

For Bible Study

Acts of the Apostles
Seen from
the Perspective of
the Gospel of
the Water
and the Spirit

PAUL C. JONG



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the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

For Bible Study



Hebziyah

**“But you shall receive power
when the Holy Spirit has come
upon you; and you shall be
witnesses to Me in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the end of the earth.”
(Acts 1:8)**

The Acts of the Apostles is commonly read as a record of the growth and miracles of the early church. However, the core that the Bible intends to say through the Acts of the Apostles does not lie only in testifying to the work of the Holy Spirit. How the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit was testified to the whole world, that is the central message of the Acts of the Apostles.

This book explains the Acts of the Apostles from Chapter 1 to Chapter 28 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is a record following how the gospel of Jesus Christ—who had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and then resurrected from the dead—was testified.

By reading this book, we come to confirm how the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord is propagated to the end of the earth. Furthermore, we will clearly receive testimony on how this gospel saves sinners from the sins of the world through the two structures of the baptism and the Cross.

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We offer a prayer of thanks to the Lord for giving us the Word of salvation and blessing us with the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit.

I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

I hope and pray that this book will help many souls be born again, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to everyone who worked hard with me.

I sincerely hope that the Lord will allow the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit to be spread throughout the world through those who believe in Jesus.

PAUL C. JONG

Preface

The Acts of the Apostles is not the process of the gospel advancing, but the word recording how the word of the gospel of salvation that Jesus Christ already accomplished was proclaimed through the mouths and faith of the apostles. From this perspective, the Acts of the Apostles testifies from beginning to end to what kind of gospel the apostles believed and preached.

The starting point of the Acts of the Apostles lies in Jesus resurrecting from the death of the Cross, appearing to His disciples, and commanding them to preach the already fulfilled gospel of the water and the Spirit. At that time, the disciples became those who were appointed to testify to the gospel. The word of Jesus telling them to wait for “the Promise of the Father” was the word fulfilling the word of the Old Testament prophecy of the prophet Joel. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost indicates not the day salvation began, but the day the already completed salvation began to be publicly proclaimed.

The sermon of the Apostle Peter after the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was the work of the Holy Spirit testifying to the gospel word of Jesus Christ, who became our Savior by resurrecting from the dead after having the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John and receiving the punishment of sins on the Cross (Acts 2:37-42). The core of this sermon was the propagation of the gospel testifying to the baptism Jesus received from John, the death on the Cross, and the resurrection.

The missionary expansion of the Acts of the Apostles testifies that the work of the Holy Spirit appeared through the

apostles who believed the gospel. The apostles and brethren propagated the already completed gospel word even to the Samaritans, the Gentiles, and the house of the Roman soldier Cornelius. The Holy Spirit did not make a new gospel, but worked within the faith believing as the Savior Jesus who resurrected from the dead after having sins transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John and receiving the judgment of sins on the Cross. Just as the Holy Spirit came upon the hearts of those who believed when Peter propagated the gospel even to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, it records that from that time on, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those who believed the word of the Lord's baptism and the Cross.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Paul's conversion and ministry also became that of one called to be an apostle due to the testimony of Jesus Christ, who washed away the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John and resurrected from death. The gospel that Paul himself preaches also did not come from man, but was the gospel of salvation that the Lord had already accomplished. All his evangelism and apologetics were not the law or philosophy, but laid the foundation of faith on testifying to the gospel of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, the death on the Cross, and the resurrection. He testified everywhere that our elimination of sin does not lie in human effort or the observance of the law, but is accomplished only by the faith believing the gospel ministry completed by the baptism and the blood of the Cross of Christ.

The final scene of the Acts of the Apostles conclusively shows the nature of this gospel. The gospel of the water and the Spirit started in Jerusalem and reached Rome, and was not bound by any hindrance. This is because the gospel of the water and the Spirit itself that the church believes has already been completed. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not transformed

according to era, culture, and religion, and reveals that it is the truth of salvation that saved the people of the whole world from sin with always the same gospel content.

In conclusion, the Acts of the Apostles testifies that the gospel of salvation was not completed progressively. The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit records how the word of the gospel—that Jesus Christ completed salvation by having the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, receiving the judgment of sin by being crucified on the Cross, and resurrecting from death—was testified to this world through the faith of the apostles.

The Acts of the Apostles throws the same question today as well. Are we now believing the already completed word of the gospel of salvation? And do you know the fact that that gospel is covering the whole world? Now what we must do is testify to the whole world with faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through this Bible study of the Acts of the Apostles, I hope you enjoy the blessing of becoming closer to the Lord within the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Hallelujah!

Who is the Author of the Acts of the Apostles, and in What Year was the Bible Completed?

The Acts of the Apostles is a historical book recorded after the four Gospels in the New Testament, and is a book that records how the gospel that the apostles believed was propagated to the whole world through the apostles and saints of the early church from after the ascension of Jesus Christ. In order to understand this book correctly, there is a need to first examine the person who recorded it, the era in which it was recorded, and

the historical background in which this book came to be recorded.

The recorder of the Acts of the Apostles is Luke. Luke was a physician and is a figure known as a co-worker of the Apostle Paul. According to the Bible, he is mentioned as the beloved physician in the Epistle to the Colossians and is a person who accompanied Paul's missionary ministry. Also, he is known as a Christian of Gentile origin and is evaluated as a figure who had a very careful and accurate attitude in historical recording. Luke recorded two books in the New Testament. One is the Gospel of Luke and the other is the Acts of the Apostles. These two books can actually be seen as a single continuous historical book of the propagation of the gospel. If the Gospel of Luke is a book recording the events from the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ to the Cross and the resurrection, the Acts of the Apostles is a book recording the process of the gospel being propagated to the world after the resurrection.

The Acts of the Apostles is not a historical book simply recording the beginning of the church. It can be seen as the Acts of the Holy Spirit in which Luke showed how the gospel of the water and the Spirit started in Jerusalem and expanded to the whole world. The overall structure of the Acts of the Apostles is well shown in the word of Acts chapter 1, verse 8. It started from the word where Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, the disciples will receive power and become witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Actually, the content of the Acts of the Apostles is a record of the propagation of the gospel recording how the Holy Spirit worked inside the believers through those who believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostles believed was expanded from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria through the

work of the Holy Spirit, and was eventually testified even to the Gentile world. Within this flow, the Acts of the Apostles is a book showing how the gospel of the water and the Spirit expanded to the whole world following the working of the Holy Spirit.

The era in which the Acts of the Apostles was recorded was the era of the Roman Empire. At that time, the world was in the era of peace of the Roman Empire formed after Augustus. This period is commonly called Pax Romana. In this era, there were a few historical characteristics that played an important role in the propagation of the gospel. First, because the Roman Empire had a highly developed road network, it was possible for the apostles and missionaries to move to various cities and preach the gospel. Also, because the common language of the Mediterranean world at that time was Greek, it was possible to easily preach the gospel even between people of different nations and regions. In addition, the Jews were already living scattered in various regions, and synagogues existed in every city. The Apostle Paul proceeded with his mission in a way of preaching the gospel first to the Jews centered on these synagogues, and after that preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

Regarding the year of recording of the Acts of the Apostles, many scholars generally view it as the early 60s AD. In particular, they estimate that the possibility is high that it was recorded around AD 60. The reason is because the story ends with the scene in the last part of the Acts of the Apostles where the Apostle Paul arrives in Rome and preaches the gospel in a state of house arrest. However, the important events that occurred after that are not recorded. For example, events such as the result of Paul's trial, Paul's martyrdom, Peter's martyrdom, and the persecution of Christianity by Emperor Nero do not appear in the Acts of the Apostles. Because all these events

occurred in the mid-to-late 60s AD, the possibility is high that such persecution had not yet occurred at the time Luke recorded this book. Therefore, many scholars view that the Acts of the Apostles was recorded around AD 60.

The history of the Holy Spirit that the Acts of the Apostles deals with is about 30 to 40 years. Seeing that Jesus' ascension occurred around AD 33, the event of the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost occurred in the same year. After this, the early church was formed and the gospel began to expand. The conversion of the Apostle Paul seems to have occurred roughly between AD 34-36, and after this, Paul's several missionary journeys proceeded between AD 46 and 57. Eventually, Paul comes to arrive in Rome between AD 60 and 61. Therefore, the Acts of the Apostles can be said to be a book recording the church history for about 30 years from roughly AD 30 to 62.

The Acts of the Apostles is the word of God recording the history of the Holy Spirit, going beyond a simple historical record. This book is an important word showing how the gospel of the water and the Spirit was propagated through the faith of the apostles. We come to see through the Acts of the Apostles how the gospel of the water and the Spirit was propagated after the ministry of Jesus. Also, we can confirm how the Holy Spirit guided and worked in God's church. Furthermore, we can also see the process in which the gospel, which at first started centered on the Jews, gradually expanded to the Gentile world. It also appears together with what kind of faith and conviction the apostles preached this gospel within this flow. In particular, the Acts of the Apostles is a record symbolically testifying that the gospel will expand to the whole world, showing the process in which the gospel starts in Jerusalem and eventually reaches even Rome. ☒

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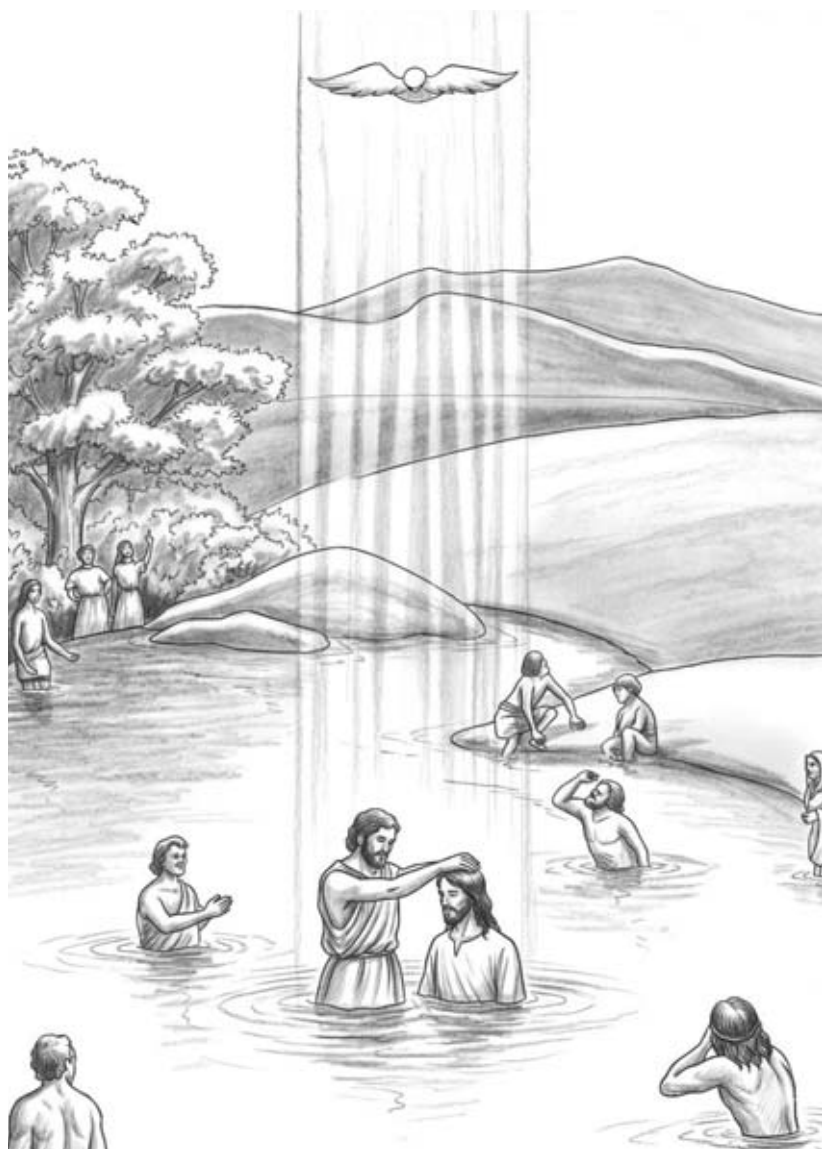
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LESSON

1



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Acts Chapter 1

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 1 testifies that it was not simply the Word of God announcing the start of God's church, but a decisive turning point showing how the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus Christ already completed, is being witnessed within the early church. This chapter is not speaking of a new truth of salvation, but is dealing with the spiritual preparation process to preach the already fulfilled gospel of salvation to the whole world.

Acts 1:1-3, 40 Days After Resurrection: Confirming the Ministry of the Gospel Completed Once for All

“The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”

Luke mentions the former writing and records the things

from when Jesus began to do and teach until the day He was taken up after giving commandments through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. It is recorded that the resurrected Jesus was seen by the disciples for forty days and “*speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*” This period was not a time to add new doctrines, but a time to make the disciples clearly recognize the already accomplished salvation, that is, the event where the gospel of God was confirmed by the resurrection, having been judged for the punishment of sin on the Cross through the structure of having the sins of the world transferred by the baptism Jesus received from John. Acts is not a history of making salvation, but records the state of Jesus’ disciples waiting to witness to the already completed salvation.

Acts 1:4–5, Relationship with the Water Baptism John Gave

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’”

Jesus assembles with the apostles and commands them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised, which they heard from Him. He said, “*For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*” This records that Jesus, having had the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the punishment for sin on the Cross, resurrected from death, and showed the Holy

Spirit as a gift to those who believe. John's water baptism refers to the event where the sins of the world were actually transferred to Jesus' body through the structure of Jesus receiving baptism from John the Baptist and having the sins of the world transferred; and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the record of the work where the Holy Spirit comes upon those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and testifies to that fact. The Holy Spirit is not One who comes to process the sin problem, but refers to the work of the Holy Spirit where the Holy Spirit comes upon the people of faith for whom the punishment for sin has already ended, causing them to witness to the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Acts 1:6-8, Purpose of the Holy Spirit: Witnesses of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Beyond Personal Experience

“Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’”

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things

that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:16-20)

When the disciples gathered, they asked, “*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*” and still placed interest in this-worldly restoration. However, Jesus says that the times and seasons are what the Father has put in His own authority, so it is not for you to know, and tells them the essence of the mission. The Lord proclaims, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” The purpose of the Holy Spirit coming was not for personal ecstasy or the strengthening of religious zeal, but was for the purpose of making them witness to the already accomplished gospel of the water and the Spirit to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:9-11, Announcing the Completion of the Atonement Ministry and the Opening of the Era of the Holy Spirit

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’”

It says, “*Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.*” Jesus’ resurrection and ascension is not a simple

disappearance, but a word announcing that all atonement ministry on earth has been completed. No more repetitive bearing of sin and punishment for sin is needed, and salvation was already completed and fulfilled within the ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist. Two men dressed in white clothes stood by and said, *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”* The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit awakens that it is not a faith of vaguely looking only at the sky, but that must boldly witness to the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has already been accomplished, on this earth.

Acts 1:12-14, The Essence of Waiting: Not Repentance for the Removal of Sin, but Waiting for Ministry

“Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

The disciples returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, went up to the upper room where they were staying, and with one mind devoted themselves entirely to prayer. This waiting was not a time of repenting with tears to obtain the

removal of sin or making a resolution to achieve sanctification. This is because Jesus had already become their Lord by receiving baptism from John to have the sins of the world transferred to Him, receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross, and resurrecting from death. Now, those who became Jesus' disciples were preparing for the full-scale preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit through the promised presence of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:15–26, Qualifications of an Apostle: Requirements for a Witness Who Saw Jesus' Baptism and Resurrection

“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, ‘Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.’ (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) ‘For it is written in the Book of Psalms: “Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it”; and, “Let another take his office.”’ ‘Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.’ And they proposed two: Joseph called

Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, 'You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.' And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

When they were supplementing an apostle to fill the empty seat of Judas Iscariot, the criteria were very strict and clear. Peter says, *"Beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."* The condition of an apostle was not character or zeal, but had to be one who could directly see and witness together to Jesus' ministry of bearing the sins of mankind through baptism and the event of resurrection that confirmed that removal of sin.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 1 presupposes that it was already completed through the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross. It says that the Holy Spirit came to cause this completed word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be witnessed to the whole world, and that the Church of God is not an institution that makes salvation by itself, but was a community of witnesses that preaches the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit of salvation that has already been accomplished. Acts chapter 1 clearly proclaims to us through the historical structure of the gospel that without the foundation of the word called the gospel of the water and the Spirit, true work of the Holy Spirit also cannot exist.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

If we view the words of Acts 1:1–26 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, this chapter is not simply a record of the birth of the church, but a solemn process where God establishes witnesses to testify to the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit of salvation.

Luke reveals in verses 1 through 3, the opening of Acts, that he had already recorded the foundation of the gospel in the Gospel of Luke through the expression “*all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*” The things pertaining to the kingdom of God that He taught while appearing to the disciples for forty days after His resurrection were not a process of creating a new method of salvation. This was a process of revealing to the disciples that Jesus had already taken upon Himself the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, bore the penalty of sin, received it on the Cross, and confirmed that truth of salvation by the resurrection from the dead, thereby making them evangelists.

In verses 4 and 5, Jesus said to the disciples, “*He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father,*” This command to wait for the Holy Spirit implies the necessity of the disciples’ ministry to testify to the already completed salvation. The Holy Spirit is not One who accomplishes atonement by Himself, but One who confirms in our hearts the word of the truth of salvation: that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John and carried them on His body, and paid the wages of sin on the Cross. Therefore, the coming of the Holy Spirit is an event of being clothed with power to boldly testify to the already completed word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In verses 6 through 8, when the disciples asked, “*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*” Jesus turned their attention away from political restoration or timing and declared, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” Here, a witness is not simply one who performs miracles, but speaks of the salvation where Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John and fulfilled the penalty of sin on the Cross. The power of the Holy Spirit is always with the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross, and through this, makes one testify to the gospel of the removal of sin to the whole world.

In verses 9 through 11, when Jesus was taken up into heaven, angels said, “*Why do you stand gazing up into heaven?*”, turning the disciples’ eyes back to the mission on this earth. This states that since Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin, and finished the ministry of salvation by resurrecting from the dead, the mission to testify to that completed word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world has now been entrusted to the Church and the saints. The task left to the saints who wait for the Lord, who will come again in like manner as He went into heaven after resurrecting from the dead and ascending, is to preach the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world.

Finally, in the process of verses 21 and 22 where they established an apostle to replace Judas Iscariot, the condition of an apostle is presented very clearly. It had to be “*Of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went*

in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us.” This emphasizes that the office of an apostle required one who witnessed and believed the fact that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world of mankind by receiving baptism from John, His death on the Cross, and the entire process of resurrection from the dead. The church of Acts was not a gathering of those who only knew the suffering of the Cross, but a community of born-again people who received the removal of sin by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Today, Acts chapter 1 tells us the fact that we must not remain in emotional confessions of the Cross, but must be believing in the perfect gospel of the water and the Spirit where Jesus took charge of the sins of the world by the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and received the judgment of sin on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifying to the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts so that we become convinced that there is no more sin in our hearts—this is the very truth of the only word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostles of the early church preached. Those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit of salvation completed like this are the true witnesses of the gospel today, and through the church preaching this gospel, the work of the kingdom of God continues even at this moment, and the kingdom of God is being expanded. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 1

1. By believing in what gospel does one receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in one's heart?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the gift of the Holy Spirit received from God when one believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John and fulfilled the penalty of sin on the Cross. Therefore, the question “How does one receive it?” is ultimately connected to the question “What word of the gospel does one believe?”

First, the Word of the Bible states that the Subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who have received the removal of sin in their hearts by believing in the Lord who washed away the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and resurrected from the dead. (Acts 2:37–39)

“For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit does not exist separately from the ministry of Jesus Christ's baptism and the ministry of the Cross. Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John and accepted the judgment of sin on the Cross. We receive the Holy Spirit as a gift by being saved from all our sins through believing in this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the New Testament age, regarding the ministry of the gospel of salvation where the

Lord saves us from the sins of the world, those who have received the removal of sin in their hearts by believing in the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the ministry of the Cross receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Therefore, to those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God comes into their hearts as a gift. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Looking at Acts chapter 2, Peter did not say to speak in tongues or to have emotional experiences. He says, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38). The repentance spoken of here is not simple emotional remorse, but a word stating that one must cast aside one’s own thoughts, return to the faith of believing in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the ministry of the Cross, have one’s sins removed, and thereby receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Also, Ephesians 1:13 says this:

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

The Holy Spirit is not given after experiencing some special faith experience, but is a gift of God given as the seal of the Holy Spirit the moment one believes in the gospel of salvation, that is, the baptism Jesus received from John and the judgment of the Cross. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a second blessing, but a gift of God given at the same time as receiving the removal of sin, a seal of the Holy Spirit received by faith.

Therefore, the way to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit can be summarized by the following faith.

First, it is the faith that admits that oneself is a sinner and one who deserves to receive the judgment of sin, and hopes for

God's mercy of salvation.

Second, it is the faith that believes that Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, accepted the penalty of sin on the Cross, and thereby saved all sinners from sin. Since this faith is the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord accepts their faith and, in return, pours the Holy Spirit into their hearts as a gift.

Third, we must know the fact that we receive salvation from our sins once and for all by the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord made, and it is neither salvation obtained by keeping God's law nor salvation obtained by believing in theological doctrines. And the life of faith is no longer asserting one's own fleshly thoughts and self-righteousness, but relying only on the word of the gospel of salvation spoken by the Lord; receiving the Holy Spirit as a gift through the faith believed in the heart and living according to the Lord's will becomes the first step of the life of faith.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an experience-centered life of faith, but is coming to walk with the Holy Spirit in a blessed life of faith achieved by faith believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, do you believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in your hearts? And you must hold onto the basis of the sure word of salvation that caused you to receive the removal of sin in your hearts. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart that has received the removal of sin. When one is born again by believing in the ministry of the water and the blood of Jesus Christ with the heart, the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit who dwells within their hearts.

In conclusion, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not received by praying for a long time, nor is it received through fasting

prayer, nor is it received through the laying on of hands received from people. It is receiving the Holy Spirit as a gift only by the faith that believes in the righteous ministry of Jesus, where Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and accepted the judgment of sin on the Cross.

Therefore, the question is this.

Am I seeking an experience, or am I believing in the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit, or do I know that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a gift of God already given to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

2. By believing in what word of the gospel can one become a faithful disciple of Jesus?

In Acts 1:21-22, it says, *“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”*

In this word, it is saying that in order to fill the place of Judas who was a disciple of Jesus, one must be chosen from among those who have the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, just like Jesus’ disciples. That is, only one who possesses the faith believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who took on the sins of the world through the ministry of the baptism Jesus received from John, accepted the judgment of sin on the Cross, and resurrected from the dead, could truly become a faithful disciple of Jesus.

(※ 3:13-17, John 1:29, John 19:17-30, Hebrews 10:9-18) ☒

LESSON

2



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Acts Chapter 2

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 2 is commonly understood only as the event of the descent of the Holy Spirit, but the center of what the Bible speaks is not the experience of the Holy Spirit itself, but the scene where the gospel of the water and the Spirit was revealed in history for the first time. This chapter records not the day when salvation began, but the day when the word of the already completed salvation was testified before the world.

Acts 2:1-4, The Descent of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit Who Comes After the Removal of Sin

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts Chapter 2 verses 1 through 4 deal with the descent of the Holy Spirit that occurred on Pentecost. The Bible testifies,

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” This coming of the Holy Spirit to this earth is not a descent of the Holy Spirit that happened to solve the problem of man’s sin. They were those who were saved by knowing and believing the fact that the sins of this world were passed onto Jesus through the baptism He received from John, the judgment of sin was fulfilled on the Cross, and God’s righteousness was confirmed through His resurrection from the dead. Therefore, the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not come into the hearts of those who have not received the removal of sin, but comes as the Spirit of witness upon those who already believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Acts 2:5-13, Tongues Become a Proclaimed Sign of Each Nation’s Language

“And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.’ So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine.’”

Acts Chapter 2 verses 5 through 13 record the event where the Holy Spirit caused them to speak in the language of each nation. The Bible records, *“because everyone heard them speak in his own language.”* The essence of these tongues is not a language of personal prayer or evidence showing spiritual superiority. This is a sign that the already completed salvation has been opened toward all nations. It is a scene where humanity, which was scattered by language at the Tower of Babel, is now being called again by one gospel.

Acts 2:14-21, It Has Become the Era of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.’”

In Acts Chapter 2 verses 14 through 21, Peter quotes the Book of Joel and explains that the era of the Holy Spirit has

come. He proclaims, *“That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams”* (Acts 2:17). This prophecy does not speak of a repentance movement or ethical reformation, but points to the era of the testimony of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that will open after the salvation event. When the Holy Spirit comes, visions and dreams do not become the purpose, but the fact of salvation, that the Lord received the baptism from John and had the sins of the world passed onto Him, becomes revealed along with the Cross.

Acts 2:22-24, The Center of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Salvation Accomplished through the Baptism Jesus Received from John and the Sacrifice of the Cross

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

In Acts Chapter 2 verses 22 through 24, Peter clearly testifies to the center of the gospel. He says, *“you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death.”* This sermon on the Cross is not a story of sacrifice floating in the air. In the preceding context, the fact that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world by receiving baptism in the Jordan River is presupposed.

The Cross is not the place to shoulder sin, but the place where judgment was received on behalf of the sins already shouldered.

Acts 2:32-36, He Made Him Both Lord and Christ

“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’ ‘Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’”

In Acts Chapter 2 verses 32 through 36, Peter declares that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ. He says, *“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* This does not mean that Jesus made an effort to become Lord, nor does it mean that He became Lord through people’s faith. It is the word that Jesus Christ is the One who completed our salvation by having the sins of the world passed onto Him through the baptism He received from John, receiving the punishment for sin on the Cross, and resurrecting from the dead.

Acts 2:37, “What Shall We Do?”: The Shock of Those Who Realize the Salvation Already Completed

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”

In Acts Chapter 2 verse 37, the crowd responds, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” This saying is not an explosion of guilt or a request for a prayer of repentance. It is the shock that their sins have been resolved through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Acts 2:38, Be Baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ and Receive the Remission of Sins

“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.””

In Acts Chapter 2 verse 38, Peter says, “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*” Here, the word to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and receive the remission of sins is a demand for the faith that because Jesus received the transfer of the sins of the world by being baptized by John, He saved us by receiving the judgment for sin on the Cross. That is, it means one must receive the remission of sins by believing in the truth that the baptism Jesus received from John is the fact that the sins of the world were transferred onto Jesus’ body, and that He already took the judgment for those sins by hanging on the Cross and shedding His blood.

Acts 2:41-47, The Birth of God’s Church: The Community of Those Who Have Received the Remission of Sins

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized;

and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Acts Chapter 2 verses 41 through 47 show the birth of the church. The early church is not a community struggling to achieve sanctification. They were a community where those whose remission of sins was already finished gathered together to live a life of faith. As a result, boldness of faith and the spreading of the gospel appeared through them, and the number of people being saved increased day by day.

Conclusion: The Historical Fact of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 2 testifies to the fact that the Holy Spirit comes after the remission of sins. The center of the gospel is not a subjective experience but a historical event, and repentance is not an outburst of emotion but a turning of faith. The church is not a place that manufactures salvation, but a community that testifies to the salvation already completed. When the gospel of the water and the Spirit is proclaimed, the work of the Holy Spirit surely follows, and the work of the Holy Spirit always flows only in the direction of testifying to Jesus' baptism and the

Cross. This is the actual structure of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Acts Chapter 2 speaks of.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 2 verses 1 through 47 is commonly called the event of the descent of the Holy Spirit, but if we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, it shows how the salvation already completed appears as evidence in people's hearts, beyond simply a record of the Spirit's presence. Acts Chapter 2 clearly testifies that the beginning of the church was not human emotion, experience, or organization, but solely the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, and the disciples were gathered together in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus had already taken upon Himself all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, and He completed eternal salvation by receiving the judgment for those sins on the Cross and resurrecting from death. Therefore, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is a work of evidence confirming by the power of the Holy Spirit the fact that the salvation already accomplished is true.

When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, the gathered people were amazed, saying, "*And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?*" The important point here is that the reason the people were amazed was not because of the

mysterious phenomenon itself, but because they heard the wonderful works of God in their own languages. The wonderful works of God mean not the tongues themselves, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed through Jesus Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit always guides people's gaze to Christ's ministry of salvation.

Peter, in front of the misunderstanding crowds, quoted the prophecy of the prophet Joel and placed the center of his sermon solely on Jesus Christ. He did not explain emotions or mystical experiences but proclaimed that "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst." Underlying Peter's sermon is the premise that Jesus received baptism in the Jordan River to have the sins of the world transferred to Him and received the judgment for sin on the Cross. Being filled with the Holy Spirit refers not to raising one's voice, but to the state of clearly knowing how perfect the salvation Jesus accomplished is and preaching it by faith.

Now when they heard Peter's sermon, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This pricking is not simple moral guilt, but a reaction of truth realizing that Jesus, whom they had denied, is the true Savior. The Holy Spirit is not One who came to make people cry sentimentally, but One who makes them realize the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Accordingly, Peter exhorted, "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" Here, repentance is not an act of washing away sin, but turning from wrong faith, and baptism is not a condition of salvation, but is received as a confession of faith of those who believe in the gospel of the remission of sins accomplished by water and blood.

On that day about three thousand souls were added, and the early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. The driving force that allowed them to divide their possessions, eat their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, and praise God was only one thing. It was because they had the assurance that the problem of their sins was completely resolved through the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross. The community that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes filled with joy and boldness that the world cannot handle.

Acts Chapter 2 asks us today as what we understand the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the heat of emotion but the Witness of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and being filled with the Holy Spirit is not the magnitude of experience but the confession of faith that the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross have eternally resolved all my sins. It is that Jesus received baptism from John to have the sins of the world transferred to Him and took the judgment for sin on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit confirms this in the hearts of those who believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Bible says that the heart of the one who believes this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is truly the one filled with the Holy Spirit. It says that the church preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the very Church of God.

Regarding the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit that Peter Preached to the Jews in Acts 2:38-47

The word from Acts Chapter 2 verses 38 through 47 is not a scene where Peter presented a new method to obtain salvation to the Jews, but a scene where he clearly explained and testified to

the gospel of the water and the Spirit that was already revealed in the Bible. Viewed from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Peter's sermon is not a legalistic sermon demanding emotional urges for repentance or deeds, but contains a clear gospel declaration regarding what you were believing wrongly and what you must believe now.

In the word where Peter cried out, "Repent," repentance does not simply mean to confess sins while crying a lot. Since the Jews were already a people who offered sacrifices daily under the law and sought atonement, the repentance Peter spoke of means not a repentance of deeds but a turning of the direction of faith. This was a powerful message to return to the bosom of Jesus by believing the truth that while saying they waited for the Messiah, they denied Jesus who actually came, and that He received baptism from John to have the sins of the world transferred to Him and went to the Cross.

Following this, it was said that each person should be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and obtain the remission of sins. The reason the Jews received baptism after hearing Peter's sermon was because they were able to have the faith believing that Jesus is the Savior who gave salvation by receiving baptism from John to have the sins of the world transferred to His body and receiving the judgment for sin on the Cross. The faith believing in the baptism Jesus received from John—especially the baptism John gave to Jesus' body—contained the concept of the laying on of hands that transfers the sins of the people once for all, just like in the Old Testament Day of Atonement sacrifices. Therefore, this word had to be viewed as faith that believes the fact that Jesus already took upon your sins through the baptism in the Jordan River and publicly confesses that faith through baptism.

Then, to the question of when the remission of sins was accomplished, the Bible presents a clear answer. It is that the remission of sins did not happen at Pentecost, but was already completed when Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River to have the sins of the world transferred to His body and received the judgment for sin regarding those sins on the Cross. In the New Testament, Pentecost is the day the Holy Spirit testified to the fact that the completed remission of sins is true, and it is the gospel where Peter could proclaim to believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and receive the remission of sins because the problem of sin was already finished before God.

Even in the word, “and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” the order of salvation appears clearly. It speaks that only when one believes in the baptism Jesus received from John by which He took upon the sins of the world and the bloodshed on the Cross, does one receive the remission of sins and at the same time the Holy Spirit comes into their heart. The Holy Spirit does not come to a person who has sin remaining in their heart, but is the Holy Spirit who comes to confirm that salvation has been accomplished to those who believe the fact that the sins of the world have been washed away solely by Jesus’ ministry. The role of the Holy Spirit was always the Spirit of God who engraves into the believing heart that it has been testified through the word of God that the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross have completely resolved all our sins of the world.

The declaration that “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call,” shows the certainty of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The truth of salvation accomplished by the baptism Jesus received from John and the punishment of the Cross is not limited to a specific era or people but applies equally to all peoples. The method of salvation from sin never changes, and

the three witnesses of the water, the blood, and the Spirit are always testified together in human history and confirm the salvation obtained by faith.

The appearance of the community described in the latter part of Acts Chapter 2, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, eating their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, is the characteristic of God's Church. The driving force that allowed them to voluntarily divide their possessions and live praising was derived from the assurance that the problem of their sins was completely resolved once for all and the food of faith that they are no longer condemned before God. Because they escaped from the burden of sin and obtained the assurance of salvation, they were able to surely enjoy the life of faith inside the Kingdom of God with joy without fear.

Ultimately, the core of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Peter preached is the fact that Jesus, whom you judged looking only at the Cross, was the Lamb of God who took upon the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John. The problem of the punishment for sin was already finished on the Cross as Jesus received baptism from John and had the sins of the world transferred to Him once for all, and the Holy Spirit testifies to the fact that this gospel of the water and the Spirit is true. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the early church propagated, and it showed that only those who believe this truth could receive true remission of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 2

1. How did the tongues of the Holy Spirit of the early church appear?

“And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.’ So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine’” (Acts 2:8-13)

In this word, it means that the citizens of 15 countries who had already come and were dwelling in the nation of Israel understood the tongues that Jesus’ disciples were speaking as the language of their own countries. Regarding why tongues were needed during the time of the early church, we can know through this word.

First, it is that God made them speak in tongues for the propagation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In this age, there are translators who translate the languages of each country so there is no need for that, but in the time of the early church, because such a translation system was not established, when preaching the gospel to people of each country, by speaking tongues God specially gave, the listeners had to understand in the language of their own country. Tongues were the work of God.

Second, there are tongues where an individual converses directly with God. Such tongues are not to be done before the public but are to be done when one prays alone. Regarding tongues, one may do them or may not do them, but doing them so that it becomes beneficial to others is biblical.

2. Is the work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost recorded in Acts Chapter 2 a fulfillment of the prophecy of the Old Testament?

It is the word found in Joel Chapter 2, verse 28 and following in the Old Testament.

“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls” (Joel 2:28-32).

This word is quoted in Acts Chapter 2, verses 17-21.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above And

signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved” (Acts 2:17-21).

What was the gift of the Holy Spirit that an individual receives in the New Testament era?

Unlike the word of prophecy promising to send the Holy Spirit in Joel Chapter 2, verses 28-29 of the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit given to each individual is the gift of the Holy Spirit received through faith in Jesus Christ, who took over the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, resurrected from death, and became our Savior. The Holy Spirit that believers receive now in the New Testament era is the Holy Spirit received when one has received the remission of sins through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is to be received as a gift when there is faith believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the heart. The basis for this is recorded in Acts Chapter 2, verses 38-41.

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” ☒

LESSON

3

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 3

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 3 is not merely for the purpose of testing the power of the Holy Spirit, but it shows how the already completed ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ is applied and testified within the actual life of a human being and the history of Israel. This Chapter 3 became a scene showing whether the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which caused sin and curse to end, saved a sinner from helplessness.

Acts 3:1–10, The Man Lame from Birth: The Human Spiritual State Revealed Before Healing

“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, ‘Look at us.’ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of

Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

Acts 3:1 through 10 shows the fundamental spiritual state of humans revealed before healing through the man who could not walk from birth. The person in front of the Beautiful Gate could not walk from birth, and although he sat in front of the temple gate, he was one who sought only silver and gold from people. This showed that although the temple was near, he could not enter into the bosom of God because of sin, and although there were religious acts, he was in a state of not having been delivered from sin.

Acts 3:6, “Silver and gold I do not have”: Shows that the gospel of the water and the Spirit became the solution that solves the realistic problem of sin

“Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’”

In Acts 3:6, Peter proclaims, *“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”* What the apostles delivered was not simple charity, consolation, or religious encouragement, but the work of delivering the Lord who received baptism from John to have the sins of the world passed onto Him and was crucified on the Cross to save us from the judgment of sin.

Acts 3:11–16, The Source of Power: It Was Power Obtained Not by the Apostle’s Godliness but by the Name of Jesus Christ

“Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: ‘Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.’”

In Acts Chapter 3, verses 11 through 16, Peter makes it clear that the source of this miracle is not the apostles’ individual power or life of godliness. He asks, *“As though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?”* and testifies that the basis of the miracle lies solely in the name of that Jesus whom you crucified. The Cross mentioned here is the salvation where Jesus received the transfer of the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John and accomplished the judgment of sin on the Cross, and Peter testified by binding this entire salvation event into one.

Acts 3:17–18, Sins Committed in Ignorance and the Fulfillment of God’s Plan

“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

In Acts Chapter 3, verses 17 through 18, Peter says that although Israel did so because they did not know, Jesus Christ accomplished at once the salvation of mankind that God had spoken of beforehand. This shows that human ignorance could not block God’s ministry of salvation, and it is saying that God the Father’s plan accomplished the salvation of mankind without an inch of error within the power of Jesus, who received the baptism from John and received the judgment of sin on the Cross and resurrected from death.

Acts 3:19, “Repent therefore and be converted,”: A Conversion of Faith, Not Emotional Wailing

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”

In Acts Chapter 3, verse 19, Peter exhorts, *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”* Here, repentance is not emotional wailing shedding tears or repetitive confession of sins. This means it is comprised of a confession of faith turning from the thought that “we are still sinners” to the belief that “our sins have already been dealt with because Jesus received the transfer of the sins of the world through the ministry of receiving baptism from John and received the punishment of

sin on the Cross.” Also, receiving the ‘blotting out of sins’ is not something one makes by striving with prayers of repentance from now on, but it means that Jesus has already saved sinners from sin through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Acts 3:20–21, Rest Coming Through the True Gospel That Reconciles Us with the Lord

“And that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

Acts Chapter 3, verses 20 through 21, mentions the “times of restoration” of all things. This restoration says that through the providence of salvation prepared from before the foundation of the world, He allowed the word of the gospel of true blotting out of sins. The restoration of faith that believes in such a word of the gospel means the true rest and salvation enjoyed by those whose atonement has ended. Jesus is the One testifying to the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through which one is saved by believing in Jesus who went to the Cross with the baptism received from John to have the sins of the world transferred to Him and received the punishment for sin.

Acts 3:22–26, Fulfillment of Moses’ Prophecy: Jesus Christ Who Became the End of the Law

“For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you

shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

In Acts Chapter 3, verses 22 through 26, Peter quotes Moses and says, *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren.”* The core of this word of declaration is that the reality of the Savior whom the Law pointed to was indeed Jesus Christ. If God’s Law revealed people’s sins, the ministry of the baptism Jesus received from John reveals Jesus who took upon Himself the sins of this world. And the Cross speaks of the fact that He took the punishment of sin to receive judgment for all those sins, and the resurrection testifies that He clearly showed God’s righteousness.

Conclusively, Acts Chapter 3 says the fact that although humans could not enter into the holy temple by themselves, the gospel of the water and the Spirit became the fundamental solution that ended human sin and curse. Physical healing is not the purpose in itself but a sign showing the truth of completed salvation, and repentance is a conversion of faith by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because the sins of the world were transferred to Jesus’ body through the ministry of the baptism Jesus received from John and the punishment of sin ended with the death on the Cross, now the name of Jesus Christ becomes the power of the gospel of salvation that takes upon all sins of all humans and delivers them from the judgment of sin.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 3, verses 1 through 26, appears superficially as a surprising miracle story where a lame man stands up, but if we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, it shows that it becomes a scene manifesting the power of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that clearly testifies to what true salvation is before Israel, rather than the miracle itself. God showed that through this salvation event, He was desiring to give the blessing of solving the problem of sin, which is much more fundamental than physical disease.

When Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, they saw a disabled man who could not walk from birth sitting in front of the Beautiful Gate of the temple. This man was a disabled person who stayed at the place closest to the temple but could never enter inside the temple; through this, God showed the spiritual state of a sinner under God's Law and indicated that He saved this soul by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The people of Israel stayed within the temple sacrificial system, but the word of God's Law could not actually make perfect the sinner who would be destroyed due to his own sins, and sins of the world were remembered daily and sacrifices were only repeated, but it could not bring true salvation to their hearts. The lame man in front of the temple gate was showing the image of our very selves who were sinners unable to have the problem of our own sins solved under the Law.

When the begging man looked at Peter and John, expecting to receive something, Peter proclaimed, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," and he gained strength in his ankles and stood up. Peter wanted to deliver the ministry of Jesus

Christ who solved the problem of sin and death which is most urgent to humans, rather than fulfilling a person's temporary expectation. They were disciples of Jesus who wanted to make that person rise and obtain salvation by the power of Jesus Christ, who had the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism Jesus received from John, was hung on the Cross to receive the punishment for sin, and resurrected from death. What Peter had was not gold and silver, but the gospel of Jesus Christ who had the sins of the world transferred to His body by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment of sin on the Cross, and then resurrected from death.

It is said that as the man stood up, walked and leaped, and praised God, all the people saw him walking and praising God and were filled with wonder and amazement. The important point here is that the purpose for which God allowed this miracle was not to tie people's eyes to a mysterious phenomenon, but that He used it as a door of evangelism to preach the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The true miracle is the faith believing in the power of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the blessing of obtaining the blotting out of sins obtained by faith. If only the miracle of healing the sick remains in our ministry and the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished by Jesus does not take place, such ministry becomes of no benefit before God.

When the people were amazed and looked intently at Peter and John, they immediately deflected their gaze, saying, "*Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?*" Apostle Peter knew that all this did not happen because of human ability or the office of an apostle, and testified immediately. Peter emphasized that God the Father raised up Jesus whom you denied and killed, and testified that this Jesus

was indeed Jesus Christ who received baptism from John the Baptist to have the sins of the world transferred, carried them on His own body, and received the punishment of sin on the Cross.

Peter urged the Jews, saying, *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”* The repentance here also was not emotional remorse, but discarding the wrong understanding about the Messiah and testifying that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gave true salvation to the believers by receiving baptism from John to have the sins of the world transferred to Him, dying after receiving the punishment of sin on the Cross, and resurrecting. The Jews, while waiting for their Messiah, did not know and could not believe the fact that Jesus who actually came to this earth became the true Savior by taking upon the sins of the world through the ministry of the baptism received from John, dying on the Cross, and resurrecting, so even now they are not saved from their own sins. Because they did not know the true meaning of Jesus’ baptism and the ministry of the Cross, they are still waiting for the Messiah even now. Peter was desiring that they turn from the wrong view of salvation and experience by faith the blessing of salvation where the soul becomes new.

Therefore, this gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a new doctrine that suddenly appeared in the world, but the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan in which Jesus Christ, who came to this earth as already prophesied through Moses and all the prophets, took upon the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist and completed that salvation through the Cross and resurrection. The baptism Jesus received from John was to take upon our human sins, not a baptism received because He was humble; the Cross was to receive the punishment of sin; and the resurrection from death is the completion of God’s great plan.

The last declaration, *“To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities”* (Acts 3:26), was an invitation of salvation to turn away and discard the wrong view of salvation before moral defects, and obtain salvation from all sins by believing in Jesus Christ’s baptism and the ministry of the Cross.

Acts Chapter 3 is telling us today that we must not be the disabled person staying only in front of the temple gate, but must actually believe with the heart the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit given to us by the Lord and enter into Jesus Christ. We must know that while acts of the Law and religion can keep a person sitting in front of the temple gate, the faith believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the Cross is saying to save all sinners from the curse of the Law and receive true salvation through the gospel of the grace of the blotting out of sins. The word of the gospel of true salvation is the faith believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit through which a sinful soul can receive salvation from his own sins beyond physical healing, and he who believes this word of the gospel receives true salvation by believing in God’s righteousness, becoming a man of faith who can praise the Triune God and boldly go forward before God.

