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a *Grace Notes* course

# The Acts of the Apostles

Section I: Acts 1 to 7

an expositional study  
by Warren Doud

Lesson 13: **Acts 5:4-20**

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Acts 5:4-20

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## **Instructions**

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

### **Instructions**

1. Study the lesson by reading the passage in ACTS, studying the notes, and studying the other passages of the Bible which are cited. It is a good idea to read the whole book of Acts regularly, perhaps at least once a month. This will give you a good overall view of the events in ACTS.
  2. Study the topics in the same way, paying close attention to all of the Bible verses which are mentioned.
  3. Review all of the notes in the ACTS study and the topics
  4. Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.
  5. When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE the file.
  6. Return the completed Quiz to Grace Notes, either by e-mail or regular mail. There are instructions below in the Quiz section.
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## Acts 5:4-20

### ACTS 5:4

**While it remained, was it not your own? and after it was sold, was it not in your own power? why have you conceived this thing in your heart? you have not lied unto men, but unto God.**

The first phrase indicates a principle: whatever belongs to you, you have the freedom to do with it as you see fit. There is an absolute right, under Grace, for you to make up your own mind how you will handle your money and possessions. It is only when a Christian begins to grow in grace that he starts to appreciate the concepts of grace giving and the proper use of money.

#### **While it remained, was it not your own?**

Ananias did not have to sell his property; there was no obligation to sell it.

**And after it was sold, was it not in your own power?** Likewise, once he had converted his property into cash, the cash belonged to him. He could have kept the cash, or invested it some other way; he would not have broken any church law or policy, because there were never any rules about how Christians were to handle their money.

What Ananias decided to do was to give part of the money to the church. If he had walked up and said, "I'm giving part of the money to the church." there would have been no problem.

### ACTS 5:5

**And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.**

Ananias "fell down" and "breathed his last breath."

Notice that Peter did not administer the judgment to Ananias. Peter did not say, "you have sinned and you are going to die." Peter's words here indicate that he simply understood the situation and he knew the extent of Ananias' sin; but there is nothing to indicate that Peter knew Ananias was going to die. Later on, he was able to predict that Sapphira would die, based on this experience.

Peter probably had the spiritual gift known as "discerning of spirits," because he certainly was able to discern the state of Ananias heart. This gift was used infrequently by the apostles, at select times when God saw it necessary for the good of His church.

No one but God can judge in any case what the level of discipline should be. Only God is omniscient; only God can possibly have enough knowledge of a situation to judge a case completely. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." "Judge not, that you be not judged."

The "great fear" is recognition of God's authority. It was the beginning of a great respect for the teaching of the Word of God, from the apostles, because of this great and terrible illustration of judgment upon sin.

### ACTS 5:6

**And the young men arose, wrapped him up, and carried him out, and buried him.**

The "young men" were Christian men, strong enough to be able to carry out the preparation and burial of Ananias, and later of Sapphira.

### ACTS 5:7

**And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.**

We don't know what Sapphira expected when she came in. She may have expected to receive some praise for the gift that she and her husband had given. The phrase "not knowing what was done" refers to Ananias' confrontation with Peter, and his death. Sapphira was fully aware that she and her husband had not told the truth about the money. Nevertheless, she continued to lie about it.

### ACTS 5:8

**And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether you sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.**

Here Peter gives Sapphira a chance to confess her sin and admit the truth of the matter. When Peter says "for so much" he is referring to the price Ananias quoted to him, not the true price of the

land. The money bag may still have been at Peter's feet, so he could have pointed to it when he asked the question.

For example, suppose they had sold their property for \$100,000. Then suppose that they agreed to give \$50,000 to the apostles, and to tell everyone that the price of the sale was \$50,000. Then Peter would have been asking Sapphira, "Tell me whether you sold the land for \$50,000." And she said, "Yes, for \$50,000," repeating the lie.

**ACTS 5:9,10**

**Then Peter said unto her, How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried your husband are at the door, and shall carry you out.**

**Then she fell down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.**

Peter had been completely fair with Sapphira. If Ananias had acted alone, then Sapphira would not have been guilty of the lie. However, it was obvious from her answer that she was an accomplice, so Peter announced the judgment that would fall on her.

It was God who administered the sin-unto-death to Sapphira, not Peter. I characterize Peter's announcement as a prophecy of a future event, where Peter's knowledge of what would occur came from God by direct inspiration. If it was a prophecy, it must qualify for the world record in prophecy fulfillment, because the event occurred within seconds after the prophecy.

Some might say that, since Peter had seen Ananias die under immediate judgment, he might have supposed that Sapphira would receive the same penalty. However, as he was not omniscient, he could not have been positive unless he had received direct revelation.

Now – both of these people were believers. They lost reward for failure to walk with the Lord, but they did not lose their salvation! Even though they were judged with death, they both went

immediately into the presence of the Lord, to live with Him for eternity.

**ACTS 5:11**

**And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.**

It was necessary in this early and tender stage in the life of the church, to show God's displeasure and judgment for deceit, spiritual fraud, and hypocrisy. Had Ananias and Sapphira been allowed to live after this, the situation would have undoubtedly been abused by other people who themselves would presume on the mercy of God.

This general fear, on the part of Christians in Jerusalem, was a deep spiritual respect and awe for the power and judgment of God. And it is always God's intention that nothing will interfere with the main activity of the church, the "feeding of the flock" and the Christians' growing in grace.

The church cannot function or grow when believers are out of fellowship, filled with approbation lust, and are allowed to continue to follow the dictates of their sin natures.

