tomorrow, whose wrath and whose bonds are not everlasting and whose sentence of death even is not that to everlasting death, who can be assuaged by arguments or perhaps bought off by money I should tremble and weep. How much more reason have I when about to be led before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be he who liveth and abideth forever, who's chains are chains forevermore and whose sentence of death killeth forever, whom I cannot assuage with words nor bribe with money and not only so but there are before me two ways, one to paradise and the other to hell and I know not which of the two ways I shall have to go. How then shall I not shed tears?" All his life for that and then the fear that he hadn't made it.

The other angle would be the sayings of Rabbi Yehudah who was called Yehudah the Holy and when he died he lifted up both of his hands toward Heaven and declared that, "None of these fingers has ever broken a law of God." One man had fear and the other man had self-righteousness. That's how bound they were.

All of a sudden into this system of life comes somebody saying, "Hey everybody, that's all over now." Huh? "All you have to do is believe in the way." Jesus Christ. Well that was absolutely devastating to a Jew. This is colossal culture shock. So it wasn't easy to make a transition. You'd find that out if you study the Book of Hebrews. They were torn. Why even Peter was told to go preach to a Gentile and he panicked. Then God had to give him a vision three times over to tell him to do it. Finally he did it and he was so apologetic he said to the rest of the Jews, "I had to do it. I kept getting the same vision and the Lord kept telling me. What could I do?" He said, "When I got there they got the same thing we got." Gentiles.

Well that was a hard transition. Now the Book of Acts, you see, gives us those early years. God knows that it's going to be a hard transition. So there's a beautiful, sensitive overlapping that occurs. All through the Book of Acts we see this kind of transition happening. Where did the church meet in its early years? In the temple. They were in the temple every day. They preached in the temple. They

taught in the temple. Chapter 2 verse 46 tells us they were in the temple. Chapter 3 verse 1, "They were in the temple." Chapter 5 verse 42, "And daily in the temple." Chapter 5 does mention in verse 12 that they were meeting in Solomon's porch which was one of the colonnade areas of the temple. It wasn't an immediate break.

Let me ask you this. When the apostle Paul went on his journeys later after the 13th chapter of Acts when he went to a town where did he go first? To the synagogue. They did not make an immediate break. They did not draw a line so clearly that the Jew felt that God has turned his back. Paul in the 19th chapter of Acts, way over in the 19th chapter when he goes to Ephesus he went right into the synagogue and taught them for three months.

This is a book of transition. This is a book where things are changing and that not only has implication for Israel but that has implications for what happened when the Spirit of God came then for tongues and the other attendant things. There are reasons for that and those reasons are explained by the transition, not that these are normative for the history of every Christian. We'll see all of those tonight. I'll look at every one of those passages tonight, 2, 8, 10 and 19. We'll show you how that works.

Let me close by having you look at Acts 18. In Acts 18 verse 18 we get a beautiful illustration of this transition. Acts 18:18. Paul has just gotten through a very harrying experience in Corinth. He's been there a year and a half and finally the Jews attacked him. Verse 12 says they brought him before Gallio and Gallio let him go. God was so gracious and delivered him.

So it says Paul after this tarried a little while, took his leave of the brothers and sailed from there to Syria and with him came Priscilla and Aquila. Paul having shorn his head in Cenchrea for he had a vow. Now Paul leaves and he's on his way and he cut his hair in Cenchrea. You say, "What is that?" He made a vow. What kind of vow was it in scripture that you made and didn't cut your hair? It's called a Nazirite from the Hebrew word *nazir* which means to vow or consecrate. It was usually a vow that was given because of a thankful heart. There were only a few Nazirites for life such as John the Baptist and Sampson. But the Nazirite vow is such prescribed in Numbers chapter 6 versus 1 to 8. The Nazirite vow itself was an expression of thanksgiving and usually was done for 30 days, 60 days or 100 days. Very likely Paul had taken a 30 day vow. That would be plenty of time to get from Corinth to Cenchrea. So at the end of the 30 days he cuts his hair. His vow is over.

Now what was this? It was an Old Testament Jewish way of extending thanks to God. You abstain from wine and certain kinds of grapes and drink of certain kind and all of these things. In other words, you cut yourself off from the parties and from the banquets and from the sweet life and you pull back and you didn't cut your hair. You didn't worry about your looks. You didn't worry about your appearance. You vowed yourself and set yourself apart to God. Beautiful Jewish way.

Some of you look like you've been doing that but I don't know if that's exactly what it is. Anyway. It's all right. It's all right. You say, "Paul, what are you doing Paul? Aren't you a dispensationalist? Paul, you don't have a Scofield Bible. You're not in the other age. You're not, man. You don't need that Numbers 6 routine." Well let me ask you a question. Let me ask you this. If we're going to make Acts normative why do the Charismatics pick the tongues and not the Nazirite vow? Neither one is commanded. They're just both there. You see? It's too arbitrary. There's a reason Paul took a vow. He was a man in transition. He was in the synagogue. He was in the temple. He was a Jewish man. This was his life and you don't cut all that off.

I'll tell you something else. In chapter 21, you say, "Well he got straightened out later." Well in chapter 21 he took another one and four others took it with him. No, this is transition. This is transition. There is even in the latter part of the 18th chapter verse 24 an introduction of a man named Apollos. Apollos is a man in transition. He's an Old Testament saint, eloquent, mighty in the scripture, instructed in the way of the Lord teaching the things of the Jesus the Greek text says. But he knew only the baptism of John. You know what he was? He had heard John the Baptist and John the Baptist kept saying, "Jesus is the Messiah," and Apollos was a great Old Testament preacher who was echoing the message about Jesus but he never knew the Gospel because he didn't know that Jesus died and rose again yet.

So you know what happened, don't you? Aquila and Priscilla took him to their house and straightened him out, gave him the full message. Here you have a man in transition. This is a transitional book. Everything in it is transition and we cannot draw the conclusion that all the transitions become normal for every believer. That just isn't so. If you do that at one point then what limits you from doing it at another point? We'll see that tonight.

But the Charismatics want to take what Acts 8, 2, 10 and 19 says as normative? What gives them the right to take that and nothing else? That's what we're going to see tonight and try to solve. Let's pray.

Thank You, our Father, for the Word, speaks to us so straight, so pointedly. Help us to really love Your truth, to seek the deep things, the rich things because we know the deeper we go the richer it gets the more wondrous Your nature becomes, the more consistent Your mind becomes, the more thrilling Your plan becomes as we see it all unfold at its depths. Help us not to be simplistic in our understanding of scripture but to search the deep things. Thank You for these dear people who do that with such great energy.

Father, thank You for our fellowship. Put Your special hand of blessing on every life. May every one of us bow before Him who is Lord and King in love to serve Him the rest of our days in the way clearly indicated in the Word that He might be glorified. In His name we pray. Amen.

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