Sermon on the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit that Removed People’s Sins Appearing in Acts 3:19–26

The passage from Acts 3:19 to 26 is one of the texts that most clearly explains how the ministry of Jesus Christ actually removed people’s sins. Interpreting this passage from the

perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, the blotting out of sins proclaimed by Peter is not mere emotional comfort or an exhortation to repent, but a declaration to accept the reality of sin that was actually removed through the ministry of Jesus Christ in history.

Peter cried out, *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out”* (Acts 3:19). Here, repentance is not a demand to regret sins more deeply or reflect morally, but an evangelical call to thoroughly turn from the direction of religious faith to the direction of faith believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Jews at that time kept the Law and offered sacrifices while waiting for the Messiah, but they did not believe in Jesus Christ, whom God the Father sent, as their Messiah. Therefore, the word to turn away was God’s command to depart from the wrong view of salvation based on the Law and their own acts, and return into the gospel of the water and the Spirit already completed by God the Father through Jesus Christ.

The important thing is the substantive issue: when, where, and how were people’s sins eliminated? The Bible shows that all of man’s sins are not wiped away by human acts of repentance or tears, but have already been resolved by the righteous ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River in the land of Israel, thereby having the sins of the world transferred onto His body, and He took all the punishment of the sins of the world and the judgment of sin upon Himself on the Cross. Like this, because Jesus received baptism from John to transfer the sins of the world onto His body and took the judgment of sin on the Cross, we become those who can receive true removal of sins by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

In the word, *“so that times of refreshing may come from the*

presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19), the ‘refreshing’ refers to the word of salvation that brings spiritual salvation beyond physical recovery or emotional goodness. The ministry of Jesus receiving baptism from John and the judgment of sin through the shedding of blood on the Cross became the truth that brings true salvation to those who believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the One who came to confirm in our hearts right now this fact, that is, the truth of salvation that the sins of the world were ended by Jesus’ ministry of righteousness, and it says that this could be confirmed within the work of the Holy Spirit.

Peter also said, “*whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things*” (Acts 3:21), explaining the soteriological meaning of Jesus’ ascension. This means that Jesus ascended to heaven because He perfectly finished the ministry of atonement. Jesus’ resurrection and ascension itself was like God’s public declaration that He had completely resolved the problem of mankind’s sin. If one believes in Jesus as the Savior even now but the problem of his sin remains even a little, he must be saved by believing that Jesus is the Lord who washed away all sins by receiving baptism from John to have the sins of the world transferred, and believing the fact that Jesus took all the judgment of sin for us by dying on the Cross.

It must be known that this gospel of the water and the Spirit did not appear suddenly, but existed from the time of the Early Church through Jesus Christ, the Savior promised from the Old Testament era, like the prophecy, “*For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren.’*” (Acts 3:22). If the sacrificial system of the Old Testament was a shadow that temporarily covered the sinner’s sins, then if one believes that Jesus Christ is the Savior who removed the sins of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist to have the sins of the world

transferred onto His body and hanging on the Cross with blood, one becomes a person who receives eternal removal of sins. This truth is what all the prophets from Samuel onward also testified to; they were waiting for the day this gospel of salvation would be preached, and were pointing to Jesus Christ, who became our Savior by having all of humanity's sins transferred through the ministry of baptism Jesus received from John, and by dying shedding blood on the Cross.

Lastly, it is the word, *“To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities”* (Acts 3:26). One must know what the greatest blessing God gives is. That blessing is not material things, honor, or power, but the faith to obtain salvation from all our sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that saved humans from the sins of the world. That we turn away from wickedness refers to the faith of obtaining salvation by abandoning one's own righteousness, abandoning one's own unbelief as well, and returning to the gospel of salvation that Jesus accomplished on the Cross by receiving baptism from John to have the sins of the world transferred.

Ultimately, the word that Acts 3:19-26 testifies to is the faith that the sins of the world do not disappear by human will or effort, but that Jesus Christ saved us eternally by having the sins of the world transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John, and receiving the judgment of sin through the blood shed by hanging on the Cross for the punishment of all sins. The Holy Spirit testifies in the heart of the one who believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that is already completed, and says that the one who believes this truth of salvation has entered into the grace of standing before God as one who has already received the blotting out of sins. The truth

of salvation is exactly the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Apostle Peter preached, and it is also the gospel of the true truth of salvation that we must believe and preach today. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 3

1. When we believe in Jesus, what does the faith of repenting, turning back, and receiving the removal of sins refer to? (※Acts 3:19)

The repentance spoken of here refers to receiving salvation through the faith of abandoning our thoughts and believing that the Lord had the sins of the world transferred onto Him through the ministry of baptism He received from John, and went to the Cross to be nailed and shed blood for the punishment of sin. Repentance is not done with the mouth, but it speaks of the repentance of obtaining salvation by realizing one's wrong thoughts and accepting into the heart the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit of salvation that the Lord gave us.

For all of us to receive salvation from our own sins, we must believe that He became our Savior not by us doing something to obtain salvation, but only by turning from our sins and our wrong thoughts and believing in the baptism the Lord received from John and the blood of the Cross. It is the fact that we must not believe and rely on human theological doctrines, the assertions of each denomination, or experiences of one's own faith, other than the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit spoken of in the Bible's word. We become those who can be saved through the faith believing in the baptism the Lord received from John and the blood of the Cross.

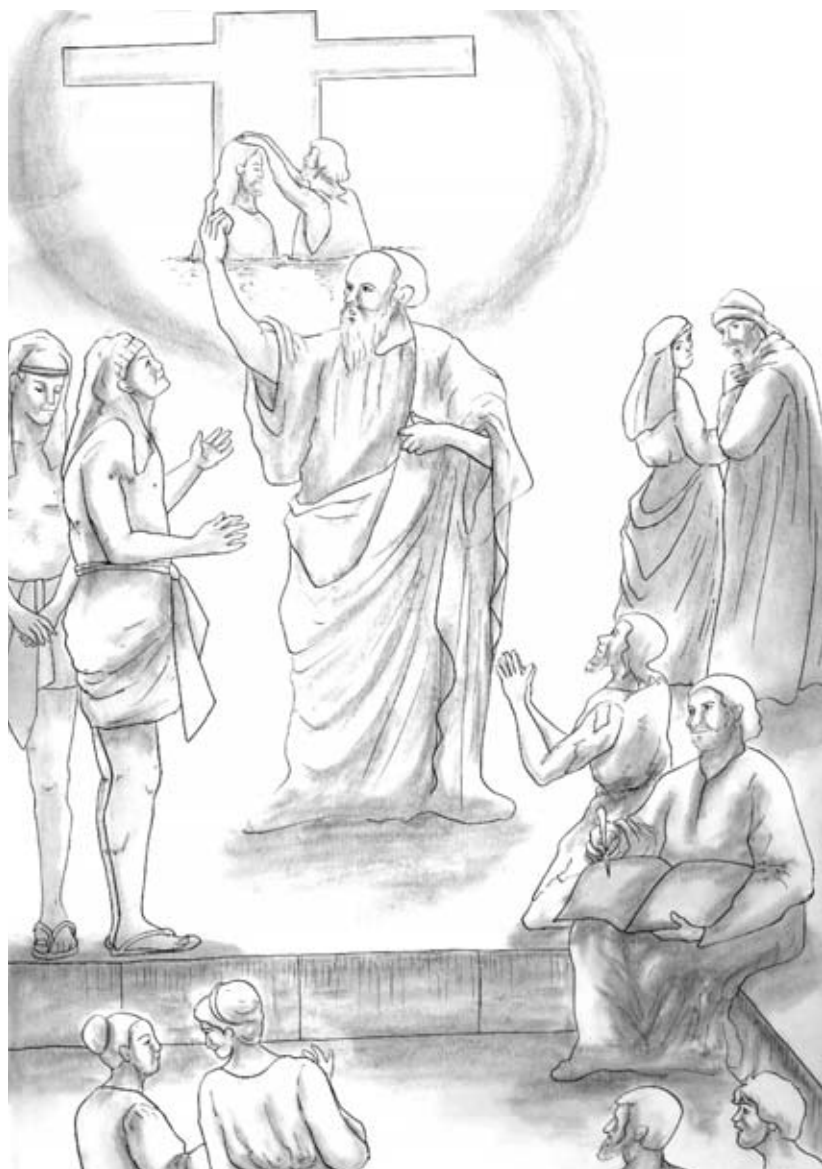
For us to receive salvation from the sins of the world, we must believe according to the structure of faith: believing in this

structure where Jesus had the sins of the world transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John, and then believing that He hung on the Cross and took the judgment for our sins.

✧If you want to know more about the gospel of the water and the Spirit, please refer to and read Paul C. Jong's book, "Have You Truly Been Born Again of Water and the Spirit? [New Revised Edition]" www.bjnewlife.org ✉

LESSON

4



You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 4

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 4 does not stay in the emotional scene called being filled with the Holy Spirit, but shows the historical moment where the faith believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit collides head-on with public authority and religious authority for the first time. This chapter shows us what kind of attitude the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which the problem of sin is already resolved, produces in front of the threat of the world.

Acts 4:1–4, The Beginning of Persecution: Regarding the Resistance Brought by the Content of the Gospel!

“Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”

In Acts 4 verses 1 through 4, the reason the disciples were

arrested was not simply because they healed a sickness, but because they preached “*preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*” This was a declaration that the authority of the sins of the world and death had already ended within Jesus. Especially, this proclamation of resurrection speaks of the completed truth of salvation that Jesus took on the sins of the world by receiving the baptism John gave at the Jordan River, and after receiving judgment for the punishment of all those sins on the Cross, lived again from death.

Acts 4:5–12, Testimony before the Council: Jesus Christ who gave the name by which we can obtain salvation, though it cannot be obtained by anyone else

“And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ‘By what power or by what name have you done this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the “stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.” Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’”

Peter does not make excuses before the Council but states the

reality of the event. He says that this man became healthy by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified to death and whom God raised, and firmly proclaims, “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*” Here, he is testifying that Jesus Christ saved us who believe by having the sins of the world transferred through the baptism received from John and receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross. Therefore, it means He became the One who ended the sins of the world eternally by resurrecting from death.

Acts 4:13, Saying that the source of boldness was the assurance of the removal of sins obtained by believing in Jesus Christ as the Savior

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”

The council members thought the apostles were uneducated common men, but were greatly surprised seeing the boldness of their faith. They come to know that the faith these men had did not come from religious training or character, but originated from “the confirmed faith that the removal of sins was already ended within the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.” This is because the baptism Jesus received from John and the judgment of sin received through the punishment of the Cross brought the faith that saved us from all our sins.

Acts 4:18–22, We see the attitude of unyielding faith regarding the command prohibiting the preaching of the gospel

“So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’ So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.”

The Council of Israel commands them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, trying to control the gospel. Regarding this, the apostles clarify the priority of authority, saying, *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.”* Because the authority of God, who has already completed salvation, is not an object that can compromise with human authority, the apostles answer, *“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”*

Acts 4:23–31, The prayer of the community: Supplication not for the change of environment but for the preaching of the gospel

“And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: ‘Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of

Your servant David have said: “Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.”’ ‘For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Immediately after the persecution, the church, instead of praying to remove the persecution, supplicates to make the hearts of the servants bold so that they may preach God’s word. Such prayer speaks of faith based on the ground of faith filled with assurance that the already written word of God is being fulfilled. As a result, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Here, the filling of the Holy Spirit is not a simple heightening of emotion but “the work of the Holy Spirit receiving re-confirmation of the assurance of the gospel.”

Acts 4:32–37, The fruit of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the aggregate of spiritual faith

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of

the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."

The having all things in common of the early church is not a forced distribution but a fruit that appeared as a result of becoming free from the bondage of sin and possession. When the problem of sin is resolved by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, condemnation and competition in sin disappear and it appears in sharing that loves brothers. The devotion of Barnabas selling his field and placing it at the apostles' feet was also not a means to obtain the filling of the Holy Spirit but "a natural result of the Holy Spirit working within the one who is already saved."

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 4 shows that although the gospel of the water and the Spirit calls for the resistance of the world, those who have the assurance of the removal of sins can never remain silent. Boldness does not come from personality but from the assurance of the gospel, and the filling of the Holy Spirit makes one remain as a witness revealing the completed salvation before the world. Because Jesus had the sins of the world transferred onto Jesus' body through the baptism He received from John, and because He ended the judgment of sin by being nailed to the Cross, the apostles could stand boldly even before worldly authority and testify to the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 4 verses 1 to 37 contains the scene where the gospel collides head-on with worldly authority for the first time, and this is a stern test where the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit reveals the true righteousness of God, going beyond the record that the church began to receive persecution. Looking at this word from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Acts chapter 4 clearly shows why they could not remain silent to that extent, before the boldness or community spirit the apostles possessed.

The reason Peter and John were seized was not simply because they healed a sick person, but because the authorities disliked that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. At that time, the Jewish religious leaders were keeping their authority by maintaining the law and the temple sacrificial system, but the apostles proclaimed the truth of salvation that the removal of sins is no longer a repeated sacrifice, but that all removal of sins has already been completed through the salvation ministry of Jesus Christ. This gospel, that Jesus took the punishment of sin by having the sins of the world transferred onto His body by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, and received it on the Cross and confirmed salvation through resurrection, was shaking the foundation of the existing Jewish religious system.

The next day, rulers, elders, and scribes gathered in Jerusalem and asked the apostles, “By what power or by what name have you done this?” Peter did not try to defend himself or explain the miracle, but answered, “*That by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.*” And

saying, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,” he proclaimed that the way of salvation is only one. This was a declaration coming from the assurance that the method to remove man’s sin is not human deeds or zeal, but only the ministry Jesus accomplished with water and blood.

The council members thought Peter and John were originally uneducated common men, but seeing them speak boldly, they marveled. The boldness of the apostles did not originate from temperament but from the assurance that their own sins were completely ended by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A person who has obtained freedom from the problem of sin does not worry about what people think or shrink before authority, and possesses boldness that has nothing to lose because he has already been justified before God. Although the Council threatened them and warned them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, the apostles answered, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge,” saying, “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

After being released, the apostles went to their companions and reported the threats of the Council, and together with one accord raised their voices to God and prayed. They did not ask to remove the threats or to guarantee safety, but supplicated, “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word.” This was because they knew it was extremely natural for the gospel to collide with the world, and when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. The filling of the Holy Spirit here was not an emotional heightening but a practical power making them testify to the completed

gospel more clearly.

The end of Acts chapter 4 concludes with the appearance of sharing where the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, had all things in common, and not one said that any of the things he possessed was his own. As the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, the multitude received great grace and formed a community where there was no needy person. This was not moral coercion or a system, but the fruit of the same faith that the problem of sin was resolved. It is the result of the gospel where there is no longer a reason to hold onto “my own” because they are those who have already received everything before God.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 4 asks us today why we preach this gospel and why we cannot remain silent. This is because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a doctrine that can be compromised, but the gospel of life that God has already completed. A person who truly knows this gospel does not retreat before any threat and testifies by faith to the power of salvation accomplished by the baptism and Cross of Jesus Christ. This is exactly the true appearance of the church shown by Acts chapter 4 and the essence of faith we must recover.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Preached by Paul C. Jong Based on the Word of Acts 4:11-12

The word from Acts chapter 4 verses 11 to 12 is a core passage showing how clear and absolute the gospel of the early church was, and this is a stern declaration proclaiming what the only way of salvation determined by God is, going beyond a simple religious assertion. Looking at this word from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit testified in

the Bible word, we can know that Peter's confession is not an expression of personal conviction but a clear testimony to the reality of the gospel of the truth of salvation already completed in history.

Peter proclaimed, *"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'"* Here, the builders refer to the Jewish religious leaders who were entrusted with the law, managed the temple, and prided themselves on knowing the word of God best. They waited earnestly for the Messiah, but because Jesus did not set human deeds as a condition for salvation but chose the method of receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross by having the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, they rejected that gospel where there was no place for their own merits to stand, and rejected Jesus. However, God revealed that the standard of salvation lies only in God's plan by making that stone, rejected by human judgment, the chief cornerstone which is the foundation of salvation.

The following declaration, *"Nor is there salvation in any other,"* is never an arrogant monopoly but an inevitable conclusion that accurately penetrates the essence of the sin problem. Human sin is not something that can be repented of with words or offset by good deeds, nor is it a problem that can be covered up by religious acts. Sin is resolved only when it is surely transferred to someone and the judgment worthy of it is carried out. The One who can do this momentous task is only Jesus Christ, and because He alone had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John and paid the price of that sin once and for all on the Cross, Peter boldly proclaimed this only way.

In the word saying, *"For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* the name

means not a simple title but the specific ministry of salvation and authority He performed. Contained within the name of Jesus are the ministry of taking on the sins of the world through the baptism given by John, the ministry of receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross, and all the works of confirming salvation through resurrection from death. Because no other name or religious object that does not possess the witness of the water, the blood, and the Spirit can give the remission of sins to humans, God gave only that name.

Even today, many people speak of Jesus, but we can see that they are stingy in knowing Jesus as the Savior who had the sins of the world transferred to Him through the ministry of baptism received from John and received the punishment of our sins on the Cross. In the gospel where Jesus was baptized by John and went to the Cross, the truth clearly explaining how the sins of this world actually disappeared is present together. However, because people do not know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by Jesus, they still consider themselves sinners and live wandering without the assurance of salvation, falling into religious doctrines of begging for forgiveness every day. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit completely excludes human pride and merit, it rather becomes a stumbling block to many, but it makes us know that only this gospel of salvation becomes the powerful gospel that causes everyone to be saved completely from the sins of the world.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 4 verses 11 and 12 ask us on what foundation of the gospel we are standing and by what name we are speaking of salvation. Salvation is not one of many options but the single way of life prepared by God. Because the sins of the world were transferred to Jesus' body through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the judgment of sin was judged by the Cross, it has been confirmed that the believer has

been saved from sin. Besides this gospel, there is no other name to remove sin. This is the reason why the early church risked their lives and did not remain silent, and it is the unchanging truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we must hold onto today. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 4

1. What is the difference in the Bible between the religion of the Jews and the gospel that saved mankind from sin through the faith believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross?

In the Bible, the religion of the Jews and the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by receiving baptism from John and shedding blood on the Cross, are fundamentally different in their starting points and centers. Outwardly, both speak of God, but they have completely different directions in the method of resolving sin and the way to reach righteousness.

1) The religion centered on the law and the faith centered on the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

The religion of the Jews was formed centering on the law. The law given by God is holy and good, but it was not given for humans to keep and become righteous, but was given to make them realize the sins of the world. However, many Jews tried to establish their own righteousness through the law. Outwardly they served God, but in reality, they tried to achieve righteousness through deeds and traditions. There were temple sacrifices and sacrificial offerings, but in many cases, they remained as forms without realizing the true meaning of how sin is transferred to the sacrificial offering and how it is removed.

The law reveals sin but cannot remove it eternally. The sacrifices repeated every year could not make the human conscience entirely clean. This was the limitation of religion.

On the other hand, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that abolishes the law but fulfills it. Jesus took on the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, and this connects to the laying on of hands and the sacrifice of the Old Testament. Just as sin is transferred to the offering, the sins of the world were transferred to Jesus, and the judgment of sin for those sins took place on the Cross. The blood of the Cross was not simply the blood of martyrdom but the righteous judgment for the sins already transferred. The resurrection was God's declaration that that salvation is perfect. If the law was a shadow, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the reality, and if religion was repetition, that gospel is the completed word of the gospel.

2) The human deed-centeredness and the God's grace-centered gospel of the water and the Spirit

The Jewish religion gradually focused on "what we must do." Fasting, prayer, feasts, regulations, and traditions were considered like the basis of righteousness. However, the gospel of the water and the Spirit focuses on "what God has done." It is not human merit but the gospel of the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross. Worldly religion is an attempt by humans to find a way to go to God, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit is receiving salvation by the faith believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God sent down to humans.

3) National selection and universal salvation

The Jewish religion considered Abraham's lineage and circumcision important and had a strong national identity.

However, the gospel of the water and the Spirit opens the way of faith to receive the remission of sins by believing not in lineage but in the word of the gospel of the washing of sin where Jesus received baptism from John and went to the Cross. Both Jews and Gentiles receive salvation equally by believing in Jesus' baptism and blood. This is not a religion of a specific nation but God's plan of salvation for mankind.

4) Regarding outward godliness and inward sealing

Religion emphasizes godliness revealed outwardly, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit resolves the problem of sin in the heart. Under the law, it makes one remember sin continuously and leads to condemnation, but within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one receives the sealing of the Holy Spirit. The one who believes this gospel no longer needs to offer repeated sacrifices. It is because the Holy Spirit has sealed that heart.

In conclusion, the religion of the Jews was directed toward God but leaned toward human deeds and traditions. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the faith believing the truth of salvation that God accomplished Himself. Religion holds onto human righteousness that is not yet completed, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit makes the righteousness of God, which is already completed, appear and makes one believe it. Ultimately, the difference depends on whether a person tries to achieve righteousness or believes the righteousness God has achieved. This difference is the decisive boundary line separating believing in religion and believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

2. Is there a difference even today between the faith believing in the Christian religion and the faith believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible speaks of?

Even today, outwardly everyone says, “I believe in Jesus,” but a fundamental difference appears depending on what kind of gospel that gospel of faith is. This is not a simple difference of denominations, but a difference between religious faith and the faith believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible speaks of.

1) What is the difference between Christianity as a religion and faith as the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Christianity as a religion moves centering on structure and form, system and activity. Visible elements such as worship attendance, service, offering, position, prayer time, fasting, and career of faith are easy to become the measure of faith. Such faith is expressed by confessions like “I have attended church for a long time,” “I serve diligently,” “I pray a prayer of repentance whenever I commit a sin,” and “I believe in the Cross.” However, deep in the heart, the burden that one must resolve the problem of sin by oneself still remains, and if one commits a sin, the anxiety of becoming a sinner again is repeated. There is faith, but assurance is shaken. Such a structure can flow in a way that relies on one’s own deeds and decisions in reality, while saying one believes in Jesus.

2) What is the faith believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible speaks of?

The Bible does not speak of salvation as the result of human effort. The gospel is believing in the salvation that God has

already accomplished. The gospel of the water and the Spirit places in the center the fact that Jesus took on the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, the fact that the judgment for those sins was completed on the Cross, and the fact that it was proclaimed through the resurrection that that salvation is perfect. This faith focuses not on “how well I believe” but on “what Jesus has accomplished.” The person who believes this gospel stands upon the assurance that the remission of sins was completed once for all, not a repeated process, and faith is built upon grace, not anxiety.

3) What is the difference in faith believing in the structure of repetitive repentance and the structure of completed atonement?

Religious faith understands sin as a problem that must be resolved again whenever one commits it. However, the gospel of the water and the Spirit declares that Jesus took on our past, present, and even future sins. Worldly religion views sin as a problem that must be continuously cleared up, but the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit views the problem of sin as something already resolved. This difference in faith makes the state of each person’s heart completely different. Religion accompanies the tension of anxiety and effort, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit brings thanksgiving and freedom.

4) Outward zeal and the assurance of inward salvation

Religious faith is easy to have zeal as the center, but the faith centered on the gospel of the water and the Spirit brings assurance. Zeal changes depending on the situation and emotions go up and down, but the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not change. The fact that Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River, the fact that the

punishment for those sins ended by Jesus shedding blood on the Cross, and the resurrection are unchanging historical events. Faithful belief is not depending on the highs and lows of emotion, but standing upon the gospel of the water and the Spirit that is already completed.

5) Conclusion

The difference between the religious Christian faith today and the gospel faith of the water and the Spirit that the Bible speaks of is ultimately a difference of the value of the center. It is a question of whether I still focus on what I must do, or focus on what God has accomplished for me. Religion can leave a human-centered structure, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit establishes a God-centered structure. True faith is not measured by the amount of church activity. Is there the assurance of the remission of sins inside that heart? Do you believe that Jesus' ministry is perfect? Standing upon that gospel of the water and the Spirit is the essence. Not the outward appearance, but the content of faith determines the essence of faith.

3. Can religious people within worldly Christianity and those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit get along well with each other?

This question is a very realistic yet sensitive issue. To state the conclusion first, as human beings, they can get along well, but regarding the content of the gospel, they must be clear without compromise.

1) One must distinguish whether the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is correct rather than prioritizing

relationships with people.

Jesus ate with sinners, but He did not compromise the truth of the gospel of salvation. Loving people and diluting the gospel of salvation are completely different issues. Religious people within worldly Christianity also seek God, speak of Jesus, and read the Bible. Therefore, humanly speaking, one can maintain a relationship with respect and love. If one is a believer in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one must not have an arrogant or exclusive attitude. However, “getting along well” does not mean eliminating the difference in the gospel. That is impossible.

2) If the content of the gospel that each believes is different, the result is also different.

Religious faith usually says, “We believe in the Cross,” “We live a life of faith while repenting,” or “We must become holy and sanctified little by little.” However, the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that because Jesus took over the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John and took the punishment for sin on the Cross, our salvation is already completed, and the Holy Spirit seals that faith as righteous. The faith of a religious person and a person who believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit may look similar, but there is a fundamental difference in the actual method of the removal of sin and the assurance of salvation. This is not a simple difference in theological doctrine, but a difference in the structure of the gospel of salvation itself.

3) What is the attitude of an evangelist that the Bible speaks of?

The Apostle Paul was very firm regarding the work of distorting the gospel, but his attitude toward people was gentle and patient. Speaking the truth of salvation clearly but treating

people with love is the biblical attitude. Compromise is not love, and condemnation is not love either. The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must have unwavering assurance of salvation regarding the gospel, and simultaneously have humility and patience regarding people.

4) One must treat others with practical tension and discernment.

Realistically, tension can arise in the church field. This is because if the central message is different, the direction of the sermon, the understanding of repentance, and the assurance of salvation become different. It may be difficult to walk completely the same path in the long term within the same community. However, on the level of personal relationships, one can sufficiently get along with respect and love. The problem is that one cannot hide the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit for the sake of peace. If that happens, one has already lost the center.

5) Conclusion

One can get along well with people, but one cannot mix the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The moment truth is mixed, the essence is blurred. Therefore, the attitude should be kept gentle, but the content must be kept clear. The important thing is not who you are trying to beat, but who you want to save from sin. The goal of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not winning a debate, but revealing the truth to save a soul. Maintaining love but not compromising the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that balance is the key. ☒

LESSON

5

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Acts Chapter 5

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 5 is not simply a listing of the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira or stories of miracles and persecution, but it shows how the Church of God, established upon the gospel of the water and the Spirit, preserves the purity of the gospel without compromising with false faith. This chapter clearly records what kind of boldness the completed salvation grants to believers and how it is testified toward the world.

Acts 5:1–11, The End of Faith Concocted by Ananias and Sapphira through Hypocritical Deeds

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’ Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell

down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him. Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter answered her, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?’ She said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ Then Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.’ Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.”

Acts Chapter 5, verses 1 through 11, deals with the incident of the couple Ananias and Sapphira. Their sin was not simply a matter of the offering amount being small or hiding property, but lay in deceiving the Holy Spirit and distorting the essence of the gospel. Outwardly, they appeared to be devoting themselves, but it was an attempt to introduce legalistic hypocrisy into the community of grace where sin had already ended. It shows that the church standing upon the gospel of the water and the Spirit no longer allows a faith that proves itself by deeds. This incident was “God’s powerful work to preserve the community holily.”

Acts 5:12–16, The Early Church Was an Era That Needed Signs and Wonders

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were

increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.”

As many signs and wonders occurred through the apostles, it records the process of the gospel’s propagation, saying, “*And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.*” Here, the purpose of the miracles was not to establish the authority of the apostles. It was a tool for the gospel that confirmed the fact of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that had already been proclaimed—that is, that Jesus took over the sins of the world through the ministry of the baptism He received from John and took the punishment for sin on the Cross, thereby saving those who believe from their sins. The fundamental reason the church grew was not because of the phenomenon of healing diseases, but because the word of the gospel of salvation, that sin has ended, was powerfully proclaimed along with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:17–21, Persecution Begins Again and the Power of the Gospel That Demolishes Religious Systems

“Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ‘Go,

stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.’ And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.”

The high priest and the sect of the Sadducees were filled with indignation, so they arrested the apostles and put them in prison. The reason they were so furious was that the gospel of the water and the Spirit was fundamentally demolishing the temple-centered and law-centered religious system. It was because the atonement was completed once and for all through the baptism Jesus Christ had already received from John and the Cross. It was because, from now on, repetitive sacrifices of atonement were not needed. This approached the vested religious forces as the greatest threat.

Acts 5:19–25, Regarding God Opening the Prison Doors and the Unstoppable Proclamation of the Word of Life

“But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ‘Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.’ And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, saying, ‘Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!’ Now when the high priest,

the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. So one came and told them, saying, 'Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!'”

The apostles were imprisoned, but the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors at night, brought them out, and commanded, “*Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.*” The life spoken of here does not mean moral improvement, but speaks of the reality of salvation where, because Jesus took over the sins of the world through the ministry of receiving baptism from John, the punishment for sin was all ended on the Cross, and one is transferred from death to life. The fact that the gospel of the water and the Spirit never stops due to place or power is proven through this incident.

Acts 5:27–32, Revealing the Value of the Gospel of Salvation by Obeying God Rather than the Words of Men

“And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!’ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.’”

Peter, standing before the council again, declares, “*We ought*

to obey God rather than men.” and testifies clearly once again to the core of the gospel. He says, “For if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.” The repentance spoken of here is a change of mind, and the removal of sins testifies, along with the Holy Spirit, that the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit has already been completed.

Acts 5:33–39, The Defense of Gamaliel the Lawyer: What is the Evidence of Work Born from God?

“When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them: ‘Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.’”

The Pharisee Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, advises, *“For if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”* Consequently, this shows that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not something created by human

thought but is the work of God. By the fact that the proclamation of the gospel did not disappear even amidst extreme persecution but rather expanded, it proved that the source of that gospel is the work of God.

Acts 5:40–42, The Joy of Those Who Were Scourged by Persecution Made Them Feel the Pleasure of Having Received the Removal of Sins

“And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

The apostles are beaten and released while being forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus. However, they depart from the presence of the council, *“rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”* Such joy is a privilege that only those who have been completely freed from the condemnation and judgment of sin can enjoy. Whether in the temple or in the house, they do not cease teaching and preaching that Jesus is the Christ, and they testify without resting to the proclamation of the completed gospel of salvation.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 5 testifies that the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not allow hypocritical faith, and that the church stands on the foundation of completed salvation, not human deeds. Persecution does not stop the proclamation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but rather becomes an opportunity to reveal the authenticity of the gospel. Because the

baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross bring the assurance that all sins of our humanity have already ended, the church did not compromise with the world and was able to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit with joy even before the scourge.

Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 5, verses 1 through 42, is a text of stern warning inserted into the record of the early church's growth, and on the surface, it looks like a scene where the death of Ananias and Sapphira and the suffering of the apostles intersect. However, if we look at this word from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit testified in God's Word, we come to realize that it raises a fundamental question: what is the most dangerous sin inside the church built on the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Ananias and Sapphira sold a possession, kept back part of the price, and brought a certain part to the apostles' feet, but Peter rebuked them, saying, "*Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?*" The essence of their sin was not a simple omission of offering, but that they tried to deceive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always testifies only to the fact that all sins are already completely solved through Jesus Christ's baptism and Cross, but they tried to blur the purity of the gospel with their hypocrisy behind actions that looked like fruits of the gospel. This event was a stern lesson from God showing how dangerous the attempt to add human pretense and merit on top of the gospel is.

Because of this event, great fear came upon all the church

and upon as many as heard these things; this fear was not simple terror but awe held before God. Through this event, the early church came to realize the fact that the community must not stand on human hypocrisy or touching sharing, but must stand only on the truth of the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit. It showed that the gospel of the water and the Spirit frees people from worldly sins but is simultaneously God's strict truth that must never be treated lightly or altered.

Through the hands of the apostles, many signs and wonders were wrought among the people, and believers were the more added to the Lord believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but the Bible focuses on the apostles' faith rather than miracles. This is because miracles can gather people but cannot eliminate people's sins, and the core gospel the apostles preached was the fact that Jesus received baptism from John to have the sins of the world transferred to Him, received the punishment for sin on the Cross, and completed salvation through resurrection from death. The high priests were filled with indignation and put the apostles in prison, but the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors by night and said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life," commanding them to preach only the gospel of the water and the Spirit of life.

Standing before the council again, the apostles declared, "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and removal of sins." The repentance and removal of sins spoken of here are not conditions obtained through human effort, but accepting the fact of salvation already completed by the ministry of Jesus Christ. The apostles showed that they are witnesses of these things; and so

is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him, testifying equally to the fact of salvation already accomplished.

Gamaliel, a doctor of the law respected at the time, showed a cautious stance, saying, *“For if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”* In reality, the salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ’s baptism and Cross did not disappear amidst any persecution, and it was proved that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not maintained by the flow of the times or power, but is the truth that God Himself takes responsibility for.

The apostles departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name, even while being beaten. The reason they could rejoice even in suffering was because the sin problem was already ended and they had received the removal of sins before God by faith, so they had nothing left to lose in the world. They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ daily in the temple, and in every house.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 5 emphasizes the holiness of the church built on the gospel of the water and the Spirit and warns that human self-righteousness put forward by those who oppose that gospel is the most serious sin. Ananias and Sapphira fell trying to add their own righteousness on top of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but the apostles could be bold because they laid down their lives on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Today, we too must stand firm not on human calculation but on the truth of salvation completed by the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the Cross, living as witnesses of joy, not silence.

What is the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Preached by Paul C. Jong Based on Acts 5:29-32?

The word from Acts chapter 5, verses 29 through 32, is the passage that shows most clearly how far the early church obeyed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and before what they never compromised. If we read this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, we come to realize that the boldness of the apostles did not come from individual personality or courage, but flowed from the firm assurance of faith in the already completed salvation.

The council strictly commanded the apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus, but Peter and the other apostles answered and said, “We ought to obey God rather than men,” declaring resolutely. This obedience is not rebellion against order, but a confession of faith regarding the hierarchy of God’s authority. The apostles did not deny the order of the state, but they could never compromise before the demand to deny the word of the gospel of the truth of salvation that God had already accomplished in history. This was because the gospel that gives salvation from sin was not an individual opinion or interpretation, but an undeniable fact of the ministry of salvation that God performed directly.

Instead of defending themselves before the threatening council, the apostles proclaimed the gospel, saying, “*The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.*” What is emphasized here is not simply the event of the Cross alone. This Jesus is the One who became the Savior by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, thereby having all the sins of the world transferred to Him and receiving the punishment for sin. He hung on the Cross in the state of having received the transfer of the sins of all mankind

once and for all through the baptism received from John the Baptist, and received the judgment for those sins on our behalf, and God publicly testified to the perfection of that ministry of atonement through the resurrection. Therefore, the Cross was not a failure but a completion, and the resurrection was the sure guarantee of salvation.

In the sermon that follows, they state that God exalted Jesus Christ with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and removal of sins, revealing the essence of repentance and removal of sins. Here, repentance and removal of sins are not conditions that humans build up through merit, but are the very purpose for which God the Father established Jesus Christ as Savior and the gift of salvation given freely to us. Repentance is not the amount of tears but turning the direction of faith toward God, and removal of sins is the result of the gospel of the assurance of salvation that comes from believing the fact that the sins of the world were transferred to Jesus' body through the baptism Jesus received from John, and the judgment of sin was ended by the blood of the Cross.

The apostles proclaimed, "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him," defining their position as witnesses. A witness is one who speaks exactly what they have seen, and the apostles believed and preached without addition or subtraction the work of Jesus taking charge of the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, the judgment of the Cross, and the completion of the resurrection. The Holy Spirit also was not One who creates a new salvation, but One who assures in the heart the fact that the ministry of the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit is true. The Holy Spirit always works together with this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and does not acknowledge human zeal that has departed from

that gospel.

The reason the apostles could be so bold was because the sin problem was already ended and they had received the assurance of being without sin before God, so they had nothing more to lose or hide. Faith where a consciousness of sin remains is bound to be shaken before worldly authority, but faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit considers silence before the demand to deny the work God has done to be disobedience instead. To those who know the word of the truth of completed salvation, the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes a natural ministry of testimony beyond duty.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 5, verses 29 through 32, is asking us today whom we are obeying and what we are testifying. It is saying that we must stand on the gospel that preaches the salvation completed by the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the Cross just as it is, not a gospel that compromises while watching the faces of men. The church that testifies to that word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with the Holy Spirit is the Acts-like church, and within this gospel of truth, even worldly persecution is sublimated into joy. This confession that we ought to obey God rather than men is the word of the gospel of the essence of faith that must ring out equally in our lives today. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 5

1. Can those who believe in Christianity today receive the blessing of salvation given by the Lord if they serve the Lord a lot within the faith of believing only in the Cross?

This question is not simply a matter of “is it enough if I serve diligently,” but a matter of what salvation is based on. To speak from the conclusion, salvation is not received as a result of serving a lot, but is received through faith that correctly believes the content of salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished.

1) The amount of service does not determine the blessing of salvation

The Bible clearly says that salvation is not the price of works but a gift of grace. Even if a person serves the Lord by volunteering and devoting themselves a lot and shedding tears, that service itself does not possess the power to eliminate sin. Service is the fruit of salvation, not a condition. If it were a structure where one obtains salvation if they serve a lot, the basis of salvation becomes human merit, not Jesus’ ministry. If that happens, grace is no longer grace.

2) The meaning of the saying that one believes only in the Cross

Many people say, “We believe in the Cross,” but it is important whether they know on what basis that Cross resolved

their sins. The Cross is not a simple symbol of love but a righteous judgment of sin regarding sin. Then, the question follows of when, where, and how the sins of the world were transferred to Jesus. If the transfer of one's own sin is not clear, the Cross can remain as a vague symbol. The Bible does not explain Jesus' ministry only with the death on the Cross. It was saying that Jesus received baptism from John, had the sins of the world transferred to Him, and received the punishment for sin regarding those sins. This whole is the structure of salvation. If one says they believe in the Cross but their sin still remains in their heart, that may be far from the assurance of the completed atonement.

3) Zeal and salvation from sin are separate matters

Jesus said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 7:21). The problem is not whether they believed in the Lord, but whether they made their own deeds the basis. The confession, "Did we not do many works in Your name?" shows an attitude of making deeds the basis. However, the standard of salvation from sin is not how much one served, but whether one believed the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit which becomes the righteousness of Jesus.

4) Salvation from sin depends on what gospel one believed

Salvation from sin is not completed simply by the saying "I believe in Jesus." What and how one believes is important. Did one believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the sins of the world were already resolved once and for all? Or does it depend on believing the doctrine that one must still process sin repeatedly? If one feels that sin still remains in one's heart and tries to supplement that with zeal, there is a high

possibility that the center of that faith lies in one's own effort, not in believing Jesus' completed ministry.

5) Conclusion

One does not receive salvation automatically just because one serves the Lord a lot. Salvation is not determined by the amount of service. Salvation comes through faith believing that the ministry of salvation Jesus accomplished is perfect within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Service is not a condition but a result, and deeds are not a basis but a fruit. The important question is not how much I have served, but whether I correctly believe the gospel of salvation that Jesus accomplished. Salvation from sin is not built upon human zeal, but is built upon the truth of salvation accomplished on the Cross by the Son of God receiving the transfer of the sins of the world through the baptism received from John and receiving the punishment of sin.

2. Can human righteousness be mixed into the salvation received through faith believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

The core of this question is whether human righteousness can be mixed within the basis of salvation. To speak from the conclusion, if one obtained salvation through faith believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, human righteousness cannot enter into the basis of that salvation. This is because the moment even a little bit of human righteousness enters, it is no longer salvation resulting from the grace of salvation.

1) The structure of the word of salvation itself is centered on 'God's righteousness'

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a result of humans adding human righteousness. It is that Jesus took charge of the sins of the world through the baptism received from John, the judgment for those sins was accomplished on the Cross, and that salvation was completed through the resurrection from death. Such a structure of faith is a structure of believing entirely in God's righteousness, and the human is only a believer, not a participant in that work. If my depth of repentance, my devotion, my decision, and my years of faith enter here as a partial basis of salvation, at that moment salvation becomes a mixed structure. However, the Bible calls salvation grace, and grace becomes no longer grace the moment human righteousness is added.

2) 'Self-righteousness' must not enter into the faith believing the truth

Self-righteousness does not appear only as overt pride revealed outwardly. Sometimes it permeates in a very religious appearance. If thoughts like "Still, I believe more seriously than others," "God will acknowledge me because I devoted myself like this," or "I am okay because I repent more when I sin" create a sense of security of salvation, the center has already shifted from the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The center of the gospel is "I can do nothing by myself regarding the work of eliminating my sins."

3) The life after salvation and the problem of self-righteousness

After receiving salvation from sin, a good life resulting from faith can appear. Obedience to God's word, service, and fruit can follow. However, that fruit of salvation is a result, not a condition of salvation. The problem is making that fruit the basis of

salvation again. That is when self-righteousness seeps in. True gospel faith confesses, “I am still weak, but the basis of my salvation is not my state but only the ministry where Jesus received the transfer of the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John and completed the judgment of sin on the Cross.”

4) Perfect righteousness is only the one person, Jesus Christ

The righteousness the gospel of the water and the Spirit speaks of is not righteousness humans create. It is not that I maintain salvation by becoming righteous gradually, but that I am one who has already become righteous because Christ’s righteousness was given to me. If one thinks that self-righteousness becomes the basis of salvation even a little, that thought must be broken down. However, one must know that human righteousness is always imperfect. Therefore, the gospel excludes human righteousness. This is because perfect righteousness exists only in God’s righteousness.

5) Conclusion

There is no gap for self-righteousness to enter inside the salvation of one who obtained salvation from sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There is no reason for it to enter, and it must not enter. Salvation is faith standing 100% upon God’s righteousness. The moment self-righteousness arises, the assurance of salvation shakes, the grace of salvation diminishes, and a sense of merit arises. True faith lies in the confession, “I was a sinner and the Lord accomplished my salvation all alone.” The salvation that keeps that confession from shaking stands upon the faith believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord. ☒

LESSON

6



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Acts Chapter 6

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 6 is not a record simply announcing an administrative reorganization or the beginning of the deacon system. This chapter is a very important turning point showing how the gospel of the water and the Spirit separates the essential from the non-essential within God's church, and creates the optimal structure to preserve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It clearly teaches what a gospel community, where sin has already ended, must protect first amidst the expansion of ministry.

Acts 6:1, The occurrence of murmuring is a phenomenon that appears when the propagation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not done with full power

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.”

In Acts 6:1, an incident occurs where the Grecians murmured

against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations when the number of disciples multiplied. This murmuring is not a problem that arose simply because relief goods were insufficient or because there was no love. This is an inevitable phenomenon that appears when the scale of the church grows and the work to be managed increases, causing the weight of ministry to be dispersed from the center of the gospel to other places or order to become blurred.

Acts 6:2–4, The declaration of the apostles was to establish the top priority of the church.

“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’”

The twelve apostles, facing the problem squarely, called all the disciples and declared firmly, *“It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.”* This is not disregarding service but a decision to clearly set up the central axis of the church. The apostles say they will devote themselves solely to prayer and the ministry of the word, reaffirming the essence of their mission. Here, the word does not mean a simple interpretation of the law, but means the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by the power of Jesus who had the sins of the world transferred to His body through the baptism received from John, ended the judgment of sin on the Cross, and resurrected from death.

Acts 6:5–6, The Selection of Seven Deacons: Assurance of the Gospel is the Filling of the Holy Spirit

“And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them..”

The community chooses “seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” and sets them before the apostles. Here, the filling of the Holy Spirit does not refer to mysterious experiences or external abilities, but refers to the state of faith of a person who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately and is in the assurance of the removal of sin through faith. This is because a person for whom the elimination of sin is not confirmed will inevitably mix their own righteousness when taking on ministry, and eventually there is a risk of degenerating the community of grace back into a legalistic community.