Believers must walk in fellowship, be occupied with Christ, and carry out their Christian activities "as unto the Lord," trusting the Lord for their reward, recognition, or promotion.

A local church is not a service organization, or a social club or fraternity. Many secular organizations rely on recognition and public praise to motivate their members to do the work required. Churches cannot operate that way; and in the early church in Jerusalem, these principles were taught, and demonstrated, in very dramatic fashion by what happened to Ananias and his wife.

**ACTS 5:12**

**And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.**

This verse must be read with verse 15, because of the parenthetical expression of verses 12b, 13, and 14.

The apostles were continually ministering among the people (imperfect middle of EGINETO).

**TOPIC: APOSTLESHIP**

The signs and miracles were mainly aimed at warning the Jews of their coming national discipline and scattering, and to encourage and motivate the Jews to listen to the Gospel message. But the Gentiles were also part of the intended audience for these miracles, which had the further purpose of establishing the apostles' credentials as messengers of God.

Solomon's Porch – the eastern portico of the Temple, obviously a place where believers from all over Jerusalem could get together for worship, prayer, and teaching.

**ACTS 5:13**

**And of the rest dared no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.**

If the "all with one accord" in verse 12 refers to all the Christians being at the Temple, then this verse probably refers to the fact that unbelievers were wary of joining themselves with the Christians, especially having just learned of the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira.

If the "all..." refers just to the apostles, so that verse 12 means that it was only the apostles were "gathered" with one accord, then this verse could mean that, now, the apostles were much more highly respected (magnified), and the Christians stayed away from them, out of respect.

**ACTS 5:14**

**And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)**

The result of these events was a tremendous production in evangelism. Now what message would these witnessing apostles and Christians have been able to give as they evangelized?

1. That Christ was the Messiah and had come to earth on a divine mission.
2. That he died for their sins.
3. That he rose again.
4. That he ascended into heaven.
5. That he send down the gift of the Holy Spirit.

6. That he was seated at the right hand of the Father and appeared there for them.

7. That it was he who provides for repentance and remission of sins, and

8. That it is he by whom the world is to be judged.

These were the simple articles of faith, the Gospel, of which they had evidence.

**ACTS 5:15**

**Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.**

Now these were superstitious people who were trying to obtain healing by being under the shadow of a holy person. There is no indication that anyone was healed in this way.

The superstition was common in those days that the shadow of a great man falling on you brings good luck. But God does not honor superstition! He honors faith in the Word. In this case, ignorance of the truth led people into a superstitious practice. The Bible account does not record any results from this.

**ACTS 5:16**

**There came also a multitude out of the cities round about, unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.**

Now there was some genuine healing going on, carried out by the apostles; and since the word was getting around, everyone who was sick wanted to be healed.

This is a very natural and understandable occurrence. People who are sick or injured, who have not been able to be cured or get relief through ordinary means, will grasp at any straw to get better. Here, family members and friends of sick people are helping to bring them to the apostles for healing.

"vexed with unclean spirits" = some of the people were "troubled" by demons. Demons can cause the symptoms of illness. Satan uses this means to

promote false healers. When a fake minister “heals” a person, the demon leaves, and the person seems to get well miraculously.

### TOPIC: DEMONS

“they were healed every one” = they were healed “one at a time.” (ETHERAPEUONTO HAPANTES). This indicates that people were healed “one at a time”, as they came forward and were touched by an apostle. This activity took quite a bit of time and may have occurred over several days. While the healing was going on, the apostles were continually giving the Gospel, and people were being saved.

It is important to remember that the purpose of healing was never to relieve suffering. The purpose always was to establish the credentials of the apostles so that people would pay attention to the Gospel message. The issue was eternal life. It would do no good to heal people, only to have them die later on without Christ.

### ACTS 5:17

**Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,**

We are already acquainted with the high priest, Caiaphas, and the extended family of Annas, from our studies in previous chapters.

The Sadducees were the aristocrats in Israel at this time. Most were wealthy. They were rationalists, intellectuals, and they did not believe either in life after death, in angels, or in resurrection. They disregarded all miraculous phenomena entirely. And they were supporters of the national religion of Israel, Judaism. Therefore, the entrenched religious majority again mounts a direct attack on Christianity, by trying to shut down the apostles’ ministry.

It’s ironic – and humorous – in this passage that the Sadducees, who don’t believe in angels, are thwarted in their goals, by angels, who release the apostles from the prison!

“filled with indignation” = but the word in Greek is (ZELOS), which usually means “zeal” or “enthusiasm;” but when a bad cause of bad motive

is involved, the word means “jealousy.” They Jewish leaders were filled with the sin of jealousy.

### ACTS 5:18

**And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.**

They seized the apostles with violence. The “common prison” was the public common cell.

### ACTS 5:19

**But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,**

### ACTS 5:20

**Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.**

Three commands here: Go; Stand; Speak. The angel is telling them to go from the place where they are, to the temple, and there to continue speaking the word of life, namely, the Gospel.

“stand” = (STATHENTES), the aorist passive participle of (HISTEMI), which means to “take a stand; to stand firm; to take an effective position.” The angel told the apostles to go to the temple and speak so as to continue establishing a firm position in the Gospel.

“the words of life” = the words that teach about Christ and his work on the Cross; because Jesus Christ is “the life.”

John 20:31, “These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name.”

### Apostleship

#### INTRODUCTION

The word “apostle” (**apostolos**) is from the Greek, meaning “an ambassador; one who is sent; a delegated authority.” The word was used for high-ranking naval officers in classical Greek times. An apostle of Jesus Christ was the highest ranking official in the local churches, 1 Cor. 12:28.

Apostles of Jesus Christ were appointed by God the Father for the purpose of establishing churches and spreading new truth, Eph. 3:1-10. There were

both the spiritual gift and office of apostleship. The spiritual gift was the divine enabling to function as an apostle, Eph. 4:11, 1 Cor. 28,29. The office of apostleship was the authority to function as an apostle, Rom. 1.5, ACTS 1:25, GAL. 2:8.

Some of the uses of **apostolos** outside of the Bible are:

- In the classical Greek period (4th and 5th centuries B.C.), apostolos was used by Lysias and Demosthenes to refer to the commander of a naval expedition. When the Athenians went to war, there was a number of men qualified to command the fleet. One of these was elected by lot and sent to the fleet to command it. He was called apostolos.
- During the Hellenistic period (323 B.C. and following) apostolos was used to refer to a person commissioned and authorized by one of the gods.
- In the Papyri of the koine period apostolos was used to refer to a civil agent sent to transact official business.

In the New Testament, the apostles of Jesus Christ fall into two classes:

- The apostles of Jesus Christ to Israel, Luke 6:12-16. These were appointed by Jesus Christ according to the will of God the Father. These men were authorized to announce to Israel that their Messiah was present; and they were endowed with miraculous powers, Luke 9:1,2.
- The apostles of Jesus Christ to the Church. These included the eleven disciples (Acts 1:26), Paul (Rom. 1:1, etc.), James the brother of Christ (Gal. 2:19), Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Timothy and Silas (1 Thess. 2:6,7 cf. 1:1).

### **The Qualifications of an Apostle**

An apostle had to have the spiritual gift of apostleship. The gift was provided by Jesus Christ after His ascension into Heaven, Eph. 4:8-11. The gift was imparted by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, 1 Cor. 12:11; Acts 2.

The apostle received his gift and office by the sovereign decision of God the Father, 1 Cor. 1:1; 12:18; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1.

The apostle had to have been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord, Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1.

### **The Credentials of an Apostle**

An apostle was endowed with miraculous powers of miracles, Heb. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12.

An apostle had success in evangelism, 1 Cor. 9:2; 2 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 2:7-9.

An apostle had the capacity to suffer patiently, 2 Cor. 12:12.

### **The Function of an Apostle**

Apostles received and communicated new revelation, Eph. 3:2-6.

Apostles communicated the gospel effectively and people accepted Christ in response to their preaching, 1 Cor. 9:1; Gal. 2:7-9.

Apostles helped organize local churches and appointed officers, Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5.

Apostles trained new believers in doctrine, 1 Thess. 1:5 to 2:12.

Apostles had the authority to administer discipline to believers, Acts 5:1-10; 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 13:2.

The apostle had authority over all local churches because he was the channel of New Testament revelation. Since the time of the apostles, no one has been given authority over more than one local church.

The apostle Paul was the most Grace-oriented apostle. He realized that he was the least deserving to be an apostle, 1 Cor. 15:9. He was the most productive because of Grace, 1 Cor. 15:10.

There were false apostles who communicated false information, 2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2.

### **Apostolic Age**

### **The Apostolic Age**

### **Sources for this Study**

Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume I, Chapter III

Encyclopedia Britannica

Josephus, Flavius, *Wars of the Jews*

Books of the New Testament

## INTRODUCTION

The Acts of the Apostles give us the external, the Epistles the internal history of early Christianity. The Acts bear on the face all the marks of an original, fresh, and trustworthy narrative of contemporaneous events derived from the best sources of information, and in great part from personal observation and experience. The authorship of Luke, the companion of Paul, is conceded by a majority of the best modern scholars; and this fact alone establishes the credibility. Renan (in his *St. Paul*, ch. 1) admirably calls the Acts “a book of joy, of serene ardor. Since the Homeric poems no book has been seen full of such fresh sensations. A breeze of morning, an odor of the sea, if I dare express it so, inspiring something joyful and strong, penetrates the whole book, and makes it an excellent *compagnon de voyage*, the exquisite breviary for him who is searching for ancient remains on the seas of the south. This is the second idyll of Christianity. The Lake of Tiberias and its fishing barks had furnished the first. Now, a more powerful breeze, aspirations toward more distant lands, draw us out into the open sea.”

## GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

The apostolic period extends from the Day of Pentecost to the death of St. John, and covers about seventy years, from AD 30 to 100. The field of action is Palestine, and gradually extends over Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. The most prominent centers are Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome, which represent respectively the mother churches of Jewish, Gentile, and United Catholic Christianity.

Next to them are Ephesus and Corinth. Ephesus acquired a special importance by the residence and labors of John, which made themselves felt during the second century through Polycarp and Irenaeus.

Samaria, Damascus, Joppa, Caesarea, Tyre, Cyprus, the provinces of Asia Minor, Troas,

Philippi, Thessalonica, Beraea, Athens, Crete, Patmos, Malta, Puteoli, come also into view as points where the Christian faith was planted.

Through the eunuch converted by Philip, it reached Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. As early as AD 58 Paul could say: “From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” (Rom. 15:19) He afterwards carried it to Rome, where it had already been known before, and possibly as far as Spain, the western boundary of the empire. (Rom. 15:24)

The nationalities reached by the gospel in the first century were the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans, and the languages used were the Hebrew or Aramaic, and especially the Greek, which was at that time the organ of civilization and of international intercourse within the Roman empire.