Acts 6:7, The Decisive Result: The Recovery That Happens When the Word Becomes Vigorous

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

Acts chapter 6 verse 7 records, *“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”* Such amazing growth is not due to good organization or

systems, but is a result that appeared because the gospel of the water and the Spirit regained the central place of the church. Especially, the fact that priests who were bound to the repetitive sacrificial system obeyed the gospel proves the power possessed by the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that ended the sins of the world once and for all.

Acts 6:8–10, Stephen: The One Who Testifies to the Power of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit as an Actual Event

“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.”

Stephen, one of the seven deacons, being full of grace and power, performs great wonders and signs among the people. He was not a simple administrator or volunteer, but a witness boldly testifying to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When people of the synagogue arose and disputed with Stephen, *“And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.”* this was because the message Stephen preached was not human philosophy but the actual salvation event of Jesus who fulfilled the law.

Acts 6:11–15, The Content of False Testimony: The Reality of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit That Ends the Law System

“Then they secretly induced men to say, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’ And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. They also set up false witnesses who said, ‘This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.’ And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.”

People suborned men to give false testimony, saying, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” The reason the council members accused Stephen, saying, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law,” is because the gospel of the water and the Spirit actually completely ends the temple-centered faith, the structure of repetitive sacrifices, and the system of trying to obtain righteousness by the law. At this time, Stephen’s face was “like the face of an angel,” which shows the peace within the gospel enjoyed by a person who has absolutely no reason to be condemned.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 6 warns of the fact that problems within the church occur not because of the growth of ministry itself, but when the center of the gospel is shaken. Service cannot replace the gospel and must only be a tool serving the gospel. Because all sins were already ended by Jesus’ baptism, the church established the gospel before work, and expanded in an orderly manner upon that foundation. This is exactly the way the

gospel of the water and the Spirit builds the church firmly.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 6 verses 1 to 15 appears on the surface to deal with the organization and administrative problems of the church, but in reality, it is a passage that clearly shows by what the gospel is preserved and by what it is expanded. If we read this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe and preach, it is revealed that the secret of the early church becoming more solid while passing through internal conflicts and crises was not a simple administrative measure, but because they did not lose the center of the gospel.

When the disciples multiplied, a complaint arose where the Grecian Jews murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily relief. This was a problem of distribution on the surface, but essentially, it was a spiritual challenge testing what the center of the church is. Amidst the realistic difficulties that arise when the church grows, it is important to ensure that service and serving do not push out the place of the gospel; the apostles dealt with it firmly, saying it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. This was not weighing the importance of ministry, but a decision reaffirming that the church is a community living by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that sin was transferred by the baptism of Jesus Christ and judgment was ended by the blood of the Cross.

The apostles commanded to choose seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, and proclaimed that they would devote themselves solely to prayer and the ministry

of the word. The fullness spoken of here does not mean individual personality or leadership, but means a state where the heart is filled with the assurance of the gospel where the sin problem is resolved. A person who has obtained boldness before God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make service their own merit, so when such people serve the community, service becomes not a cause of conflict but the abundant fruit of the gospel.

As a result, the word of God increased, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly, and a great company of the priests also became obedient to this way. That the word became vigorous is evidence that the gospel was not obscured and was living and breathing at the center of the church. Especially, even the priests who were inside the strict system of the law laid down their authority and came to obey before the gospel of the water and the Spirit that actually resolves the sin problem. This shows that the gospel is the only truth that sets all souls free beyond a specific class.

Stephen, one of the seven deacons, was full of grace and power and performed great wonders and signs among the people, but the reason people were actually perplexed was because of the wisdom of the gospel he possessed. They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which Stephen spoke, and this wisdom was boldness coming from the clarity of the gospel that Jesus took upon all sins at the Jordan River and received judgment on the Cross. The proclamation of one who knows the truth accurately eventually makes human shallow learning silent and possesses authority that does not shake before any argument.

Those who opposed Stephen suborned men to give false testimony, saying, “We have heard this man speak blasphemous words against Moses and God,” and dragged him to the council.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is bound to always collide with the temple-centered or works-centered religious system, because it proclaims that salvation is completed within the ministry of Jesus Christ, not in the temple which is a building or in repeated sacrifices anymore. Because such a declaration shakes religious vested rights, Stephen came to face fierce resistance and false accusations.

All who sat in the council looked steadfastly on Stephen and saw that his face was like the face of an angel. This tranquility is not simply the result of controlling emotions, but the light of glory that only a person for whom the sin problem is completely ended can possess. A person who has already been justified before God does not feel condemnation even before the world's false accusations or the threat of death, so they can show boldness like an angel. This is exactly the actual appearance of a person who possesses the gospel completed by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Acts chapter 6 awakens us today to the fact that the answer to church problems lies not in restructuring but in recovering the center of the gospel. It shows that service cannot replace the gospel and must flow out only from within the gospel, and that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not a mysterious experience but assurance in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When the church keeps this gospel firmly, every crisis rather becomes a channel to prove the gospel, and the saints can live a bold life like Stephen in any situation. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 6

1. What is the work that the church, the community where people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit among those in this world are gathered, must do?

The center of this question is this. It is the issue of for what purpose the church, where people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are gathered, exists. The church is not a simple gathering, but a community that preserves, testifies to, and reveals the salvation already completed.

1) The essence of the church is the work of preserving the gospel.

The first mission of the church is keeping the gospel. As time passes, people easily concentrate on form rather than essence, and zeal, organization, or activities can become the center. However, the church that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must place Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, and that completed salvation at the center. Keeping the structure of the gospel—how sin was transferred, how that sin was judged, and why salvation was completed once for all—from becoming blurred is the basic mission of the church. If the gospel is corrupted, the church loses its reason for existence.

2) The essence of the church is the work of preaching the gospel.

The gospel does not end at preserving but must be testified to. In the world, there are still people suffering from the problem of sin, and there are many who live a life of faith without assurance amidst religious efforts. The church must proclaim the salvation already accomplished to them. It must preach not a repetitive structure of resolving sin, but the structure of completed atonement. The church is not an organization that gathers people, but a channel that reveals the gospel to the world.

3) The work of showing a life living within the gospel.

Those who believe the gospel do not remain merely as people who know doctrine. That gospel must be revealed in life. It must become a community where grace precedes condemnation, where there is assurance rather than anxiety, and where service appears rather than competition. The church that believes the gospel is not a group boasting of its own righteousness but a community confessing grace. If the gospel is true, it sets people free, and that freedom must appear in actual life.

4) The work of accurately passing on the gospel to the next generation.

As time passes, the gospel is easy to be simplified or distorted. There is a danger of emphasizing only the Cross fragmentarily or returning to works-centered faith. The church must clearly teach why Jesus' baptism is important, why the Cross is the place of judgment, and why salvation was completed once for all. The work of establishing the next generation to understand the structure of the gospel accurately is very important.

5) The goal of the church is not size.

Gathering many is not success itself, and the size of the organization does not prove the mission. The standard of the church lies in whether the gospel is at the center, whether that gospel is being preached without changing, and whether the saints are standing upon that gospel. The church is not an institution competing with the world but a community testifying to God's salvation.

In conclusion, the work that the church, where people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are gathered, must do is to keep the gospel, preach the gospel, and reveal the life living within the gospel. The power of the church lies not in zeal but in the clarity of the gospel. The church is not a place that creates something new but a place that proclaims the salvation already completed. As long as that center is not shaken, the church does not lose its purpose of existence.

2. Are things like poverty relief, social justice, peace movements, and religious integration movements that the churches of this world are doing, things that the Lord desires?

This question is very important. Because it is a problem of how to distinguish between the church's mission and social responsibility. It is not simply a problem of whether it is a good work or not, but one must discern whether it is the essential mission of the church.

1) Poverty relief and good deeds themselves are biblical.

The Bible never ignores the work of looking after the poor. James says that faith without works is dead, and rebukes faith

that turns away from a needy brother. The early church also filled each other's needs and helped difficult saints. Love must surely appear through life. Therefore, one cannot say that poverty relief or good deeds themselves are evil. The problem lies in whether it replaces the gospel, or is a fruit of the gospel.

2) The church's primary mission is the gospel.

The most essential mission Jesus entrusted to the church was the command to make disciples of all nations. Jesus did not come as a political activist to solve all social problems of the world, but came to resolve the sin problem. If the church places social reform at the center and pushes the gospel to the periphery, at that moment the church loses its original mission. Poverty relief and social justice may be important, but they cannot replace the removal of sin and salvation.

3) The limitations of social justice and peace movements.

Justice and peace are biblical values. However, changing the structure of the world does not mean human sinful nature disappears. The Bible says that the fundamental problem of humans is sin before structure. If sin is not resolved, another conflict can arise even amidst justice movements. If the church becomes deeply combined with the world's political ideologies, there is a danger that the gospel will gradually become blurred.


4) The problem of the religious integration movement.

The religious integration movement speaks of peace and harmony on the outside, but it cannot avoid the decisive question of whether the gospel is the only way of salvation or one of many ways. Jesus said that He is the way, the truth, and the life. The gospel is not an idea capable of compromise but the only way of salvation. If one dilutes the uniqueness and singularity of the

gospel for the sake of inter-religious harmony, one loses the essence of the gospel instead of gaining peace.

5) The problem of balance.

That does not mean that the church must be completely severed from the world. While placing the gospel at the center, the fruit of love must appear in life. The problem is priority. The gospel must be the center and good deeds must be the result. If the gospel disappears and social movements become the center, it is difficult to view that church as a gospel community anymore.

In conclusion, poverty relief, justice, and peace themselves are not evil. However, they cannot be the essential mission of the church. The most core work the Lord entrusted to the church is preaching the gospel of the elimination of sin. The church is not an institution that makes the world perfect, but a community that leads sinners to salvation. Good works can be the fruit of the gospel, but cannot replace the gospel. Ultimately, the standard of discernment is this. Does that work make the gospel clearer, or is it obscuring the gospel of the water and the Spirit? 

LESSON

7

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Acts Chapter 7

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 7 is not merely Stephen's self-defense, but a massive summary declaration of salvation history testifying how the gospel of the water and the Spirit penetrates through the entire Old Testament Bible and is completed. Through this sermon, Stephen clearly reveals that the history of Israel was not a history of simple law observance, but God's preparation history of salvation to end the sins of mankind.

Acts 7:1–8, Abraham: God's Promise Started Before the Temple and the Law

“Then the high priest said, ‘Are these things so?’ And he said, Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even

when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years. ‘And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,’ said God, ‘and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.’ Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs.”

Stephen does not start with the story of the temple which the Jews cherish like their lives, but traces back from the calling of Abraham. He quotes the event recorded as, *“The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’”* This is proclaiming that God had already started the promise of salvation even before the temple or the law existed. Salvation did not start from human acts or religious buildings but started with God’s promise, and this promise was perfectly fulfilled later through Jesus’ baptism and the Cross.

Acts 7:9–16, Joseph: God’s Wisdom Saving Lives Through the Forsaken One

“And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no

sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people. So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem."

Continuing, Stephen conveys the history of Joseph, saying, *"And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house."* The fact that Joseph was abandoned by his brothers and suffered in a foreign land but eventually saved the whole family and many lives is a perfect model of the Christ who was to come. Jesus likewise was abandoned by the Jews and handed over to the hands of Gentiles, but through the baptism in the Jordan River, He accepted the transfer of the sins of mankind, and through the judgment of the Cross, He became the Lord of life who saves all mankind who were under sin.

Acts 7:17–36, Moses: The True Savior Rejected by Humans but Established by God

"But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt till another king arose who did not know Joseph. This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. At

this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons. And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and dared not look. 'Then the Lord said to him, 'Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.' This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red

Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.”

Stephen explains Moses, the hero of Israel, at length and reminds them of the fact that he was rejected when he first tried to save his brothers. He testifies, saying, *“This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.”* This question is the same question that was thrown at Jesus later. Jesus took upon the sins of the world through baptism and received judgment on the Cross, but Israel rejected Him. Stephen was piercingly seeing the fact that the true Savior is always rejected by the world not because of human religious expectations, but because of the method of ending sin.

Acts 7:37–43, The Limitation of the Law: The Illusion of Religious Zeal That Cannot Give Life

“This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’ This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, ‘Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: ‘Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years

in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’”

The Law Moses delivered was holy, but it could not fundamentally remove human sin or give life. Stephen points out that the forefathers of Israel refused to obey Moses, and thrust him aside, and *“And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, ‘Make us gods to go before us’”* They made a golden calf and chose a visible religion instead of God. This is no different from the appearance of those today who, turning away from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, remain in a religious structure of trying to build up human righteousness, that is, a faith centered on repetitive repentance and acts.

Acts 7:44–50, The Relativization of the Temple: The Reality of God’s Salvation That Is Not Confined in a Building

“Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ‘Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?’”

Stephen mentions the history from the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness to Solomon's temple and proclaims, "*However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest?'*" This does not mean the Temple itself is denied, but implies that Jesus Christ, the reality to which the Temple pointed, has come. The Temple and the sacrifices were shadows, and Christ, who took upon sins by baptism at the Jordan River and was judged once for all on the Cross, is the very completion of all those types.

Acts 7:51–53, Frontal Declaration: Warning Against Religious Stubbornness Resisting the Holy Spirit

"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."

Stephen strongly rebukes in the conclusion of the sermon, "*You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.*" The work of the Holy Spirit they resisted was not a mystical experience, but God's method of salvation that ends sin once for all. Israel, who insisted on establishing their own righteousness through the Law and tried to settle in the repetitive sacrificial system, eventually stood in the place of those who always resist the Holy Spirit by rejecting the completed salvation.

Acts 7:54–60, Martyrdom and Vision: The Glory of Christ Who Finished the Ministry of Salvation

“When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

When the angry crowd threw stones, Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed up into heaven and looked intently, seeing the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and shouted, *“Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”* Here, Jesus standing is the appearance of Him welcoming His witness as the One who has already finished the ministry of salvation and triumphed. Even while dying, Stephen prayed, *“Lord, do not charge them with this sin,”* and this was not simply moral forgiveness, but a gospel confession that only one who is convinced that the price of all sins has already been paid through Jesus’ baptism and Cross could make.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 7 testifies that the history of Israel is a record not of the victory of the Law but of the complete failure of humans, and that God prepared the gospel of the water and the Spirit that would end sin once and for all from the

beginning. Jesus' baptism and Cross are the completion and conclusion of the entire Old Testament. Stephen was not a destroyer of the Law, but the first martyr of the gospel of the water and the Spirit who testified to that completion which the Law eagerly pointed to.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The Word from Acts 7:1 to 60 is the record of Stephen's defense and heroic martyrdom. If we read this chapter from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe and preach, this converges not into a simple historical summary or self-defense, but into the essential question of how God has saved sinners and why people have repeatedly rejected that salvation. When the high priest asked if these things were so, Stephen, instead of defending himself, began to preach God's method of salvation that penetrates through the entire history of Israel, starting from Abraham.

Stephen first reminded them of the fact that the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he was in Haran, and emphasized that salvation began with God's promise and calling before the institution of the Temple or the Law. This aligns with the principle of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which shows that salvation is not bound by human acts or forms but is given by faith in the method God established. Also, through the history of Joseph, who was abandoned by his brothers but eventually became the one who saved them, he revealed the repeated pattern of Israel rejecting the Savior God sent and obtaining salvation through him again, and the shadow of the Christ to come.

In the following story of Moses, Stephen made it clear that

God sent Moses—whom the children of Israel rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’—as a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush burning with fire. God’s salvation is surely accomplished regardless of human acknowledgment; this is the same as the truth that even if people reject Jesus’s baptism and the Cross, God has actually removed sin through that ministry. Stephen went through the story of the tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon’s temple and declared that ‘the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands,’ rebuking the Jews for being obsessed with the building and sacrifices, which are shadows, rather than Christ, the reality.

At the climax of the sermon, Stephen straightforwardly rebuked them, saying, “*You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you,*” stating that they became the betrayers and murderers of the Just One. This was not merely pointing out the sin of murder, but revealing the unbelief that rejected God’s appointed method of salvation, that is, the gospel in which Jesus took upon sins by being baptized at the Jordan River and received judgment on the Cross. Since the gospel of the water and the Spirit breaks down human pride, the stubborn heart that resists the Holy Spirit comes to resist fiercely before this gospel.

When the council members heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But Stephen, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Even at the moment of dying by stoning, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Such forgiveness is not a simple cultivation of character, but the fruit of boldness and peace that

only a person whose sin problem has already ended through the ministry of Jesus Christ can possess.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 7 asks us whether we are holding onto buildings and acts, or believing in the completed salvation God has accomplished. God gave shadows through the promise to Abraham, the type to Moses, and the tabernacle and the Temple, and finally removed our sins forever through the reality of the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ. Stephen proved this gospel through the history of Israel and sealed its truthfulness with his own life. Today, we too must choose whether to become those who reject this gospel of the water and the Spirit, or those who testify like Stephen. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 7

1. What does God say about the suffering that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by God receive for the sake of preaching this gospel?

The Bible does not speak of the suffering received while preaching that gospel by those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by God as a curse or failure. Rather, it speaks of it as participating in the sufferings of Christ. Jesus said, “*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake*” (*Matthew 5:10*), and said that being hated because of the gospel is a sign of belonging to the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, suffering due to preaching the gospel is not evidence of being abandoned, but a sign of one who has been promised a reward in heaven. The apostles were beaten and imprisoned because of the gospel, but they considered it not shame but glory. The Bible speaks of this saying they were “counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” In other words, God does not calculate suffering due to the gospel as a loss, but views it as a privilege to participate in the name of Christ. Also, the Apostle Paul expressed the tribulation suffered because of the gospel as light affliction which is for a moment, and testified that it cannot be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in the future. Here, suffering is not God’s wrath, but a natural result that appears when the value of the gospel collides with the world.

The world may be tolerant of works-centered religions, but it is bound to have divided reactions to the gospel that denies human righteousness and proclaims only God's righteousness. So, the suffering received for preaching the gospel is not because God has abandoned them, but rather becomes evidence that they are clearly preaching the truth. The Bible says that through such suffering, He refines faith and reveals the truthfulness of the gospel. Therefore, it can be said that the suffering received by one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit because of that gospel is not God's judgment, but suffering within God's acknowledgment, and a passage toward the glory that will appear in the future.

2. What does the Bible say about those who avoid being persecuted by religious people while doing the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

The Bible says that encountering religious opposition and persecution while preaching the gospel is not a strange thing. Rather, it declares that those who desire to live godly lives will suffer persecution. Therefore, persecution itself is not an abnormal situation, but a natural result that appears when the gospel collides with the religious structure of the world. In this context, the Bible clearly warns against the attitude of hiding or distorting the gospel out of fear of persecution. Jesus said, "*But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 10:33). This does not refer to a single emotional mistake, but points to an attitude of intentionally hiding the truth because of fear.

Also, Galatians says that one cannot possess the attitude of

trying to please men and being a servant of Christ at the same time. Softening the message or blurring the core point to avoid criticism and rejection from religious people while preaching the gospel can eventually become an act of choosing human acknowledgment. The Bible views such an attitude as weakness of faith, and sometimes points it out as an appearance of being ashamed of the truth. However, at the same time, the Bible exhorts us to seek boldness even amidst fear, rather than condemning the weak. Apostle Paul confessed that he was not ashamed of the gospel, but it is recorded that he also ministered in much fear and trembling.

The problem is not the human reaction itself to try to avoid persecution, but the choice to give up or distort the gospel. Jesus mentioned those who stumble because of the word when tribulation or persecution arises in the parable of the sower. This is a scene explaining faith that does not have deep roots. If the gospel does not become the center of life, one can easily be shaken before external pressure. Therefore, the Bible warns against the attitude of avoiding persecution, while simultaneously urging us to firm up our faith. Compromising the truth because of fear can be a subject of rebuke, but one who returns to the gospel and seeks boldness even amidst fear is a subject of restoration. Ultimately, the focus of the Bible is not on condemnation but on discernment. Conflict may follow on the path of preaching the gospel, and at that time, whether one chooses human acknowledgment or holds onto God's truth reveals the direction of faith.

3. Does God want to use those who are born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit as God's workers?

Looking at the overall flow of the Bible, God does not want the saved to merely stay within personal conviction, but wants to use them as channels to reveal that salvation. God first makes a person born again, and then works through him. The order is always grace first, and mission next.

Being born again is not human determination but God's work. One who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer a being under condemnation, but becomes a child of God. And one who has become a child naturally participates in the Father's will. The Bible refers to this as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." This is a status that includes both privilege and mission at the same time.

God does not look for and use perfect people, but uses people who have received grace. Looking at the apostles, they were not called because their learning or background was outstanding, but were used because they experienced the salvation of Jesus Christ. They believed the gospel first, and when that gospel became a conviction, they became witnesses. Therefore, being a worker of God is not a position one becomes by volunteering oneself, but a calling that naturally begins within one who knows the gospel.

Also, saying that God uses them as workers does not mean that everyone becomes the same form of minister. Some teach the word, some serve, and some pray and help in unseen places. What is important is not the size of the position, but whether the center stands upon the gospel. God makes that gospel be preached to the next person through one who clearly knows and

is convinced of the content of the gospel.

However, this mission is not a burden or coercion but a result of grace. It is not a load shouldered by force, but a channel where the salvation already received flows out as thanksgiving. If ministry becomes a tool to establish one's own righteousness, it goes against the spirit of the gospel. The worker God desires is not a person who reveals his own zeal, but a person who testifies to God's righteousness.

In conclusion, God wants to use those who are born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. However, that usage is not a reward for merit, but God's method of expanding grace through those who have received grace. Salvation is first, and mission is next. And in that center, God's righteousness and the gospel are always situated.

4. What does the Lord say about those who are born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit but do not do the work of preaching this gospel on this earth and follow their own fleshly desires?

The Bible clearly speaks about how a born-again person must live on this earth. Salvation is received by grace, but that grace must appear as power that changes the direction of life. If one says they are born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit but continues to live following only the desires of the flesh, the Bible treats that state very severely.

Jesus said, "Follow Me." Following means not just a confession of the lips but a change in the direction of life. Also, He said that if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself. Self-denial is not a condition to obtain salvation, but the

attitude of life of a saved person. If a person still places his own desires at the center and turns away from the mission of the gospel, he is remaining in a state of loving his own will more than the Lord's will.

Apostle Paul distinguished between those who follow the flesh and those who follow the Spirit. He warned that a life following the flesh is a path to becoming an enemy of God. This is not a simple formula that salvation is cancelled immediately, but a word asking where the direction is heading. If one is a born-again person, he must advance toward a life that reveals the gospel following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If one continues to follow the lusts of the flesh and the greed of the world, the Bible describes it as a spiritually sleeping state, or a state of having lost the first love.

Also, in the parable of the talents, Jesus rebuked the servant who buried what was entrusted to him in the ground. The attitude of having received the master's things and doing nothing was evaluated as laziness. This does not mean that all saints must do the same form of ministry, but it is a warning against the attitude of ignoring the received grace and staying only in self-satisfaction.

However, at the same time, the Bible presents a way of restoration of faith. The Lord wants the one who stumbles to turn back rather than completely abandoning him. There is rebuke for the one who followed the flesh, but if he repents and returns to the center of the gospel again, there is restoration. God does not look for a perfect person, but rejoices in one who turns his heart and follows the Lord's will again.

Ultimately, the core is this. The direction of a born-again person's life must be toward the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There may be temporary weakness, but if one continuously follows only the flesh, the Bible treats it with

words of warning. The Lord saved by grace, and He wants that grace not to be in vain. So when a born-again person stays in a life of turning away from the gospel and following only his own desires, the Bible awakens him with a warning of love. ☒

LESSON

8



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Acts Chapter 8

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts chapter 8 shows a decisive turning point where the gospel expands beyond the Jerusalem and Jew-centered framework to Samaria and the Gentiles. This expansion is not a success story of a simple mission strategy, but an actual historical record of how the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit breaks down the boundaries of lineage, religion, and culture.

Acts 8:1–4, God’s Work of Using the Persecution of Faith as a Means of Expansion

“Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”

Acts chapter 8 verses 1 through 4 deals with the scene where, after Stephen's martyrdom, a great persecution struck the church in Jerusalem, and except for the apostles, all were scattered to all the lands of Judea and Samaria. The Bible testifies, *"Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word."* This shows that the gospel does not stop even amidst the crisis called persecution, but rather expands. This is because what they preached was not simple morals or systems, but the event of completed salvation that the sins of mankind were transferred through Jesus' baptism and judged on the Cross, so the problem of all sins has ended.

Acts 8:5–8, The Joy of Salvation That Visited the Land of Hostility through the Gospel That Came upon Samaria

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city."

Philip goes down to the city of Samaria and preaches Christ to the people. Samaria was a land of hostility that was thoroughly ignored by the Jews religiously and ethnically, but when many people had faith after hearing the gospel Philip preached, the Bible records that *"there was great joy in that city."* This joy was not simply because of the healing of diseases or miracles, but was the result of the vitality that came when they realized that the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that the remission of sins was finished, was applied equally to them as well.

Acts 8:9–13, Simon’s Misunderstanding: A Warning about the Essence of the Gospel, Not Power

“But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.”

Simon the sorcerer is amazed seeing the signs and great power Philip performs, and after being baptized, he follows Philip with his whole heart. However, Simon’s problem lay in the point that he reacted only to the power of the Holy Spirit itself rather than the assurance of the remission of sins, which is the essence of the gospel. Even though he received baptism, he misunderstood the Holy Spirit as a means to expand his own power. Simon’s incident warns that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a ministry that ends sin eternally first, before giving any power.

Acts 8:14–17, The Descent of the Holy Spirit in Samaria: The Same Gospel and Apostolic Unity

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John

to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

The apostles in Jerusalem hear that Samaria also received the word of God and send Peter and John. Only when they pray for the Samaritan believers and lay hands on them does the Holy Spirit come upon them. This was not that the descent of the Holy Spirit was delayed, but it was God’s consideration to publicly confirm the fact that the Jews and Samaritans share the same Jesus who took the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, so the judgment of sin ended at the Cross, and that the same Holy Spirit comes upon them.

Acts 8:18–24, The Refusal of Selling Gifts: God’s Gift That Cannot Be Bought with Money

“And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.’ Then Simon answered and said, ‘Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.’”

When Simon sees that the Holy Spirit is given through the

laying on of the apostles' hands, he requests, *“He offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’”* To this, Peter sternly rebukes him, saying, *“Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money.”* This is because the Holy Spirit is not an object of human reward or transaction, but the gift of the Holy Spirit given freely to those whose remission of sins is already finished, and He is the Spirit of testimony.

Acts 8:26–40, The Ethiopian Eunuch: An Immediate Confession through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

“Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, ‘Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: ‘He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.’ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, ‘I ask

you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”

By the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch. The eunuch was reading Isaiah 53 but did not know its subject, and Philip, beginning from this scripture, teaches Jesus and preaches the gospel. Philip clearly explained the fact that before the suffering on the Cross, Jesus had the sins of the world passed onto Him through the baptism He received from John. Accordingly, the eunuch, arriving at a place with water while going down the road, asks, saying, “*See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized??*” Here, baptism is not a condition to wash away sins, but by believing in the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit, he received baptism as a token of faith, and the eunuch goes on his way with great joy.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 8 testifies to the process of the gospel of the water and the Spirit expanding, breaking through persecution and tearing down the boundaries of nations and classes. The Holy Spirit is not a tool of power but the One who guarantees the completed salvation, and baptism is a holy

confession of the already finished elimination of sin. Because the sins of the world were passed onto the body of Jesus through the baptism Jesus received from John and were eternally resolved on the Cross, the gospel is ceaselessly flowing over Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The Word from Acts chapter 8 verses 1 to 40 contains the dynamic process of the gospel spreading to the nations as the church was scattered in all directions due to persecution, but at its center, the essential question of whether the one gospel was preached accurately always lies. Here, if we look at this chapter from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in, we can see that Acts chapter 8 is a very important chapter that shows how the accuracy of the gospel and the testimony of the Holy Spirit are combined into one and work, going beyond a simple success story of evangelism.

After Stephen's martyrdom, a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles, but those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word of the gospel. The important point here is the fact that although the environment may have changed, the content of the gospel they preached was never blurred. The saints proclaimed without compromise not simple comfort or ethical lessons, but the truth that Jesus Christ took upon the sins of the world by being baptized in the Jordan River and completed salvation by receiving the judgment for those sins on the Cross.

When Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to the people, many signs appeared, and there was great

joy in that city. The source of this joy was not in the mysterious phenomena of diseases being healed or demons being cast out, but originated from the assurance of the gospel that the sin problem was fundamentally resolved. Physical healing may be shaken again as time passes, but the gospel of the remission of sins completed by Jesus' baptism and blood makes the human soul eternally free and presents true peace that does not shake in any situation.

On the other hand, although Simon the sorcerer believed and was baptized after seeing Philip's signs, when he saw the Holy Spirit falling through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered money and implored, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." Peter sternly rebuked him, saying, "*Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!*" stating that his heart was not right before God. Simon's problem lay in misunderstanding the Holy Spirit as a tool or power to fulfill his own desires. The Holy Spirit does not come for the greed of a person in whom sin remains, but comes solely to confirm the truth to those who believe the gospel that sin has ended through Jesus' ministry.

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and when they had come down, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; then the two apostles laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. This is an event where the Holy Spirit publicly confirmed that the gospel the Samaritans believed was identical to the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by the apostles. The presence of the Holy Spirit is not adding a new method of salvation, but a work of sealing in the hearts of all believers that the gospel of the water and the blood already preached is the true truth coming from God.

An angel of the Lord commanded Philip to arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which was a desert. The reason God sent Philip to the desert, leaving the scene of great revival, was to preach the accurate gospel to one soul, a eunuch of Candace the queen of the Ethiopians. The eunuch was riding in his chariot and reading the writings of the prophet Isaiah, but he did not know whom the word he was reading referred to. This shows that the act of reading the Bible itself does not guarantee salvation, but that the door of life opens only when one accurately realizes the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him; and the eunuch came to realize that although Jesus was led like a lamb going to the slaughter, in reality, He was the One who took over all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, and the One who received the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross. Hearing this accurate gospel, as the eunuch went down the road, he came to a place with water and requested baptism, saying, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” This baptism was not a condition to wash away sin, but a sign of faith confessing that he had already obtained the remission of sins through Jesus’ baptism and the blood of the Cross, and the eunuch could go on his way rejoicing.

Acts chapter 8 awakens us to the fact that the accuracy of the content being preached is much more important than the place where the gospel is preached. The Holy Spirit is not the One who comes to give mysterious experiences, but works to testify that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth. The baptism of Jesus Christ, the Cross, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit that Philip consistently preached to the crowd in the city or to one soul in the desert apply equally to us today. Wherever this gospel

is proclaimed correctly, human religious effort disappears, and the true freedom and joy of life given by God become full.

Based on the words of Acts chapter 8 verses 14-25, if we look from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Paul C. Jong:

The word from Acts chapter 8 verses 14 to 25 is a text where the boundary line between true faith and false faith is clearly revealed in the midst of the revival in Samaria. Here, if we read this word from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe and preach, the focus of the text is not simply on the method of receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but on to whom and why the Holy Spirit comes, and it strictly warns how faith can be instantly distorted when the accuracy of the gospel collapses.

The reason the apostles who were at Jerusalem sent Peter and John after hearing that the Samaritans had received the word of God through Philip's evangelism was to confirm their oneness within the same gospel so that the Samaritan church would not stand upon another gospel. The Holy Spirit coming when the apostles laid their hands on them was not because their salvation was incomplete, but is an event where the fact that the same gospel of the water and the Spirit is true was publicly confirmed through apostolic testimony. The Holy Spirit always testifies to the salvation completed by the water ministry, which is the baptism of Jesus Christ, and the blood of the Cross, and is God's seal that seals the truthfulness of the already accomplished gospel in our hearts.

Simon the sorcerer, seeing that the Holy Spirit was given, offered money and implored, saying, "*Give me this power also,*

that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:19), and tried to buy that power. He had already believed and even received baptism, but he greatly misunderstood the Holy Spirit not as God Himself, but as a power that humans can possess and use. Within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is never an object of possession or transaction, but is the sovereign Testifier who comes solely to confirm the truth in the hearts of those who believe the fact that sins were transferred through Jesus’ baptism and judgment was ended through the Cross.

Peter sternly rebuked him, saying, *“Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God” (Acts 8:20-21).* Here, the gift of God does not mean spiritual gifts but salvation itself, and because salvation has already been completed and given through the ministry of Jesus Christ, it can never become an object of transaction. The Holy Spirit does not degrade the gospel into a tool to fulfill human desires, but rather plays the role of revealing the holy weight and absolute standard of the gospel.

The repentance Peter urged was also not a simple emotional remorse, but a demand to fundamentally change the direction of faith, as the word says, *“Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you” (Acts 8:22).* Simon’s problem lay in not fully receiving salvation as what God had done, but considering it as something he could acquire and use; and true repentance spoken of in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is turning away from self-centered faith and returning to the perfect salvation God has already accomplished. Simon, seized with fear, requested, *“Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things*

which you have spoken may come upon me” (Acts 8:24), but the Bible leaves it as a question for the reader whether he truly obeyed the gospel.

The two apostles, after they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. What the apostles left behind was not a story of mysterious experiences, but solely the testimony of the word containing the evidence of the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always works together with the written Word and never supports human zeal that deviates from the Word. Because if the gospel is not clear, faith instantly deteriorates into a transaction of power, we must humbly stand on the truth that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received judgment on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit confirms that fact.

Ultimately, Acts chapter 8 verses 14 to 25 teaches us that we must receive the Holy Spirit as a Testifier, not as a power, and believe the gospel as the truth completed by God, not as a tool to satisfy human desires. Faith that stands upright on the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a life that obeys before the will of God and dwells under the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, rather than coveting power. This is the purity of the gospel that the apostles protected at the risk of their lives, and the essence of faith that we must restore today. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 8

1. God’s Church is persecuted by worldly religious people; is it right to exert ourselves in preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit even in such situations?

The Bible does not view it as strange for God’s Church to be persecuted by the world, especially by people within religious structures. Jesus Himself was rejected by religious leaders, and the apostles also experienced the greatest resistance within the Jewish religious system. Therefore, the fact itself of receiving persecution while preaching the gospel is not evidence of wrongdoing. Rather, the Bible shows that conflicts can arise when the truth collides with existing religious frameworks.

Jesus told His disciples in advance that they would suffer tribulation in the world. He also said, “*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.*” This is not a statement that glorifies suffering itself, but a declaration that the conflict experienced because of the gospel is not an abandonment by God. In Acts, the disciples did not stop preaching the gospel even after being beaten. They did not think that the value of the gospel diminished through suffering.

However, at the same time, the Bible does not recommend recklessness or unnecessary collision. It says that the attitude of preaching the gospel should always be with meekness and fear. The truth must be spoken clearly, but the attitude toward people must be humble. Acting provocatively to invite persecution is

not a biblical attitude. However, it is also not right to dilute the core of the gospel or remain silent to avoid persecution.

The core is the direction. God's Church must prioritize God's will over human recognition. If we stop preaching the gospel out of fear of persecution, the reason for the Church's existence can be weakened. The Church is not an organization competing with the world, but a community that delivers the news of salvation. Therefore, even if the situation is difficult, the essence of preaching the gospel must not be given up.

In conclusion, stopping the preaching of the gospel because there is persecution does not align with the flow of the Bible. We just need to move forward with wisdom and discernment, having both love and boldness together. Preaching the gospel in an attitude that does not create unnecessary conflict while not compromising the truth is the right path. Suffering cannot weaken the value of the gospel, and God accomplishes His will even in the midst of it.

2. Does the church need servants of God who live by fully dedicating themselves for the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

If the church is a community that preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, at its center, it needs people who offer themselves for the gospel. Looking at the flow of the Bible, God always raised up people to whom He would entrust the gospel. When Jesus called His disciples, He called them not as simple supporters, but as people who change the direction of their lives for the gospel. Apostle Paul also confesses that he placed his life's goal on preaching the gospel. This is not a heroic tale of a selected few, but an example showing how valuable the gospel is.

However, the phrase “fully dedicating oneself” does not mean human zeal or extreme sacrifice. God first saves by grace, and causes dedication to come forth in response to that grace. A forced resolution or dedication to establish one’s own righteousness does not last long. True dedication comes from the conviction of the gospel. When the faith that Jesus’ ministry is perfect is clear, a person naturally desires to use their time and life for that gospel.

Also, it does not mean that all saints must dedicate themselves in the same way. Some serve the gospel as full-time ministers, some within their workplaces and families, and others with material possessions and prayers. Because the church is one body, the roles entrusted to each member are different. However, the commonality is that the center is not in one’s own glory, but in the righteousness of God and the gospel.

Ultimately, the church needs people who offer themselves for the gospel. Because the gospel is not preached automatically, God is pleased to work through people. However, that dedication must be the fruit of grace, not a merit. The gospel comes first, and dedication is its result. When it becomes so, the church becomes a living community that reveals God’s will, not a human organization.

3. Can false ones be mixed together with believers within God’s Church?

The Bible does not say that only those who truly believe exist completely separated within God’s Church. Rather, it shows the possibility of true believers and those who are not being mixed together within the church through various parables and events. In the parable of the tares, Jesus said that the good seed and the

tares grow together in one field. He said to let both grow together until the harvest, which implies that in church history, true faith and formal faith can coexist for a certain period.

Also, even among the twelve disciples, there was Judas Iscariot. Outwardly, he was in the position of a disciple and possessed the same external appearance as the others, but his center was different. This shows the fact that just because one belongs to the church community outwardly, it does not mean everyone is in the same state of faith. In Acts as well, cases are recorded like Ananias and Sapphira, who showed an untruthful attitude while being within the community.

Apostle Paul also warned that false brothers come into the church and try to distort the gospel. Therefore, the church is not a space where safety is guaranteed simply by the size or external appearance of the gathering. The center of the gospel must be clear, and there must be discernment through the Word. The Bible says that as time passes, true faith and faith that is not true are revealed through their fruits.

However, the important point is the fact that the authority to finally sort out people does not lie with humans. The work of completely separating the tares and the wheat ultimately belongs to God. The church must be vigilant and discern, but it must not destroy the community with hasty condemnation. At the same time, it must clearly deal with teachings that blur the essence of the gospel or obvious distortions.

In conclusion, the possibility of those with false faith being mixed within God's Church cannot be biblically denied. However, that reality does not destroy the essence of the church. True faith is eventually revealed, and God ultimately purifies His church. While clearly keeping the gospel, the church must build up the community with patience and discernment until God reveals them.

4. Even today, are there those who, like Simon in Acts chapter 8, try to receive the treatment of a servant of God by performing signs and miracles?

Simon, who appears in Acts chapter 8, was a figure who received people's attention by practicing magic in Samaria. He was called a man with great power, and people even considered him the power of God. However, even after hearing the gospel preached by Philip and receiving baptism, his center was not completely changed. Seeing that the Holy Spirit came upon them when the apostles laid their hands on them, he tried to buy that power with money. Here, his problem was not the power itself, but the heart wanting to gain status through the power.

Peter rebuked him, saying, "Your heart is not right before God." This is not simply pointing out a mistake, but a word revealing that the center of his understanding of the gospel was wrong. The work of the Holy Spirit and the power of God are not objects of transaction, nor are they means to establish human glory. Outwardly, Simon was in the position of a believer, but he still could not cast away his religious desire pursuing power and influence.

This incident gives an important lesson even today. Just because signs and miracles appear, it cannot be concluded that the person is necessarily within the will of God. The Bible looks at the center rather than the signs. Jesus also warned that on the last day, many people will say, "We performed miracles in the Lord's name," but the Lord will judge them based on their center. Power belongs to God; it is not a human possession.

The core of the gospel is the removal of sins and the righteousness of God. However, some people try to gain people's recognition by putting power and experience ahead of the gospel. At this time, ministry can be corrupted into a tool to

establish human fame, not the glory of God. The story of Simon shows how easily the religious desire craving power can blur the essence of the gospel.

In conclusion, the position of God's servant is not a position recognized through power, but the position of one whose heart is right before the gospel. God values the honesty of the center and the truth more than outwardly revealed signs. The case of Simon is a warning against the attitude of pursuing power and fame within the church, and clearly shows that true ministry must be focused on revealing the righteousness of God and the gospel. ✉

LESSON

9

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 9

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts chapter 9 is not simply a personal anecdote of the conversion of the persecutor Saul, but a decisive turning point showing how a human being who was at the peak of the law and religious zeal is completely dismantled and reconstructed before the ‘gospel of water and the Spirit’. God clearly reveals through the historical events of this chapter why He changed the most zealous legalist into the most thorough witness of the gospel.

Acts 9:1–2, Saul’s State: The Danger of Religious Zeal Without the Removal of Sins

“Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”

Acts chapter 9, verses 1 and 2, begins with the scene where Saul, “*still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,*” goes to the high priest and asks for letters to take to the various synagogues of Damascus. Saul was confident that he

himself was a righteous person serving God, but his reality was nothing more than a murderous religious zeal trying to establish human righteousness while his sins remained undealt with. Saul's state clearly shows that legalistic zeal, which is not premised on the gospel of water and the Spirit, inevitably stands in the position of persecuting the true gospel.

Acts 9:3–5, On the Road to Damascus: Saul Realizes that the One He Was Persecuting Was Christ Himself

“As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’”

When Saul came near Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him, and a voice was heard saying, “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*” When Saul asked, “*Who are You, Lord?*” the Lord revealed Himself, saying, “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*” Although Saul had never directly persecuted Jesus, he came to realize that persecuting the church, which is the gathering of those who believe in the gospel of salvation that the sins had already been ended through Jesus’ baptism and the Cross, is exactly persecuting Christ. This was an event that exposed that Saul, who was an expert in the law, actually did not know Christ, the substance of salvation, at all.

Acts 9:6–9, Blind Saul: The Eyesight of the Law Collapses and Prostrates Before the Gospel

“So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’ And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.”

Overwhelmed by the light, Saul arose from the ground and opened his eyes, but saw nothing, and was led by the hands of men into Damascus. He stayed for three days without seeing, neither eating nor drinking, which symbolizes that all the religious eyesight of Saul, who had prided himself on seeing the law, completely collapsed before the light of the gospel. This period was a time of thorough self-denial where Saul completely stopped his own righteousness and waited only for the mercy of God in the despair that the problem of sin could not be solved by human effort.

Acts 9:10–18, Ananias’s Laying on of Hands and Baptism: Restoration and Confirmation of the Gospel Vision

“Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord.’ So the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a

vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.’ Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.’ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.”

The Lord sends the disciple Ananias and says, “He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.” Ananias lays his hands on Saul and says, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately, when something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes and he received his sight again, he arose and was baptized. This baptism was not a condition for the removal of sins, but an evangelical confession acknowledging by faith the fact that the sins of the world were already taken upon by Jesus’ baptism and judged on the cross.

Acts 9:19–22, Immediate Proclamation: Bold Testimony Stemming from Structural Understanding

“So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, ‘Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?’ But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.”

Saul, having eaten food and become strengthened, immediately “preached that Jesus is the Son of God” in every synagogue. This change in Saul was not a simple emotional experience, but the result of clearly understanding the structure of salvation regarding why Jesus had to be baptized in the Jordan River and why He had to be crucified on the cross. He confounds the Jews dwelling in Damascus by testifying that Jesus is the Christ, and begins to logically prove the inevitability of the gospel of water and the Spirit.

Acts 9:23–31, The Reversal of Persecution: The Inevitable Path Walked by a Witness of the Gospel

“Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket. And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but

they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus. Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

Now Saul changes from the position of a persecutor to that of the persecuted. When the Jews plot to kill him and watch the city gates day and night, the disciples take Saul by night and let him down from the city wall in a basket. Saul goes to Jerusalem and tries to associate with the disciples, but when everyone is afraid, with the help of Barnabas, he comes to be with the apostles and speaks boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Through this process, the church experiences the expansion of the gospel, where all the land of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria has peace and stands firmly, and walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, their numbers increase.

Acts 9:32–43, Parallel with Peter’s Ministry: Confirmation of the Power of the Same Gospel

“Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said

to him, ‘Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.’ Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, ‘Tabitha, arise.’ And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.”

Acts 9 connects from the story of Saul back to the ministry of Peter. When Peter heals the paralytic Aeneas living in Lydda, saying, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” he immediately arises. Also, in Joppa, through the sign of raising the dead Tabitha to life, many people come to believe in the Lord. These events confirm that the gospel that came upon Saul and the gospel preached by Peter are not different from each other, but are the same gospel of the water and the Spirit and the same work of life.

In conclusion, Acts 9 declares that salvation can never be achieved through zeal for the law, and shows that the gospel of the water and the Spirit thoroughly breaks down even the most

religious person to recreate them as a true witness. Conversion is not a simple explosion of emotion, but a shift in the perception of the salvation event, and baptism is a confession of the already completed removal of sins. By changing the persecutor Saul, who considered himself righteous without the assurance of the removal of sins, into a vessel standing at the forefront of the gospel, God testified that only the gospel of the water and the Spirit can truly renew a human being.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 9, verses 1 to 43, is a chapter recording the most dramatic turning point in Christian history and is commonly known as the story of Saul's conversion. However, when we look at it from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe and preach, we come to realize that it is a crucial passage showing what kind of gospel God testifies to and how, going beyond the life reversal of a single individual. Saul was a person so loyal to the law and without any qualms in his conscience that, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, he went to the high priest and asked for letters to take to the various synagogues in Damascus. Yet, his biggest problem was not a moral flaw but his ignorance of the gospel. He was confident that he was serving God, but in reality, he was opposing the Savior sent by God. Because he was bound only to the law without knowing the ministry of Jesus Christ, he showed that human zeal without the gospel can rather become a tool that opposes God.

As Saul journeyed and came near Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him, but what fundamentally changed Saul was not the light itself, but the voice of the Lord

saying, “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*” Asking, “Who are You, Lord?”, Saul came to face the fact that the church he was persecuting was the very body of Jesus, and God did not merely break him down with an emotional shock but stood him before the truth of salvation. Saul arose from the ground, and though his eyes were opened, he saw nothing, and he was without sight for three days and neither ate nor drank. This symbolizes the spiritual principle that only when the eyes of the flesh are blinded does the salvation accomplished by God begin to be seen, and it made Saul lay down his own knowledge and righteousness to become one who waits for the word of God.

When God healed Saul, He used a disciple named Ananias in Damascus, which shows God’s order that while salvation is given directly from heaven, the content of the gospel is transmitted through people. As Ananias laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit,” Saul immediately received his sight again, arose, and was baptized. The filling of the Holy Spirit here is not a simple emotional experience, but means the confirmation of the gospel that Jesus was baptized by John to take upon Himself the sins of the world once and for all, received the judgment for those sins on the cross, and that the Holy Spirit is the One who testifies to this fact. This realization established Saul as a true apostle.

When he had received food, Saul was strengthened, and he immediately preached in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God, which is a proclamation that Jesus is the One who has the authority to take upon and remove sins. Because Saul now knew the fact that the law only brings the knowledge of sin but cannot solve it, and that only the ministry of Jesus Christ can put an end to sin, his gospel became a confirmation rather than an argument.

Even in the midst of persecution where the Jews plotted to kill him and watched the gates day and night, Saul did not stop preaching the gospel even as he escaped by the disciples letting him down through the wall in a large basket. This was because the problem of sin was already completely blotted out and he was justified before God, thus considering the gospel more precious than his own life.

The latter part of Acts chapter 9 transitions back to the ministry of Peter, recording the events where he healed a paralytic named Aeneas and raised the dead Tabitha to life, which is an intentional structure to show that the gospel preached by Saul and Peter is identical. Peter made it clear that the subject of the miracle was Jesus by saying, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; arise and make your bed,” and when raising Tabitha, he also testified that Jesus Christ is alive and His salvation is true by kneeling down, praying, and then commanding, “Tabitha, arise.” Although Saul and Peter had different backgrounds, the gospel they preached was only one, and that was exactly the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 9 asks us today whether we are living a life of faith with simple religious zeal, or whether we accurately know and believe the gospel. Saul was a man of zeal but was not saved, and only after he became Paul and a person who knew the gospel did he become a witness who shook the world. A person who encounters this gospel—that Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment for those sins on the cross, and that the Holy Spirit testifies to this fact in the hearts of those who believe—will have their direction and life changed. Before changing a person’s behavior, God establishes us as true witnesses by first changing the foundation of that soul with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 9

1. Persecution may come in the process of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit that is being preached in God's church; in all this process, can God accomplish the wills that God desires?

Looking at the flow of the Bible, the occurrence of persecution in the process of preaching the gospel is not an exceptional event but a repeatedly appearing scene. However, at the same time, the Bible clearly testifies: God is the One who accomplishes His will even in the midst of human opposition and hindrance. Persecution is not a factor that frustrates God's plan, but rather it also becomes a tool that can be used within that plan.

Looking at the Acts of the Apostles, when a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem, the saints were scattered. Outwardly it was a crisis, but that scattering became an opportunity for the expansion of the gospel. Through persecution, God did not keep the gospel bound to one region, but caused it to spread to wider places. Human hostility could not stop God's will, and rather it was used as a channel to accomplish God's plan.

The event of Jesus' cross is the same. The opposition and conspiracy of the religious leaders were malicious acts, but God completed the history of salvation through that event. Human malice could not destroy God's good will. This applies equally

in the process of preaching the gospel. God is the Sovereign who can fulfill His will even in the midst of the weakness of the church and the persecution of the world.

Persecution may come when preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. However, that persecution cannot limit God's sovereignty. Rather, in that process, faith is refined like pure gold, and the truthfulness of the gospel is revealed. God is not One who is swayed by situations, but One who works above the situations.

In conclusion, even if there is any resistance and difficulty in the process of preaching the gospel, God's will is not frustrated. God accomplishes His plan through the church, and sometimes even through suffering. Just because human opposition is great does not mean God's purpose is shaken. The gospel is not maintained by human power, but is preserved and expanded within God's sovereignty.

2. In the church of God, is it better the more servants of God there are?

The question of whether it is good if there are many servants of God in the church of God is not simply a matter of numbers, but a matter of what the center and content of those servants are. The Bible says that laborers are lacking and told us to pray for the laborers of the harvest. Looking only at this word, it seems like the more servants of God there are, the better. However, at the same time, the Bible also warns about false teachers and hirelings. Therefore, the core is not the number, but whether they are standing on the truth of the gospel.

That there are many servants of God can mean that there are many channels for the propagation of the gospel. If the people

who preach the gospel in different regions and situations, look after the saints, and teach the word increase in number, the church can be built up more healthily. Rather than a structure where one person bears all the work, a structure where various members serve according to their respective gifts is biblical. When each member of the body plays its own role, the community achieves balance.

However, just because the number is large does not mean it automatically becomes healthy. If they have the name of a servant but their center is on their own glory or the expansion of power, the larger the number, the greater the confusion can be instead. The Bible distinguishes between the true shepherd who looks after the sheep and the hireling who works for himself. God looks at the honesty of the heart and the purity of the gospel rather than the number of offices.

Also, the increase in the number of servants of God means that the responsibility also grows together. It was said that those who teach bear a greater responsibility. Therefore, simply increasing the offices must not become the goal. When a person who knows the depth of the gospel and can clearly testify the righteousness of God is established, that number has meaning.

In conclusion, the increase in the number of servants of God is a good thing when they stand upright on the gospel. The number itself is not the purpose, but it is important that sincere workers who can keep and preach the gospel are established. God looks at the center rather than the size or quantity, and when that center is correct, the church can expand healthily. ☒

LESSON

10

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 10

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 10 is not simply a record showing the process of the gentile mission beginning. This chapter is a crucial passage showing that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is by no means the exclusive property of the Jews, and how God's final judgment of salvation toward humanity is handed down. God clearly reveals through this historical event why He accepts people based on the already finished elimination of sin, rather than human regulations of purification.

Acts 10:1–8, Cornelius: Salvation That Cannot Be Reached Even by Godly Acts

“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, Cornelius!’ And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, ‘What is it, lord?’ So he said to him, ‘Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial

before God. Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.’ And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.”

Acts Chapter 10, verses 1 through 8 introduce Cornelius, the centurion of Caesarea. He was a devout man, fearing God together with his whole household, giving many alms to the people, and always praying to God. However, even such outstanding godliness and acts of Cornelius could not fundamentally end the problem of sin. Instead of sending an angel to command him to exert greater zeal, God tells him to invite Peter in Joppa and hear the words of the gospel. This shows that human godliness cannot become the basis of salvation, and only hearing and believing the completed fact of the gospel is the way of life.

Acts 10:9–16, Peter’s Vision: The End of Purification Regulations and the New Standard of Atonement

“The next day, as they journeyed and came near the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray, and the time was about the sixth hour. Being hungry and wanting to eat, while people were preparing, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and a certain vessel descending, like a great sheet, bound at the four corners and let down to the earth. In it were various four-footed animals of the earth, creeping things, and flying things of the air. And a voice came, saying, ‘Peter, rise, catch and eat.’ Peter said,

‘Lord, I cannot do so, for I have never eaten anything common and unclean.’ And a second voice came, saying, ‘What God has cleansed, you must not call common.’ After this happened three times, the vessel was taken up into heaven at once.”

While praying on the roof, Peter sees a vision of heaven opening and a vessel containing four-footed animals, creeping things, and flying things of the air coming down. When Peter answered the voice telling him to rise, catch and eat, saying, *“For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.”* God declares a second time, *“What God has cleansed you must not call common.”* The essence of this vision is not simply a change in food regulations. He proclaimed a great transition in the method of salvation, that now the cleanness of a person is judged not by the observance of legal regulations or lineage, but only by the fact of the elimination of sin already completed by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus.

Acts 10:17–23, The Guidance of the Holy Spirit: Dispatching the Apostle to the Field of the Completed Gospel

“Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate. And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.’ Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, ‘Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?’

And they said, ‘Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.’ Then he invited them in and lodged them. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.”

When Peter was wondering as he thought about the meaning of the vision, the Holy Spirit says to him, “*Three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.*” This was not an invitation for a theological discussion, but a powerful dispatch of the Holy Spirit to show how the already completed gospel is applied to the actual field called gentiles. Obeying this voice of the Holy Spirit, Peter departs on the journey together with the men sent by Cornelius.

Acts 10:24–33, The Meaning of the Meeting: God Who Takes People by the Fact of Atonement, Not by Outward Appearance

“And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I myself am also a man.’ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. Then he said to them, ‘You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for

me?’ So Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.’”

Peter, who arrived at the house of Cornelius, confesses that his theological prejudice was broken, saying, “*In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.*” Here, outward appearance means nationality, religious history, or life morality. The fact that God does not look at these human conditions, but pays attention only to whether the soul accepts the fact of the elimination of sin that has already been accomplished through the ministry of Jesus Christ, is confirmed through this meeting.

Acts 10:34–43, The Core of Peter’s Sermon: The Event of Salvation That Began from the Baptism of Jesus

“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from

Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.’”

Peter preaches the essence of the gospel to Cornelius and those gathered in his house. He says, *“that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached”* and testifies that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. The reason Peter mentioned the baptism of John first before speaking of the Cross and resurrection is that the judgment of the Cross can have effect only when the event of Jesus taking charge of the sins of the world by receiving the baptism given by John at the Jordan River is presupposed.

Acts 10:44–46, The Holy Spirit Descending During the Sermon: The Confirmation of Unconditional Salvation

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came

with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.”

When Peter was saying these words, the Holy Spirit comes down on all the people hearing the word, so the circumcised believers who came with Peter become amazed due to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit even to the gentiles. Here, no circumcision, observance of the law, or religious registration process was included. The Holy Spirit came down the very moment they heard and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this was God’s powerful testimony that gentiles also receive the same Holy Spirit without discrimination within the same gospel as the Jews.

Acts 10:47–48, The Meaning of Baptism: A Mark Acknowledging the Already Descended Salvation

“Then Peter answered, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.”

Peter, who witnessed the presence of the Holy Spirit, asks in return, saying, *“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”* and commands to give baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. Here, baptism is not a condition to receive the Holy Spirit or a means to wash away sins. It is a holy mark by which those who have received confirmation through the Holy Spirit of the elimination of sin already ended by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus publicly acknowledge and confirm that completed fact of salvation before the community.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 10 proclaims that God no longer distinguishes people by human regulations or acts. The only standard of cleanness is solely the elimination of sin accomplished by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus. God did not look at the devout acts of Cornelius themselves, but called him into the grace of the atonement already completed by the ministry of Jesus. This is exactly the actual history where the gospel of the water and the Spirit tears down all boundaries between people and binds humanity into one.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 10, verse 1 to 48 records the crucial turning point where the gospel crossed the boundary of the Jews and was applied equally to the gentiles. The core of this chapter is not simple national harmony, but what the method of salvation appointed by God is, and to whom and how it is testified. Looking from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe and preach, Acts Chapter 10 is not the beginning of a new gospel, but a great event where the already completed gospel broke human prejudice and was revealed to the whole world.

In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the army called the Italian Regiment. He was devout, fearing God together with his whole household, giving many alms to the people, and always praying to God, but God did not say to him that it was already enough, but sent an angel and commanded him to invite Peter. This shows that human godliness and zeal can never replace salvation, and awakens us to the fact that no matter how many good acts are accumulated, the problem of sin can only be resolved by the gospel sent by God.

When Peter went up on the roof to pray, he saw a vision of heaven opening and a vessel like a great sheet descending, and in it various four-footed animals of the earth, creeping things, and flying things of the air were mixed. When God said, “Peter, rise, catch and eat,” Peter refused, saying, “I have never eaten anything common and unclean.” However, God spoke a second time, “What God has cleansed, you must not call common.” This vision is a declaration that, going beyond food regulations, the standard of cleanness has now been completely moved from the law of man to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Entering the house of Cornelius, Peter confessed, “*You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for.*” Peter proclaimed the universality of the gospel, saying, “*In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.*” This does not mean that one receives salvation by acts, but is an acknowledgment that the gospel of Jesus Christ is open to all nations without discrimination.

The subsequent sermon of Peter clearly summarizes the ministry of Jesus Christ. He testified to the public life of Jesus, saying, “*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*” In particular, the passage “*that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached*” presupposes the ministry of water where Jesus took charge of the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. Also, through the testimony of the resurrection that they killed Him by hanging

Him on a tree, but God raised Him up again on the third day and showed Him, he preached Christ who completed the ministry of the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

When he reached the conclusion that to Him all the prophets also testify, *“through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”* a surprising history occurred. When Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all the people hearing the word, which shows that the Holy Spirit did not come to confirm the preparation or qualification of a person, but is the One who came to confirm the truthfulness of the proclaimed gospel. The circumcised believers who came with Peter were astonished because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit even to the gentiles.

“Then Peter answered, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” The water baptism given to them was not a condition to wash away sins, but a confession of faith of joy made by those who have already received the elimination of sin by hearing and believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Acts Chapter 10 proclaims that cleanness is not a distinction of man but the completion of God, and confirms that this gospel, that Jesus took charge of our sins at the Jordan River and was judged on the Cross, is the only truth for all people.

Looking at the Word of Acts Chapter 10, Verses 44-48 from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Preached by Paul C. Jong,

The word from Acts Chapter 10, verse 44 to 48 is a crucial text showing by what principle the salvation of gentiles is established. This scene, going beyond a simple record of experiencing the Holy Spirit, reveals to whom and in what order the salvation already completed by God is testified. When we read this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach, it becomes clear that the descending of the Holy Spirit is not a result of human conditions or religious ceremonies, but God's immediate testimony to the truthfulness of the proclaimed gospel.

When Peter spoke these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all the people hearing the word, which shows that the Holy Spirit did not wait for any ceremony or human decision. The Holy Spirit came down when they heard the gospel preached by Peter, that is, the word that Jesus Christ took charge of the sins of the world by receiving baptism at the Jordan River and completed salvation by receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The Holy Spirit always responds to this gospel, and the descending of the Holy Spirit is not an act of checking the prepared state of a person, but God's sealing that confirms the fact that the already accomplished salvation is true.

The circumcised believers who came with Peter, who watched this sight, were astonished because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit even to the gentiles. The reason they were astonished was that the conditions of the law, circumcision, and national boundaries, which they had been firmly holding onto, collapsed, rather than the power of the Holy Spirit itself. God revealed without discrimination that the standard of salvation is

not in human regulations, but solely in the faith that believes in the ministry of Jesus Christ. This is an event that proclaimed that the principle of salvation appointed by God is applied equally to both Jews and gentiles.

Hearing the people of Cornelius's house speaking in tongues and exalting God is the inevitable reaction burst out by the liberated spirit of those whose sin problem has been resolved. If even a little sin remains in the heart, the Holy Spirit can never come down, but when the gospel is preached that sins were transferred by the baptism of Jesus and those sins were judged by the blood of the Cross, the Holy Spirit immediately testifies to that truth. Therefore, speaking in tongues and praising can be said to be the result of the joy enjoyed by the saints who received the completed salvation, rather than the purpose of the Holy Spirit's presence.

Afterwards, Peter said, “*Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?*” *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*” (Acts 10:47-48). The point to pay attention to here is the order that water baptism was given after the Holy Spirit came down. This confirms that water baptism is not a condition to wash away sins, but a mark by which those who have already received the elimination of sin by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus publicly confess their faith before the public. The water baptism performed in the house of Cornelius was not a means to obtain salvation, but the proper response of those who received salvation.

Through this event, God made it clear that He grants the same gospel, the same Holy Spirit, and the same salvation to all people, regardless of whether they are Jews or gentiles, or devout people or sinners. The Holy Spirit does not look at a person's social background or religious history, but looks only

at the truthfulness of the gospel. When the fact that the problem of sin has eternally ended by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit comes down without discrimination upon those who receive that word with faith and justifies their souls.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 10, verses 44 to 48 awaken us to the fact that the Holy Spirit is not the One who newly begins salvation, but the One who testifies to the already completed salvation. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is based on the perfect ministry of God, not on the qualification of a person. This truth, that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to that fact in the hearts of those who believe, is working equally today. Where this gospel is proclaimed, no one is excluded, and only the grace of God is fully revealed. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 10

1. Is God the One who is preparing those who will receive salvation before God even among the religious people of the world?

Looking at the revelation of the Bible, God is not depicted as One who limits salvation based only on a specific group or outward religious affiliation. God said that He wants all people to reach salvation. This includes the meaning that even the people inside the religions of the world are not excluded from the object of God's salvation. Even if they are outwardly inside a religious system, God knows the ones seeking the truth even among them.

Looking at the Acts of the Apostles, Cornelius was not a Jewish religious person, but he was a person who feared God. God did not just leave him as he was, but sent Peter and made him hear the gospel. This is a scene where God connected the gospel to the one whose heart He had already prepared. Even if they look like people inside another religion to human eyes, God looks at the center and can lead them to the way of salvation.

At the same time, the Bible makes it clear that salvation is not accomplished by simple religious zeal or morality. No matter how much religious zeal there is, if they do not know the gospel, they cannot reach the assurance of salvation. Therefore, God makes the prepared ones hear the gospel. In Romans, it says, "*How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?*" (*Romans 10:14*), emphasizing the necessity of the propagation of the gospel. This means that while God prepares a person, He

simultaneously connects the gospel through the church.

In conclusion, God is the One who knows those who will be saved even among the people inside the religions of the world, and can work toward them. However, that salvation is ultimately accomplished through the gospel. God is not One who only waits, but is the Sovereign One who makes them meet the gospel and realize the truth when the time comes. Not human external affiliation, but faith before the gospel is the final standard.

2. Are the angels sent by God doing the work of protecting God's people even in the New Testament era?

The testimony that God works through angels even in the New Testament era clearly appears within the Bible. Hebrews explains angels as “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.” This contains the meaning that the ministry of angels is not simply limited only to the Old Testament era, but continues within God's history of salvation even in the New Testament era.

Looking at the Acts of the Apostles, the scene where an angel released the apostles locked in prison is recorded. Even when Peter was locked in prison, an angel appeared and led him out. These events show that God, when necessary, used angels to protect His own people and made them continue the gospel ministry. At the same time, it is not a promise that He always miraculously protects in all situations. Some apostles were rescued, but some apostles were martyred. This shows the fact that the ministry of angels is also under the sovereignty of God.

An angel is not a being that acts independently, but a being that carries out the command of God. Therefore, even in the New

Testament era, if God wants, He can protect and help through angels. However, the Bible does not teach believers to seek or rely on angels. The center is always on God and Christ, and angels are merely tools working within the invisible providence of God.

In conclusion, even in the New Testament era, God can help His own people through angels, and the Bible testifies to that fact. However, that ministry is not a realm of pursuing visible experiences, but a matter within the sovereign providence of God. The trust of the believer must be placed on God who sends the angels, not on the angels themselves.

3. Since the Holy Spirit dwells within the heart of God's servant who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if he realizes and testifies to God's will through the word of God, does the word he preaches become the very word of God?

This question is very important. This is because the problem of whether that word directly becomes the word of God when God's servant in whom the Holy Spirit dwells preaches the word, is a problem that deals with the authority of the church and the essence of revelation.

The Bible clearly states that the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer, and guides them into the truth. It also clearly declares that the word recorded by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is the Bible. However, there is something that must be distinguished here. The Bible is the completed revelation of God, and its authority is in the recorded word. Even if God's servant today realizes and preaches the word amidst the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that preaching itself does not become a new revelation or have the same absolute authority as the Bible.

Even the apostles did not place their teachings above the gospel. Rather, they made it the standard whether it aligned with the already given gospel. Paul even said that if anyone preaches another gospel, he would be accursed, and placed the standard of the gospel not on himself but on the revelation given by God. This shows that no servant can stand above the Bible.

When the servant in whom the Holy Spirit dwells preaches the word, if that word aligns with the truth of the Bible and reveals the essence of the gospel, it can be a sermon that correctly explains the will of God. However, that authority comes from the Bible, and does not come from the preacher as an individual. The preacher is a channel delivering the truth, not the source of the truth.

If a person claims, “Since the Holy Spirit is in me, what I speak is the very word of God,” at that moment he stands in a dangerous position. The Bible teaches to discern the spirits, and tells us to test whether all teachings align with the recorded word. This is a warning not to place even a servant who looks godly in a position of absolute inerrancy.

In conclusion, God’s servant in whom the Holy Spirit dwells can realize and preach the will of God. However, the standard by which the word he preaches is recognized as the word of God is whether it aligns with the Bible. Authority does not come from man, but comes from the recorded word of God. A true servant is a person who does not exalt himself, but humbly confirms that the word he preaches stands upon the truth of the Bible.

4. If it is said that the Holy Spirit is not in the heart of the one who testifies the word in the church of God, does the word he preaches become the word of God?

The Bible does not place the authority of the word of God on

the condition of man, but places it on God Himself. Therefore, when assuming that a certain person does not have the Holy Spirit in his heart, it cannot be definitively determined whether the word he preaches is the word of God or not. The word of God is essentially a revelation that came from God, and its authority is in the recorded Bible. The preacher is merely a tool delivering that word, not the source of the word.

However, at the same time, the Bible shows that God can use even incomplete tools. Even through a person whose center is not right like Balaam in the Old Testament, God has declared His own will. Even in this case, the authority did not come from man, but there was authority because God spoke. Therefore, the core is not the inner condition of the preacher, but whether the content he preaches aligns with the truth of the Bible.

If a person who does not have the Holy Spirit in his heart deals with the Bible simply as knowledge or a job and preaches his own thoughts or distorted teachings, that is not the word of God. The Bible warns about false teachers, and commands to discern those who corrupt the gospel. The word can be recognized as the word of God only when it aligns with the recorded truth.

In conclusion, the authority of the word does not automatically arise from the spiritual condition of the preacher. The servant in whom the Holy Spirit dwells has a greater possibility to more correctly discern and preach the truth, but the final standard is always the Bible. Just because a person without the Holy Spirit speaks, it does not necessarily mean that it is not the word of God; it can be accepted as the word of God only when it aligns with the recorded word. The church must not absolutize man, but must test all teachings by the standard of the Bible. ☒

LESSON

11

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 11

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 11 is not a simple explanation or report about the Cornelius event. This chapter is like an official document where God Himself confirms the judgment before the whole church that gentiles are also saved by the same gospel of the water and the Spirit. It clearly shows that the church is not a place that takes human experience or tradition as a standard, but a community that acknowledges and follows the order of salvation already completed by God.

Acts 11:1–3, Raising the Problem: The Conflict Between Purification Regulations and the Standard of Atonement

“Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, ‘You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!’”

Acts Chapter 11, verses 1 through 3 deal with the dispute that arose when the apostles and brethren in Judea heard that the

gentiles had also received the word of God. When Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision criticize and raise a problem, saying, “*You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!*” This outwardly looks like a protest that the tradition and regulations of the Jews were violated, but in reality, it was an essential collision of the gospel asking whether to place the standard of the elimination of sin on human acts and national tradition, or on the atonement already completed by Christ.

Acts 11:4–14, Peter’s Explanation: The Order of the Event of Salvation Beyond Human Experience

“But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: ‘I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” But I said, “Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.” But the voice answered me again from heaven, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, “Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.”’”

Peter explains this matter to them in order without appealing to emotions. He states in detail the vision of the declaration of cleanness he saw when praying in the city of Joppa, the event where the Holy Spirit commanded him to go together doubting nothing, and the word Cornelius heard through the angel. In particular, the passage where the angel who came to Cornelius said, “He told us that he saw an angel standing in his house and saying... *‘who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’*” emphasizes that salvation is not some mystical phenomenon, but an objective event that occurs only when one hears and believes the proclaimed word.

Acts 11:15–17, The Decisive Standard: The Confirmation of the Same Holy Spirit Given by God

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?”

The core of Peter’s declaration is the testimony, “*And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.*” He says he remembered the word the Lord spoke, “*John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*” and asks in return, “*If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?*” This shows that the Holy Spirit did not wait for the laying on of hands of the apostle or the approval of the church, but confirmed God’s

judgment by coming down directly upon those who believe the already completed word of salvation.

Acts 11:18, The Conclusion of the Church: Repentance Unto Life Granted Also to the Gentiles

“When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.’”

Those who heard Peter’s explanation become silent and glorify God, concluding by saying, *“Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”* Here, repentance is not a simple act of tears, but a great transition of thought, discarding the stereotype that gentiles can never be saved, and acknowledging that their sins have also already ended by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus. The Jerusalem church finally officially accepts the order of God’s salvation that works beyond the boundaries of man.

Acts 11:19–21, The Ministry in Antioch: The Gospel Working in the Mission Field

“Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”

Those who were scattered due to the tribulation that arose

over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word only to the Jews, but some of them arrived in Antioch and spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. This gospel did not have a separate one for Jews or for gentiles, but was the same gospel of the water and the Spirit. As the hand of the Lord was with them, the history of a great multitude of people believing and turning to the Lord appeared, which proves the fact that the gospel is faster than institutional control and the Holy Spirit directly presides over the history of life in the field.

Acts 11:22–26, The Antioch Church and the Birth of World Missions

“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

The Jerusalem church dispatches Barnabas to Antioch. Arriving there, Barnabas sees the grace of God, rejoices, and exhorts everyone to *“with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.”* What Barnabas confirmed was not whether regulations were observed, but the evidence of grace where the elimination of sin was finished. Afterwards, Barnabas brought

Saul from Tarsus and they taught together in the Antioch church for a year, and the disciples were first called “Christians” in Antioch. The title Christian does not mean a specific sect, but means the identity of being a new creation belonging within the completed ministry of Christ.

Acts 11:27–30, The Practice of Relief: The Spontaneous Fruit Flowed Out from the Assurance of the Grace of Salvation

“And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

Hearing the prophecy that a great famine would come upon all the world, the disciples of the Antioch church determine to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea, each according to his ability. This relief was not a legal obligation or a survival strategy of the community, but a spontaneous and vital fruit shared by those who had already been freed from sin and curse. The Antioch church practically showed that the grace resulting from the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not produce condemnation, but produces true love and a sense of responsibility toward the brethren.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 11 confirms that the salvation of the gentiles was not an accidental exception but God’s original plan. The only standard of the church is not human experience

or tradition, but the order of the gospel, and the Holy Spirit comes upon the one who believes the word and guarantees that salvation. The church is not an organ of power that manages God's work, but a community that acknowledges the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the work God has already done, and testifies it to all the world. This is the historical expansion structure of the gospel that Acts Chapter 11 shows.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 11, verse 1 to 30 is a chapter recording a thorough explanation and verification of the event of the salvation of gentiles. This text does not show the process of creating a new gospel, but shows how the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit is confirmed and universally accepted within the church community. Looking at Acts Chapter 11 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, it can be seen that this chapter is not a place that justifies a simple emotional experience, but a chapter that clearly establishes what the absolute standard of salvation and the gospel is.

When the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the gentiles had also received the word of God, those of the circumcision criticized Peter and raised a problem, saying that you went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them. Outwardly it looks as if the regulations of the law and food were violated, but the actual core issue was in what the gentiles came to believe. Acts Chapter 11 begins the discussion by revealing that the standard of salvation is not human tradition or acts of the law, but solely the work God accomplished through Christ.

Peter explained this matter in order and testified how God sovereignly worked. The passage where Peter confessed, “*And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.*” when he preached the gospel in the house of Cornelius, is very important. This confirms that the Holy Spirit did not come to newly begin salvation, but is the One who came to seal that the already completed salvation is true while the ministry of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and that gospel is heard. The Holy Spirit always works as a witness who guarantees the truthfulness of the gospel accomplished by water and blood.

The declaration Peter quoted, saying, “What God has cleansed, you must not call common,” means that, going beyond the simple abolition of food regulations, the standard of cleanness has been moved from human effort to the ministry of God. Cleanness is no longer a process, but a completed fact that Jesus Christ has already accomplished by taking charge of the sins of the world at the Jordan River and receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross. Peter emphasized that human stereotypes must be laid down before the completed ministry of God, saying, “*Who was I that I could withstand God?*”

The Jerusalem church, having heard Peter’s explanation, became silent and glorified God, and concluded by saying, “*Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.*” Here, repentance unto life is not simple tears or an ethical decision, but a transition of the direction of faith that discards one’s own righteousness and relies only on the salvation accomplished by God. The church did not confirm the intensity of the acts or experiences of the gentiles, but acknowledged the work of God by confirming only whether the same gospel was preached and the same Holy Spirit testified to that gospel.

Afterwards, those who were scattered due to the tribulation that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and

Antioch and preached the gospel, and arriving in Antioch, they preached the Lord Jesus to the Hellenists also, so the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great multitude of people believed and turned to the Lord. When the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas as far as Antioch to confirm the grace of God, and Barnabas sought Saul, brought him to Antioch, and they assembled for a year and taught a great multitude, the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. The name Christian is not a simple moral title, but an evangelical declaration that they are those who believe the salvation ministry of Christ and stand upon that identity.

The end of Acts Chapter 11 finishes with the appearance of the disciples of the Antioch church determining to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea, each according to his ability, when a great famine came upon all the world. This relief and service is not an obligation by a legal command, but a spontaneous fruit of the joy enjoyed within the gospel by the saints whose problem of sin has been resolved. The community that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit shares with love without calculating, and naturally manifests service in life as a result of salvation, not as a condition of salvation.

standards of judgment of the church must be the gospel, not tradition. The clear evidence of salvation is not acts but the same history of the Holy Spirit, and the basis of cleanness is not the zeal of man but the completed ministry of Jesus Christ. When this gospel is clear, that Jesus took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to that fact in the hearts of those who believe, the church finally tears down all boundaries and sees the glory of God. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 11

1. Must the Church of God concentrate on mission ministry for the propagation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

If the Church of God is a community that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, its reason for existence ultimately lies in keeping and preaching that gospel. Jesus commanded the disciples to make disciples of all nations, and told them to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. Therefore, for the church to place interest in mission ministry is not an optional matter, but a matter connected to its essence.

Mission does not simply mean only the activity of going overseas. All ministries that preach to those who do not yet know the gospel are missions. Preaching the gospel to people within the local community, in different cultural spheres, or in different religious backgrounds all fall into the category of missions. If it is a church that places the gospel of the water and the Spirit at the center, that gospel must not remain in only one place.

However, this does not mean that mission is the only activity of the church. The church must also bear together the work of building up the saints with the Word, caring for one another, and nurturing them to stand firmly upon the gospel. If it pursues only external expansion in a state where the inside is weak, it can lose balance. Therefore, mission is one among the essential missions of the church, but it cannot be separated from Word education and community care.

Also, mission must not be a simple organizational expansion, but the delivery of the gospel. Gathering people is not the purpose, but making known the truth of the elimination of sin is the purpose. If mission becomes a means of numerical competition or expansion of influence, the center can become blurred.

In conclusion, it is the biblical direction for the Church of God to concentrate on mission ministry for the propagation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. However, that concentration must be accomplished while maintaining gospel-centricity and the depth of the Word. The church is a community that preserves the gospel and, at the same time, a community that expands that gospel to the world. Mission is not an optional additional activity, but a mission connected to the church's reason for existence.

2. Is it right for the Church of God to do businesses that act as a calyx (supporting businesses) in order to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

The question of whether it is God's will for the Church of God to do so-called 'businesses that act as a calyx', that is, auxiliary activities to help the propagation of the gospel, in order to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is a matter of priority and center. The Bible clearly places the essential mission of the church on the propagation of the gospel. Therefore, all activities can have meaning when they are within the scope of helping that center.

The church can do various forms of businesses such as managing buildings, publishing, utilizing media, supporting missions, and helping the lives of the saints. These things are not

the work of directly preaching the gospel, but they can play a role in helping the gospel be transmitted more widely. If these activities actually support the propagation of the gospel and help the saints concentrate more on the gospel, they can become a means to serve the purpose.

However, what becomes a problem is the case where the means becomes the purpose. A calyx exists to make the flower stand out, not to replace the flower. If the business itself becomes the identity of the church, and the gospel remains only formally, the center has already shifted. The Bible teaches to rely on God's power and Word rather than an attitude that relies on human wisdom or organizational ability.

Also, for all businesses, the motive and direction are important. It must be discerned whether it is for helping the gospel, or for financial stability or expansion of power. Even if it looks like it is for the gospel on the outside, if it actually pursues human glory or influence, its purpose can be distorted. God looks at the honesty of the center rather than external success.

In conclusion, it is not a wrong thing in itself for the Church of God to do auxiliary businesses to help the propagation of the gospel. However, it must be a means for the gospel to the utmost, and it cannot precede the gospel. God's will does not lie in establishing the calyx, but lies in the gospel, which is the flower, being revealed clearly. All activities must be evaluated under that standard. ☒

LESSON

12

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 12

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts chapter 12 is not simply a record intended to show a miraculous prison escape story or the miserable end of King Herod. The center of this chapter lies in clearly revealing how human power and God's power are contrasted before the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit. When the power of the world tries to suppress the gospel, it vividly shows how God continues His history of salvation.

Acts 12:1–4, Herod's Persecution and the Resistance of Worldly Power Toward the Completed Gospel

“Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.”

Acts chapter 12 verses 1 through 4 deal with the incident where King Herod stretched out his hand to harm some of the church, killed James the brother of John with a sword, and seeing that the Jews rejoiced in this work, tried to catch Peter also. The purpose of this persecution was to seek political stability and buy the favor of the Jews, but at its root, there was an attempt to eliminate the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which fundamentally tears down the human system of sacrifices and the Law. Worldly power rejected the absolute order of salvation possessed by the gospel and tried to block it with violence.

Acts 12:5, The Church's Prayer: Trust in God Beyond the Situation

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”

The Bible records, *“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”* This prayer was not simply begging for the elimination of sin to escape a crisis, nor was it an emotional repentance movement. This was a confession of faith by those who believed that salvation had already been completed through Jesus' baptism and the Cross, trusting God who presides over history in any situation and leaving the results to Him.

Acts 12:6–11, Opening of the Prison Doors: God’s Intervention That Cannot Stop the Testimony of the Gospel

“And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise quickly!’ And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, ‘Gird yourself and tie on your sandals’; and so he did. And he said to him, ‘Put on your garment and follow me.’ So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, ‘Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.’”

On the night before Herod was about to bring Peter out, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, a light shone in the prison, *“and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise quickly!’”* and the chains fell off his hands. As Peter followed the angel past the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate that leads to the city, a miracle occurs where the gate opens of its own accord. This scene shows the fact that God supernaturally intervenes whenever necessary to continue the testimony of the gospel. This is because a human prison cannot confine the gospel, and the news of completed salvation must necessarily continue to be proclaimed.

Acts 12:12–17, Mark’s House: Human Weakness and God’s Sovereign Work

“So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter’s voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, ‘You are beside yourself!’ Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, ‘It is his angel.’ Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, ‘Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren.’ And he departed and went to another place.”

When Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, many people were gathered together praying. When a girl named Rhoda heard Peter’s voice and, out of gladness, reported it without opening the gate, the people could not believe it, saying, “You are beside yourself” or “It is his angel.” This scene reveals the weakness of human beings who are bewildered before a real-life miracle even while they are praying. However, the important fact is that the gospel of the water and the Spirit and its advancement do not depend on the strength of a person’s faith or the perfection of their prayer, but are accomplished within God’s absolute plan.

Acts 12:18–23, The Death of Herod: The End of Human Glory That Usurped God’s Glory

“Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed there. Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king’s personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king’s country. So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, ‘The voice of a god and not of a man!’ Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.”

When Herod chose a day, put on royal apparel, sat on the rostrum, and gave an oration to the people, the people flattered him, saying, *“The voice of a god and not of a man!”* Because Herod did not give glory to God, an angel of the Lord immediately struck him, and he was eaten by worms and died. This shows the vain end of human power that opposed the gospel, blocked God’s work of salvation, and sought its own glory. It was God’s judgment declaring that human glory can never stand for long before the gospel.

Acts 12:24, The Decisive Conclusion: The Vitality of the Gospel That Prospers Despite Any Hindrance

“But the word of God grew and multiplied.”

The core conclusion that wraps up all the events of Acts chapter 12 is the declaration, *“But the word of God grew and multiplied.”* James was killed, Peter was imprisoned, and the church was placed before a fierce threat, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit broke through any obstacles and continuously expanded. Because this gospel of the water and the Spirit did not begin by the will of man but is God’s work already completed by Jesus’ baptism and the Cross, it possesses a vitality that can never be stopped.

Acts 12:25, To the Next Stage: The Gospel Heading Toward the Gentile World Beyond Jerusalem

“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.”

Barnabas and Saul return from Jerusalem, taking with them John whose surname is Mark, after completing their relief work. This is an important signal announcing that the flow of Acts is now shifting from a Jerusalem-centered history to a history of full-scale missions toward the Gentile world. The gospel of the water and the Spirit has finished its preparations to advance toward the whole world, crossing the geographical boundary of Judea.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 12 testifies that although the gospel of the water and the Spirit faces resistance from worldly

power, it continues to achieve victory under God's sovereign protection and guidance. Persecution cannot stop the gospel and merely becomes a tool to prove its vitality. The fact of this eternal gospel, that all sins have already been ended by Jesus' baptism, is God's powerful work that neither Herod's sword nor the prison's iron chains can bind.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 12, verses 1 to 25, is a record showing by what the church survives when it is placed between the blade of worldly power and the hand of God. When looking at the text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, we can see that Acts chapter 12 is not simply a listing of mysterious miracles, but a powerful testimony of how the completed gospel protects the church and tears down secular power.

At that time, King Herod stretched out his hand to harm some from the church, and he killed James the brother of John with the sword; and seeing that the Jews were pleased with this, he proceeded further to seize Peter also, and it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Here we may have a question as to why James was martyred and Peter survived, but the life of the church does not depend on whether a person survives or not. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a promise that exempts us from all dangers, but a declaration that the power of sin and death has already ended through the ministry of Jesus Christ, both the death of James and the rescue of Peter testify to the same truth that victory has been confirmed by Jesus' baptism and the Cross.

Peter was kept in prison, and the church prayed earnestly to

God for him. This prayer was not simply a spell to change the situation, but the rightful reaction of the saints standing on the conviction of the gospel. Because there was faith that Jesus took all our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to that fact, the church did not scatter in fear but could sustain the foundation of the gospel through prayer.

On the night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards before the door were keeping the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, struck Peter on the side and woke him up, saying, “Arise quickly!” and the chains fell off his hands; and Peter followed the angel, passed the first and the second guards, and came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. When Peter had come to himself, he confessed, saying, “*Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.*” The core of this rescue lies in showing that there remained a place where God’s gospel had to be preached, and that gospel can never be bound by human power.

When Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, many were gathered there praying; but when Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came out to answer, and when she recognized his voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. However, the people said, “You are beside yourself,” or “It is his angel,” and could not believe it, until they saw Peter continuing to knock, opened the door, saw him, and were astonished. This scene shows that the power of prayer does not depend on how perfect human faith is, but depends on God who is faithful to the promise of the

gospel, and it reminds us that despite our wavering, God accomplishes His work.

After a conflict with the people of Tyre and Sidon, Herod put on royal apparel, sat on the rostrum, and gave an oration to the people, and the people flattered him, saying, “*The voice of a god and not of a man!*” Because Herod did not give glory to God, an angel of the Lord immediately struck him, and he was eaten by worms and died. This incident is a theological declaration showing the vain end of power that usurps God’s glory. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit states that the merit of salvation lies entirely in the ministry of Jesus’ baptism and the Cross, it clarifies that there is no place anywhere for humans to take that glory.

Ultimately, Acts chapter 12 concludes with the declaration, “*But the word of God grew and multiplied.*” Neither human death, nor prison, nor the king’s sword could stop the word of God, and the true victory of the church was not in the removal of external physical force, but in the continuous propagation of the gospel.

Acts chapter 12 asks us today whether we are holding onto the completed gospel of salvation rather than the safety of our circumstances. As long as there is this gospel that Jesus Christ took our sins at the Jordan River, received judgment on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this, the church will stand on a foundation that is never shaken in the midst of any crisis. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 12

1. Can the politicians of the world persecute God's church and God's servants?

Looking at the entire history of the Bible and church history, cases where the secular political power persecuted God's church and God's servants actually exist. Jesus was crucified under the rule of the Roman Empire, and the apostles also experienced trials, imprisonment, and punishment under the influence of political power as well as Jewish religious leaders. Therefore, to the question of whether political power can pressure or restrict the church, we can say "it can be so" biblically and historically.

However, at the same time, the Bible teaches that all authority is ultimately under God's permission. Politicians or state power may seem to have absolute sovereignty themselves, but there is no authority standing above God's rule. In the Book of Daniel, the kings of Babylon and Persia exercised powerful authority, but ultimately they could not escape God's plan. In the New Testament as well, Paul was under the emperor's rule, but he testified that the gospel was not bound.

Political persecution often occurs when the message of the gospel and the power structure collide. Even if the church is not a group intending to threaten political power, conflicts can arise when it does not compromise on issues of truth and conscience. However, the Bible does not teach the church to respond with violence or rebellion. Rather, it teaches to pray and obey within the boundaries of the law, but when it conflicts with God's will,

obeying God takes priority over obeying men.

In conclusion, the politicians of the world can persecute the church and God's servants. However, that persecution cannot destroy God's plan. Political power is temporary, but God's kingdom is eternal. The church must neither depend on power nor fear power, but must stand boldly in the truth. Because God is the One who protects His church in history and accomplishes His will in any situation.

2. Does God's church spread and work the gospel of the water and the Spirit more strongly as the persecution of the world becomes fiercer?

Looking at the records of the Bible, there are cases where the gospel spread even more widely when worldly persecution occurred. In the Book of Acts, when a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem, the saints scattered to various regions, and that scattering became an opportunity for the expansion of the gospel. Outwardly it was a crisis, but God used that situation to have the gospel preached to new regions. In this sense, persecution cannot block God's will, but rather can be used within God's plan.

However, there is no mechanical formula that the stronger the persecution, the more strongly the gospel automatically works. In some cases, people shrink back because of fear, and in other cases, faith is refined and becomes bolder. The Bible says that suffering refines faith like pure gold, but at the same time warns that if one does not stay awake and pray, one can fall. Therefore, the expansion of the gospel is not simply determined by the intensity of external pressure, but is also related to God's sovereignty and the state of the saints' faith.