The contemporary secular history includes the reigns of the Roman Emperors from Tiberius to Nero and Domitian, who either ignored or persecuted Christianity. We are brought directly into contact with King Herod Agrippa I. (grandson of Herod the Great), the murderer of the apostle, James the Elder; with his son King Agrippa II. (the last of the Herodian house), who with his sister Bernice (a most corrupt woman) listened to Paul’s defense; with two Roman governors, Felix and Festus; with Pharisees and Sadducees; with Stoics and Epicureans; with the temple and theatre at Ephesus, with the court of the Areopagus at Athens, and with Caesar’s palace in Rome.

## Sources of Information

The author of Acts records the heroic march of Christianity from the capital of Judaism to the capital of heathenism with the same artless simplicity and serene faith as the Evangelists tell the story of Jesus; well knowing that it needs no embellishment, no apology, no subjective reflections, and that it will surely triumph by its inherent spiritual power.

The Acts and the Pauline Epistles accompany us with reliable information down to the year 63. Peter and Paul are lost out of sight in the lurid fires of the Neronian persecution which seemed to consume Christianity itself. We know nothing certain of that satanic spectacle from authentic sources beyond the information of heathen

historians. A few years afterwards followed the destruction of Jerusalem, which must have made an overpowering impression and broken the last ties which bound Jewish Christianity to the old theocracy. The event is indeed brought before us in the prophecy of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, but for the terrible fulfilment we are dependent on the account of an unbelieving Jew, which, as the testimony of an enemy, is all the more impressive.

The remaining thirty years of the first century are involved in mysterious darkness, illuminated only by the writings of John. This is a period of church history about which we know least and would like to know most. This period is the favorite field for ecclesiastical fables and critical conjectures. How thankfully would the historian hail the discovery of any new authentic documents between the martyrdom of Peter and Paul and the death of John, and again between the death of John and the age of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus.

**Causes of Success.**

As to the numerical strength of Christianity at the close of the first century, we have no information whatever. Statistical reports were unknown in those days. The estimate of half a million among the one hundred millions or more inhabitants of the Roman empire is probably exaggerated. The pentecostal conversion of three thousand in one day at Jerusalem, and the “immense multitude” of martyrs under Nero, favor a high estimate. The churches in Antioch also, Ephesus, and Corinth were strong enough to bear the strain of controversy and division into parties. But the majority of congregations were no doubt small, often a mere handful of poor people. In the country districts paganism (as the name indicates) lingered longest, even beyond the age of Constantine.

The Christian converts belonged mostly to the middle and lower classes of society, such as fishermen, peasants, mechanics, traders, freedmen, slaves. St. Paul says: “Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble were called, but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world

that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to naught the things that are: that no flesh should glory before God.” (1 Cor. 1:26-29) And yet these poor, illiterate churches were the recipients of the noblest gifts, and alive to the deepest problems and highest thoughts which can challenge the attention of an immortal mind. Christianity built from the foundation upward. From the lower ranks come the rising men of the future, who constantly reinforce the higher ranks and prevent their decay.

At the time of the conversion of Constantine, in the beginning of the fourth century, the number of Christians may have reached ten or twelve millions, that is about one-tenth of the total population of the Roman empire. Some estimate it higher.

The rapid success of Christianity under the most unfavorable circumstances is surprising and its own best vindication. It was achieved in the face of an indifferent or hostile world, and by purely spiritual and moral means, without shedding a drop of blood except that of its own innocent martyrs. Gibbon, in the famous fifteenth chapter of his “History,” attributes the rapid spread to five causes, namely:

1. the intolerant but enlarged religious zeal of the Christians inherited from the Jews;
2. the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, concerning which the ancient philosophers had but vague and dreamy ideas;
3. the miraculous powers attributed to the primitive church;
4. the purer but austere morality of the first Christians;
5. the unity and discipline of the church, which gradually formed a growing commonwealth in the heart of the empire.

But every one of these causes, properly understood, points to the superior excellency and to the divine origin of the Christian religion, and this is the chief cause, which the Deistic historian omits.

**Significance of the Apostolic Age.**

The life of Christ is the divine-human fountainhead of the Christian religion; the apostolic age is the fountainhead of the Christian church, as an organized society separate and distinct from the Jewish synagogue. It is the age of the Holy Spirit, the age of inspiration and legislation for all subsequent ages.

Here springs, in its original freshness and purity, the living water of the new creation. Christianity comes down from heaven as a supernatural fact, yet long predicted and prepared for, and adapted to the deepest wants of human nature. Signs and wonders and extraordinary demonstrations of the Spirit, for the conversion of unbelieving Jews and heathens, attend its entrance into the world of sin. It takes up its permanent abode with our fallen race, to transform it gradually, without war or bloodshed, by a quiet, leaven-like process, into a kingdom of truth and righteousness.

Modest and humble, lowly and unseemly in outward appearance, but steadily conscious of its divine origin and its eternal destiny; without silver or gold, but rich in supernatural gifts and powers, strong in faith, fervent in love, and joyful in hope; bearing in earthen vessels the imperishable treasures of heaven, it presents itself upon the stage of history as the only true, the perfect religion, for all the nations of the earth.

At first an insignificant and even contemptible sect in the eyes of the carnal mind, hated and persecuted by Jews and heathens, it confounds the wisdom of Greece and the power of Rome, soon plants the standard of the cross in the great cities of Asia, Africa, and Europe, and proves itself the hope of the world.

In virtue of this original purity, vigor, and beauty, and the permanent success of primitive Christianity, the canonical authority of the single but inexhaustible volume of its literature, and the character of the apostles, those inspired organs of the Holy Spirit, those untaught teachers of mankind, the apostolic age has an incomparable interest and importance in the history of the church. It is the immovable groundwork of the whole. It has the same regulative force for all the subsequent developments of the church as the

inspired writings of the apostles have for the works of all later Christian authors.

Furthermore, the apostolic Christianity is preformative, and contains the living germs of all the following periods, personages, and tendencies. It holds up the highest standard of doctrine and discipline; it is the inspiring genius of all true progress; it suggests to every age its peculiar problem with the power to solve it. Christianity can never outgrow Christ, but it grows in Christ; theology cannot go beyond the word of God, but it must ever progress in the understanding and application of the word of God. The three leading apostles represent not only the three stages of the apostolic church, but also as many ages and types of Christianity, and yet they are all present in every age and every type.

**The Representative Apostles.**

Peter, Paul, and John stand out most prominently as the chosen Three who accomplished the great work of the apostolic age, and exerted, by their writings and example, a controlling influence on all subsequent ages. To them correspond three centres of influence, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome.

Paul was called last and out of the regular order, by the personal appearance of the exalted Lord from heaven, and in authority and importance he was equal to any of the three pillars, but filled a place of his own, as the independent apostle of the Gentiles. He had around him a small band of co-laborers and pupils, such as Barnabas, Silas, Titus, Timothy, Luke.

Nine of the original Twelve, including Matthias, who was chosen in the place of Judas, labored no doubt faithfully and effectively, in preaching the gospel throughout the Roman empire and to the borders of the barbarians, but in subordinate positions, and their labors are known to us only from vague and uncertain traditions.

The labors of James and Peter we can follow in the Acts to the Council of Jerusalem, AD 50, and a little beyond; those of Paul to his first imprisonment in Rome, AD 61-63; John lived to the close of the first century. As to their last labors we have no authentic information in the New

Testament, but the unanimous testimony of antiquity that Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom in Rome during or after the Neronian persecution, and that John died a natural death at Ephesus. The Acts breaks off abruptly with Paul still living and working, a prisoner in Rome, “preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all boldness, none forbidding him.” A significant conclusion.

It would be difficult to find three men equally great and good, equally endowed with genius sanctified by grace, bound together by deep and strong love to the common Master, and laboring for the same cause, yet so different in temper and constitution, as Peter, Paul, and John. Peter stands out in history as the main pillar of the primitive church, as the Rock-apostle, as the chief of the twelve foundation-stones of the new Jerusalem; John as the bosom-friend of the Saviour, as the son of thunder, as the soaring eagle, as the apostle of love; Paul as the champion of Christian freedom and progress, as the greatest missionary, with “the care of all the churches” upon his heart, as the expounder of the Christian system of doctrine, as the father of Christian theology.

Peter was a man of action, always in haste and ready to take the lead; the first to confess Christ, and the first to preach Christ on the day of Pentecost; Paul a man equally potent in word and deed; John a man of mystic contemplation. Peter was unlearned and altogether practical; Paul a scholar and thinker as well as a worker; John a theosophist and seer.

Peter was sanguine, ardent, impulsive, hopeful, kind-hearted, given to sudden changes, “consistently inconsistent” (to use an Aristotelian phrase); Paul was choleric, energetic, bold, noble, independent, uncompromising; John somewhat melancholic, introverted, reserved, burning within of love to Christ and hatred of Antichrist. Peter’s Epistles are full of sweet grace and comfort, the result of deep humiliation and rich experience; those of Paul abound in severe thought and logical argument, but rising at times to the heights of celestial eloquence, as in the seraphic description of love and the triumphant paean of the eighth

chapter of the Romans; John’s writings are simple, serene, profound, intuitive, sublime, inexhaustible.

We would like to know more about the personal relations of these pillar-apostles, but must be satisfied with a few hints. They labored in different fields and seldom met face to face in their busy life. Time was too precious, their work too serious, for sentimental enjoyments of friendship.

Paul went to Jerusalem AD 40, three years after his conversion, for the express purpose of making the personal acquaintance of Peter, and spent two weeks with him; he saw none of the other apostles, but only James, the Lord’s brother. He met the pillar-apostles at the Conference in Jerusalem, AD 50, and concluded with them the peaceful concordat concerning the division of labor, and the question of circumcision; the older apostles gave him and Barnabas “the right hands of fellowship” in token of brotherhood and fidelity.

Not long afterwards Paul met Peter a third time, at Antioch, but came into open collision with him on the great question of Christian freedom and the union of Jewish and Gentile converts. The collision was merely temporary, but significantly reveals the profound commotion and fermentation of the apostolic age, and foreshadowed future antagonisms and reconciliations in the church. Several years later (AD 57) Paul refers the last time to Cephas, and the brethren of the Lord, for the right to marry and to take a wife with him on his missionary journeys.

Peter, in his first Epistle to Pauline churches, confirms them in their Pauline faith, and in his second Epistle, his last will and testament, he affectionately commends the letters of his “beloved brother Paul,” adding, however, the characteristic remark, which all commentators must admit to be true, that (even beside the account of the scene in Antioch) there are in them “some things hard to be understood.”

Peter was the chief actor in the first stage of apostolic Christianity and fulfilled the prophecy of his name in laying the foundation of the church among the Jews and the Gentiles. In the second stage he is overshadowed by the mighty labors of Paul; but after the apostolic age he stands out

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again most prominent in the memory of the church.