Historically as well, during times of persecution, the church often became purer, and formal faith was filtered out. Motives that were mixed in a comfortable environment become separated, and when persecution comes, the core is revealed. In this respect, persecution makes the church weak, but at the same time, makes it deep. Through that process, God can make the truthfulness of the gospel even clearer.

In conclusion, cases where the gospel was preached more strongly as worldly persecution became stronger definitely exist. However, that is not because of human power, but because of the sovereignty of God who accomplishes His will even in the midst of suffering. The core point is that persecution does not kill the gospel, but rather can become a channel for the gospel in God's hands. The power of the gospel does not depend on the advantageousness of the environment, but depends on God. ☒

LESSON

13

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Acts Chapter 13

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts 13 is not merely a commencement report of a simple missionary journey. This chapter records the historical moment when the gospel of water and the Spirit is officially and legally proclaimed to the Gentile world through the dispatch by the Antioch Church. The events in this chapter clearly demonstrate why the gospel must be dispatched to the world and what the core content of that dispatch is.

Acts 13:1–3, Antioch Church: The Dispatch of the Gospel According to the Sovereign Guidance of the Holy Spirit

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

In the Antioch church, there were various prophets and

teachers, such as Barnabas and Simeon called Niger, serving the Lord and fasting together. At this time, the Holy Spirit says, *“Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”* This dispatch was not based on the church’s strategic judgment or the selection of talented personnel, but was due to the direct command of God, who intended to testify the already completed gospel of water and the Spirit to the whole world. In obedience to this, the Antioch church opens the door to full-scale world missions by laying hands on the two men and sending them away.

Acts 13:4–12, Confrontation in Cyprus: The Clash with False Spirituality that Blocks the Completed Atonement

“So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant. Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.’ And

immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.”

The two men, having been sent by the Holy Spirit, arrive in Cyprus and confront a Jewish false prophet and sorcerer named Bar-Jesus. This man, called Bar-Jesus or Elymas, interferes so that the proconsul Sergius Paulus cannot hear the gospel. Paul rebukes him, calling him one full of all deceit and malice, and a child of the devil. This was a head-on collision between the false spirituality that binds people with deeds and obscures the completed atonement, and the gospel that brings the extinction of sin. Through this confrontation, the gospel of water and the Spirit demonstrates its victory by exposing all spiritual falsehoods that shackle humanity.

Acts 13:13–25, Antioch in Pisidia: The Preparatory Ministry and Fulfillment of Jesus the Savior, Who Came from the Seed of David

“Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, ‘Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.’ Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an

uplifted arm He brought them out of it. Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus— after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'"

Paul and his companions arrive at Antioch in Pisidia, enter the synagogue on the Sabbath, and preach by summarizing the history of Israel. Paul reveals that the entire flow—from the Exodus and the forty years in the wilderness, down to the judges and King David—was ultimately to prepare for one Person. He proclaims, *"From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—"* and mentions that before His coming, *"John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."* This is a passage that testifies to the absolute necessity of the process of baptism (water)—by which He takes upon Himself the sins of humanity for the extinction of sin—prior to Jesus's saving ministry.

Acts 13:26–31, The Ministry of Jesus’s Baptism Received from John, the Cross, and Resurrection from the Dead: The Completion of the Event of Being Killed and Rising Again

“Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.”

Paul says that although this word of salvation was sent to you, those who dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers did not know Jesus or the words of the prophets read every Sabbath, and therefore *“fulfilled them in condemning Him.”* He explains that although they found no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have Him killed, completely fulfilling all the words written about Him in the Scriptures. However, emphasizing that God raised Him from the dead, Paul proclaims that the Cross is the place where the sins He took upon Himself through baptism were judged, and the resurrection is God’s public verdict demonstrating that this atonement is completely finished.

Acts 13:32–39, The Definition of the Blotting Out of Sins: Salvation Obtained Through the Righteous Ministry of Jesus, Not the Law

“And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’ Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

The core declaration of Acts 13 appears right in this passage. Paul cries out, *“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”* The faith here is accepting the fact that sin has already been completely ended through Jesus’s baptism and the Cross. The law only served the role of exposing sin, but the gospel actually ended that sin and made us righteous.

Acts 13:40–49, The Reaction of the Gentiles and the Warning: The Joy of Those Ordained to Eternal Life

“Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: ‘Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.’ So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: “I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.”’ Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.”

Quoting the book of Habakkuk, Paul warns those who reject the gospel, saying, *“Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.”* On the other hand, the Gentiles hear this news, rejoice, and glorify the word of God, and *“And as many as had been appointed to*

eternal life believed.” The joy of the Gentiles was the soul’s reaction bursting forth when they heard for the first time the gospel of water and the Spirit, realizing that the problem of sin had perfectly ended.

Acts 13:50–52, Persecution and the Fullness of the Holy Spirit: The Spread of the Gospel and the Actual Life of Testimony?

“But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

The Jews stir up the devout, honorable women and the influential men of the city to persecute Paul and Barnabas, driving them out of that region. The two apostles shake the dust off their feet against them and go to Iconium, but the Bible records, *“And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.”* The fullness of the Holy Spirit is a phenomenon that appears not from the comfort of circumstances, but when the gospel is accurately preached and the fact of that salvation is firmly confirmed within the soul. Even persecution could not stop the advancement of the gospel and the joy of the believers.

In conclusion, Acts 13 demonstrates that the dispatch by the church is God’s sovereign decision, and the proclamation of the gospel is a forensic declaration that reveals the conclusion of the entire Old Testament. Without the water event of Jesus’s baptism, there is no judgment of the Cross, and the extinction and blotting out of sins is only possible when relying upon this

completed event. Acts 13 is the historical turning point where the gospel of water and the Spirit expanded beyond the internal doctrine of the church into a public declaration to the whole world.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 13, verses 1 to 52, is not simply a record announcing the beginning of missions, but a solemn chapter that publicly proclaims what the gospel is that God has determined to preach to the world. The dispatch of the Antioch church, Paul's sermon, and the subsequent rejection by the Jews and the joy of the Gentiles all converge on one essential question: what kind of gospel has God determined to preach to the world? From the perspective of the gospel of water and the Spirit that we believe and preach, Acts 13 shows how the completed salvation is proclaimed under the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, not human strategy.

In the Antioch church, there were leaders with diverse backgrounds, but as they ministered to the Lord and fasted in worship, the Holy Spirit commanded, saying, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The important point here is the fact that the expansion of the gospel began by the discernment of the Holy Spirit, not by a church program or human missionary strategy. The Holy Spirit always works so that the content of the gospel is not blurred, and the Antioch church laying hands on and sending the two men was an event that went beyond a simple human dispatch, sending the single gospel established by God to the nations.

Barnabas and Saul, sent by the Holy Spirit, arrived in Cyprus and while preaching the gospel, encountered a false prophet and

sorcerer named Bar-Jesus. Paul sternly rebuked him, calling him one full of all deceit and malice, a child of the devil, and asking, “Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” Because the gospel must always be clear, the act of blurring how sin was removed and what the basis of salvation is becomes the object of severe judgment. The reason the proconsul Sergius Paulus believed upon seeing this event and was astonished at the teaching of the Lord was because of the clear truth the gospel holds, rather than the miracle itself.

Paul’s sermon delivered in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia was not a simple summary of Israel’s history, but a declaration on the method of salvation. Paul testified that according to His promise, God raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus, from this man’s seed, and reminded them that before His coming, John had first preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. This emphasized that the completed salvation—accomplished by the water ministry where Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world by receiving baptism at the Jordan River, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection—is the reality of the salvation promised by God.

Paul proclaimed the core of the gospel, saying, *“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”* The removal of sins and justification are not based on human repentance, observation of the law, or religious zeal, but solely on the ministry of Jesus Christ. Only this gospel of water and the Spirit—that sin was transferred through the baptism at the Jordan River and the judgment was ended by the blood of the Cross—can make a human perfectly righteous.

In the face of this proclamation of the gospel, people’s

reactions were distinctly divided. On the next Sabbath, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of God, but when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, contradicting and blaspheming the things spoken by Paul. The gospel becomes a stumbling block to those who hold onto their own righteousness, but it becomes life to those who long for the resolution of the problem of sin. Paul and Barnabas declared, “*It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.*” showing that the gospel was flowing beyond national boundaries according to God’s plan.

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, and the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. Due to the persecution by the Jews, Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust of their feet against them and went to Iconium, but the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit. This fullness did not come from the comfort of their environment, but from the clear conviction of the gospel that the problem of sin was completely ended through the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Acts 13 asks what we are preaching today and what the basis for it is. Rather than emphasizing human choice or emotional determination, the gospel of water and the Spirit proclaims the event of salvation that God has already completed. Wherever this truth is proclaimed—that Jesus Christ took our sins upon Himself at the Jordan River, received judgment on the Cross, and that the Holy Spirit testifies to this in the hearts of those who believe—joy arises and the word of God flourishes. This is the unchanging power of the gospel testified in Acts 13. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 13

1. Does God always work together with His servants and His people in God's church? And does He accomplish His will?

The Bible does not describe God as being completely separated from His church. Jesus promised, *"I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"* (Matthew 28:20). This word declares that the church is not an organization left alone, but a community within the presence of God. The promise that the Holy Spirit dwells within believers is also in the same vein. Therefore, in principle, it can be said that God is One who works together with His servants and people.

However, "being together" does not always manifest as visible miracles or immediate success. Sometimes in the midst of suffering, and sometimes in times that seem like silence, God works. Even when Joseph was unjustly in prison, God was with him, and even when the Apostle Paul was imprisoned, the gospel was not bound. God's accompaniment is not identical to the favorability of circumstances.

Also, God accomplishes His will. Human weakness, incompetence, and even mistakes cannot overthrow God's ultimate plan. The event of the Cross was a historical event combined with human malice, but God completed the will of salvation through that event. This shows that God is not one who is swayed by circumstances, but the Sovereign who accomplishes His purpose above the circumstances.

However, this does not mean that the church can automatically expect God's protection while acting regardless of God's will. The Bible clearly speaks of the consequences of obedience and disobedience. God loves the church, but at the same time, He demands holiness. Within a church that is in harmony with God's will, that accompaniment and work are revealed more clearly.

In conclusion, God's church does not exist alone. God is together with His servants and people, and ultimately accomplishes His will. That accomplishment may appear in ways that exceed human calculation, but God's plan is not frustrated. The hope of the church lies not in circumstances, but in God Himself who is with us and works.

2. Should God's church, and God's servants and God's people, stand against those who are captivated by the spirit of Satan?

The Bible clearly states the fact that the church is in the reality of spiritual warfare. However, it teaches that the target of that warfare is not "people" themselves, but the spiritual forces that oppose God. The Apostle Paul says, *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"* (Ephesians 6:12). Therefore, the target the church must stand against is not human beings, but the spiritual influence that distorts the truth and obscures the gospel.

Jesus stood against the works of Satan, but He did not take an attitude of condemning or destroying sinners. Rather, He did the work of freeing the captives and liberating those bound in

darkness. This shows that the attitude of the church must also be the same. The biblical attitude is not to hate or attack a person who seems captivated by the spirit of Satan, but to stand against the authority of falsehood and sin that binds them.

The weapons the church uses are not carnal. The Bible tells us to put on the whole armor of God, emphasizing truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, and the word of God. That is, standing against them is not done through arguments, violence, or condemnation, but is done in the manner of proclaiming the truth, exhorting with love, and fighting through prayer.

Also, the Bible teaches to correct those who oppose with meekness. This is because God may give them the opportunity to repent. This means that while the church must have spiritual discernment, it should not define people as enemies and treat them hostilely.

In conclusion, God's church and God's servants and people must clearly stand against the works and falsehoods of Satan. However, that opposition is not an attack toward people, but spiritual discernment and the proclamation of truth toward falsehood and darkness. The church's fight aims for restoration, not destruction, and its center must always be on the gospel and love. ☒

LESSON

14

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Acts Chapter 14

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts 14 is not a simple mission log where miracles and persecution repeat. This chapter is a record showing how the gospel of water and the Spirit firmly stands to the end as the “gospel of the event” while passing through waves of misunderstanding, distortion, and resistance right in the middle of the Gentile world. The events of this chapter testify to how the news of completed salvation solidly builds up the church even amidst human misunderstanding and suffering.

Acts 14:1–7, Iconium: Concerning the Inevitable Faith and Division Following the Proclamation of the Gospel!

“Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews,

with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. And they were preaching the gospel there.”

As Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue of the Jews in Iconium and spoke, a great multitude of Jews and Greeks believed. However, the disobedient Jews stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. The result of the gospel preached by Paul and Barnabas was always divided into two paths. This is not a failure of strategy, but an extremely normal reaction that appears when the gospel of water and the Spirit is accurately proclaimed. This is because the gospel does not allow people to remain in a neutral zone; it is a branching point of life that forces them either to accept the fact of that salvation and gain life, or to reject it and oppose it.

Acts 14:8–10, The Miracle in Lystra: A Sign Confirming Faith Worthy of Salvation

“And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked.”

In Lystra, a man who was unable to use his feet, a cripple from birth who had never walked, hears Paul speaking. Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had “*seeing that he had faith to be healed*” says with a loud voice, “*Stand up straight on your feet!*” and the man leaps up and walks. What is important here is not the phenomenon of healing itself, but the content of the faith he possessed. That faith went beyond a simple expectation for physical healing; it was the conviction of accepting into his soul

the reality of the gospel—that sin and curses had already been completely ended, bringing about the absolute extinction and removal of sin through the baptism and the Cross of Jesus.

Acts 14:11–13, The Crisis of Deification: The Test of Idolization That Blocks the Essence of the Gospel

“Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, ‘The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!’ And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.”

The multitudes, seeing what Paul had done, shout in their dialect, saying, *“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”* and call Barnabas Zeus, and Paul Hermes. The priest of the temple of Zeus outside the city brings oxen and garlands to the gate and wants to offer sacrifices with the multitudes. This was a distortion of the gospel much more dangerous than external persecution. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit exalts only the ministry (baptism-cross-resurrection) accomplished by Jesus Christ, but humans try to obscure the glory of the gospel by deifying the person who became its channel.

Acts 14:14–18, Paul’s Outcry: Abandon Vain Things and Return to God the Creator

“But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men

with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.’ And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.”

The two apostles tear their clothes, run in among the multitude, and cry out, saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you” Paul proclaims, “And preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.” Instead of forcing legalistic regulations on the Gentiles, Paul preaches God the Creator and the fact of salvation He accomplished in history. Because what the Gentiles needed was not religious improvement, but the very fact of salvation that eliminated sin itself.

Acts 14:19–20, Stoning and Recovery: The Boldness of the Gospel That Overcame Death

“Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.”

Jews come from Antioch and Iconium and incite the multitudes, so they stone Paul and drag him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, Paul rises up, enters that city, and the next day goes to Derbe with Barnabas to preach the gospel. This is not a

personal heroic tale, but the practical boldness shown by one who is convinced of the fact that the power of sin and death has already been ended by Christ. The apostle did not romanticize suffering, but focused solely on the value of the gospel that must be testified.

Acts 14:21–23, Nurturing Disciples: The Community of Salvation That Becomes Solid While Passing Through Tribulation

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Having preached the gospel in that city and made many disciples, they return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the hearts of the disciples and exhorting them to remain in this faith. Paul says, *“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”* which teaches that this is not a condition for obtaining salvation, but an inevitable process that those who have completed salvation will experience in this world. Also, by appointing elders in each church and commending them to the Lord in whom they believe, he ensures that the church stands on the order of the written gospel, not on mystical miracles.

Acts 14:24–28, Return Report: The Report of the History of Salvation That God Has Done!

“And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to

Pamphylia. Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.”

Arriving in Antioch, they gather the church and report “*they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles*” The center of this report was not the success stories of the apostles or the numbers of the mission fields, but solely the work that God had done. The core of that work is the fact that the same gospel of the water and the Spirit was opened without discrimination to both Jews and Gentiles, and that God Himself presided over that door.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 14 testifies to the fact that the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be distorted even in miracles and advances even in persecution. Miracles are not the cause of salvation but the evidence, and tribulation is not the means to complete salvation but the path passed through by those who are convinced that salvation is already finished. Because all sins have already been eliminated through the baptism of Jesus, the apostles considered neither human glory nor extreme suffering as obstacles, but made only the completed gospel take deep root in the Gentile world.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word of Acts chapter 14, verses 1 to 28, vividly shows the fierce mission field where the gospel receives both welcome and persecution at the same time. The core of this chapter does not lie

in the superhuman courage of the missionaries or the continuous miracles themselves, but in clearly revealing what salvation is established by and on what foundation the church is built, when viewed from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong. In Iconium, a great multitude of both Jews and Gentiles believed, but the disobedient Jews stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren; this was not because the gospel was ambiguous, but an inevitable reaction that appeared because the truth that sins were transferred through the baptism of Jesus Christ and the judgment was ended by the blood of the Cross was so clear.

In Lystra, when a certain man who had been unable to walk from birth and had never walked was listening to Paul speaking, Paul, observing him and seeing that he had faith to be saved, commanded with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet." As the man leaped and walked, the multitudes called Paul and Barnabas gods and tried to offer sacrifices, but the apostles tore their clothes, ran in among the multitude, and immediately rejected it, saying, "Why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you." Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make human heroes but solely reveals the completion of salvation that God has done, the apostles showed through their lives the fact that the glory of the gospel must never return to man.

Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and incited the multitudes, so they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead; however, when the disciples gathered around him, Paul rose up, entered that city, and the next day went to Derbe with Barnabas and preached the gospel in that city. The reason Paul could rise again even after being stoned was not because of an indomitable mental strength, but because the conviction of the gospel that the power of sin and death had

already ended took hold of him. He who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not stop the steps of testimony even in the face of persecution, not for the calculation of survival, but for the value of the already completed salvation.

Paul and Barnabas returned again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the hearts of the disciples, exhorting them to remain in this faith, and teaching that we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God. This does not mean that tribulation itself is a condition for salvation, but it taught the reality that the clearer the gospel is, the more the world's resistance is bound to follow; and having appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed. This once again confirmed that the true power that sustains the church is not the comfort of the external environment, but the solid foundation of the gospel.

Finally arriving in Antioch, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done with them and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, but the apostles never boasted of their own achievements. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a human success story but always focuses on the work that God has done, they concluded their journey with a report of the ministry in which God was the main agent. Acts chapter 14 asks whether our faith relies on miracles or welcomes, or whether it stands on the completed gospel.

When standing on this gospel that Jesus Christ was baptized by John to take on the sins of the world, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and that the Holy Spirit testifies to this fact in the hearts of those who believe, the church can be humble amidst welcomes and bold amidst persecutions. This is the true path of the church built upon the gospel of the water and the Spirit testified in Acts chapter 14, and the life of a witness that we must walk. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 14

1. Should God's servants focus on nurturing and multiplying disciples?

Looking at the flow of the Bible, the mission of God's servants does not simply end with preaching the gospel once. Jesus commanded the disciples, "*Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you*" (Matthew 28:19-20). Within this command, the responsibility of not only evangelism but also nurturing and growth is included. Therefore, God's servants must focus on establishing disciples and helping them stand firmly upon the gospel.

Nurturing does not only mean transferring knowledge. It is a process of making them clearly understand the structure of the gospel, giving them conviction upon the righteousness of God, and helping them so that their faith does not waver in their lives. The Apostle Paul also did not simply leave after establishing a church, but visited again and sent letters to care for the saints so that they would grow in faith. This shows that nurturing disciples is the core of the ministry.

However, the expression "multiplying" here must not solely mean a simple numerical increase. The multiplying that the Bible speaks of includes spiritual maturity prior to outward expansion. Expansion without depth may not last long. God's servants must

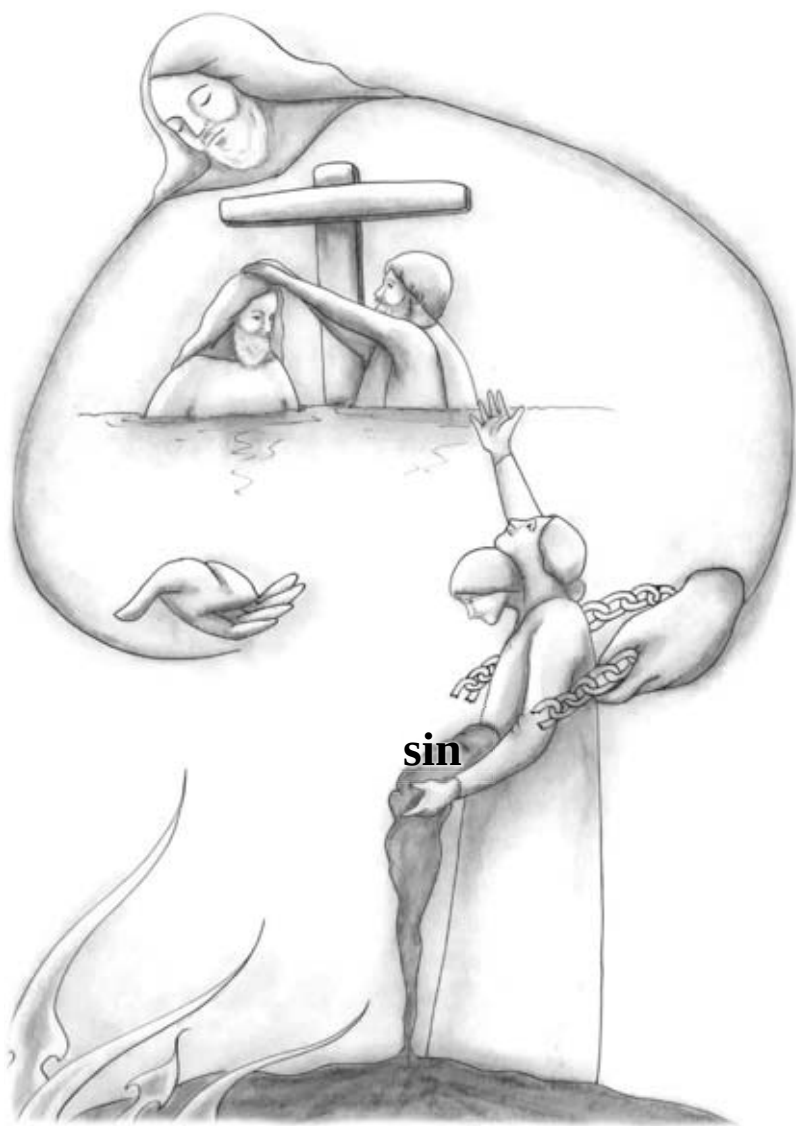
focus on establishing solid disciples within the gospel, rather than gathering many people. A community built upon order and truth can naturally grow healthily.

Also, not all saints minister in the same way. However, God's servants must take on the role of preparing each person to understand the gospel in their own place and preach it to others. When this happens, the church is established not as a one-person-centered community, but as a gospel-centered community.

In conclusion, it is biblical for God's servants to focus on nurturing and establishing disciples. This is not a strategy for organizational expansion, but obedience to Jesus' command. When the number of disciples standing upright on the gospel increases, the church multiplies healthily, and that multiplication is accomplished within the will of God. ☒

LESSON

15



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Acts Chapter 15

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts chapter 15 is the most important salvation verdict in church history. This chapter is not simply a record of adjusting missionary methods or an administrative meeting, but a place declaring the final public verdict on by what a person is justified. The Bible presents a clear answer to the fundamental question of whether human conditions can be added to the salvation already completed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross.

Acts 15:1–5, Raising the Issue: What about the attempt to add human conditions to the completion of the gospel?

“And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed

through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.’”

Certain men came down from Judea to the church in Antioch and taught the brethren, asserting, “*Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved*” and a great dissension and dispute arose. This assertion was the logic that circumcision and the law, that is, human deeds, must be added to the faith of believing in Jesus. This was not a small doctrinal difference, but an attempt to fundamentally deny the gospel of water and the Spirit, which states that the transfer of sins was already finished through Jesus’ baptism and that the sin was judged once and for all on the Cross.

Acts 15:6–11, Peter’s Testimony: What is the verdict of the Holy Spirit who came upon them when they believed the Word?

“Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: ‘Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test

God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved in the same manner as they.’”

When the apostles and elders gathered to discuss this matter, Peter reminds them of God’s decision. He testifies, *“So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”* The Holy Spirit came upon them not before receiving circumcision or after keeping the law, but only when they believed the Word of God. Peter asserts, *“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”* declaring not to add human conditions to the salvation that God has already finished.

Acts 15:12, Apostolic Silence: The verdict of the Holy Spirit already rendered must be accepted!

“Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.”

All the multitude keeps silent and listens to Barnabas and Paul speaking about the miracles and wonders that God had worked through them among the Gentiles. This silence was not because more reports of miracles were needed, but because the very fact that the Holy Spirit had already descended upon the Gentiles was God’s confirmed verdict. Within the gospel of water and the Spirit, it shows that the coming of the Holy Spirit is not a condition to obtain salvation, but a natural result that follows when the gospel is believed.

Acts 15:13–21, James’s Declaration: Regarding the order of salvation for the Gentiles prophesied in the Bible!

“And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, ‘Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: “After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.” Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.’”

James quotes the Book of Amos and delivers the word, saying, *“Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree.”* This is a declaration that Gentiles are not saved after becoming Jews, but are saved exactly as they are in their Gentile state. It confirmed that the standard of salvation is not in lineage or regulations, but solely in the name of God itself, completed by Jesus’ baptism and the Cross.

Acts 15:22–29, The Core of the Official Document: What is the power of the gospel of salvation of grace that lays no burden?

“Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’—to whom we gave no such commandment— it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

The Jerusalem church chooses Judas named Barsabas and Silas and sends an official letter to Antioch. The core of this document is the declaration, *“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.”* This is an evangelical proclamation that completely removed the conditions for salvation. The exhortation mentioned here to abstain from things offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and sexual immorality was not a condition or device to obtain salvation, but merely the minimum

practical consideration for Jews and Gentiles to fellowship within one community.

Acts 15:30–35, Result: Regarding the true comfort and joy given by the completed gospel!

“So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles. However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.”

The people of the Antioch church read the letter from Jerusalem and rejoice over its comforting words. This joy was not simply because the rules were reduced, but because they received official confirmation from the mother church in Jerusalem of the gospel that their sins were already finished by Jesus’ baptism and the Cross. The gospel does not bind people, but gives true rest and comfort to the soul by proclaiming a completed fact.

Acts 15:36–41, The Separation of Paul and Barnabas: God’s sovereignty toward the propagation of the gospel advancing beyond human personality

“Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.’ Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”

Paul and Barnabas have a sharp contention over the issue of taking John Mark and part from one another. However, even in the midst of this conflict, the Bible records, *“but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”* This is evidence that the gospel does not depend on the personal character or relationships of the apostles. The gospel of water and the Spirit advances without stopping, following God’s sovereign plan, even above human conflicts.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 15 finally confirms that salvation has already been completed by Jesus’ baptism and the Cross. The Holy Spirit is not a reward for keeping the law, but comes when one believes the word of the gospel of water and the Spirit, and the church has no authority to add any human conditions to salvation. The moment anything is added to grace, it is no longer

the gospel. Acts chapter 15 governs the church today as the final declaration of salvation, confirmed by the Holy Spirit, that sins were finished by Jesus' baptism and judgment was finished by the Cross.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 15, verse 1 to 41, is the very important first theological turning point in the history of the church, and it records the decision on what completes salvation, going simply beyond the issue of organizational operation. From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe and preach, the Jerusalem Council was not a place of compromising with human traditions, but a place of victory that defended to the end the purity of the gospel that God had already completed.

Conflict began when certain men came down from Judea to the Antioch church and taught, *“Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”* This claim outwardly looked like godly zeal, but essentially it was nothing more than an attempt to forcibly add human conditions to the already completed salvation. The gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaims that salvation is not a process but a completion, and teaches that the water baptism by which Jesus Christ took on the sins of the world at the Jordan River, the merit of the blood by which He received judgment on the Cross, and the work of the Holy Spirit coming into the hearts of those who believe this are everything.

When the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter, Peter recalled the event that happened at Cornelius's house and testified, *“So God, who knows the heart,*

acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Peter rebuked, *“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”* and proclaimed, *“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”* Grace is not a human emotion, but the undeniable reality of salvation that God has already accomplished through the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Then Barnabas and Paul reported concerning the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them, and the whole multitude listened to this silently. Their report ultimately confirmed that the same Holy Spirit came upon the places where the same gospel was preached, and that the standard of salvation God uses is only one. The Holy Spirit always testifies only to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the completed ministry of Jesus Christ, and does not acknowledge any behavioral condition of humans as the basis for salvation.

James revealed that the words of the prophets agree with this situation, and made the judgment that it is right to write to them not to trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. This was a declaration to warn those who tried to add other conditions to salvation and to clearly establish the way of salvation, making it clear that actions are not the basis of salvation but the order of life that those who are saved must keep. The Jerusalem church sent a letter containing the decision, *“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.”*

The saints of the Antioch church read the letter and rejoiced over its comforting words, because the gospel did not add a human yoke but truly set people free. Although later Paul and Barnabas had a sharp contention over the issue of taking John called Mark and parted from one another, the truth of the gospel was not shaken, and Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord, and went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. Even if human relationships can change depending on the situation, the gospel of the water and the Spirit established by God is never shaken and advances.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 15 presents to us today the strict standard to add nothing to salvation. The fact that Jesus Christ was baptized by John at the Jordan River to have the sins of the world passed onto Him, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and that the Holy Spirit testifies to this, makes our salvation perfectly complete without anything more to add. Actions are not the condition of salvation but only the result, and because this gospel of the water and the Spirit is perfect, the church must resolutely defend the truth, and the saints must enjoy true freedom within it. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 15

1. Does a person receive the removal of sins by believing the theological doctrines of Christianity? Or do they receive the removal of sins in their heart by faith believing in the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross spoken of in the Bible?

The core of this question lies in whether salvation comes from intellectual agreement, or from faith believing in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ. To state the conclusion first, a person does not receive the removal of sins simply by knowing a system of theological doctrines, but receives the removal of sins by faith believing in the heart the redemptive ministry of Jesus testified by the Bible.

Theological doctrines are tools to organize and explain the Bible. Doctrines play the role of systematizing the truth, but they themselves do not become the power of salvation. One can intellectually understand and agree with doctrines, but that does not mean the problem of sin in the heart has been solved. The faith spoken of in the Bible is not the simple acceptance of information, but a trust that relies on God's salvation ministry by applying it to oneself.

The Bible testifies that the removal of sins was accomplished through the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus' baptism and death on the Cross are proclaimed as events connected to the resolution of the sin problem. The Cross is the place of judgment for sin, and His death is not a simple martyrdom but holds the meaning of

substitutionary atonement. Therefore, salvation is related to the faith that accepts and relies on this redemptive event in the heart.

The important thing is ‘what to believe’. It is not simply at the level of “I believe in Christian doctrine,” but the core is whether one trusts the fact that Jesus’ ministry has solved my sins. The Bible says that a person being justified is not by works but by faith. The object of that faith is not human determination or zeal, but the salvation God accomplished in Christ.

Therefore, the removal of sins does not come from the intellectual act of believing the doctrine itself, but comes from faith believing in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ testified by the Bible. Doctrines can be explanations that help that faith, but the basis of salvation lies solely in the salvation event accomplished by God and the faith that relies on it.

2. In Acts chapter 15, there appeared those who said that unless one is circumcised according to the law of Moses, one cannot be saved; is this really so? And if we do not believe the doctrines spoken of in theology in the 21st century, do we not receive salvation?

In Acts chapter 15, certain people claimed, “*Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.*” This was not a simple cultural dispute, but an essential issue regarding what the basis of salvation is. They did not completely deny Jesus, but said that while believing in Jesus, the deeds of the law must be added for salvation to be complete. However, the apostles and elders clearly declared. A person is not saved by the yoke of the law, but is saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus. Ultimately, circumcision was not a condition for

salvation, but merely a mark of the Jews.

The core that this event shows is this. It is a matter of what is added to salvation. If one adds any deed or ritual to the salvation of Jesus Christ and says, “You must do this too for salvation to be completed,” that is changing the structure of the gospel. Acts chapter 15 clearly rejects attempts to add human conditions to the gospel.

Then the question arises whether one cannot receive salvation if they do not believe the doctrines spoken of in theology in the 21st century. Here too, a distinction is necessary. Doctrine is an explanatory system that organizes the teachings of the Bible. Correct doctrine plays an important role in helping to clearly understand the gospel. However, salvation is not given only when one perfectly understands and agrees with the entire doctrinal system. The basis of salvation is not a precise understanding of doctrine, but faith believing in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ.

Of course, teachings that distort the core of the gospel become a problem. For example, if one denies the salvation of Christ or establishes human merit as a condition for salvation, that is a different path from the gospel. However, just because one does not understand all theological details does not mean salvation becomes invalid. The saints of the early church also did not learn systematic theology, but received salvation by believing the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, the circumcision dispute in Acts chapter 15 was a matter of what to add to salvation. The apostles declared that nothing could be added. It is the same today. No tradition, ritual, theological system, or intellectual agreement can become an additional condition for salvation. Salvation is received only by the grace of God, through faith believing in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Doctrine can be a tool to explain and protect that gospel, but it is not the basis of salvation itself.

3. The gospel that Peter believes is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which believes in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross. Therefore, when Peter testified the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, those who believed received the Holy Spirit as a gift. The question is whether it is correct to think that such faith is the faith that believes the gospel spoken of in the Bible.

The core of this claim lies in how to understand the content of the gospel Peter preached and the event of the Holy Spirit coming upon those who believed that gospel. Looking at the Bible, Peter testified to the entire ministry of Jesus Christ. He did not separate Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, but proclaimed the event of salvation that God accomplished through Christ. In his Pentecost sermon, he proclaimed centering on the death on the Cross—where Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of sin—and His resurrection, and he said that when those who were pierced in their hearts upon hearing that word repent and believe in the name of Jesus Christ, they receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The faith spoken of in the Bible is not a simple emotional agreement, but a trust that accepts the fact of salvation that God accomplished in Christ. Jesus' ministry is understood within the flow of redemptive events leading to baptism, public ministry, the Cross, and resurrection. Peter testified that the event was not an accidental tragedy but salvation accomplished within God's plan. Therefore, the reason people received the Holy Spirit was not because they added some ritual, but because they accepted Christ's salvation ministry by faith.

The structure of the gospel repeated in Acts is clear. When the apostles testified of Jesus Christ and people believed that word, the Holy Spirit came upon them. This shows that the Holy Spirit is not given as a reward for human merit or observance of the law, but is God's gift given to those who believe the gospel. The Holy Spirit does not appear as a condition for salvation, but as a mark of sealing and confirmation given to those who believe in Christ.

Therefore, the faith spoken of in the Bible is a faith that entirely relies on the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ. That faith is not adding human righteousness, but accepting the righteousness God has accomplished. The gift of the Holy Spirit is given upon such faith. Ultimately, the center lies not in human zeal, but in trusting the salvation God accomplished in Christ.

4. Can those who were outside of Christ also receive the removal of sins in their hearts and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift if they believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

The center of this question is the issue of "whether even a person who was outside of Christ can actually receive the removal of sins and the Holy Spirit if they believe the gospel." Looking at the flow of the Bible, the answer is clear. Salvation is not only for people who were within a specific nation or religious background, but is open to anyone who believes the gospel.

Looking at Acts, not only Jews but also Samaritans, Gentiles, and people like the Roman centurion Cornelius experienced the removal of sins and the coming of the Holy Spirit when they heard and believed the gospel. They were not those who were

previously under the law, nor were they people standing at the center of the covenant. However, when they heard and believed the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ, God gave the Holy Spirit without discrimination. This shows that salvation is not based on bloodline or religious career.

The Bible says that by nature, all people are under sin and are born in a state of being outside of Christ. Therefore, the fact itself of “having been outside of Christ” does not become a condition that blocks the possibility of salvation. Rather, the gospel is proclaimed exactly toward such people. It testifies that the ministry of Jesus Christ is an event of salvation that has already been accomplished, and whoever believes that event is justified.

Also, the Holy Spirit is not One given as a reward for human merit or religious qualification, but is God’s gift given to those who believe the gospel. The apostles preached the gospel, and the Holy Spirit came upon those who believed that word. This shows that the Holy Spirit is not the exclusive property of a specific group, but is connected to the faith that believes in Christ.

Therefore, to the question of whether even a person who was outside of Christ can receive the removal of sins and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift if they believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the testimony of the Bible says yes. The core is not the past position but the present faith. Salvation is based not on human background, but on the faith that trusts the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ. ☒

LESSON

16

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Acts Chapter 16

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts 16 is not simply a record collecting changes in mission routes, visions, or miracles that occurred in prison. This chapter is a dynamic record showing how the gospel of the water and the Spirit moves according to God's detailed guidance beyond human plans, and how it is applied in the same way to people in various situations. The events of this chapter clearly testify to the principle that the already completed salvation operates identically regardless of place and target.

Acts 16:1–5, Timothy and Circumcision: On the free consideration for ministry, not a condition for salvation!

“Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. And as they went

through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.”

When Paul met Timothy in Lystra and wanted to take him and leave, he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews in that region. This scene does not contradict the principle of salvation without circumcision confirmed in Acts 15. To Paul, circumcision was not a condition for salvation, but a cultural consideration to remove obstacles to preaching the gospel. It shows that one who has already been justified by the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not bound by the yoke of the law, but enjoys the true freedom of willingly adjusting oneself and considering neighbors for the progress of the gospel.

Acts 16:6–10, The Macedonian Vision: On the sovereign control and accurate guidance of the Holy Spirit!

“Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.”

Paul’s party tried to preach the word in Asia, but the Holy Spirit blocked them, and they tried to go to Bithynia, but the

Spirit of Jesus did not permit them. This was not a failure of mission, but guidance to the exact point God had prepared. A vision appeared to Paul in the night, saying, “A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’” The gospel moves under the sovereign control of the Holy Spirit, not toward places where human zeal precedes, but toward the souls waiting for the testimony of God’s already completed plan of salvation.

Acts 16:11–15, Lydia: On the providence of God who opened the heart to accept!

“Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us.”

Paul, having reached Philippi, was looking for a place to pray on the Sabbath and preached the gospel to the women gathered by the river. Among them, while a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple cloth who served God, was listening to the words, the Lord opened her heart to heed Paul’s words. Lydia’s conversion is an event in which God worked as the sovereign agent prior to any human emotional explosion or decision. She accepted the

fact that sin had already ended through the baptism and cross of Jesus, and by her and her entire household receiving baptism, she publicly confesses the fact of completed salvation.

Acts 16:16–18, A slave girl possessed by a fortune-telling demon: On the discernment to protect the purity of the gospel!

“Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, ‘These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.’ And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And he came out that very hour.”

A slave girl possessed by a fortune-telling demon followed Paul’s party and cried out, saying, *“These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”* Although those words were true, Paul was greatly distressed and commanded the demon, *“I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”* This is because the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not need the testimony of demons, and the mixture of spiritual powers undermines the purity of the gospel. The gospel is based solely on the pure testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 16:19–24, The way to prison: On the influence of the gospel that shakes the system of life!

“But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, ‘These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.’ Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”

Seeing that the hope of their profit was cut off, the masters of the slave girl caught Paul and Silas, dragged them to the marketplace to the officials, and stood them before the magistrates. When the multitude rose up together and accused them, the magistrates tore off their clothes, beat them much, threw them into prison, and commanded the jailer to keep them securely. Because the gospel does not simply remain in the realm of religion but shakes unjust economic structures and social orders, it brings about the backlash of the world. Such suffering becomes strong evidence that the gospel is alive and moving in actual life.

Acts 16:25–26, Praise and Earthquake: On the true freedom enjoyed by those whose condemnation has ended!

“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.”

At midnight, Paul and Silas pray and sing praises to God, and the prisoners listen. At this, suddenly a great earthquake occurs, shaking the foundations of the prison, and immediately all the doors are opened and everyone’s bonds are loosed. Their praise was not a means to escape reality, but an expression of the spiritual freedom enjoyed by those who are certain that condemnation and judgment have already ended through the baptism and cross of Jesus, transcending even the environment of a prison. The miracle of the earthquake appeared as a tool to confirm that the gospel of the water and the Spirit they were preaching was true.

Acts 16:27–34, The Jailer’s Question: The once-for-all salvation obtained by believing in the Lord Jesus

“And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, ‘Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.’ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what

must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.”

When the jailer wakes from sleep, sees the prison doors open, thinks the prisoners have fled, and draws his sword to kill himself, Paul cries out with a loud voice, *“Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”* When the jailer, trembling with fear and falling flat, asks, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*, Paul answers, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”* Here, faith means accepting as a fact the salvation that Jesus has already accomplished, and as he and his entire household believe in God, they rejoice greatly and immediately receive baptism.

Acts 16:35–40, The use of citizenship: Securing the public nature and legitimacy of the gospel

“And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, ‘Let those men go.’ So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, ‘The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.’ But Paul said to them, ‘They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.’ And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. Then they came and

pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city. So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.”

When it was day, the magistrates send their subordinates to let these men go, but Paul says, *“They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.”* This was not for personal revenge or the assertion of rights, but to publicly confirm that the gospel they preached was not an illegal religion. It showed that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a legitimate truth that destroys only the power of sin without destroying social order.

In conclusion, Acts 16 testifies that the Holy Spirit perfectly controls the direction of the propagation of the gospel, and that the gospel of the water and the Spirit applies equally to religious people, those in power, and the oppressed alike. Suffering is evidence that the gospel is working, and praise is the natural reaction of those for whom the blotting out of sins has already been completed. Baptism is always a holy confession acknowledging the fact of salvation that has already been finished. Acts 16 is a history that confirms that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the only power that saves people everywhere, transcending place and class.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 16, verses 1 to 40, vividly shows the process of the gospel advancing through God’s sovereign guidance beyond human plans. Looking at this word from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by

Pastor Paul C. Jong, we can know that Acts chapter 16 is not merely a recorded success story of evangelism strategy, but a powerful testimony showing how the already completed gospel is witnessed and how the Holy Spirit confirms that gospel.

When Paul met Timothy in Lystra and intended to leave with him, he had him circumcised in consideration of the Jews in that region. This shows that because it was already declared in Acts chapter 15 that salvation was completed solely by grace, it was not an act of establishing a condition for salvation, and that circumcision was not a means for salvation but a wise consideration to avoid obstructing the propagation of the gospel. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaims that Jesus Christ took upon Himself all the sins of the world at the Jordan River and already completed salvation by receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, human deeds can never become the condition for salvation and are merely used as tools for the gospel to be propagated.

When the Holy Spirit forbade them to speak the word in Asia, Paul's party came before Mysia and tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them, and during the night a vision appeared to Paul in which a man of Macedonia stood and pleaded, "Come over and help us." The Holy Spirit is not One who changes the content of the gospel, but One who guides the witnesses to the people who need the news of salvation completed by water and blood, and by acknowledging this and immediately endeavoring to leave for Macedonia, Paul's party acknowledged that God had called us to preach the gospel to those people.

Upon arriving in Philippi, when they went out to the riverside on the Sabbath looking for a place to pray, they met a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple cloth who worshiped God, and the Lord opened her heart to heed the words of Paul. Salvation

is not a result achieved by human persuasion, but a work where the already completed gospel is accepted by faith only when God opens the heart. What Lydia believed was the truth of Jesus Christ's ministry—that is, the transfer of sins through the baptism at the Jordan River and the judgment of those sins on the Cross—and she and her household were all baptized, and she made Paul's party stay at her house.

As we were going to the place of prayer, we met a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination, who followed Paul for many days and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." Paul was greatly troubled by this and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her," and drove the demon out, which shows the strict standard of the gospel that does not permit the truth to be testified by a distorted being. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a display of power but must be testified only by the accurate content of the gospel, Paul returned the initiative of the gospel back to God.

Seeing that the hope of their profit was cut off, the masters of the slave girl seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace. Having brought them before the magistrates, after striking them with many blows, they threw them into the deep prison and securely fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight, as Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, the prisoners were listening to them; this hymn was not an optimism transcending the situation, but a song of freedom bursting forth from the conviction that the power of death had already ended through the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ. The event where suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were

unfastened, was a symbolic work showing that the gospel cannot be bound by any shackles.