He is chosen by the Roman communion as its special patron saint and as the first pope. He is always named before Paul. To him most of the churches are dedicated. In the name of this poor fisherman of Galilee, who had neither gold nor silver, and was crucified like a malefactor and a slave, the triple-crowned popes deposed kings, shook empires, dispensed blessings and curses on earth and in purgatory, and even now claim the power to settle infallibly all questions of Christian doctrine and discipline for the Catholic world.

Paul was the chief actor in the second stage of the apostolic church, the apostle of the Gentiles, the founder of Christianity in Asia Minor and Greece, the emancipator of the new religion from the yoke of Judaism, the herald of evangelical freedom, the standard-bearer of reform and progress. His controlling influence was felt also in Rome, and is clearly seen in the genuine Epistle of Clement, who makes more account of him than of Peter.

But soon afterwards he is almost forgotten, except by name. He is indeed associated with Peter as the founder of the church of Rome, but in a secondary line; his Epistle to the Romans is little read and understood by the Romans even to this day; his church lies outside of the walls of the eternal city, while St. Peter's is its chief ornament and glory. In Africa alone he was appreciated, first by the rugged and racy Tertullian, more fully by the profound Augustine, who passed through similar contrasts in his religious experience; but Augustine's Pauline doctrines of sin and grace had no effect whatever on the Eastern church, and were practically overpowered in the Western church by Pelagian tendencies.

For a long time Paul's name was used and abused outside of the ruling orthodoxy and hierarchy by anti-catholic heretics and sectaries in their protest against the new yoke of traditionalism and ceremonialism. But in the sixteenth century he celebrated a real resurrection and inspired the evangelical reformation. Then his Epistles to the Galatians and Romans were republished, explained, and applied with trumpet tongues by Luther and Calvin. Then his protest against

Judaizing bigotry and legal bondage was renewed, and the rights of Christian liberty asserted on the largest scale. Of all men in church history, St. Augustine not excepted, Martin Luther, once a contracted monk, then a prophet of freedom, has most affinity in word and work with the apostle of the Gentiles, and ever since Paul's genius has ruled the theology and religion of Protestantism. As the gospel of Christ was cast out from Jerusalem to bless the Gentiles, so Paul's Epistle to the Romans was expelled from Rome to enlighten and to emancipate Protestant nations in the distant North and far West.

St. John, the most intimate companion of Jesus, the apostle of love, the seer who looked back to the ante-mundane beginning and forward to the post-mundane end of all things, and who is to tarry till the coming of the Lord, kept aloof from active part in the controversies between Jewish and Gentile Christianity. He appears prominent in the Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians, as one of the pillar-apostles, but not a word of his is reported. He was waiting in mysterious silence, with a reserved force, for his proper time, which did not come till Peter and Paul had finished their mission.

Then, after their departure, he revealed the hidden depths of his genius in his marvellous writings, which represent the last and crowning work of the apostolic church. John has never been fully fathomed, but it has been felt throughout all the periods of church history that he has best understood and portrayed the Master, and may yet speak the last word in the conflict of ages and usher in an era of harmony and peace. Paul is the heroic captain of the church militant, John the mystic prophet of the church triumphant.

Far above them all, throughout the apostolic age and all subsequent ages, stands the one great Master from whom Peter, Paul, and John drew their inspiration, to whom they bowed in holy adoration, whom alone they served and glorified in life and in death, and to whom they still point in their writings as the perfect image of God, as the Saviour from sin and death, as the Giver of eternal life, as the divine harmony of conflicting creeds and schools, as the Alpha and Omega of the Christian faith.

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### CHRONOLOGY OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

The chronology of the apostolic age is partly certain, at least within a few years, partly conjectural: certain as to the principal events from AD 30 to 70, conjectural as to intervening points and the last thirty years of the first century. The sources are the New Testament (especially the Acts and the Pauline Epistles), Josephus, and the Roman historians. Josephus b. 37, d. 103) is especially valuable here, as he wrote the Jewish history down to the destruction of Jerusalem.

The following dates are more or less certain and accepted by most historians:

1. The founding of the Christian Church on the feast of Pentecost in May AD 30. This is on the assumption that Christ was born BC 4 or 5, and was crucified in April AD 30, at an age of thirty-three.
2. The death of King Herod Agrippa I. AD 44 (according to Josephus). This settles the date of the preceding martyrdom of James the elder, Peter's imprisonment and release Acts 12:2, 23).
3. The Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, AD 50 (Acts 15:1 sqq.; Gal. 2:1-10). This date is ascertained by reckoning backwards to Paul's conversion, and forward to the Caesarean captivity. Paul was probably converted in 37, and "fourteen years" elapsed from that event to the Council. But chronologists differ on the year of Paul's conversion, between 31 and 40.<sup>245</sup>
4. The dates of the Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans, between 56 and 58. The date of the Epistle to the Romans can be fixed almost to the month from its own indications combined with the statements of the Acts. It was written before the apostle had been in Rome, but when he was on the point of departure for Jerusalem and Rome on the way to Spain,<sup>246</sup> after having finished his collections in Macedonia and Achaia for the poor brethren in Judaea;<sup>247</sup> and he sent the epistle through Phebe, a deaconess of the congregation in the eastern port of Corinth, where he was at that time.<sup>248</sup> These

indications point clearly to the spring of the year 58, for in that year he was taken prisoner in Jerusalem and carried to Caesarea.