When the jailer awoke from his sleep and saw the prison doors open, thinking that the prisoners had fled, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. At that time, Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” When the jailer, trembling with fear, fell down before them and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Paul answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household,” and he preached the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. Here, faith is accepting the fact exactly as it is that sins were transferred to Jesus at the Jordan River and judged on the Cross, and the jailer and his whole household, having believed in God, rejoiced greatly and were baptized.

When day came, the magistrates sent their officers, saying, “Let those men go.” However, Paul confidently stated his rights, saying, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now do they wish to throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and bring us out.” The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not cowardly hide, but rather boldly establishes the dignity of the truth. Hearing the words that Paul’s party were Roman citizens, the magistrates were afraid, and they came and pleaded with them, asking them to depart from the city. The apostles went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and having met and encouraged the brethren, they departed.

Acts chapter 16 reminds us that the Holy Spirit does not change the gospel of the water and the Spirit but only opens the way to deliver the gospel, and that salvation is not a human condition but a fact already completed by God. This gospel—that Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world by

receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and that the Holy Spirit testifies to this fact in the hearts of those who believe—today also opens the heart of a woman, opens the doors of a prison, and transforms a family into the people of God. This is exactly the great work of God moving by the gospel of the water and the Spirit testified in Acts chapter 16. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 16

1. What kind of tension arises when the gospel of the water and the Spirit meets the gospel structure believed in existing Christianity?

The core of this question lies in what kind of conflict occurs when the content of the gospel and the center of the religious structure are different. If the gospel is entirely centered on God's grace and the completed ministry of Christ, the religious structure is often maintained centering on elements such as institutions, offices, traditions, activities, and stages of faith. When these two centers meet, tension can naturally arise.

First, tension arises regarding the basis of salvation. When the gospel proclaims "already completed salvation," a conflict occurs if the existing structure emphasizes "process-centered faith." If the stability of faith depends on offices, devotion, a structure of repetitive repentance, and spiritual stages, the message emphasizing completed atonement can shake that foundation. At this time, the question leads not to a simple doctrinal difference, but to the issue of what is the foundation of faith.

Second, tension in the authority structure can arise. The religious structure is maintained through a certain authority system and education system. However, when the gospel proclaims that "God's grace is given to whoever believes," it becomes a message that spiritual authority is not monopolized by a specific class. This can be felt as threatening the existing order.

Third, there is also tension coming from the change in the

motivation of faith. If the religious structure sometimes maintains devotion through duty, fear, and a reward structure, the grace-centered gospel shifts the motivation to love and gratitude. This change can be positive, but at the same time, it can conflict with the existing management method. This is because the way people are moved changes.

Fourth, it is a matter of identity. A structure built upon a long tradition and denominational identity considers their history and interpretation system important. However, when the gospel makes them reexamine that structure, it expands into an issue of community identity, not a simple theological debate. At this point, emotional reactions or defensive attitudes can appear.

However, not all tension necessarily ends in conflict. Certain communities can reexamine the essence through the gospel and become clearer. The core is the point that the gospel does not exist to destroy the institution, but always exists to return the center to the ministry of Christ. Tension can be a natural phenomenon that appears when the gospel is alive and moving, and ultimately, the standard is one. It is the question of what is the center of salvation spoken of by the Bible.

2. Should we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit while belonging to a Christian sect or denomination? Or is it okay to come out separately and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Which is beneficial?

The core of this question lies in whether the place and structure of preaching the gospel can precede the essence of the gospel. To state the conclusion first, the power of salvation does not depend on whether one belongs to a specific denomination.

What is important is what you place at the center when preaching, rather than where you belong. However, at the same time, because the church is established within a community and not as individuals, the issue of structure and order must also be considered carefully.

First, it is the case of remaining inside a denomination to preach the gospel. If you preach the gospel while staying within an existing denomination, you can utilize a broader network, resources, and pulpit opportunities. The arena for dialogue and discussion may also be open. However, if you cannot freely preach the core of the gospel within that structure, or if you are required to modify the gospel, tension arises. If the content of the gospel is restricted or distorted, that structure can no longer be a tool but can become an obstacle.

Second, it is the case of coming out separately to preach. If you preach the gospel independently, you can clearly maintain the message and be free from institutional pressure. However, at the same time, the risk of isolation, the weakening of the accountability structure, and the possibility of losing balance also exist. The church is inherently communal, and it needs an order to check and build each other up. Complete independence gives freedom but can simultaneously weaken protective mechanisms.

Third, it is the standard for judging benefit. The benefit does not depend on scale or convenience, but on the clarity of the gospel and the healthiness of the community. Whether that position allows the gospel to be preached more clearly, whether it can establish the saints upon the Bible, and whether the ministry is carried out within accountability and order become the standards of judgment. One chooses a structure to protect the gospel; one must not adjust the gospel to protect the structure.

Ultimately, the standard of choice is only one. It is whether

the redemptive work of Christ can be preached without distortion, and whether a community centered on that work can be established healthily. Whether inside or outside a denomination, it is meaningful if the gospel is the center. However, if the gospel is shaken, no structure can be said to be beneficial. What is important is the essence of the gospel rather than affiliation, and biblical discernment and communal responsibility must be considered together even prior to separation.

3. If you are a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, you must know the fact that uniting your heart with the denomination that delivered this gospel of the water and the Spirit to you, to propagate the gospel and serve, is helpful to you.

The core of these words lies in why it is important not only to hold onto the gospel individually, but to unite your heart with the community that preaches that gospel together. This is because the gospel is not the private property of one person, but a message that is preserved and delivered within a community.

If you have received grace through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, uniting with the community that delivered that gospel to you can be a natural flow. Because the gospel is not merely knowledge but continues in life and ministry, it can be more clearly protected and propagated when you are together with people who have the same confession of faith. Rather than undertaking the ministry alone, when cooperating within a community that shares the same belief, the clarity and continuity of the gospel are easily maintained.

Also, unity does not mean a simple organizational affiliation. The unity of heart is sharing the same conviction and direction regarding the center of the gospel. When each other stands upon the same gospel, unnecessary competition or division decreases, and the strength of the ministry is gathered. The process of learning, being checked, and being encouraged within the community becomes beneficial to personal faith as well.

However, the standard of this unity must always be the gospel. Unity must not precede the gospel, and a unity in a way where the clarity of the gospel becomes blurred is not helpful. Unity within the truth is true unity. Unity centered on the gospel protects the individual, brings balance to the ministry, and also becomes a great strength in passing on the faith to the next generation.

Ultimately, what is important for a person who believes the gospel is not isolation, but healthy unity within the correct gospel. The work of propagating the gospel and serving together with a community standing upon the same confession of faith can become beneficial to both the individual and the community.

4. What kind of work occurs when those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit gather to testify to the Lord's work of salvation and praise the ministry of the blessing of salvation given by the Lord?

When those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit gather together to testify to the Lord's work of salvation and praise His grace, the very first thing that occurs is that the conviction of the gospel becomes clearer within the community. When the faith held individually is proclaimed as a communal

confession, the content of salvation becomes clearer, and the heart is established more firmly. This is because the gospel is not an ideology of one person alone, but a truth that gains strength when confessed together.

Also, an atmosphere of gratitude and freedom is formed. When confessing that salvation is based not on human merit or zeal but on the completed ministry of the Lord, condemnation and fear decrease, and gratitude for grace becomes the center. Such praise is not a simple expression of emotion, but an act of faith that acknowledges and exalts what God has accomplished. In that process, the saints encourage one another and come to stand within the same hope.

Communal testimony also plays the role of a proclamation toward the outside. When those who believe the gospel speak of the work of salvation with joy and conviction, questions and interest can arise in the listeners as well. The church becomes not a simple gathering, but a living testimony showing that God's salvation is real.

Furthermore, such gatherings play the role of realigning the lives of the saints to be centered on the gospel again. Hearts that can be shaken in daily life find their standard again within the Word and praise. When the structure of the gospel is proclaimed repeatedly, faith comes to stand upon truth, not emotion.

Ultimately, the greatest work that occurs when those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit gather together to testify and praise the work of salvation is that the community stands more firmly centered on the gospel, and advances toward a life that gives glory to God in the conviction of grace. This work is a work that, on a deeper level than outwardly revealed phenomena, turns the direction of the heart and the community back to God. ✉

LESSON

17

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 17

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts chapter 17 shows how the gospel of the water and the Spirit is boldly testified without losing its self-identity in the very midst of culture, philosophy, and diverse religions. The events in this chapter clearly teach with what logic the salvation completed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross must be proclaimed before the world of intellect and religious pluralism.

Acts 17:1–4, The Synagogue in Thessalonica: On the Inevitability of the Event of Salvation Proved Through the Scriptures!

“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.’ And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not

a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.”

Arriving in Thessalonica, Paul reasons with them from the Scriptures over three Sabbaths in the synagogue of the Jews. Explaining the meaning, he testifies that Christ had to suffer and live again from among the dead, and says, *“This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”* The gospel that Paul preached was not a simple religious emotion, but the proclamation of an event that unraveled as a historical inevitability why Christ had to receive baptism from John at the Jordan River to take upon Himself the sins of humanity, why those sins had to be judged on the Cross, and why the resurrection becomes the public evidence of the completion of that atonement.

Acts 17:5–9, The Reason for the Uproar: On the Influence of the Gospel That Shakes the Order of Sin and Condemnation!

“But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, ‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.’ And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.”

The Jews who were jealous of Paul’s evangelism took wicked men and caused an uproar in the city, accusing Paul’s party, saying, *“These who have turned the world upside down*

have come here too.” Just as they said, the gospel of the water and the Spirit has the power to shake to the roots the religious power of the world, human righteousness, and the system of the law. What Paul disrupted was not the social order, but the order of sin and condemnation that had oppressed humanity. Because the gospel tears down the system of self-righteousness established by the world and establishes the righteousness of God, it inevitably causes an uproar.

Acts 17:10–12, Berea: On the Attitude of Trying to Confirm the Authenticity of Salvation Through the Written Word!

“Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.”

The people in Berea were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, receiving the word with an earnest mind and *“searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”* Here, the nobility of faith does not lie in intellectual level or academics, but in the attitude of confirming for oneself whether the content of the proclaimed gospel aligns with the baptism Jesus received from John and the event of the Cross spoken of by the Bible. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not fear verification, and reveals the reality of its truth to those who deeply search the Scriptures.

Acts 17:16–21, The Scenery of Athens: On the Spiritual Pain Faced by an Overly Religious Society!

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, ‘What does this babbler want to say?’ Others said, ‘He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,’ because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, ‘May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.’ For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.”

In Athens, seeing that the whole city is full of idols, Paul is provoked in his heart. This was not a simple anger, but a deep lamentation for the wandering souls who, despite the overflow of philosophy and religion, actually did not know the only way of the removal of sins. The Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time in nothing else but speaking and hearing the newest things, but their intellectual amusement could not solve the fundamental sin problem of humanity.

Acts 17:22–23, “The Unknown God”: On the Limit Concerning Sin That the World’s Religiosity Could Not Solve!

“Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.”

Paul stands in the midst of the Areopagus and begins his sermon, saying, *“Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious.”* He points out the limit of human religiosity, saying, *“For as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.”* The expression of the unknown god was a mark of helplessness showing that human intellect and religious zeal can never reach the reality of God who solved sin.

Acts 17:24–29, The Declaration of the Creator: On God’s Sovereignty Surpassing Human Thoughts and Idols!

“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that

they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising."

Paul declares, "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything." This is revealing that God is not One confined within human needs or philosophical systems. He emphasizes that human thoughts or any idol cannot end sin, and only the Creator God, who gives life and breath to all humanity, can save humans through the event of salvation that He accomplished.

Acts 17:30–31, The Core of the Conclusion: On the Command to Repent and the Standard of Judgment Confirmed by the Resurrection!

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Paul cries out, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." The repentance here is not a moral reflection, but a command to discard human philosophical thoughts and turn one's thoughts to the event of atonement fulfilled by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus. Also, God

proclaims, “*He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*” and the resurrection is God’s final public evidence showing that salvation is already perfectly finished.

Acts 17:32–34, The Differentiation of Responses: On the Choice and Responsibility of Intellectuals Standing Before the Gospel!

“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, ‘We will hear you again on this matter.’ So Paul departed from among them. However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”

The response of the people who heard Paul’s sermon was that upon hearing of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others said, “*We will hear you again on this matter.*” However, some people drew near to him and believed, and among them were Dionysius, an official of the Areopagus, a woman named Damaris, and other people as well. The gospel does not strive to persuade all intellectuals, but leaves behind those who believe by making each person make a decision and take responsibility before the proclaimed fact of salvation.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 17 testifies that the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be proclaimed as the immutably same historical event whether in a Jewish synagogue or in the very midst of Greek philosophy. Religiosity and intellect can never end human sins, and only the shift in perception that believes in the baptism and the Cross of Jesus is the way of life. Acts chapter 17 is the bold history of the gospel of the water and the Spirit showing that even in the world of intellect, the gospel must be the only truth that is not compromised.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 17, verses 1 to 34, records the urgent journey of Paul preaching the gospel in Athens, which was the center of the intellectual stage of the time, after passing through Thessalonica and Berea. Looking at this word from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Acts chapter 17 is not a simple travelogue of evangelism, but a magnificent repository of the gospel showing how God proclaims the ‘reality of completed salvation’ in a place where human philosophy and religious zeal cannot reach.

Arriving in Thessalonica, Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures over three Sabbaths, explaining the meaning and demonstrating that Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and proclaimed, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is exactly the Christ.” Here, the ministry of Christ that Paul demonstrated does not merely stop at the suffering of the Cross. At the foundation of Paul’s sermon is always the premise of the gospel of ‘water,’ that Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. When this gospel of water and blood was proclaimed, a great multitude of devout Greeks and not a few prominent women were persuaded and followed Paul and Silas, but the Jews who held onto their own righteousness became jealous and caused an uproar in the marketplace.

Subsequently moving to Berea, Paul’s party witnessed that the people there were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, receiving the word with an earnest mind and searching the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. True faith begins not with emotional excitement, but with accurately confirming the law of salvation testified by the written Word of

God. They confirmed through the Scriptures the truth of the baptism by which Jesus took over the sins of humanity and the Cross by which He paid the price for those sins, and as a result, the work of many believing and not a few prominent Greek women and men returning to the Lord occurred.

Afterwards, arriving in Athens, Paul saw that the whole city was full of idols and was provoked in his heart, so he reasoned in the synagogue and the marketplace with those who met him. The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who boasted of their wisdom at the time mocked Paul, saying, “What does this babbling man want to say?” but Paul proclaimed the true God, who is the Lord of heaven and earth, to them who worshiped the ‘unknown god’ in the very midst of the Areopagus square. Paul revealed that God made every nation of humanity from one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth, and determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, emphasizing that idols made by human hands can never become God.

The climax of Paul’s sermon in Athens was on repentance, judgment, and resurrection. He proclaimed, “*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead*” (Acts 17:30-31). The repentance spoken of here does not mean religious remorse, but a ‘shift in faith’ of discarding the vain efforts to wash away sins with human philosophy and good deeds, and turning back to the perfect righteousness accomplished by Jesus Christ through water and the Spirit.

Before the proclamation of the resurrection of the dead, some of the intellectuals of Athens mocked, and others showed a

reserved attitude saying, “We will hear you again on this matter,” but among them, Dionysius an official of the Areopagus, a woman named Damaris, and other people drew near to Paul and believed. The gospel they believed was the practical secret of the removal of sins that the philosophy of Athens could not give. Only this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took away all our sins forever by receiving baptism at the Jordan River and ended the punishment for those sins on the Cross—could lead the people of Athens, who were under the fear of death and condemnation, to true life.

Acts chapter 17 asks us today: Are you searching the gospel of the water and the Spirit with an earnest mind like the Bereans, or are you only listening to new knowledge and philosophy like the Athenians? God has given us not philosophical comfort, but the certain salvation completed by the baptism and blood of the Son. Only in the place where this truth is propagated—that Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sins at the Jordan River and was judged on the Cross, and that the Holy Spirit confirms this fact in the hearts of those who believe—does the work of eternal life occur.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 17 testifies that even in the place where human intellect was most brilliant, only the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the unique power to solve the fundamental sin problem of humanity. Those who believe this gospel no longer wander in search of an unseen god, but come to boldly live the life of a witness while praising God within the already completed salvation. This is the essence of the gospel that the Apostle Paul proclaimed, risking his life, before the philosophers of Athens. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 17

1. Must people living in the 21st century firmly possess the structure of faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, standing in the very midst of the world's culture, philosophy, and diverse religions?

People living in the 21st century live in an environment where diverse cultures, philosophies, ideologies, and religions are mixed together. It is an era where information overflows, values are relativized, and truth is considered like a matter of personal choice. In the midst of this situation, if what one believes is not clear, faith can easily be shaken. Therefore, if one is a person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is very important to clearly understand the structure of that faith and stand firmly in conviction.

Having a certain structure of faith does not simply mean having emotional zeal, but means clearly knowing what salvation is based upon. It must be clear how sin was resolved, why salvation is grace, and why the ministry of Christ, not human merit, is the center. If this foundation is weak, confusion easily arises before worldly philosophy or religious pluralism.

Also, in a state without self-conviction, it is difficult to preach the gospel to others. When asked a question, you cannot explain it, and when hearing criticism, you only react defensively. However, if you understand the core of the gospel biblically, you can explain it clearly without attacking the other

person. Conviction gives a sense of stability, not coercion.

Furthermore, worldly culture constantly reinforces human-centered thinking. Success, self-development, a sense of moral superiority, and relativistic tolerance can blur the standard of faith. At this time, if the structure of the gospel is clear, you can discern based on God's grace, not human effort or philosophy. The gospel does not intend to reign over culture, but provides an unshakable standard even in the very midst of it.

Ultimately, the conviction of the gospel is the power to protect oneself and the foundation of the mission toward others. Only when the center of one's faith is clear can one maintain consistency in life and persuasively preach the gospel to others as well. What is needed even more in the complex environment of the 21st century is not a new strategy, but a clear understanding and conviction concerning the content of salvation. When standing upon that, faith also becomes solid, and the testimony also gains power.

2. Today, when those around the world who have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and become co-workers of the gospel want to propagate the gospel, must they testify knowing for certain that the structure of the gospel of the Cross and the structure of the gospel of the water and the Spirit are different from each other?

If there are people cooperating in the propagation of the gospel around the world, above all, it is important to clearly understand the content and structure of the gospel they are preaching. This is because the propagation of the gospel is not a matter of zeal or scale, but a matter of what and how to preach.

If only activities precede without clearly understanding the core structure of the gospel, the message can become blurred.

Knowing the structure of the gospel does not simply mean repeating slogans, but clearly knowing upon what basis salvation stands. One must be able to explain biblically how the ministry of Jesus Christ is connected to the sin problem, what the meaning of the Cross is, and how that redemptive event is applied to humans. When different understandings exist, one must not treat the difference emotionally, but calmly organize it based on the biblical text.

Especially even when using the expression “the gospel of the Cross,” the understanding of whether it is a simple symbol, an event of substitutionary atonement, or the completion of redemption must be clear. A preacher of the gospel must discern the difference in content rather than the difference in terminology. This is because if one does not understand the structure, one can deliver a different meaning while using the same word.

At the same time, when explaining the difference in the gospel, biblical grounds and humility are needed, not an aggressive attitude or a sense of superiority. The gospel is not a tool to win a debate, but a message that illuminates the way of salvation. Clarity and gentleness must go together.

Ultimately, what is needed for a co-worker who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not the expansion of activities but the clarity of content. When one clearly knows and testifies to what is the center of salvation and how human merit and God’s grace are distinguished, the gospel is not distorted. Clearly knowing the structure of the gospel is exactly the power of propagation, and that clarity becomes the foundation that allows the same message to be preached anywhere in the world.

3. Is the reason the Bereans in Acts chapter 17, verses 10-12 were called noble-minded because they examined whether the word the Apostle Paul preached was what the Bible was saying or not?

In Acts chapter 17, verses 10–12, it is recorded that the Bereans were more noble-minded than the people in Thessalonica. The reason is not simply because they were polite or had much knowledge, but because they received the word the Apostle Paul preached with an earnest mind and searched daily whether it was based on the Bible. Here, the expression “noble-minded” is an evaluation that includes both attitude and discernment together.

They neither rejected unconditionally nor accepted blindly. First, they listened with an open mind, and at the same time, they confirmed by comparing it with the written Bible. The Bible they had at that time was the Old Testament, and they examined whether the content concerning Jesus Christ testified by Paul aligned with the prophecies of that Old Testament. This shows an example that faith must stand upon the revealed Word, not an emotional response.

This scene reveals an important principle. It is the point that no matter how great the authority of the person preaching God’s word may seem, the final standard is the Bible. Even the Apostle Paul was placed under the verification of the Bible. This is a principle that must continue to be applied even within church history. An attitude of examining whether any teaching aligns with the Bible is necessary.

Also, it is recorded that the Bereans searched “daily.” It was not a one-time confirmation but a continuous review. This shows earnestness and sincerity in treating the truth. This attitude does not come from a simple critical spirit, but from a godly desire to

know God's revelation accurately.

Ultimately, the Bereans respected the Word, and at the same time, they discerned it. Therefore, the Bible says that many of them came to believe. When an open mind and Bible-centered verification are combined, healthy faith is formed. This is the reason Acts evaluated the Bereans as noble-minded, and it is an attitude of faith that can be applied today as well.

4. Can people who are faithful to worldly religions reach the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord?

The core of this question is the issue of whether religious zeal becomes the way to reach the truth of salvation. Looking at the flow of the Bible, the fact itself of being faithful to religion does not guarantee the conviction of salvation. This is because while religious zeal can be a heart directed toward God, that zeal does not necessarily align with the center of the gospel.

The Apostle Paul says in Romans that Israel has a zeal for God, but not according to correct knowledge. They were faithful to the law, but they failed to reach the point of accepting God's righteousness through Christ. This shows that religious loyalty and faith in the gospel are not the same. Zeal, if its direction is not right, can fail to lead to salvation.

However, at the same time, the Bible says that God gives the opportunity for repentance and faith to all people. Even a person faithful to religion can reach faith if they hear the message of salvation testified by the Bible and realize that it is the truth. The problem does not lie in the religious background of the past, but in how one accepts the gospel in the present.

Religious structures can sometimes place human merit or tradition at the center. The longer a person has stayed within that structure, the less easy the shift in thinking can be. However, the gospel proclaims not human merit but God's grace. When the Holy Spirit opens the heart, a person can go beyond the existing framework and reach the truth.

Ultimately, the answer to whether people faithful to worldly religions can also hear the truth of the gospel and reach faith is that it is possible. However, that is not because of religious faithfulness, but because of God's grace and the faith that accepts the gospel. The standard of salvation lies not in the intensity of zeal, but in whether one trusts the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

5. If we preach the gospel we believe to the intellectuals of the world, that is, the faith that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, resurrected, and leads us to the Lord's kingdom, how would it appear in their eyes?

To the intellectuals of the world, the faith that Jesus received baptism from John, died on the Cross, resurrected, and leads us to the kingdom of God can appear in various ways. To some, this appears as a confession of faith including historical claims and supernatural events, and can be felt as difficult to verify by the standards of scientific methods or philosophical rationality. In particular, because events like the resurrection rely on testimony and interpretation rather than empirical proof, there are also cases where they view it skeptically.

To others, this message is also understood as symbolic language. Baptism can be interpreted like a mark of devotion, the Cross as a symbol of sacrifice, and the resurrection as a metaphor for hope. From this perspective, there is a tendency to try to accept faith as an existential meaning or an ethical lesson. Therefore, the faith that confesses the event of salvation as a historical and transcendent reality can appear as a literal interpretation.

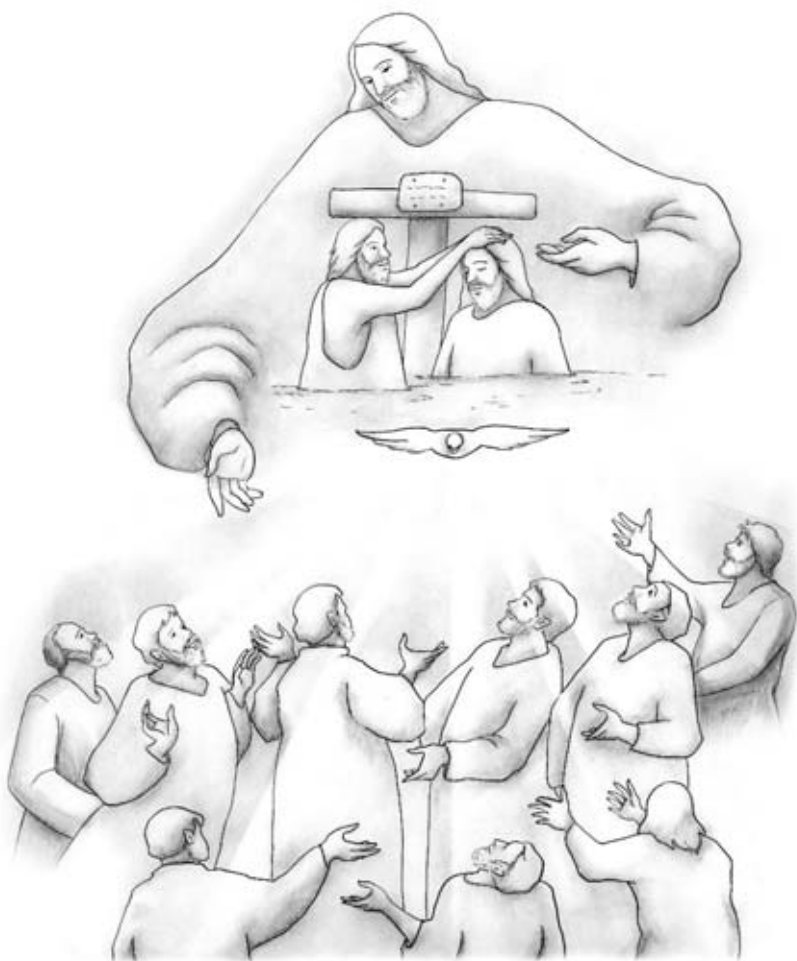
However, not all intellectuals respond the same way. Among those who study philosophy, history, and religious studies, there are also people who earnestly explore the Christian faith not as a simple superstition, but as a system of thought and an existential answer formed in history. They do not view faith only as a blind irrationality, but also understand it as a single response to the questions about the limits and transcendence of human existence.

Ultimately, how this faith appears depends on the premise. If one sets human reason as the absolute standard, transcendent revelation can appear difficult to accept. Conversely, if one acknowledges the premise that human reason has limits, one can leave open the possibility of revelation and faith.

Therefore, to the intellectuals of the world, this faith can appear sometimes as irrational, sometimes as symbolic, and sometimes as an object of earnest exploration. What is important is the point that faith is not a realm completely separated from reason, but includes historical claims and interpretations, and ontological questions. When explaining faith, an attitude of calmly presenting what that faith says and what meaning it holds is needed, rather than a simple claim. ☒

LESSON

18



You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 18

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts 18 is a chapter where the fatigue of the minister, the formation of the local church, and the supplementation of incomplete doctrines are presented multi-dimensionally. The focus of this chapter is not simply on listing the achievements of the ministry, but on showing how the Gospel of Water and the Spirit—which is the already completed salvation—comforts the minister, stabilizes the church, and makes the teachings perfect.

Acts 18:1–4, Entering Corinth: On the Self-Sustaining Power of the Gospel of Water and the Spirit Permeating the Field of Daily Life!

“After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.”

Paul leaves Athens and arrives in Corinth, and because they share the same livelihood, he lives with the couple Aquila and Priscilla and works making tents. Every Sabbath, he reasons in the synagogue and exhorts the Jews and Greeks. This shows that the gospel does not depend on a specific support structure or environment, but advances by uniting with the minister's life itself. The Gospel of Water and the Spirit is not swayed by the environment; rather, because it is rooted in the historical events of Jesus' baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection, it does not stop in any situation.

Acts 18:5–8, Rejection and Transition: On the Shift from a Place Clinging to Religious Conditions to a Place Embracing the Grace of Salvation!

“When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, ‘Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.’ And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.”

When Silas and Timothy come down from Macedonia, Paul is compelled by the word of God and clearly testifies to the Jews that “Jesus is the Christ.” However, when they oppose and blaspheme, Paul shakes his garments and declares, “*Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.*” This is not simply an expression of anger, but a scene showing that the order of salvation is shifting from the

synagogue—which clings to the law and conditions and rejects the gospel—to the Gentiles, who embrace the free grace.

Acts 18:9–11, The Lord’s Vision: On the Confirmation of Belonging Given to a Discouraged Minister!

“Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, ‘Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.’ And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”

During his ministry in Corinth, the Lord speaks to Paul in the night by a vision: *“Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”* This word goes beyond a promise guaranteeing the minister’s capability; it is a declaration confirming that even those who have not yet converted are God’s possession. By revealing that the already completed salvation is prepared in that city, He raises up the discouraged minister again, leading him to stay for a year and six months teaching the word of God.

Acts 18:12–17, Acquittal before Gallio: On the Gospel’s Public Innocence and the Restoration of Order!

“When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, ‘This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.’ And when Paul was about to open his

mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such matters.' And he drove them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things."

The Jews rise up with one accord against Paul and bring him to the court, accusing him, saying, *"This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."* However, the proconsul Gallio dismisses the case, saying, *"But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such matters."* This can be seen as an incident where the Gospel of Water and the Spirit is publicly confirmed not as a crime that destroys the order of the world, but as the truth that frees the human soul from condemnation.

Acts 18:18, Vow and Freedom: On the Voluntary Expression of a Saint Rather Than a Condition of Salvation!

"So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow."

Paul remains a good while longer, then takes leave of the brethren and sails for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila are with him. At this time, because Paul had taken a vow earlier, he has his hair cut off at Cenchrea. This act of a vow is by no means a condition for obtaining salvation or a procedure for accumulating righteousness. The way of salvation confirmed in

Acts 15 remains unchanged, but it is a voluntary expression of a personal faith resolution by an apostle who has gained freedom within the Gospel of Water and the Spirit, showing that the Gospel of Water and the Spirit is in a state not bound by the law.

Acts 18:19–22, The Door of Ephesus: On the journey of the gospel waiting for the timing of the Holy Spirit!

“And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, but took leave of them, saying, ‘I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.’ And he sailed from Ephesus. And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch.”

Arriving in Ephesus, Paul reasons with the Jews and is asked to stay longer, but he bids them farewell, saying, *“I will return again to you, God willing.”* and leaves by boat. The completed gospel is not spread by human impatience but moves according to the exact timing of God. Even before an open door, the apostle prioritized the guidance of the Holy Spirit and trusted the sovereignty of God, who prepares the history of salvation for the next ministry.

Acts 18:24–26, Apollos: On being supplemented with the exact structure of the gospel beyond zeal!

“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an

eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

A Jew named Apollos arrived in Ephesus, and this man was eloquent and proficient in the Scriptures. He had learned the way of the Lord early on and with zeal spoke and taught in detail the things concerning Jesus, but he only knew the baptism of John. At this, Priscilla and Aquila heard him, took him aside, and “*they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*” What Apollos lacked was the complete structure of salvation—that Jesus took on the sins of the world by receiving baptism at the Jordan River (water) and that those sins were finished on the cross—and through this supplementation, his teaching finally becomes complete.

Acts 18:27–28, The result of supplementation: On the specific power of the gospel that firmly builds God’s church!

“And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.”

When Apollos, whose teaching had been supplemented, crossed over to Achaia, he went and “*he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the*

Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.” The core ability by which Apollos could help the community was not his splendid eloquence, but in his proving through events how Christ completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit according to the promises of the Scriptures. When the exact foundation of the gospel is established, the church finally enjoys unshakable stability.

In conclusion, Acts 18 testifies to the process by which the gospel of the water and the Spirit heals the discouragement of ministers, makes lacking teachings complete, and builds up the church in an orderly manner. Salvation is based not on human zeal but on the already completed event of God, and especially when the meaning of the water, which is the baptism of Jesus, is accurately positioned within the structure of the gospel, grace becomes a practical power that greatly helps the community. This is the structure of the on-site ministry of the gospel shown in Acts 18.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word of Acts 18:1 to 28 powerfully shows that the gospel is not spread by a person’s eloquent speaking skills or a favorable environment, but is established by the clear content of salvation that God has already completed. Looking at this passage from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, we can see that Acts 18 is not simply a record of a minister’s success story, but a very important testimony of how the gospel is completely corrected and expanded. When Paul left Athens and arrived in Corinth, which was full of philosophy and pleasure, he met a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, and his wife Priscilla. Because they had the same trade, he stayed and

worked with them; this was to not rely on the conditions of the minister, but to reveal only the power of the ministry that Jesus Christ had already accomplished.

When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the word of God and clearly testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But when they opposed and blasphemed, Paul shook his garments and said, "Your blood will return upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles." This declaration was not an emotional severance but a clarification of the responsibility for the gospel, showing that the truth that Jesus took upon the sins of the world at the Jordan River and was judged on the cross must be delivered through testimony, not human coercion. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians also heard, believed, and were baptized, but there was still fear in Paul's heart.

In the night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, "*Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city*" (Acts 18:9-10). The Lord did not give Paul a new message, but commanded him to continue speaking the already completed gospel without keeping silent, which means that the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be proclaimed not when people are ready, but because there are those whom God has already chosen. Paul stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying that this fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law. However, Gallio considered this a matter of words and names and your own law, and did not get involved. This scene shows that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is

not maintained by the power of the world or the judgment of courts, but is the absolute truth already completed before God. Paul stayed many days longer, then took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and came to Ephesus and entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. Promising, “I will return to you if God wills,” he landed at Caesarea and went down to Antioch.

Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus; he was an eloquent man and proficient in the Scriptures, but he knew only the baptism of John. Apollos had learned the way of the Lord and with zeal spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, but he possessed an incomplete gospel, not accurately knowing the meaning of the gospel of the water and the Spirit regarding how Jesus took upon the sins of the world at the Jordan River. Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately, which was a decisive ministry to correctly establish the core of salvation: the baptism of Jesus, the cross, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

After the gospel was correctly established, Apollos crossed over to Achaia with the encouragement of the brethren, and there he greatly helped those who had believed through grace. This was because he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ, which shows that not a partial gospel, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit transformed him into an unshakable, true witness. Acts 18 asks us whether we are speaking with mere zeal or preaching the accurate gospel.

When this gospel—that Jesus Christ took upon our sins at the Jordan River, was judged on the cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this—is correctly established, a minister can avoid keeping silent even in fear, and the church is built firmly. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 18

1. Now, for those who believe in the gospel of water and the Spirit, must it melt into their lives in order to preach this gospel?

The core of this saying lies in the fact that the gospel loses its power if it merely remains as a message of the lips. If one confesses to believe in the gospel of water and the Spirit while that gospel is separated from their life, the spoken words have difficulty holding persuasive power. The gospel does not exist only as a doctrine, but becomes a living testimony only when it is revealed within life.

The gospel melting into life does not mean becoming a perfect person. Rather, it is the conviction that salvation is based on grace being reflected in everyday attitudes. A change must appear where forgiveness precedes condemnation, conviction exists rather than fear, and gratitude becomes the center rather than self-righteousness. Such a life becomes a stronger message than exaggerated religious language.

Also, the world looks at consistency rather than words. If the gospel proclaims a completed salvation, then in the life of the believer, freedom and responsible love must be revealed, not anxiety and a sense of merit. When life and message are separated, the gospel remains only as a claim. When life and message align, the gospel gains trust.

Therefore, a person who intends to preach the gospel must first stand deeply within that gospel. They must clearly know

what they believe, and that belief must permeate their way of thinking, relationship building, and criteria for choices. When the gospel forms the life, words naturally follow.

Ultimately, the starting point of the propagation of the gospel of water and the Spirit is not a strategy, but an inner belief. When the gospel is melted into life, evangelism becomes not a coercion, but an overflowing testimony. It is important not to forget this.

2. An evangelist must do their ministry being captivated by the Word of God, and their life itself must also be devoted to a life for the propagation of the gospel within the faith that believes in the Word of God.

The ministry of an evangelist does not start from personal passion or ability, but starts from being captivated by the Word of God. If the Word does not become the standard, the ministry can easily flow centered on human thoughts or strategies. However, a person captivated by the Word puts God's will before their own will, and places the direction of their ministry upon the standard of the Bible.

Also, an evangelist must not merely be a person who delivers a message, but a person who lives inside that message. The faith that believes in the Word of God must form their entire life. If one follows different values in their actual life while preaching the gospel, the ministry loses its power. Evangelism gains authority when life and message align.

Devoting to a life for the propagation of the gospel does not mean not pursuing secular success, but means putting the priority of life centered on the gospel. The use of time, the

direction of relationships, and the standard of choices must be connected to the gospel. Ministry does not only take place on the pulpit but continues within everyday life.

Also, a life captivated by the Word is accompanied by humility. An evangelist is not a technician who persuades people, but a steward entrusted with the truth of God. Rather than relying on one's own ability, one must trust the power of the Word. At that time, ministry becomes not a competition but obedience.

Ultimately, the power of an evangelist comes not from eloquence, but from the conviction in the Word and the consistency of living within that Word. A person who is captivated by the Word of God and whose faith leads their life naturally becomes a channel for the propagation of the gospel. When ministry and life are not separated, the gospel is revealed more clearly.

3. Those who are scattered throughout the world and live by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit may at times face loneliness. However, we must not forget that we belong to the church that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we must live within it.

People who are scattered around the world and live keeping their faith can sometimes experience deep loneliness. When the surrounding culture and values are different, and there are not many people who share the same faith, it is easy to feel a sense of isolation. In particular, the more one tries to live with the conviction of the gospel at the center, the more one can feel a sense of distance from the flow of the world.

What is important at times like this is to remember the fact that oneself is not alone. Faith can start from an individual's

decision, but it is essentially communal. The fact that there is a church that confesses the same gospel, and that there are brothers and sisters standing upon the same faith, becomes a great strength. Even if physically separated, the consciousness of being connected within the same confession of faith becomes the foundation to endure loneliness.

Also, belonging to a church does not mean a mere belonging in name, but means spiritual solidarity and responsibility. When staying within a relationship of praying for each other, sharing the Word, and exchanging encouragement, faith is maintained. Isolation can make faith weak, but unity supports faith.

Instead of disconnecting oneself within loneliness, one must be consciously connected with the community. Through worship, fellowship, and the sharing of the Word, one must remember that they are a part of a larger body. This is because the church is not a simple organization, but a fence that supports believers.

Ultimately, the path of faith is a path that is both personal and communal. When we do not forget the fact that we stand within the same gospel even though we are scattered, loneliness becomes not despair but a time of endurance. When we remember the community and keep the awareness that we belong within it, faith can become even more firm.

4. When we preach the gospel, we must accurately make known the structure of the gospel of water and the Spirit. If the evangelist does not devote themselves to making this structure of the gospel known, the propagation of the gospel can fail. Therefore, one must absolutely keep this point in mind.

When preaching the gospel, the most important thing is not

the size of zeal, but the clarity of the content. If one cannot clearly explain its structure while saying they believe in the gospel of water and the Spirit, the person listening will only receive fragmentary information. This is because the gospel is not a simple message of emotion, but news of salvation that has a structure regarding how sin was resolved.

Accurately making the structure of the gospel known means connecting and explaining the problem of sin, the ministry of Jesus Christ, and how that ministry is applied to humans. If this connection is omitted, the cross remains only as a symbol, and faith can be reduced to a vague religious decision. The structure must be clear for conviction to arise, and conviction must exist for faith not to be shaken.

If the evangelist does not devote themselves to this part, there is a risk that the gospel will change into a message relying on human experience or zeal. In that case, the person listening might be moved for a moment, but might not reach a deep understanding. This is because the gospel is not an emotional appeal, but conveying the event of salvation that God has accomplished.

Also, clearly explaining the structure is not for the sake of argument, but for the sake of reducing misunderstanding. Because even if the same terms are used, they can be understood with different meanings, the core concepts must be clearly presented based on the Bible. This is the responsibility for delivering the gospel without distortion.

Ultimately, whether the propagation of the gospel succeeds or not depends on how accurate the delivered content is, rather than outward results. An evangelist must deeply understand the essence and structure of the gospel, and must not neglect the effort to clearly explain it. When this point is kept in mind, the gospel is not blurred, and remains as a clear standard in the mind of the listener. ✉

LESSON

19

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer,
Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 19

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts chapter 19 is not simply a chronicle listing miracles and powers, but a decisive record showing how incomplete faith transforms into the completed gospel, and how the result changes the life and structure of a single city. Through the fundamental changes that occurred when the gospel of the water and the Spirit landed in the city of Ephesus, it testifies to us of the reality of the gospel.

Acts 19:1–7, The Disciples in Ephesus: On the Confirmation of the Holy Spirit Completing the Incomplete Gospel!

“And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ So they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.’ And he said to them, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ So they said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’ Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should

believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all.”

Paul comes to Ephesus, meets some disciples, and asks, “*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*” They answer, “*We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.*” which is because they only knew up to John’s baptism. They knew the stage of repentance and preparation, but they did not know the fulfillment that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world by being baptized by John at the Jordan River, and the completion of salvation that He finished the judgment once and for all on the cross. When Paul preaches the gospel again in the name of the Lord Jesus, administers baptism, and lays hands on them, only then does the Holy Spirit come upon them, which shows the fact that the Holy Spirit comes solely upon the already completed gospel to confirm that salvation.

Acts 19:8–10, The School of Tyrannus: On the Power of the Gospel Expanding through Systematic Teaching!

“And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”

Paul speaks boldly in the synagogue for three months, reasoning and persuading about the kingdom of God, but when some become hardened and slander it, he separates the disciples and reasons daily in the school of Tyrannus. Doing this for two years, the amazing work occurs that “*so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*” What Paul focused on was not ethical training or spiritual techniques, but repeatedly teaching the event structure of the gospel that leads to Jesus’ baptism, the cross, and the resurrection. The gospel of the water and the Spirit extends throughout the entire city not through temporary emotion, but through the clear teaching of the truth.

Acts 19:11–12, Signs of Power: On the Incidental Evidence Supporting the Truth of the Word!

“Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.”

God performs extraordinary miracles through the hands of Paul, so that even when people bring handkerchiefs or aprons from Paul’s body and place them on the sick, the disease leaves and evil spirits go out. These special powers were not the goal in themselves, but a means by which God publicly confirmed that the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Paul is the genuine truth. Signs can never replace the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and are always merely the result that follows the proclaimed word of salvation.

Acts 19:13–17, The Sons of Sceva: On Those Who Minister Without Possessing the Gospel!

“Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’ Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.”

To the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish priest, who called upon the name of the Lord Jesus over those with evil spirits as an experiment, the evil spirit retorts, *“Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”* and overpowers and wounds them. This incident warns that power does not manifest simply by calling the name of Jesus like a magic spell. The authority of the gospel is given only to those who clearly recognize the completed atonement and possess that salvation as their own, revealing that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not mere knowledge but a spiritual reality.

Acts 19:18–20, Repentance and Purification: On the Practical Transformation of Life Born from the Assurance of the Removal of Sins!

“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic

brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”

“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.” This is not a fear-driven resolution to obtain salvation, but a voluntary reorganization of their life structure within the true freedom enjoyed by those who have already received the blotting out of their sins. The Bible concludes this phenomenon by stating, *“So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”* The gospel of the water and the Spirit not only changes the human heart but also newly reconstructs the specific patterns of life.

Acts 19:23–27, The Riot of Demetrius: On the Influence of the Gospel Shaking the City’s Value System!

“And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: ‘Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of

the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship.’”

Demetrius, a silversmith in Ephesus, was a man who made a large profit by making models of the shrine of Artemis, but when the idol industry was threatened by Paul’s evangelism, he caused a riot. He incites them by saying, “*So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised.*” The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not remain merely as a personal comfort, but fundamentally shakes the religious, economic, and cultural value systems of the city. Wherever the true gospel enters, the system of vain idols cannot help but collapse.

Acts 19:28–41, The Ephesian Theater: On the Collision of Truth and God’s Sovereign Settlement!

“Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians!’ So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul’s travel companions. And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours,

‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians!’ And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: ‘Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. For we are in danger of being called in question for today’s uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.’ And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.”