5. Paul's captivity in Caesarea, AD 58 to 60, during the procuratorship of Felix and Festus, who changed places in 60 or 61, probably in 60. This important date we can ascertain by combination from several passages in Josephus, and Tacitus.<sup>249</sup> It enables us at the same time, by reckoning backward, to fix some preceding events in the life of the apostle.
6. Paul's first captivity in Rome, AD 61 to 63. This follows from the former date in connection with the statement in Acts 28:30.
7. The Epistles of the Roman captivity, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, AD 61-63.
8. The Neronian persecution, AD 64 (the tenth year of Nero, according to Tacitus). The martyrdom of Paul and Peter occurred either then, or (according to tradition) a few years later. The question depends on the second Roman captivity of Paul.
9. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, AD 70 (according to Josephus and Tacitus).
10. The death of John after the accession of Trajan, AD 98 (according to general ecclesiastical tradition).

The dates of the Synoptical Gospels, the Acts, the Pastoral Epistles, the Hebrews, and the Epistles of Peter, James, and Jude cannot be accurately ascertained except that they were composed before the destruction of Jerusalem, mostly between 60 and 70. The writings of John were written after that date and towards the close of the first century, except the Apocalypse, which some of the best scholars, from internal indications assign to the year 68 or 69, between the death of Nero and the destruction of Jerusalem.

### Demons

Demons are fallen angels under the command of Satan, those who are still free after the Gen. 6 affair. Satan is called the Prince, or Ruler, of all demons in Matthew 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke

11:15. Demons are also called the ministers, or ambassadors of Satan, Luke 4:35; 9:1,42; John 10:21. Satan is brilliant, an administrative genius. He has an excellent organization, mentioned in Eph. 6:10-12 (READ) The Bible also makes a distinction between demon possession and demon influence.

**Demon possession** occurs when an actual fallen angel, a demon, enters and occupies the body of an unbeliever. Demons cannot enter the bodies of Christian believers because the Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Inviting demons can be accomplished in a number of ways.

- Through idolatry (Satan's communion table), 1 COR. 10:19-21\*.
- Through drug addiction, called in Greek, φαρμακεια (**farmakeia**), "the use of drugs, potions, or spells; poisoning, witchcraft, sorcery" GAL. 5:20 ("witch-craft, sorcery"), cf. also REV. 9:21; 18:23.
- Through religious backsliding, religious sensitivity activities such as dabbling in the occult, consulting mediums, necromancy. cf. ISA. 8:19.

**Demon Influence** is the residence of evil in the soul; can be unbeliever (ROM. 1:23) or believer. This is the method that Satan uses to trap and neutralize the believer, by introducing, if allowed, the Doctrine of Evil inside the soul of the born-again believer. Demon influence in the believer comes about in the later stages of negativity, or backsliding.

The first stage of backsliding is some kind of reaction to life -- whether discouragement, disillusion, disenchantment, boredom, self-pity, loneliness, frustration, instability, pride complex and various sins of arrogance, revenge tactics, reaction to contemporary events or social pressures, etc. Whatever causes it, the reaction stage makes one very vulnerable to the attacks of Satan. This is not the entrance into demon influence, at this point, but merely vulnerability to it.

The second stage of backsliding is the frantic search for happiness following the trends of the Sin Nature (towards asceticism or lasciviousness).

This also increases vulnerability, especially as one moves away from the protection of doctrine and Grace provision.

The third stage intensifies the reaction stage, but still has only the potentiality, not the actuality, of demon influence. It is at the fourth stage of backsliding, in which the soul is in revolt emotionally, where the possibility of demon influence comes in. Doctrinal content is located in the mentality of the soul (including standards, conscience, frame of reference, memory center, vocabulary, doctrinal storage under edification, and the area of applied doctrine resulting in production of divine good). It is the lack of doctrinal content which is the primary factor in vulnerability to demon influence.

The soul also has its area of response to outside influences, centered in the emotions of the soul. Emotion has no doctrinal content, no character of its own, no spiritual content, no ability to think or rationalize, or even to use common sense. It is designed to respond; it is not designed to lead or initiate anything. The tongues movement is an illustration of the soul's emotions being led about by falsehood. Sometimes believers in the tongues movement are under demon influence. Sometimes unbelievers are actually demon possessed.

The thing that opens the door for demon influence in the life of the believer is negative volition toward the Word of God. The believer says "Negative" to doctrine and opens up a vacuum in his soul. Whatever evil is in the neighborhood will be picked up -- false teaching, TV, newspaper...

Regardless of what causes the negative attitude, the effect is the same. It may be antagonism or a negative attitude or personality conflict with the pastor, or with other members of the congregation. It may be apathy or indifference to teaching. It may be failure to use Grace provision, Faith Rest, or inability to handle prosperity, slavery to the details of life. Whatever it is, negative volition opens up the emptiness of the soul.

As a result of evil in the soul, there is demon influence, the "darkness in the soul" of Eph. 4. There is the infiltration of the doctrines of Satan into the soul of the reversionistic person (believer

or unbeliever). Here, the believer is "worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator".

There are two systems for demon possession of the unbeliever. The first is the unlawful isolation of dormant faculties. The body is brought under the control of the soul, and the soul has been given to Satan. It is like a conversion in reverse. Seances, or the ceremony called the Satanic mass, are means by which this is accomplished. This person becomes a disembodied spirit or an "adept". All of the activities of supernaturalism may be attributed to this; mental telepathy, spiritism, out of body experiences.

The second system is passive submission to demons. This can be accomplished through idolatry, through drugs, or other means. In the ancient world, the various oracles used this means in attempting to predict the outcome of events. (The "mephitic vapors" of the oracle of Delphi, which was some form of narcotic gas.) Another example is the Hindu "soma" mysteries, and the various sutras of Indian religions. There are also various systems of mesmerism or hypnotism, whether induced by one's self or another person, such as Whirling Dervishes, or unbelievers involved in the tongues movement.

Demonism is directly related to idolatry and thus to human sacrifice Ps. 136:37,39. Sacrifices to demons were prohibited by law in Lev. 17:7, "And they shall no longer sacrifice to the goat demon (or satyr) with which they shall play the harlot. This will be a permanent law in every generation." Or in Deut. 32:17, "They sacrifice to demons, not gods, new things which came lately which your ancestors did not fear." Heathen nations worship demons, acc. to Ps. 96:5, "For all the gods of the peoples are idols (**daimonia** in LXX)." It was thoroughly understood that idolatry meant demons. Capital punishment by stoning was the penalty for witchcraft, demonism, etc.

The judgment against Egypt concerning the death of the first-born was also a judgment against the demons in Egypt. Ex. 12:12, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the demons of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am Jehovah."

Num. 33:4, "While the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn whom the Lord had struck down among them, the Lord had also executed judgment against their demons."

Demons are powerless to change the course of history. Isa. 19:3, "Then the spirits of the Egyptians will become demoralized within them; also, I will frustrate their strategy, so that they will resort to idle demons and to the ghosts of the dead and to mediums and to spiritists." Demonism is always subject to the justice of God and is always judged in its various forms.

The reason why the Canaanites were removed from the land is that they practiced demonism. Deut. 18:9-12 (READ). In the reign of King Manasseh, evil is associated with demonism, 2 Kings 21:2-16. Demonism brings the discipline of total destruction to a nation, Isa. 47; Jer. 27:6-10; Isa. 29:4.

Satan and demons are often used by God in the administration of the sin unto death to reversionistic believers. Ex. Hymenaeus and Alexander, I Tim. 1:19,20. The believer committing incest in 1 Cor. 5:5 was turned over to Satan, but it was so painful that he repented.

Satan's power of death is mentioned in four categories. He has the power of death, Heb. 2:14,15; 1 John 3:8. He killed Job's children, Job 1:12,18,19. He motivated Cain to murder Abel, John 8:44; 1 John 3:12.

Satan is a source of disease. Satan produced the illness in Job, Job 2:6,8. Satan uses demons to produce disease in human beings. There is therefore the principle of demon-induced illness, Matt. 12:22; Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38. Certain mental diseases, and illness which are related to abnormal behavior, may be demon induced. Dumbness and deafness, Mark 9:17; Luke 11:14; Matt. 11:22. Certain forms of epilepsy, Mark 1:26; 9:20; Luke 4:35. Satan is the source of at least ten different types of abnormal behavior which are mentioned in the Bible.

Convulsions, Mark 1:26.

Violence, Matt. 8:28.

Abnormal strength, Mark 5:4.

Raving, Mark 5:5

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Self-mutilation, Mark 5:5

Foaming at the mouth, Mark 9:20

Public nakedness, Luke 8:27

Living among corpses, Mark 5:3

A type of grinding of the teeth, Mark 9:18

Falling into fires and throwing oneself into dangerous things, Matt. 17:15

Satan also heals. He heals by the withdrawal of demons and establishes the credentials for some of his evangelists. In Acts 19:11,12 legitimate healing by God was used to establish apostolic authority. On the other hand, healing was used by Satan in a similar way, II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 16:14; Matt. 24:24.

Satan wanted to punish Peter by using demons. Luke 22:31,32 (READ). Peter had denied Christ, and Satan had the audacity to suggest how the justice of God should function toward Peter. Of course the Lord refused this.

I Tim. 3:6,7 (READ)-- Satan is used as a warning for discipline.

The power of Satan is summarized in Psalm 109:6-13 (READ). He can blind true religion, shorten life (where God permits), remove people from authority, can kill, can persecute children, remove wealth, turn everyone against you, he can cut off posterity to the second generation. So certain powers are permitted Satan as the "ruler of this world", but they are always under the sovereignty of God.

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### Lesson 13 Quiz

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

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**1705 Aggie Lane**

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Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

This Quiz may have Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill-in-the-Blank, and Short Answer questions. Type your responses after the word "Answer:" following each question. The last question is an essay question and requires you to write a few sentences. Type your response following the questions.

1. Ananias was required to give all of the money from the sale of the property to the apostles. [True/False]

2. Who was it who actually caused Ananias to die?

Answer:

3. Sapphira was fully as guilty as Ananias was in the attempt to deceive the church. [True/False]

Answer:

4. What was the immediate result in the minds and hearts of the other members of the Jerusalem church?

Answer:

5. Where was Solomon's Porch?

Answer:

6. The shadow of Peter crossing over a person could produce healing. [True/False]

Answer:

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7. The highest ranking official in a local church, in this period of Christian times, was the \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

8. How many apostles of Jesus Christ to the Church were there?

Answer:

9. How many of the apostles had not seen the resurrected Christ?

Answer:

10. An apostle had ecclesiastical authority over one or more local churches. [True/False]

Answer:

11. The Apostolic Age covers the years from AD \_\_\_\_\_ to AD \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

12. The three apostles who stand out prominently as the representative apostles of the apostolic age are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

13. The apostle \_\_\_\_\_ was chosen in the place of Judas Iscariot.

Answer:

14. A Christian believer can be influenced by demons. [True/False]

Answer:

15. The second stage of backsliding is \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

End of Quiz

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