The whole city falls into confusion and the crowd rushes into the theater to cause a commotion, but the majority of the gathered crowd does not even know why they have come together. At this time, the town clerk quiets the crowd and advises them to follow legal procedures, putting an end to the disturbance. The gospel does not seek physical violence or social subversion. Truth is bound to be revealed eventually within time and public order, and God protects His gospel and evangelists even through the general order, allowing its authenticity to be brought to light.

In conclusion, Acts 19 testifies that prior to the presence of the Holy Spirit, the content of the gospel must stand upright as the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Without the fact that sins were taken upon Jesus through His baptism, there is no confirmation of the Holy Spirit, and true repentance appears as a change in the lives of those for whom the blotting out of sins is already completed. Acts 19 is a vivid history of the gospel

showing how an entire city, beyond individuals and communities, is reconstructed when the completed gospel enters.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts chapter 19, verses 1 to 41, is a chapter that most clearly reveals how decisive a factor the accuracy of the gospel is in determining the success or failure of faith. Viewed from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, all the events that occurred in Ephesus are read not simply as a showdown of power or news of revival, but as God's thorough inspection of what we believe. Paul met some disciples in Ephesus and asked, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" but they answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." This question was not asking about the years of their faith, but was a question to confirm whether the gospel had been completely transmitted. The fact that they only knew John's baptism means they realized the fact that there is sin, but they did not know how those sins were actually blotted out.

Paul explained, saying that John administered the baptism of repentance and told the people, "*that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*" and clearly preached the ministry of Jesus Christ. When he preached the gospel of water, that Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John at the Jordan River, and the gospel of blood, that He received the judgment for those sins on the cross, they heard this and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. Because the Holy Spirit is not one who fills the empty spaces of the gospel

but one who testifies to the already completed salvation, the evidence of His presence appears only when the content of the gospel is accurate.

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the kingdom of God, but some people became hardened and disobedient, slandering this Way before the crowd. Accordingly, Paul left them, took the disciples apart, and reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus, doing this for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord. What Paul taught repeatedly for two years was not a new theology but the already confirmed gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it showed that the expansion of the gospel lies not in refined methods but in the clarity of its content.

God caused amazing powers to be performed through the hands of Paul, so that even when people brought handkerchiefs or aprons from Paul's body and placed them on the sick, the disease left and evil spirits went out. However, to the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish priest, who imitated this and, as an experiment, called the name of the Lord Jesus over those with evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches," the evil spirit rushed at them and wounded them, saying, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" The reason the name of Jesus has efficacy is because the ministry of water and blood contained within that name is a reality, and a faith that uses only the name like a magic spell without the substance of the gospel ultimately leaves behind only shame and fear.

Triggered by this incident, all the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus knew of this matter, feared, and magnified the name of the Lord Jesus; and many who believed came, confessed, and made known their deeds, and also many of those who practiced

magic gathered their books, brought them, and burned them in front of everyone. This action was a conversion of faith that appeared as a result of the entrance of the belief that the problem of sin was actually eliminated through the baptism and cross of Jesus Christ, prior to any effort to clean up their behavior. In this way, the word of the Lord was powerful, prospered, and gained strength, and when the gospel takes hold of a person's spirit, the refuges of the old life naturally lose their meaning.

As the gospel prospered, no small disturbance arose in Ephesus concerning this Way, because a silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis and brought no small income to the craftsmen, instigated the people when his business was hindered by Paul's evangelism. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a religion that slightly improves a person's life, but the truth that tears down the fundamental idols that people relied on, resistance from vested interests is bound to always follow wherever the true gospel is preached. However, just as the city clerk quieted the crowd, warned of the danger of an unlawful assembly, and dispersed the gathering, the gospel is not proven by human uproar, but triumphs by revealing itself to be the truth as time flows.

In conclusion, Acts chapter 19 asks whether we simply know the name of Jesus as knowledge, or whether we fully believe in the ministry of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished. Only this gospel—that Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment for those sins on the cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this fact in the hearts of those who believe—tears down the idols of our lives, just as it tore down the idols of Ephesus. The church that knows this gospel does not imitate vain powers, but comes to possess the power of life that quietly yet clearly changes the world. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 19

1. What is the difference between John the Baptist administering the baptism of repentance to the people and his transferring the sins of the world by baptizing Jesus?

The two types of baptism administered by John the Baptist had the same format, but they possessed completely opposite characteristics in their spiritual ‘direction’ and ‘effect.’

First, the ‘baptism of repentance’ administered to the general public was a preparatory process for humans to advance toward God. At that time, John awakened the hearts of the people by proclaiming in the wilderness, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The baptism the people received at this time was a volitional resolution to confess before the public that they were sinners and to turn their life attitudes around to welcome the soon-coming Messiah. In other words, this baptism can be seen not as a final destination for the removal of sins, but as a ‘preparatory ceremony’ that cultivated the field of the heart to meet Jesus, the true Savior.

On the other hand, the baptism Jesus received was an event of the ‘imputation of sins,’ unrelated to human repentance. The reason Jesus, who is originally without sin, stood before John was not to repent of sins Himself, but to legally take on the sins of humanity. Just as the high priest in the Old Testament era laid hands on the head of the sacrificial offering to pass the sins of the people onto the beast, John, who was the last priest and

prophet at that time, administered baptism (the laying on of hands) to Jesus, causing all the sins of the world to be transferred to Jesus.

In conclusion, if the baptism of ordinary people was a ‘process of emptying’ to discard their own sins, the baptism of Jesus was a ‘process of filling’ to bear the sins of humanity on their behalf. John’s crying out, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (*John 1:29*) immediately after he baptized Jesus was a proclamation that the transfer of sins was completed precisely through this baptism. Through this, Jesus officially began His public ministry not as a single human confessing personal sins, but as the ‘atoning sacrifice’ who bore the sins of the whole world.

2. What is the reason Jesus demanded John the Baptist to baptize Him in the word of Matthew 3:13-17?

In Matthew 3:13-15, the apparent reason Jesus demanded baptism from John is “to fulfill all righteousness.” Here, ‘Righteousness’ contains the meaning of fully carrying out the legal and spiritual procedures according to God’s plan of salvation. Originally, John hesitated to administer baptism to the sinless Jesus and declined, saying, “I need to be baptized by You,” but Jesus made it clear that this procedure was a gateway that must necessarily be passed through in the genealogy of redemptive history.

Theologically, this scene is the process of completing the principles of the Old Testament’s ‘priestly ordination ceremony’ and the ‘laying on of hands on the sacrificial offering.’ According to the Old Testament law, the high priest begins his

public office through the ceremony of washing with water (Exodus 29:4), and before the removal of the people's sins, he places his hands on the head of the offering to transfer (lay hands on) the sins. John the Baptist, as the last prophet of the priestly family (son of Zechariah) succeeding the order of Aaron, carried out the role of legally 'transferring' all the sins of the world to Him by administering baptism (the laying on of hands) to Jesus, the representative of humanity.

Therefore, the practical reason Jesus demanded baptism was to identify Himself with humanity and stand in the 'place of a sinner.' Through baptism, He was officially inaugurated as the 'Lamb of God' who bears the sins of the world, and this becomes the legal basis for the substitutionary ministry in which He will die on the cross afterward. Immediately after John administered the baptism, the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit descended, and the voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" was heard, which can be said to be an event in which God publicly certified that Jesus is the unique and perfect Messiah who will take charge of the sins of humanity.

3. A Sermon on the Gospel of Water and the Spirit Preached by Paul C. Jong

The core of the 'gospel of water and the Spirit' emphasized by Pastor Paul C. Jong is that, as an absolute condition for being born again, one must believe in the 'baptism' Jesus received from John the Baptist with the same weight as the blood of the cross. He states that modern Christianity, while overly emphasizing only the blood of Jesus on the cross, is overlooking the process of the 'imputation of sins,' which is the prerequisite for that blood to take effect. In other words, he interprets the

‘water’ in John 3:5, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit,” as the baptism Jesus received from John, and explains that this baptism is the reality of the ‘legal transfer’ just like the laying of hands on the head of the sacrifice to pass on sins in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament era.

According to his logic, all the sins of humanity have already been passed on to Jesus at once through the baptism event in Matthew chapter 3. John the Baptist, as the representative of humanity and the last priest, administered the laying on of hands (baptism) on the head of Jesus, and at that moment, all the past, present, and future sins of the world were transferred to Jesus. Therefore, the death on the cross is merely ‘the execution of the punishment for the sins already transferred through baptism,’ and he emphasizes that if a believer does not believe this ‘gospel of water (baptism)’ and only believes the ‘gospel of blood (cross),’ the process of the transfer of sins is omitted, and therefore they cannot obtain the true blotting out of sins.

Ultimately, the uniqueness of the gospel preached by Paul C. Jong lies in tying together the two pillars of “the transfer of sins through baptism and the judgment of sins through the cross” into one. He points out that the reason believers feel that sin remains no matter how earnestly they pray prayers of repentance is because they do not believe the fact that Jesus has already taken away all of my sins through baptism. This gospel emphasizes the atonement accomplished ‘once and for all, eternally,’ and has a structure that strongly argues that a believer must live with the assurance of being a righteous person, no longer a sinner.

4. How does the principle of the ‘laying on of hands’ emphasized in this ‘gospel of water and the Spirit’ align with the Old Testament Levitical sacrificial law?

The core of the ‘gospel of water and the Spirit’ emphasized by Paul C. Jong lies in the point that the principle of the ‘laying on of hands’ of the Old Testament Levitical sacrificial law was substantially completed through the ‘baptism of Jesus’ in the New Testament. Looking at Leviticus 1:4 or 16:21, in order for the people of Israel to receive the blotting out of their sins, the process of laying hands on the head of an unblemished sacrifice was essential. This laying on of hands is not a simple ritual, but means the ‘imputation of sins’ that transfers the sinner’s sins completely, physically and legally, to the sacrifice. The logical basis of this gospel is that even if the sacrifice is killed and sheds blood, if the sins were not transferred to the sacrifice through the laying on of hands beforehand, that shedding of blood becomes merely an individual death unrelated to the sinner’s sins.

Substituting this principle into the New Testament, the baptism John the Baptist administered to Jesus becomes the substantial event of the ‘laying on of hands’ that the high priest of the Old Testament performed on the sacrifice. Paul C. Jong explains that when John the Baptist, as a descendant of Aaron and in the capacity of the representative of humanity, laid his hands on the head of Jesus and baptized Him, all the sins of the world were transferred to Jesus at once. Just as the blood of the sacrifice had no effect without the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, in the New Testament as well, if Jesus had not received the sins of humanity in advance through baptism, His death (shedding of blood) on the cross could not be the execution of the punishment that atones for our sins. That is to say, the

formula of 'laying on of hands and blood' in the Old Testament perfectly pairs and aligns with 'baptism and the cross' in the New Testament.

Ultimately, the point of comparison between the Old Testament Levitical sacrificial law and this gospel lies in the 'route of the transfer of sin.' In the Old Testament, sin was handled in the order of sinner → sacrifice → laying on of hands → shedding of blood (death), and in the New Testament, it was completed in the order of sinner → Jesus → baptism (laying on of hands) → cross (death). Pastor Paul C. Jong states that only when one believes that sin was transferred through 'water (baptism)' in this way can they reach the assurance that the blood of the cross washed away their sins, and that this is the very substance of the 'gospel of water and the Spirit' spoken of in the Bible. ☒

LESSON

20

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 20

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts chapter 20 is not a simple travel record or a collection of farewell sermons, but contains the scene of an apostle, who has run holding onto the gospel of the water and the Spirit all his life, officially passing down the essence and attitude of that gospel, as well as his spiritual legacy, to the church. The records of this chapter solemnly show what a person who has taken hold of the already completed salvation must leave behind at the final point of their life.

Acts 20:1–6, The Repetition of the Journey: On the Reconfirmation and Validation of the Gospel Completed Once and for All!

“After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia. Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus

of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.”

After the uproar ceases, Paul calls the disciples to himself, exhorts them, says farewell, and visits the regions of Macedonia and Greece again. This was not to give a new revelation, but to confirm whether the foundation of the gospel already preached had not been shaken within the saints. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a doctrine that transforms according to the times, but an event completed once and for all by Jesus' baptism, cross, and resurrection, Paul's ministry always proceeded in the direction of "reconfirming" and firmly establishing this completed fact.

Acts 20:7–12, The Night in Troas: On the Power of the Word that Overcomes Death and Saves Life!

“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, ‘Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.’ Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a

little comforted.”

In Troas, Paul “*ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.*” At this time, Eutychus, who was sitting at the third-story window and dozing off, falls and dies, but Paul brings him back to life. This incident is not a simple miracle anecdote, but shows that Paul staked his life on the work of preaching the word until the last moment before his departure. The restoration of Eutychus was a sign showing that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the practical power that ends the authority of sin and death and gives true life to humanity.

Acts 20:13–16, The Decision Toward Jerusalem: About the Direction of the Holy Spirit Established for the Mission!

“Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next day we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.”

Paul hurries past Ephesus to reach Jerusalem within Pentecost. This was not a personal desire for martyrdom or an emotional decision, but an intention to finish “*so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God*” (Acts 20:24). The gospel of grace that Paul intended to testify means

the entire structure of salvation already ended by the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, and he entrusted his schedule to the sovereignty of God to fulfill this mission.

Acts 20:17–21, Self-Testimony Before the Elders of Ephesus: About the Essence of the Gospel Preached with Tears and Humility!

“From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. When they had come to him, he said to them: ‘You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plots of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.’”

Paul, who called the Ephesian elders from Miletus, looks back on his ministry and speaks of *“serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews.”* However, his center was not on his own character, but on *“testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”* He emphasized that repentance here is a transition of thought turning away from human ideology, and faith is accepting the fact of the completed salvation exactly as it is.

Acts 20:22–24, The Binding of the Holy Spirit: About the Guidance Leading to the Completion of the Mission Beyond Comfort!

“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

Paul confesses, *“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there.”* The guidance of the Holy Spirit grants a powerful direction toward the completion of the gospel testimony, rather than guaranteeing the comfort or safety of the flesh. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make the believer settle in a comfortable life, but becomes the driving force that makes them live as a witness of the gospel to the end, like one who has already received the elimination of sin.

Acts 20:25–27, The Decisive Declaration: About the Ministry of the Apostle Who Preached the Will of God Without Hiding Anything!

“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

Paul affirms to the elders, *“For I have not shunned to declare*

to you the whole counsel of God.” This is a confident confession that he did not omit or compromise any one of the entire structure of salvation, which is the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus. Because he preached the gospel wholly, he could say, *“I am innocent of the blood of all men,”* and this shows that this is the greatest legacy a minister entrusted with the gospel can leave behind.

Acts 20:28–31, The Standard for Entrusting the Church: About the Faith of the Flock Built Upon the Word of Grace!

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

Paul exhorts the elders, saying, *“among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood,”* and commands them to examine themselves and protect the flock. Warning that savage wolves will speak perverse things and draw away the disciples, he made it clear that the only standard to firmly build up the church is not human organization or numbers, but solely the “word of grace.”

Acts 20:32–35, The Core of the Legacy: About the Life of the Gospel Overcoming Greed and the Blessing of Giving!

“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

As the last legacy of his ministry, Paul blesses them, saying, *“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”* He reminds them that he did not covet silver or gold, but worked himself and helped the weak, and quotes the word of the Lord, *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* This was a generous and mature attitude of life that only those who have already received all salvation without price can have.

Acts 20:36–38, The Scene of Farewell: About the Settlement of the Eternal Hope Bound by the Gospel!

“And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.”

After finishing the words, Paul kneels down and prays with

all those people. They all weep freely, embrace Paul's neck and kiss him, and sorrowing even more because of the word he spoke that they would see his face no more, they accompany him to the ship. This farewell of tears was the point of intersection between the mature love of the community that became one life within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, going beyond human attachment, and the conviction that although the body is separated, the preached gospel will remain forever.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 20 testifies how the gospel of the water and the Spirit defines and leads the life of an apostle from beginning to end. Paul did not leave behind splendid achievements or buildings, but only left behind "one gospel" testifying that sin was ended by the baptism of Jesus. Acts Chapter 20 deeply imprints on us that the standard of success in ministry is not in how much work was done, but in whether the entire structure of salvation was preached without hiding anything.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 20, verse 1 to 38 is the sorrowful farewell sermon of the Apostle Paul and at the same time, it is the word showing most concentratedly with what the gospel ministry begins and finishes. When reading this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Paul's tears, warnings, and earnest exhortation are heard not as a simple outpouring of emotion but as a stern last will to defend to the end the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has already completed. Paul sought out the disciples, exhorted them, and set out on his way even in a situation where uproar and persecution did not cease, and the driving force that moved him was not external success or safety,

but the conviction that salvation is not maintained by human protection but is preserved only by the completion of the gospel. Because there was this completion of salvation—that Jesus Christ took charge of the sins of the world through the baptism received from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this—Paul could not stop in any adversity.

When Paul reasoned until late at night in Troas, a young man named Eutychus was sitting in a window and dozing, and fell down from the third story and died, but Paul fell on him, embraced his body, and said, “*Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.*” and brought him back to life again. This incident is not a simple showing off of a miracle but an important event showing that life was restored in the place where the word is proclaimed. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not dealing only with the problem of the soul but is the power of God declaring that the authority of death itself has already ended, it clearly confirmed upon what exactly the word-centered church stands.

Even in the urgent schedule going to Jerusalem, Paul called the elders of Ephesus from Miletus, looked back on his ministry, and delivered a message of farewell. He recalled serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears, and enduring the trials which happened to him by the plots of the Jews, and that he taught them without hesitation, keeping back nothing that was helpful, whether publicly or from house to house. In particular, he said that he testified to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance here means not an emotional penitence, but a change of direction of faith turning away from one’s own deeds and the law and accepting the salvation already completed by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Paul confessed, while saying, “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,” he confessed, “*Except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God*” (Acts 20:23-24). This confession is a declaration that only a person who has already obtained eternal life through the gospel of the water and the Spirit can make, and it shows not a life struggling to obtain life, but the life of a witness willingly giving himself up to testify to the life already obtained.

Paul exhorted the elders, saying, “*Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood*” (Acts 20:28). Here, the expression ‘the church that God purchased with His own blood’ implies that in order for the shedding of blood on the Cross to have efficacy, the baptism of water—that all our sins were transferred to Jesus through the baptism received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River prior to that—is presupposed. Because sin was transferred, that blood could become the death of redemption, and as a result, the church became a community purchased with the precious sacrifice of Christ. Therefore, it emphasized that the mission of taking care of God’s church is a spiritual battle guarding the purity of the gospel, going beyond a simple administrative dimension of managing people.

Paul warned and requested them to be awake, saying, “*For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves*” (Acts 20:29-30). This is seeing

through the fact that the greatest threat tearing down the church originates from the distortion of adding or subtracting something to the gospel from the inside, rather than external persecution. This is because if human deeds are added to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it immediately becomes legalism, and if the problem of sin is blurred, it degenerates into a lifeless religion.

Lastly, Paul blessed them, saying, “*So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*” (Acts 20:32). He did not entrust the future of the church to people or systems but entrusted it only to the gospel of God’s grace itself, and this is because salvation is not a work that a person started but a ministry that God completed. Paul and the elders knelt down and prayed together, and they all wept freely, fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 20 awakens us that the center of ministry is not in external success but in the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit itself. The person who possesses this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit confirms this—can be bold even before a tearful farewell and can peacefully entrust everything to the word of God even at the moment of leaving. This is the power of the gospel that the Apostle Paul held onto until the end, and the eternal legacy that our church today must defend.

Let us meet how this tearful farewell of Paul leads to the footsteps of hardship heading to Jerusalem and arrest, and how it is testified within God’s sovereign plan, and how the history of Acts Chapter 21 also came to continue. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 20

1. Is the gospel of the water and the Spirit the certain gospel of salvation that must be testified to all Christians?

The ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ is a clear truth that must be testified to all Christians in order to restore the ‘conviction of the elimination of sin’, which is the essence of Christian faith. The reason many believers, while believing in the vicarious redemption of Jesus’ Cross, still confess themselves as ‘sinners’ and suffer because of the sins they commit every day, is because they have not realized the principle of ‘legal transfer’ of how sin was transferred from me to Jesus through the gospel of the water (baptism). The Bible says that the Spirit, the water, and the blood agree as one (1 John 5:8), and emphasizes that for the completeness of salvation, one must necessarily combine and believe not only the blood of the Cross (judgment) but also the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist (the transfer of sin).

The practical reason this gospel must be testified to all Christians is because it establishes the foundation of the life of faith on the ‘righteousness of God’ and not on ‘my zeal’. While our effort to wash away sins through prayers of repentance every time is relying on human will, believing the fact that Jesus took over the sins of the world once and for all through baptism and finished that punishment on the Cross is accepting God’s perfect design of salvation. Only when one believes this ‘gospel of the

water and the Spirit' with the heart, the saint is completely liberated from the guilt of sin and obtains the spiritual freedom to be able to proudly proclaim, "I have become a righteous person."

Therefore, this gospel is not simply conveying theological knowledge, but is the news of life proclaiming the 'atonement accomplished once and for all forever' to numerous souls whose conviction of salvation is shaken. If the 'gospel of the water' that Jesus bore all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist is left out, the gospel is nothing but a half-truth, and humans have no choice but to still remain under the weight of their own sins. Only when all Christians realize this perfect gospel can they finally enter the path of true faith that is not bound by deeds but receives the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. How the secret of this amazing gospel concretely works in our lives, about the sealing of the Holy Spirit!

The method by which the 'gospel of the water and the Spirit' concretely works in our lives starts from establishing the identity as a 'righteous person' who has already received the elimination of sin, not a 'sinner' struggling with sin anymore. The Sealing of the Holy Spirit is exactly like a spiritual seal by which God confirms us as His own possession when we believe this gospel of 'the water (baptism) and the blood (the Cross)' with the heart. As in the word of Ephesians chapter 1, verse 13, when we hear and believe the gospel of salvation, we come to receive the seal with the Holy Spirit of promise, and this is the work where the Holy Spirit ceaselessly testifies within us to the legal fact, "All your sins have already passed over to the baptism and the Cross

of Jesus 2,000 years ago and were resolved,” whenever we are pressed down by the actual sins we commit every day and fall into a sense of condemnation.

Such work of the Holy Spirit completely changes the nature of the ‘prayer of repentance’ in the life of a believer. If previously one offered a prayer ‘for exemption from punishment’ seeking forgiveness out of fear of going to hell whenever committing a sin, the saint who has received the seal by the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that my sins have already been transferred to Jesus, and therefore advances to a prayer of ‘thanksgiving and confession’ saying, “God, thank You for having already taken away even these weak sins entirely through the baptism of Jesus.” The Holy Spirit makes us enjoy practical freedom from the authority of sin by making us look at the righteousness of God who accomplished the atonement once and for all forever, not making us look at our own deeds and be discouraged.

Ultimately, the sealing of the Holy Spirit becomes the spiritual security guarantee of our lives. Even when we are emotionally shaken or make mistakes, the Holy Spirit reminds us of the testimony of the gospel called ‘the baptism of water (the transfer of sin)’ and ‘the Cross of blood (the judgment of sin)’ engraved in our hearts, and confirms that we are the children of God. When this conviction becomes the root of life, the saint comes to obtain the true driving force to be able to overcome sin, and finally becomes transformed into a holy life bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit. This exactly is the concrete sealing of the Holy Spirit appearing to those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and can be said to be the reality of the faith that overcomes the world.

3. How does the ‘conviction of a righteous person’ obtained through this gospel appear as concrete peace in actual interpersonal relationships or the hardships of life?

The ‘conviction of a righteous person’ obtained through the gospel of the water and the Spirit goes beyond abstract doctrine and becomes the foundation of unshakable inner peace (Inner Peace) in the actual field of life. In interpersonal relationships, we are often easily hurt and intimidated by the criticism or condemnation of others, but a person who has the legal conviction that all my faults were already transferred by the baptism of Jesus and completely resolved on the Cross comes to trust God’s verdict much more than the judgment of people. In other words, the spiritual self-esteem saying, “God justified me, who is to condemn me?” is formed, so that one does not alternate between joy and sorrow at the gaze of others, and comes to have the composure of mind to be able to generously accept even the weakness of the other party.

Also, even in the midst of fierce hardships or unexpected adversities of life, this gospel becomes a powerful tool of peace. When suffering hardship, many people are captivated by the retributive fear saying, “What sin did I commit to receive such punishment?”, but the righteous person who possesses the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not interpret his own hardship as ‘punishment for sin’. This is because he believes that all punishments for sin were already borne by Jesus through baptism 2,000 years ago and finished on the Cross. Therefore, even in the midst of hardship, he maintains peace within the conviction that “God sees me as a righteous child whom He loves,” and comes to have the spiritual sight to be able to look at that hardship as refinement for growth or God’s good plan.

Ultimately, the peace given by the conviction of a righteous person does not come from a temporary emotion arising because the environment is good, but from the fundamental sense of relief that the ‘problem of sin’ has been perfectly resolved. The love of God having been poured out through the Holy Spirit into the heart where the guilt of sin and the fear of judgment have disappeared, the practical ability to be able to confess “My soul is at peace” in any extreme situation appears. Like this, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a practical power that makes us escape from the religious yoke, proudly enjoy the authority of a righteous person even before the conflicts of interpersonal relationships and the waves of life, and walk together with the Lord who is the King of peace.

4. The conviction of being a righteous person is the driving force of sanctification that leads not to self-indulgence but to true holiness.

The ‘conviction of a righteous person’ obtained through the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not lead the believer to self-indulgence, but rather leads to true holiness rooted in ‘voluntary love’ toward God. Many people worry, saying, “If all sins were already eliminated by the baptism and the Cross, isn’t it okay to commit sin as one pleases?”, but the person who has truly met this gospel becomes overwhelmed by the love of Jesus who vicariously took charge of the terrifying judgment of sin.

In other words, it is transformed not into the ‘obedience of a servant’ who reluctantly does not commit sin out of fear of punishment, but into the ‘obedience of a child’ who comes to stay away from sin in gratitude for the grace that He received baptism and shed blood for a sinner like me. This exactly is the

powerful driving force of sanctification (Sanctification) that the gospel has.

In the process of sanctification, the conviction of a righteous person plays the role of a ‘source supplying spiritual vitality’. When we still consider ourselves sinners and live in a sense of condemnation every day, there is no power to overcome sin, but when the identity saying, “I am already a holy righteous person,” is established through the sealing of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit dwelling inside us begins to rule our inner self to live a life suitable for that status. Even when committing a sin, one does not despair and step back, but a gospel-centered resilience to be able to immediately advance to God and rise again relying on the righteousness of Jesus who already took away all my sins is generated. Such repeated experience of grace gradually molds the character of the believer into the image of Christ, and leads us to a holy life that overcomes the world even without legalistic coercion.

Ultimately, true holiness is not a moral achievement built up by my effort, but the resultant product of a life enjoying the ‘righteousness that Jesus accomplished’ as my own and walking together with Him. The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes unhindered fellowship with God possible by eternally liberating us from the condemnation of sin. Within this fellowship, we come to have a new heart that delights in the will of God rather than the lusts of the world, and this exactly is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that the Bible speaks of. Self-indulgence is merely a misunderstanding of those who know the gospel only as knowledge; the righteous person who has actually tasted the power of the gospel can never be left neglected in the midst of sin because that grace is so precious, and comes to crave a more perfect holiness day by day.

5. When preaching this amazing gospel to the people around, about the concrete evangelism method or the wisdom of conversation that resolves the misunderstandings the other party might have!

The misunderstanding one faces first of all when preaching the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ around is the existing notion saying, “Isn’t it enough to just believe in the Cross of Jesus?” and the doubt, “Why is baptism so important?” In order to resolve this wisely, rather than denying the other party’s faith, it is effective to approach with the logic of a ‘completed puzzle’ borrowing the principle of the sacrifice of the Old Testament. Presenting the biblical basis (Leviticus 16:21) that the priest of the Old Testament shed ‘blood’ only after passing the sin over by ‘laying hands’ on the offering, one must explain step by step the fact that “in order for the blood of the Cross to become the power to wash our sins, the process of sins being transferred to Jesus prior to that was necessarily needed.” At this time, if one emphasizes that the reason Jesus requested baptism from John in Matthew chapter 3 is exactly the fulfillment of this ‘laying on of hands’, the other party comes to realize the legal completeness of the gospel.

Also, when dealing with the misunderstanding about self-indulgence saying, “If He took away all sins, is it okay to commit sin as one pleases now?”, it is good to use the analogy of the ‘relationship between parents and children’. Reminding them that just because parents paid the price instead and forgave when a child committed a big fault, it is not the attitude of one who has sincerely experienced forgiveness for that child to think, “Now I can cause trouble as I please.” Rather, just as a child who has realized that immense love and sacrifice comes to be careful

oneself wanting to please the parents, one must gently convey the point that the gospel of the water and the Spirit leads us not to self-indulgence but to ‘holiness bound in love’. Empathizing with the other party’s sense of condemnation and fear, adding a personal testimony saying, “I too was tormented by sin before, but I finally obtained true freedom through this perfect gospel,” is the wisdom that opens the door of the heart.


In the final stage of evangelism, it is important to make the other party stand before ‘God’s testimony’, not human words, by letting them read Bible verses (John 3:5, 1 John 5:6-8, etc.) directly for themselves. Patience waiting for the Holy Spirit to confirm the testimony of the water and the blood inside that heart is needed, rather than us persuading. Try inviting with conviction, “When you accept this legal procedure recorded in the Bible with your heart, you can finally be completely freed from the burden of sin of a lifetime.”

6. Frequently Asked Questions When Preaching the Gospel and Biblical Answer Materials for Them

The questions that the other party most frequently asks when preaching this gospel are mainly concentrated on the ‘meaning of water’ and the ‘eternity of atonement’. The most representative verse is “*unless one is born of water and the Spirit*” of John chapter 3, verse 5, and many people often interpret ‘water’ here simply as physical birth or the ceremony of baptism itself. At this time, we must present 1 John chapter 5, verse 6 (“*This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ*”) together, and point out the fact that the Bible is testifying that when Jesus came to this earth as the Savior, He

went through both the process of transfer called ‘water (baptism)’ and the process of judgment called ‘blood (the Cross)’. Also, through Hebrews chapter 10, verses 10-12, by emphasizing that we have obtained holiness through the offering of the body of Jesus “once for all,” and that this sacrifice has an eternal efficacy, we can legally resolve the doubt, “What about future sins?”.

As concrete materials to help the propagation of the gospel, it is very effective to systematically utilize the books of Paul C. Jong. In particular, his representative book, *Have You Truly Been Born Again of Water and the Spirit?*, has been translated into numerous languages of the whole world, and because it logically organizes the correlation between the laying on of hands and baptism penetrating the entire Bible, it presents clear answers to both new believers and existing believers.

To add the wisdom of conversation, it is testifying to the other party, “Why does the Bible say Jesus went to the Cross after receiving baptism from John and having the sins of the world transferred to Him?” It is good for you to throw this question first and make them think for themselves. If you discover the other party’s theological void through the question, and fill that place with the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ connecting the principle of the laying on of hands in Leviticus and the event of baptism in Matthew, you can draw out much deeper empathy. When handing over materials, I recommend you to select a book suitable for the reading level or interest level of the other party and hand it over together with a sincere confession about “how this book resolved the problem of sin in my life.” 

LESSON

21

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 21

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 21 is not a chapter recording Paul's personal stubbornness or misjudgment of the situation. This chapter shows how the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit, going beyond the 'logic of human protection', pushes the witness into the inevitable place of testimony. The events of this chapter prove to us why a person who has the gospel where the problem of sin is already ended does not turn his steps back even before the danger of life.

Acts 21:1–6, Departure and Farewell: About the Mature Community That Does Not Possess People for the Mission!

“Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo. And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They

told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home.”

Paul’s party finds the disciples and stays in Tyre for seven days. When they leave, *“they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed.”* and bid farewell. This scene is not a simple emotional parting, but shows the appearance of a mature community knowing that the center of salvation is not in man but in the gospel. The gospel of the water and the Spirit produces a deep love among the saints, but at the same time, it gives the freedom to respect the mission given to each one and to know how to send them solely on the way of the Lord without trying to possess one another.

Acts 21:7–11, Agabus’s Prophecy: About the Preparation for Testimony, Not a Warning to Block the Way!

“And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. On the next day we who were Paul’s companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, “So

shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.””

When arriving at Caesarea, the prophet Agabus takes Paul’s belt, binds his own hands and feet, and prophesies, saying, *“Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’”* This prophecy was not God’s command to block Paul’s way, but God’s method of informing in advance without hiding the reality of the tribulations to come. The Holy Spirit did not try to protect Paul by isolating him from danger, but rather prepared the stage of testimony that would be accomplished through that tribulation.

Acts 21:12–14, Paul’s Answer: About the Conviction of Salvation Overwhelming the Threat of Death!

“Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’ So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, ‘The will of the Lord be done.’”

When the people who heard the prophecy wept and pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem, Paul answers, *“What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”* This is not a heroic decision or a death drive, but a confession that came out from the conviction that the authority of sin and death has already ended by the baptism Jesus

received from John and the Cross. To the one who has the gospel of the water and the Spirit, death is no longer an object of fear, but becomes the most powerful background to testify to the completed salvation.

Acts 21:15–26, The Proposal of the Jerusalem Church: About the Cultural Consideration to Keep the Essence of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit!

“And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. But concerning the Gentiles

who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.’ Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.”

To Paul, who arrived in Jerusalem, James and the elders propose to perform the purification rite to resolve the misunderstanding of the Jews. Paul accepts this proposal and “took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.” This act was not adding a condition for salvation or modifying the gospel, but was a cultural consideration for peace with the Jewish community. It shows that the one who has already obtained freedom is not bound by taking any form for the sake of the gospel.

Acts 21:27–30, The Essence of the Uproar: About the Inevitable Resistance to the Gospel That Ends the System of the Law!

“Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, ‘Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.’ (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city

was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.”

The Jews from Asia see Paul in the temple, stir up the crowd, and seize him. They cause an uproar, crying out, *“This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place.”* Although this accusation was a malicious misunderstanding, at the same time it reveals the exact effect that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has. This is because the gospel of the water and the Spirit actually ends the law and the repetitive sacrificial system that establish human righteousness, and establishes the law of life.

Acts 21:31–36, The Intervention of the Roman Army: About the Testimony of the Gospel Guided into the Public Order!

“Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, ‘Away with him!’”

When the multitude is seeking to kill Paul, the rumor that the

whole city of Jerusalem is in an uproar is heard by the commander of the army. When he takes soldiers and runs down, the multitude stops beating Paul. The commander commands to “*commanded him to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done.*” This intervention was not a coincidence, but God’s providence to move the gospel into the public order. This is because the gospel is not an illegal ideology preached in hiding, but a public truth that must be confidently proclaimed even before the courts and powers of the world.

Acts 21:37–40, Speaking Rather Than Silence: About the Attitude of the Witness Who Turns Danger into Opportunity!

“Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, ‘May I speak to you?’ He replied, ‘Can you speak Greek? Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?’ But Paul said, ‘I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people.’ So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying.”

When Paul is about to go into the barracks, he requests the commander to “*permit me to speak to the people.*” Paul, having received permission, stands on the stairs, motions with his hand to the multitude, and after causing a great silence, begins to speak in the Hebrew language. He used the scene of his arrest that bound him not as an opportunity to escape, but as an opportunity to speak the gospel again. The gospel of the water

and the Spirit does not shrink before danger, but rather exerts the ability to convert that crisis into a decisive stage to explain the entire structure of the gospel.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 21 testifies that the guidance of the Holy Spirit does not remove danger, but grants a holy meaning to that danger. The one who believes that all sins have already ended by the baptism of Jesus chooses testimony over safety even before the threat of death. Although Paul was bound with chains, the gospel of the water and the Spirit he had was never bound. This is the historical method that Acts Chapter 21 shows, where the gospel leads the witness to the hottest field of the world.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 21, verse 1 to 40 is a chapter that starkly shows to what extent the mission of the gospel demands obedience from the saints. When reading this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Paul's steps approach not as personal stubbornness or reckless heroism, but as a solemn testimony to how a person who knows the reality of the already completed salvation defends the gospel to the end. At Tyre, the disciples told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem, but Paul did not stop his way. This was not disobedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but the decision of a mission-bearer willing to willingly endure the tribulation foretold by the Holy Spirit for the sake of testifying to the gospel. Because Paul was convinced of the fact that this gospel—that Jesus Christ took charge of the sins of the world by the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross,

and the Holy Spirit testifies to this—is more precious than his own life, he chose the place of testimony over safety.

When he arrived at Caesarea, a prophet named Agabus came down, took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and prophesied, saying that the Holy Spirit says the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt in this way and deliver him into the hands of the gentiles. The companions and local people who heard this sound wept and pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem, but Paul answered, "*What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*" Such a confession is not a simple display of will, but the boldness that only a person who has already obtained eternal freedom from the law of sin and death through the gospel of the water and the Spirit can show. Because he had the conviction of salvation that even death could not sever, Paul left behind the dissuasion of human love and went forward, seeking that the Lord's will be done.

Paul, who arrived in Jerusalem, met James and all the elders and reported in detail the things God had done among the gentiles through his ministry. However, because a misunderstanding had spread among the Jewish believers that Paul taught to forsake Moses and not to circumcise, the elders advised Paul to show an appearance of respecting the law by performing a purification rite. Paul accepted this exhortation and performed the purification ceremony, which was not because he believed the law was a condition for salvation, but a consideration based on the freedom obtained within the gospel to prevent the weak from stumbling. Because he knew better than anyone that salvation is not maintained by human acts but is already completed solely by the baptism and the Cross ministry of Jesus Christ, he willingly laid down his own rights

within the scope of not damaging the essence of the gospel.

However, the peace in Jerusalem did not last long. The Jews from Asia saw Paul in the temple, stirred up the crowd, seized him, and caused an uproar, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people, the law, and this place.” Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit tears down human religious efforts or sacrifices to cover sins and proclaims that sin has eternally ended solely within the ministry of Jesus Christ, it inevitably collides with the existing religious system. When all the city was disturbed and the people ran together, seized Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and tried to kill him, the commander of the army took soldiers, ran down, bound Paul, and had him taken into the barracks, thereby his life was preserved within the providence of God.

On the stairs going into the barracks, Paul asked the commander and obtained an opportunity to speak to the people. When the commander permitted it, Paul stood on the stairs, motioned with his hand to the people, and after making them very quiet, began to speak in the Hebrew language. Despite being right after surviving the threshold of death, Paul was ready to testify to the gospel again toward the crowd that tried to harm him. This shows the fact that God sometimes opens the way of the gospel through the worldly order and environment, not through miracles. Paul’s appearance of turning even the place of binding into a pulpit of the gospel proves how much more confident a person captured by the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be than worldly powers.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 21 asks us whether we are living a life that adjusts the gospel for the sake of safety, or whether we stand boldly in any environment because we know the value of the completed salvation. This truth, that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment on the

Cross, and the Holy Spirit confirms this, gives us the peace and courage that the world cannot give. Just as Paul advanced amidst dissuasion and opened his mouth to speak the word even in chains, we too must run to the end as witnesses of the gospel within the faith that believes in the already completed salvation. That is exactly the way of a true disciple that the Acts of the Apostles teaches us today. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 21

1. About the Entire Chapter of Acts 21 from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit!

Looking at Acts Chapter 21 from the perspective of the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’, this is not simply a record of Paul’s visit to Jerusalem, but is interpreted as a tense scene where ‘human zeal and the tradition of the law’ collide with ‘the righteousness of the completed gospel’. Although Paul repeatedly hears exhortations not to go up to Jerusalem from the disciples moved by the Holy Spirit, he does not stop his steps, saying, *“For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”* Here, Paul’s decision is not stubbornness to establish his own righteousness, but practically shows ‘the life of the righteous’ who does not spare his own life at all for the completion of the gospel, just as Jesus took on the sins of the world through baptism and headed to the Cross.

The core of the event lies in the scene of the ‘purification ritual’ (21:23-26) that Paul performed to resolve the misunderstanding of the Jews according to the exhortation of James and the elders after arriving in Jerusalem. Seen from the perspective of the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’, this purification rite is merely a legalistic ceremony that is no longer necessary to the one who has already obtained the eternal and perfect elimination of sin by the baptism and blood of Jesus.

However, the reason Paul participated in this ceremony to win the Jews was not because the law is a condition for salvation, but it was a concession to widen the door of the gospel. However, paradoxically, such legalistic compromise could not calm the anger of the Jews, but rather became the opportunity for Paul to be seized in the temple. This paradoxically proves the fact that no human legalistic effort or ceremony can satisfy the religious zeal of a sinner, and solely the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ gives true peace and salvation.

Ultimately, the process in the latter half of Chapter 21 where Paul is bound by the Roman army and obtains the opportunity to preach the gospel to the crowd shows that the righteousness of God is expanded not through human means, but through ‘tribulation and the proclamation of the gospel’. The religious madness of the Jews trying to kill Paul reveals the current address of humans bound under the law, and the appearance of Paul standing boldly even in that tribulation symbolizes the true freedom enjoyed by the one who passed sins onto Jesus by His baptism and received the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Acts Chapter 21 asks us the question, “Even though we have already obtained perfect righteousness by the water and the Spirit, are we still trying to solve problems with legalistic tradition and human methods?”, and can be said to be a chapter that urges us to rely solely on the gospel accomplished by the Lord.

2. How do these steps of Paul to Jerusalem become a channel to testify to the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ in the subsequent process of being escorted to Rome?

The journey of Paul being arrested in Jerusalem and escorted to Rome is a magnificent process showing how the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ goes beyond the life of an individual and advances into a public and global confirmation. That Paul came to go to Rome, defending himself before Governor Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa, was not a simple legal struggle, but God’s strategy to plant the way of the Cross, which ended that punishment, and the baptism of Jesus, who received the transfer of the sins of humanity, in the center of the world at that time called Rome. Paul did not shrink even in the situation where he was bound, but rather emphasized “*testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 20:21), and confidently proclaimed that the righteousness of the gospel he met is above the laws of those in power.

In particular, the sailing process that met the storm Euroclydon starkly shows how the righteous person who has the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ saves the world amidst tribulation. When all people were trembling in the fear of death and throwing away the ship’s tackle, Paul proclaimed, “Take heart,” and delivered the message of salvation delivered by the angel of God. This resembles the evangelical principle where, just as when humanity was sinking in the storm of sin, Jesus guaranteed eternal safety to us by bearing all our sins through baptism. That the lives of 276 people in the ship were preserved due to the single person Paul became a channel visually proving the ‘principle of redemption’ where the whole of humanity came

to obtain the way to live by the baptism and sacrifice received by the single person Jesus Christ.

The last record of the Acts of the Apostles (28:31), that Paul, who finally arrived in Rome, stayed in his rented house and *“preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”* symbolizes the victory of the gospel. Within *“all things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ”* that Paul preached, naturally the event of Him taking away the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John and the shedding of blood on the Cross are included. Paul’s escort route ultimately became the channel of blessing where the ‘gospel of the water’, which is the legal procedure by which a sinner becomes a righteous person, flowed into the heart of Rome, and his binding rather produced the paradoxical result of making the gospel unbound.

3. Let us examine more deeply, through specific verses, how this “gospel of the water and the Spirit” is woven into the Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, etc.) written by Paul in the Roman prison.

The Prison Epistles written by Paul in the Roman prison show that although his body is bound, the spiritual freedom given by the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ completed by the baptism and blood of Jesus has reached its peak. Representatively, in Ephesians 1:7, Paul proclaims, *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”* Here, the expression ‘in Christ’ is not simply a psychological state, but means the state in which we are legally united with Him as Jesus received the

transfer of all our sins through baptism. Also, the part mentioned in Ephesians 5:26, *“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,”* clearly supports how the washing of ‘water (the baptism of Jesus)’ emphasized by Pastor Paul C. Jong changes the saints into a holy status at once.

Philippians 2:6-8 well represents ‘self-emptying’ and ‘obedience’, which are the fundamental mindsets of Jesus receiving baptism from John. Paul records that the One who is in the form of God took the form of a bondservant and became like men, and this depicts the extreme of that humility where the sinless One bowed His head before John the Baptist and received the transfer of the sins of humanity. Because the righteousness of this gospel is so certain, Paul confesses in Philippians 3:9, *“not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”* The reason Paul could rejoice even in the extreme situation called prison was that the ‘righteousness of God’, which Jesus perfectly accomplished by His baptism and the Cross, not his own acts, was holding his heart by the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

Ultimately, the core of the Prison Epistles is to accept ‘the perfect victory accomplished by Christ’ as the believer’s own. In Colossians 2:12, Paul says, *“buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead,”* connecting that the baptism Jesus received from John is exactly the death of our old man and the beginning of a new life. Like this, to Paul, the life in prison was not a time of pain, but rather a time proving how solid the conviction of the righteous person obtained by the gospel of the water and the Spirit is. Through the epistles, he earnestly exhorts the saints not to return to the elementary principles of the law, but to abide in the eternal atonement

accomplished at once by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus, and to walk with the Holy Spirit.

4. Specific Practical Guidelines Toward Liberation from Sin and a Spirit-Filled Life Testified by Paul's Epistles

The 'gospel of the water and the Spirit' testified by Paul's epistles presents to us today not a simple doctrine, but practical guidelines of life based on the 'identity of the righteous'. The first guideline is 'taking the already accomplished legal state by faith'. In Romans 6:11, Paul exhorts, "*Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*" Here, the word 'reckon' does not mean to rely on emotions, but means to think and act based on the 'confirmed written judgment' that Jesus took away my sins by baptism and ended that punishment on the Cross. When the temptation of sin comes, proclaiming not "I am a sinner trying not to commit sin," but "I am a righteous person who has already died with Jesus and has been liberated from sin," is the beginning of actual liberation.

The second guideline is 'the life of union following the desire of the Holy Spirit'. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not an energy I obtain by doing something diligently, but means the state of entrusting the initiative of my heart to the Holy Spirit dwelling within the one who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Like the word of Galatians 5:16, when we walk according to the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh, for this is because the Holy Spirit makes us ceaselessly meditate on that great love Jesus accomplished. When one has committed a sin, not falling into a sense of condemnation and avoiding God,

but immediately going forward to the throne of grace saying, “Even this appearance of mine has already been all washed away by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus 2,000 years ago,” is exactly the specific appearance of a Spirit-filled life, which is ‘evangelical resilience’.

The third guideline is the life of a ‘lifestyle missionary motivated by gratitude and joy’. Paul says in Philippians to “rejoice always,” emphasizing that this is a privilege of the righteous person who has ‘citizenship in heaven’, not a change in environment. The reason we live honestly and holily in the world is not to obtain salvation, but because we are thankful to God who has already perfectly saved me by the baptism and blood. Such spontaneous holiness becomes a powerful fragrance to the people around us, drawing out the question, “How do you enjoy such peace and freedom?” At this time, we come to boldly propagate the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ accomplished by Jesus who is in me, not myself. This is the most specific and glorious way of life lived by the righteous person liberated from sin, which Paul showed us through his epistles. ✉

LESSON

22

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 22

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 22 is not a simple speech of excuse to defend himself. This chapter is a solemn court statement testifying within a soteriological structure why Paul, who was at the very peak of the law and Jewish tradition, had no choice but to preach this gospel. Through the event of his conversion, he clearly shows how God's completed plan of salvation, not human zeal, captivated one life.

Acts 22:1–5, Paul's Starting Point: About the Confession of the Past That Was Perfect Within the Zeal of the Law!

“Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now.’ And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Then he said: ‘I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears

me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.’”

Paul first begins his speech toward the multitude in the Hebrew language, saying, “*Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now.*” He says that he is a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, grew up in this city, received the strict teaching of the law of our ancestors under Gamaliel, and is a person zealous toward God like all of you today. He also reveals that he persecuted this Way even to killing people, and bound both men and women and handed them over to prison. This is a declaration that he did not accept the gospel because he was ignorant, but that he is a person who stayed more deeply than anyone else within the system of the law, but realized its limit and collapsed before the completion of the gospel.

Acts 22:6–11, The Damascus Incident: About the Collapse of Religious Vision and the Calling That Came as Light!

“Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ So I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. So I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.’ And

since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.”

When coming near Damascus, suddenly a great light from heaven shines around Paul and a voice is heard saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” When Paul asks, “Who are You, Lord?”, the Lord answers, “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.” This event was not a moral rebuke but a demand for a wholesale revision of the structure of salvation. Because Paul could not see due to the glory of that light, he is led by the hand of the people who were with him and enters Damascus. This was God’s symbolic measure to completely block the religious eyesight of man who used to see the world through the law, and to make him see the world only through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Acts 22:12–16, Ananias’s Exhortation: About the Confirmation of the Elimination of Sin and Baptism Based on the Event!

“Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, came to me; and he stood and said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that same hour I looked up at him. Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’”

God sends a devout man Ananias and makes him say to Paul, “The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.”

Following this, he exhorts, “*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” Here, the word to wash away sins does not mean that Paul’s act becomes the subject, but means to accept by faith the fact that Jesus already took charge of the sins of the world by the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and ended the judgment of sin on the Cross. Baptism is, like this, a holy confession that publicly acknowledges the already completed elimination of sin.

Acts 22:17–21, The Temple Vision: About the Termination of the Nation-Centered Salvation Structure and the Commencement of Gentile Missions!

“Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance and saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’ So I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’”

When Paul returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, he sees the Lord speaking to him in a trance, saying, “*Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.*” Although Paul tries to stay in Jerusalem citing his past history of persecution, the Lord commands, “*Depart, for I will send you far from here to the*

Gentiles.” This is a scene declaring that the closed salvation structure bound only to the temple, the law, and the Jewish nation has been terminated, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit advances as a universal gospel toward all humanity.

Acts 22:22, The Anger of the Audience: About the Faith of the Jews Standing Before the Gospel That Denies Human Righteousness!

“And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, ‘Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!’”

The Jews, who were listening to Paul’s speech, explode at the passage of sending to the gentiles and shout, saying, *“Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!”* The reason they were so angry was not simply because of the gentile mission, but because their own religious system, which tried to establish righteousness by keeping the law, completely collapsed before the gospel. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not allow human boasting even a little, it becomes the most unbearable news to those who hold onto their own righteousness.

Acts 22:23–29, Roman Citizenship: About the Legitimacy of the Gospel Testified Within the Public Order!

“Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under

scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, 'Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?' When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, 'Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman.' Then the commander came and said to him, 'Tell me, are you a Roman?' He said, 'Yes.' The commander answered, 'With a large sum I obtained this citizenship.' And Paul said, 'But I was born a citizen.' Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him."

When the commander tries to bring Paul into the barracks and examine him under scourging, Paul asks, *"Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"* The commander and the soldiers, having learned that Paul is a Roman citizen, become afraid and loose his bonds. That Paul used his citizenship was not to protect his personal safety, but to reveal that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not an illegal movement subverting the social order. The gospel only subverts condemnation and the authority of sin; it is a truth that must be confidently testified within the legitimate legal order of the world.

Acts 22:30, The Expansion of the Stage of Testimony: The History of Salvation Moved Before the Council

"The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and

brought Paul down and set him before them.”

The next day, the commander, wanting to know the truth of why the Jews accuse him, releases Paul from his bonds, gathers the priests and the whole council, brings Paul down, and sets him before them. Paul now comes to stand in the center of the official Jewish religious court, not before a personal mob. This is a process where the stage of testimony of the gospel gradually widens, and it shows that the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be proclaimed without ever shrinking before any power.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 22 testifies that Paul’s change was not a simple moral repentance, but an event where the salvation structure itself was completely transitioned from the law to the gospel. The zeal of the law can never end sin, and only the one who acknowledges the baptism and the Cross of Jesus by faith can reach the true elimination of sin. Acts Chapter 22 is a great court record of faith showing how the gospel of the water and the Spirit reconstructs the identity of a person, and how it makes him a witness who does not fear even death.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 22, verse 1 to 30 outwardly looks like a self-defense Paul performed to protect himself, but in reality, it is a powerful sermon publicly proclaiming what the essence of the gospel is. Reading this word from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Paul’s testimony becomes a declaration of salvation that clearly reveals how the sin of humanity ended and to whom the news of that salvation reaches, not a simple story of a personal mystical experience. Paul opened his mouth in the Hebrew language before the mob trying to kill him, saying, “Brethren

and fathers, hear the words of excuse I make before you now,” and this well shows the attitude of a minister building a bridge of understanding to open the door of the gospel even to adversaries. He confessed that he was a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, grew up in this city, received the strict teaching of the law of the ancestors under Gamaliel, and was a person zealous toward God like all of you today. Such a confession was not self-rationalization, but an intention to clarify the fact that human religious zeal and God’s salvation are completely different.

Paul recalled the past when he persecuted this Way even to killing people, and bound both men and women and handed them over to prison, and testified to the event that happened on the way to Damascus. When he came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around him, but what fundamentally changed Paul was the Lord’s question, “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*” rather than the visual light. When Paul asked, “*Who are You, Lord?*”, He said, “*I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.*” and the core here is the identity between the salvation ministry of Jesus Christ and the church, which is His body. Paul was convinced that he himself kept the law well, but came to realize that he was actually opposing the salvation ministry God accomplished, and showed that true conversion is not a simple overturn of emotions, but completely transitioning the direction of life before the gospel.

Paul, who could not see due to the glory of the light, was led by the hands of the people who were with him, entered Damascus, and spent a blind time for three days. This time was not a punishment, but a place of grace preparing Paul to close the eyes with which he saw the world by his own knowledge and righteousness, and to be able to look solely at the salvation God accomplished. At this time, a certain Ananias, a devout man

according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, came to Paul and proclaimed that the God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. This is a passage showing that salvation does not remain as an individual's subjective revelation, but is necessarily completed through a deliverer of the gospel.

Ananias exhorted Paul, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord," and the essence of this word touches the content of the gospel that Paul will testify to all his life. The reality of the washing away of sin is not in a ceremony performed by man, but is in the gospel of the water where Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, and the gospel of the blood where He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The exhortation to be baptized was an urging to accept by faith and publicly confess the ministry of the elimination of sin already accomplished by water and blood, and the Holy Spirit confirms this truth of completed salvation in the hearts of those who believe.

Paul's testimony caused a great uproar when it reached the confession that when he was praying in the Jerusalem temple, the Lord said to me, "Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me," and said He would send me far to the gentiles. The reason the Jews were angry was because they could not accept the fact that God's grace flows universally beyond their boundaries. However, because the gospel of the water and the Spirit declares that the sins of all people were resolved in solely one way, it tears down the privileged consciousness of man and opens the way of salvation without discrimination to anyone.

Due to the disturbance of the crowd, when the commander brought Paul into the barracks and was about to examine him under scourging, Paul revealed his citizenship to the centurion standing by, saying, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen, and uncondemned?” The commander became afraid, loosed Paul’s bonds, and the next day, wanting to know why the Jews accuse him, gathered the priests and the whole council, brought Paul down, and set him before them. That Paul used his citizenship was not to avoid tribulation, but a wise choice to protect the dignity of the gospel and proclaim the truth more boldly, and it proved that a saint who has already been justified can stand confidently without being servile even before worldly powers.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 22 asks us today whether we are boasting only of subjective experiences or testifying to the reality of the already completed gospel. The one who possesses this gospel, that Jesus Christ took charge of the sins of the world by the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit confirms this, obtains the courage to speak the truth even before adversaries. To live as the Lord’s witness, standing firmly upon the gospel of the water and the Spirit even amidst misunderstanding and persecution, that is exactly the way of a true disciple that Acts Chapter 22 presents to us. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 22

1. If we explain the word of the entire chapter of Acts 22 from the perspective of believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Acts Chapter 22 is a scene where Paul testifies about his conversion event before the Jerusalem crowd, and looking at it from the perspective of the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’, it starkly shows the fundamental change that occurs when ‘religious zeal’ meets the ‘righteousness of God’. Paul first confesses how strict he was toward the law, and that he was a ‘zealous religious person’ who tried to eradicate those who believe in Jesus. This symbolizes the fatal misunderstanding that a human can fall into when trying to please God with his own acts and righteousness before realizing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is, through Paul’s past, it is warning of the fact that zeal that does not know the perfect atonement accomplished by the baptism and blood of Jesus rather produces the result of opposing the will of God.

The experience on the road to Damascus, which is the turning point of the event, means that the blind state of man is revealed when the ‘light of the Holy Spirit’ shines. That Paul fell down in the light and became blind is a symbolic event realizing that the arrogant ego full of his own righteousness dies, and he is a being who can live only by the righteousness given by the Lord. In particular, among the messages Ananias delivered to Paul, the exhortation “*And now why are you waiting? Arise and*

be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16) is very important. This is because it is a powerful request to accept by faith and proclaim the ‘gospel of the water’, that Jesus took over all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, and the efficacy of the ‘washing away of sins’ given as its result, going beyond a simple ceremony of sprinkling water.

The core that Paul intended to deliver to the Jews through this testimony is that salvation is not in the tradition of the ancestors or human observance of the law, but in the ‘righteousness of the baptism and blood’ that God has opened even to the gentiles. That the Jews became angry and tried to lift stones as soon as Paul mentioned the mission to the gentiles shows that they still could not give up their privilege and the righteousness of acts. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mix human goodness even a little and makes one believe only the fact that Jesus accomplished, it becomes a stumbling stone to religious people who hold onto their own righteousness, but it becomes the only way of life to those who realize their sins and long for a Savior.

Ultimately, Acts Chapter 22 throws the same question to us today. Before asking “What shall I do?” like Paul, it makes us confirm whether we first believe the ‘already accomplished fact’ that the Lord already took away all my sins and washed them away by the baptism and the Cross. The secret by which Paul could endure the subsequent tribulations with joy for the sake of this gospel was because the gospel of the washing away of sins proclaimed by Ananias was confirmed in his heart through the Holy Spirit. ☒

LESSON

23



You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 23

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 23 is not simply a report recording the division of the council, an assassination plot, or the escort process. This chapter shows how the gospel of the water and the Spirit secures the way of testimony without stopping, even in the middle of courts, politics, and religious power. The historical events of this chapter clearly testify how a person who has the gospel where the problem of sin is already eliminated maintains boldness and the direction of the mission even within a hostile structure.

Acts 23:1–5, The Declaration of Conscience Before the Council: About the Bold Attitude of the One Whose Condemnation Has Ended!

“Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, ‘Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.’ And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, ‘God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?’ And those who stood by said, ‘Do you revile

God's high priest?' Then Paul said, 'I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

Paul looks earnestly at the council and declares, *"Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."* This confession is not a self-praise that his own acts are righteous, but the conviction of faith that condemnation and the judgment of sin have already ended within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To the one who knows the gospel, the conscience is not a tool to wash away sin, but becomes a holy channel testifying to the state of having already been cleansed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. Therefore, Paul did not shrink even before the unjust threat of the high priest, and could boldly speak only the truth.

Acts 23:6–10, The Declaration of Resurrection: About Proclaiming the Final Evidence of the Completed Elimination of Sin!

"But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, 'Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!' And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, 'We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.' Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to

pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.”

Paul, perceiving that one part of them were Sadducees and the other part Pharisees, cries out in the council, saying, “*Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!*” This declaration is not simply wisdom to escape the situation, but a testimony that pierces through the core of the gospel. This is because the resurrection is the public result through which God confirmed that the elimination of sin was completely fulfilled after Jesus took charge of the sins of the world by baptism at the Jordan River and received the judgment of sin on the Cross. Paul shifted the center of the dispute from the peripheral issues of the law to the resurrection, which is the completion of salvation.

Acts 23:11, The Comfort of the Lord: The Confirmation of Testimony, Not the Safety of the Ministry

“That night the Lord stood by Paul and said, ‘Be bold; for as you have testified of My work in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.’”

That night the Lord stands by Paul and says, “*Be bold; for as you have testified of My work in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.*” This comfort was not a promise to eliminate tribulation or a guarantee of physical safety. This was a declaration confirming the mission, which confirmed that the way of testimony Paul had walked was right, and made clear the fact that the stage of testimony he must advance to in the future is Rome. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not call the

believer to comfort, but leads them to the end to the place of mission where they must testify with all their life.

Acts 23:12–15, The Assassination Plot: About the Resistance of the Religious System Rejecting the Completed Salvation!

“And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, ‘We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near.’”

When day dawns, the Jews band together and swear an oath, saying, *“they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul,”* and those who formed a conspiracy like this become more than forty. Their collective madness was a desperate resistance of the religious system against the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which denies human merit and religious authority, going beyond simple personal anger. It shows that the religious zeal of humans trying to establish righteousness by themselves produces such violent persecution when it meets the grace of the elimination of sin.

Acts 23:16–22, The Providence of God: About the Detailed Protection Through Everyday Routes!

“So when Paul’s sister’s son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, ‘Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.’ So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, ‘Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you.’ Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, ‘What is it that you have to tell me?’ And he said, ‘The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you.’ So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded him, ‘Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me.’”

Paul’s nephew hears that they are lying in ambush, comes and enters the barracks, and informs Paul. Paul calls a centurion and commands him to lead this young man to the commander, and the commander keeps the plot a secret. The history of the gospel does not always flow only with supernatural miracles. God sometimes preserves His gospel and protects the way of testimony through everyday routes such as the ear of a family member or the rational judgment of a commander.

Acts 23:23–30, Roman Escort: About the Legitimacy of the Gospel Guaranteed Within the Public Order!

“And he called for two centurions, saying, ‘Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor.’ He wrote a letter in the following manner: Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him. Farewell.”

The commander calls two centurions and commands them to prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night, and sends a letter to Governor Felix. The letter contains the content, *“I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains.”* This was evidence showing that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not an illegal movement disturbing society, but a universal and legitimate truth without the slightest flaw even within the legal order of the world.

Acts 23:31–35, Arrival at Caesarea: About the Expansion Toward a Wider Stage of Testimony!

“Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. And when the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia, he said, ‘I will hear you when your accusers also have come.’ And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.”

The soldiers took Paul by night and arrived at Antipatris, and the next day let the horsemen escort Paul, delivered the letter to the governor, and set Paul before him. The governor says, *“I will hear you when your accusers also have come.”* and commands him to be kept in Herod’s palace. The examination that began within the narrow religious power of Jerusalem is now moved to the governor’s residence called Caesarea, and is expanded to a wider stage of testimony toward Rome.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 23 declares that the one who has the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not lose the freedom of conscience and the boldness of the mission in any hostile situation. God harmoniously uses miracles and daily life to protect His witness, and the gospel advances to a more public and wider place as it passes through persecution. The fact that *“the one who has the completed salvation is never isolated, but is inevitably moved to the next place of testimony within the providence of God”* is the core historical structure of Acts Chapter 23.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 23, verse 1 to 35 is a record showing how the gospel advances while receiving God's protection even in the middle of a hostile court, a secret plot, and meticulous human calculation. When reading this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Paul's trial scene goes beyond a simple political drama and becomes a magnificent chapter of testimony revealing with what unshakable center a witness who possesses the already completed salvation stands.

Paul looked earnestly at the council and boldly said, "Men and brethren, I have served God following my conscience in all things until this day." This boldness was not asserting his own innocence, but the true freedom of conscience that only a person whose problem of sin has been completely eliminated can have. A person who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit can stand confidently without losing his center before any threat because he stands upon the conviction that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this.

Paul, perceiving that one part of the council were Sadducees and the other part Pharisees, cried out, "*Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!*" This declaration is not simply a tactic to escape a crisis, but revealing the hope of resurrection, which is the core of the gospel. The resurrection is not news that comforts human emotions, but a judgment God proclaimed that the price of sin was completely paid through the ministry of Jesus Christ. That the death on the Cross has the efficacy of redemption is because the sins of the world were transferred to Jesus at the Jordan River prior to that, and the

resurrection is an event proclaiming that the completed righteousness was confirmed. Before this truth, religious alliance is broken, and only the law of salvation established by God is clearly revealed.

That night the Lord stood by Paul and said, “Be bold; for as you have testified of My work in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.” The Lord did not give Paul a new message, but reconfirmed the mission already entrusted to him, which means that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is an absolute thing that does not change according to the situation. God sometimes moves the stage of testimony, but He never changes the content of the gospel to be testified, and the One who held onto Paul even in the isolated night was exactly the Lord, who is the master of this completed gospel.

When day dawned, the Jews banded together and swore an oath, saying they would neither eat nor drink before they killed Paul, and more than forty men formed a meticulous plot. However, such a human determination could never stop the march of the gospel under the sovereignty of God. God revealed this secret plot through Paul’s nephew, which shows that God is faithfully protecting His gospel not necessarily only through supernatural miracles, but also through everyday routes and people. No matter how meticulous the scheme of the wicked is, the life of the one who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit is on the palm of God’s hand.

To protect Paul, the commander prepared two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, and had him transferred to Governor Felix in Caesarea at the third hour of the night. In this process, God moved Paul using the legitimate legal order, not armed conflict, which shows that the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not demand recklessness,

and that He widens the stage of testimony through the legitimate way God opens. Paul's way heading to Rome was not an escape, but a process where God's grand plan to proclaim the completed gospel at the center of the world was being realized.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 23 confirms to us that the witness of the gospel stands with freedom of conscience and possesses the clearest truth within the hope of resurrection. No plot and threat can surpass the providence of God, and solely this gospel, that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River and was judged on the Cross, establishes us as unshakable witnesses. A person who knows this gospel is bold even in the court, sees hope even in the night of tribulation, and silently follows the way of God who works beyond human calculation. This is exactly the appearance of a true witness captured by the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Acts Chapter 23 testifies to. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 23

1. Shall we examine how the testimony of the gospel of the water and the Spirit protected Paul when he stood before the council in Chapter 23, and became the driving force that made him boldly head to Rome?

The strength that sustained Paul when he stood before the Sanhedrin council in Acts Chapter 23 was the conviction regarding the ‘clean conscience’ and the ‘righteousness of God’ obtained through the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’. As his first word before the council, Paul proclaims, “I have served God following my conscience in all things.” This does not mean that he was morally perfect, but means that he had the ‘conscience of a righteous person’ with no more condemnation before God by believing the gospel that Jesus took over all his sins through baptism and paid the price on the Cross. Such evangelical boldness became the source of spiritual authority by which he did not shrink even before the unjust command and religious threat of the high priest Ananias, but rather could confidently confront him, saying, “*God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!*”

Also, Paul’s wise defense appearing in this chapter, that is, the mention concerning the ‘hope of resurrection’, represents the ‘power of life’ that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has. That Paul threw resurrection as a topic of conversation between the Pharisees and the Sadducees was not a simple strategy for

escaping a crisis. It pierced the core of that ‘completed gospel’ that Jesus bore our sins by baptism and died, but confirmed our justification by living again. This gospel caused a dissension inside the council and made them protect Paul, and that night the Lord stands by Paul and says, “Be bold; for as you have testified of My work in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.” This promise was the sealing of the Holy Spirit reconfirming that Paul is within the ‘mission of the righteous’ who is already liberated from sin and has become one with the Holy Spirit.

Ultimately, the driving force by which he could maintain peace and head to Rome even before the massive threat of about 40 assassins trying to kill Paul in Chapter 23 was because he believed the ‘inevitability of the gospel’ that the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’, which is more precious than his own life, must necessarily be propagated in the heart of the gentile world called Rome. The reason the Lord commanded Paul to go to Rome was because He knew that he would change even the court of Rome into a ‘pulpit of the gospel’ testifying to the baptism and the Cross of Jesus, who took charge of the sins of humanity. Like this, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not only a shield protecting the believer in the moment of crisis, but becomes a powerful energy of advancement making one accomplish God’s plan by leaping over the environment. ☒

LESSON

24

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 24

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 24 is not a document that simply records the process of a delayed trial. This chapter clearly shows what remains unchanged to the end when the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit is examined by the language of politics, religion, and morality. Through Paul's defense and attitude, it testifies to us with what the gospel, where the problem of sin has already ended, proves itself before the power of the world.

Acts 24:1–9, The Reality of the Accusation: About the Frame of a 'Destroyer of Order' Trying to Confine the Gospel!

“Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul. And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: ‘Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law. But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.’ And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.”

Five days later, the high priest Ananias comes down with the elders and a lawyer Tertullus, and accuses Paul before the governor. Tertullus points to Paul and criticizes, “*For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.*” The core of this accusation was not an actual fact of crime, but an attempt to confine the gospel within a social frame. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit ends human acts and the temple-centered system of the law, it cannot help but always look like a dangerous plague destroying the existing order to those who hold onto their own righteousness.

Acts 24:10–16, Paul’s Defense: About ‘The Way’ That Fulfills the Promises of the Old Testament and the Freedom of Conscience!

“Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: ‘Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since

I went up to Jerusalem to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.’”

Paul calmly begins his defense having received the governor’s permission. He reveals that he has never caused a disturbance, saying, *“because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship.”* Yet he declares, *“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.”* Here, ‘the Way’ that Paul speaks of was not a new religion, but the completion of the method of salvation prophesied by the Old Testament. He also says, *“This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”* and this conscience was not a condition to obtain salvation, but the result of the freedom enjoyed by the one whose condemnation has already ended.

Acts 24:14–16, Hope of Resurrection: About the Central Issue of the Trial Proving the Completion of the Elimination of Sin!

“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all

things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”

Paul brings the issue of the trial once again to the hope of resurrection, saying, *“I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.”* The resurrection is not a vague idea of the afterlife, but the final evidence showing that all that elimination of sin was completely finished after Jesus took charge of sins by the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and received judgment on the Cross. Because if there is no resurrection, the gospel of the water and the Spirit also has no substance, Paul places this historical fact of the resurrection at the core of the trial.

Acts 24:17–21, The Truth of the Temple Incident: A Place of Testimony, Not a Scene of Crime

“Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.’”

Paul states that he did not cause a tumult in the temple, but was merely in the temple purified, having performed the

purification rites. He testifies, “*unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.’*” The only thing Paul did was testify to the fact of completed salvation. What became a problem for the Jews was not Paul’s actions, but the fact that the gospel message he proclaimed itself dismantled their religious system.

Acts 24:22–23, The Governor’s Deferral: On the Limits of Power That Knows the Truth Yet Fails to Make a Decision!

“But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, ‘When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case.’ So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.”

Felix adjourns the trial, saying “*having more accurate knowledge of the Way,*” and postpones the verdict, stating, “*When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case.*” He commands to keep Paul but give him liberty, and not to forbid his friends from taking care of him. This shows the typical nature of power, which objectively understands the truth but delays making a decision while calculating its own political interests and timing. Felix’s attitude paradoxically proves that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not an object of mere understanding, but an object of life-taking decision.

Acts 24:24–26, The Sermon Before Felix: On the Holy Discomfort Given by the Gospel of the End of Condemnation!

“And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.’ Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.”

After some days, Felix comes with his wife, the Jewish woman Drusilla, calls Paul, and hears the Way of believing in Christ Jesus. As Paul *“Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.’”* This was not a simple moral lecture, but a sermon that revealed the severity of the judgment left for those who reject the already accomplished removal of sins. Felix felt fear, but at the same time, because of his greed hoping to receive money from Paul, he could not step forward to a decision of faith.

Acts 24:27, A Two-Year Deferral: On the Uncompromising Gospel and the Advancing Providence of God!

“But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.”

After two years pass, Porcius Festus succeeds Felix's office. Felix, wanting to gain the favor of the Jews, leaves Paul in custody. Paul unjustly spends a time of two years in prison, but during that period, the gospel of the water and the Spirit was not modified or compromised by even a single line. The gospel does not negotiate with the power of the world in exchange for one's release or safety. Acts silently shows that even Paul's imprisonment is within the greater providence of God heading toward Rome.

In conclusion, Acts 24 testifies how the gospel of the water and the Spirit stands while keeping its purity even amidst the frame attacks and political calculations of the world. The gospel is not a religious faction, but the only 'Way' in which all the promises of the Old Testament were fulfilled by the baptism, cross, and resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection is the final proof of the completion of atonement, and the one who believes this fact enjoys the freedom of conscience that is not subservient even before power. Acts 24 proclaims that the gospel is a living power that demands actual decision and faith beyond human understanding.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 24, verse 1 to 27 is a word that starkly shows how its essence is revealed when the gospel is put on the examination table of worldly power. When reading this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Paul's trial becomes a magnificent scene revealing how the salvation God has already completed simultaneously illuminates human conscience and power, rather than a defense simply to prove an individual's

innocence.

Five days later, the high priest Ananias came down with the elders and a lawyer Tertullus, and accused Paul before Governor Felix, driving him into a corner as a pestilent fellow, a creator of dissension among all the Jews scattered throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. However, the reality of this accusation was not a matter of public security, but a collision between the gospel and the existing religious order. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit tears down the system trying to manage sin by the law and feel at ease by institutions, and proclaims that sin has already ended by the ministry of Christ, it appears as a power threatening religious control and vested rights.

Paul, having received the governor's permission, boldly revealed his position before Felix. He declared, *"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."* Here, 'this Way' that Paul speaks of does not mean a new ideology, but the fulfillment of salvation promised by the Bible, and the hope of resurrection he had was not a vague comfort of the afterlife, but the conviction in God's judgment that the price of sin was completely paid through the ministry of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ took charge of the sins of the world from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testified to this, Paul could say, *"This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men."* This is not an assertion of his own righteousness, but a confession of true freedom within the gospel where condemnation has ended.

Paul clearly revealed that he had never caused a disturbance or blasphemed in the temple, but rather worshipped performing the purification rite. The gospel does not destroy the order of the world, but fundamentally changes the standard of purification. This is because repetitive sacrifices or human acts no longer make purification, but the baptism and blood-shedding of Jesus become the reality of purification. While respecting the order of the place called the temple, Paul proved with his life that the actual basis of salvation is in the completed ministry of Christ accomplished outside the temple. Felix knew more accurately about this Way, but postponed the decision, keeping Paul in custody, yet commanded to let him have liberty and not to forbid any of his friends to provide for him.

After some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus, and Paul reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. The reason Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you,” was because the gospel sharply pierced his hidden sins and conscience. However, at the same time, hoping that money would be given him by Paul, he sent for him more often and conversed with him, postponing the decision. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not allow compromise, and before the declaration that sin has ended, the act of postponing the decision for the sake of profit like Felix is not neutrality, but merely another expression of rejection. After two years had passed, when Porcius Festus came as his successor, Felix, wanting to win the favor of the Jews, left Paul bound in custody.

The conclusion of Acts Chapter 24 appears as Paul still being left bound, but this paradoxically shows the victory of the gospel. It is the fact that even if a person can be bound, the gospel

of God is never bound. Even while Paul was imprisoned, the gospel of the water and the Spirit shook the governor's heart and was ceaselessly proclaimed in the middle of the court of power. Rather than placing its purpose on changing the environment, the gospel reveals human conscience and demands a truthful decision. This truth, that Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this in the hearts of those who believe, sets us before the examination table even today.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 24 asks us whether we are postponing like Felix even after knowing the gospel, or boldly making a decision before the completed salvation. Before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, human conscience must choose one of two ways: obtaining freedom or being shaken with fear. The gospel is not the object receiving the examination of the world, but rather the eternal light illuminating the conscience of those who examine. When this gospel is proclaimed, rather than calculating our own profit or environment, we must obtain true peace within the faith that believes in the perfect salvation God has already accomplished. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 24

1. Are you curious about the majesty of the gospel that Paul showed while reasoning about ‘righteousness, self-control, and judgment’ before Governor Felix? Shall we find out more through the flow of Chapter 24 how this gospel made those in power tremble?

The ‘righteousness, self-control, and judgment’ proclaimed by Paul before Governor Felix in Acts Chapter 24 is a scene simultaneously showing the severity of judgment and the inevitability of redemption that the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ has. While keeping Paul in custody to buy the favor of the Jews, Felix on the one hand wondered about “the faith in Christ Jesus” and sent for Paul. At this time, Paul does not flatter the one in power or beg for his own release, but first proclaims ‘righteousness’, which is the sharpest part of the gospel. Here, the ‘righteousness’ Paul spoke of does not mean human moral acts, but means the ‘righteousness of God’ which Jesus completed on the Cross after bearing the sins of the world through baptism, and it premises that all humans without this righteousness are objects of judgment without exception.

The ‘self-control’ Paul reasoned about means the life of controlling one’s lusts within the gospel, and the following ‘judgment to come’ is the final declaration on the result of not believing the gospel. From the perspective of the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’, the judgment is very clear. This is because

all the sins of humanity have already been passed on by the baptism of Jesus and received punishment on the Cross, but those who do not believe this legal fact and still remain under their own sins must bear the responsibility for those sins themselves. That Felix evaded the answer by ‘trembling’ after hearing Paul’s words was a spiritual shudder that occurred when the light of the gospel directly illuminated his own unrighteousness and God’s righteous judgment.

The majesty of the gospel that made Felix tremble comes exactly from the ‘authority of the righteous’. Although Paul was in the body of a prisoner, because he was a ‘righteous person’ who passed all sins over by the baptism of Jesus, he could be confident standing on the side of God, who is the Sovereign of judgment. On the contrary, although Felix had the highest power, because he was a ‘sinner’ who did not know the secret of the elimination of sin (the water and the Spirit), he had no choice but to tremble before the judgment to come. That Felix hoped for money while frequently calling for Paul shows that he was bound by the desires of the flesh rather than the truth of the gospel, and this suggests to us how great the difference is when the gospel of the water and the Spirit is heard only as knowledge and when it is believed with the heart.

Ultimately, Chapter 24 informs us that the gospel is not simply a message of comfort, but a ‘powerful legal ultimatum’ that moves a soul from the fear of eternal judgment to the peace of the righteous. To the one who only fears and postpones the decision like Felix, the gospel becomes the basis of judgment, but to the one who accepts that righteousness like Paul, it gives true freedom of not being servile even before worldly power. ☒

LESSON

25

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 25

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 25 is not a document that records complex administrative procedures or the process of appeal. This chapter shows how the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit preserves its purity and advances to a wider stage of testimony even amidst the massive pressure of compromise, delay, and political dealing. Through Paul's steps, it clearly testifies what a person who possesses the gospel where the problem of sin has already ended chooses and how he advances within an unfair structure.

Acts 25:1–5, The Replacement of the Governor: About the Reality of the Opponents of the Gospel That Does Not Stop Even with the Change of Power!

“Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while they lay in ambush along the

road to kill him. But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there shortly. ‘Therefore,’ he said, ‘let those who have authority among you go down with me and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him.’”

Three days after Festus arrives as governor, he goes up to Jerusalem from Caesarea, and the high priests and the chief men of the Jews accuse Paul. They petitioned Festus, “*asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him.*” Although the subject of power had changed, the hostility of the religious system trying to eliminate the news of the completed salvation did not change even a little. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit denies human merit, it always receives such persistent and systematic attacks from worldly powers trying to establish their own righteousness.

Acts 25:6–12, The Trial Before Festus: About the Legal Boldness Enjoyed by the One Whose Condemnation Has Ended!

“And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, while he answered for himself, ‘Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.’ But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, ‘Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these

things?’ So Paul said, ‘I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.’ Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, ‘You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!’”

When Festus sat on the judgment seat in Caesarea and commanded Paul to be brought, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and accused him with many serious complaints, but could not present the evidence. To this, Paul asserts, *“Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.”* Such boldness of Paul did not come from legal skill, but originated from the conviction of faith that all condemnation has already ended by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus. He said, *“For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying,”* and rather than trying to prolong his life through unjust compromise, he chose the confidence of the completed gospel.

Acts 25:11–12, Appeal to Caesar: About the Decision Toward the Expansion of the Mission Beyond Escape!

“For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.’ Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, ‘You have appealed

to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!’”

When Festus asked Paul if he was willing to go up to Jerusalem and be judged in order to win the favor of the Jews, Paul declares, *“I appeal to Caesar.”* This appeal was not simply a trick to avoid death, but a strategic choice to make the gospel be testified on a wider and more public stage called Rome, without being confined to the religious frame called Jerusalem. This is because the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not hide before threats, but rather wants to be revealed and propagated under a brighter light.

Acts 25:13–22, Festus’s Confusion: About the Worldly Power That Has No Standard to Decide Even After Seeing the Truth!

“And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king, saying: ‘There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. To them I answered, ‘It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.’” Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And because I was uncertain of such

questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar.’ Then Agrippa said to Festus, ‘I also would like to hear the man myself.’ ‘Tomorrow,’ he said, ‘you shall hear him.’”

When King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus, Festus mentions Paul’s case and says, “*When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.*” Even though Festus did not find any evidence of a crime in Paul, he cannot release him due to political calculation. This clearly reveals the limit of worldly power, which has the ability to discern the truth but has no standard to make a decision before the gospel of life.

Acts 25:23–27, The Introduction Before Agrippa: On Drawing Attention Toward the Resurrection, That Is, the Event of the Completion of Atonement!

“So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus’ command Paul was brought in. And Festus said: ‘King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to

Augustus, I decided to send him. I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.’”

The next day, Agrippa and Bernice come with great pomp and enter the audience room with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, and Paul is brought out. Festus introduces Paul and says that since he does not have suitable material for an appeal, he has set him before them to see what to write after examining him. At the core of all the political whirlpools of Acts 25 ultimately lies the event of the resurrection, “*about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.*” The fact of salvation, which passed through the baptism and cross of Jesus and was confirmed by the resurrection, is a difficult puzzle for worldly power to understand, but to the apostle, it was the only reality of life that had to be testified.

In conclusion, Acts 25 testifies that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is never damaged but preserved even amidst the delaying tactics and political dealings of the world. The one who possesses completed salvation chooses the seat of public testimony for the mission rather than an unjust release, and God uses even administrative procedures and the meetings of those in power as tools to move the gospel to the center of the world. The fact that “the gospel desires to be testified on a brighter stage rather than settling down in a comfortable place” is the historical method of salvation that pierces through Acts 25.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 25, verse 1 to 27 is a record showing how its truth is revealed when the gospel is placed between political calculation and religious plot. When reading this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, Paul's appeal and the perplexity of the governors are revealed not as a simple matter of trial skill, but as an event proving that the completed salvation is beyond human understanding. As soon as Festus arrived as governor, the Jewish leaders visited him and accused Paul again, asking to transfer him to Jerusalem, but this was because they intended to lie in ambush on the road and kill him. The reason the essence of the accusation does not change even if the governor changes is not because of Paul's acts but because of the gospel he preaches, and because the declaration that sin has already ended by the ministry of Christ always becomes a threat to the religious system that has managed sin by the law.

Festus, wanting to win the favor of the Jews, asked Paul if he was willing to go up to Jerusalem and be judged, but Paul answered, saying, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged," and "I appeal to Caesar." This appeal was not an escape from tribulation, but a decision of faith moving the stage of testimony to a wider square called Rome. Paul was convinced that this gospel, that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this, is a public truth that cannot be confined to a trial in a specific region.

When King Agrippa visited Festus, Festus mentioned Paul's case and expressed his perplexity, saying that when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil deeds as he supposed, but only had questions against him about their own

religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. Here the core of the text is revealed, and the issue that the world does not understand is exactly the problem of the resurrection, whether Jesus is alive. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaims that that righteousness was confirmed by His resurrection after Jesus bore our sins by the baptism at the Jordan River and received judgment on the Cross, the worldly court that does not know the resurrection comes to lose the language to explain this.

Festus tried to reduce this issue to their own religious problem, but the gospel never remains as a personal taste or private faith. Because the gospel is God's decisive answer to the universal problem of humanity called sin and death, it always comes out to the court and the square and proves itself. When King Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room, Festus brought Paul forward and confirmed once again that he found nothing deserving of death in him, even though the Jews cried out that he was a man not fit to live.

Festus, having him examined before King Agrippa to make appeal materials to send Paul to Caesar, confessed that he had no proper charge to send to the Emperor, and said, "For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him." This is exactly the paradox of the gospel, and it is in the same flow as the sinless Jesus ending all our sins by walking the way of a sinner. Paul heads to Rome bound while being innocent, but even the chains binding him cannot stop the advance of the gospel, and although a person can be imprisoned, the word of God goes out freely.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 25 asks us whether we are confining the gospel merely within the frame of a manageable religion, or testifying to it as the reality of the completed salvation. Before this gospel of the water and the Spirit, that

Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received judgment on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit confirms this, power has no choice but to postpone judgment and the system loses its explanation. Like Paul, who had no charge to be sent with but had the gospel to preach that was so clear, we too must live a life boldly proclaiming the public truthfulness of the already completed salvation rather than seeking the understanding of the world. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 25

1. Whose heart is it that an evangelist who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit desires this gospel word to be propagated in any situation whatsoever?

The heart of the evangelist who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit goes beyond simple religious zeal, and is full of the desperation and conviction that only one who has confirmed God's 'righteous love' toward humanity can have. An evangelist is a person who believes with the heart the 'legal fact' that Jesus perfectly took over all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and ended the punishment of those transferred sins on the Cross. Therefore, when he sees souls who are still suffering from their own problem of sin or trying to obtain salvation by their own acts, he feels a pity like seeing "a person who is still suffering from debt collection when the debt has already been fully paid." This heart of compassion becomes the most powerful motive making the evangelist propagate the gospel in any situation.

Also, the heart of the evangelist possesses a boldness that prioritizes the 'value of the gospel' over his own environment. Just as the Apostle Paul preached the gospel to Roman governors and kings even when he was imprisoned in jail, a true evangelist interprets even tribulation or persecution as a 'special stage' prepared by God to preach the gospel. He fears the gospel of life failing to be delivered to one soul more than he himself receiving

criticism or suffering tribulation. Because he has already become a righteous person by the gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtained eternal life, the threats of this world can no longer stop him. To the evangelist, all encounters and situations come not as a coincidence, but as holy opportunities designed to propagate the righteousness of God.

Ultimately, the heart of the evangelist is a state where the responsibility and joy as an ‘Ambassador of Christ’ coexist. He feels pride in the fact that he is not preaching by possessing great ability himself, but is a deliverer who honestly delivers the news of the perfect salvation called ‘the water and the Spirit’ that God has already accomplished. In the heart of the evangelist who proclaims, “If the sins of a sinner like me were cleansed by the baptism and blood of Jesus, your sins have also naturally been resolved,” the joy of heaven that will be experienced when a soul is moved from darkness to light is foretasted. Because there is such joy, the evangelist, whether in season or out of season, willingly yields his entire life as a channel of the gospel.

2. On how this heart of the evangelist appears as concrete actions and fruits in the actual field of our lives!

The heart of the evangelist who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit appears in the actual field of life as ‘the action of reinterpreting reality from the perspective of the gospel.’ In the field of daily life, the evangelist is not simply a person who lives kindly, but when facing the faults and sins of others, first applies the evangelical perspective that “Jesus has already taken away those sins as well through His baptism.” This action stops human judgment or condemnation, and leads to the

concrete practice of delivering the news of peace to the other person that “your sins have already been transferred to Jesus and resolved.” The reason the evangelist can maintain composure and become an instrument of peace even amidst conflicts at work or discord within the family is because they trust that the ‘already completed righteousness of God,’ rather than their own emotions, presides over all the order of life.

The dynamic work of the Holy Spirit appears as visible fruit when the evangelist makes good use of ‘all contact points of life as opportunities for the gospel.’ Whatever the topic of conversation may be, the evangelist ultimately connects it to the problem of human’s fundamental thirst and sin, and naturally presents the ‘gospel of water,’ which is the laying on of hands in the Old Testament and the baptism of Jesus. The concrete fruit that appears at this time is not simply an increase in the number of church members, but the ‘true being born again’ obtained when a soul who has lived oppressed under the guilt of sin all their life realizes, “Ah, all my sins have truly been passed onto Jesus!” The restoration of this one soul becomes a catalyst that spreads the influence of the gospel to the entire surrounding community, and in this process, the evangelist tastes a spiritual joy and fulfillment that the world cannot give.

Ultimately, the greatest fruit borne in the life of the evangelist is the ‘reproduction of the gospel.’ A virtuous cycle occurs where a person who has become righteous by the gospel of the water and the Spirit leads another person to the path of the righteous, and that person becomes a witness of the gospel again. The evangelist does not wait for their eloquence or environment to become perfect, but opens their lips relying on the sealing of the Holy Spirit at the very place they are standing right now. This dynamic process makes us not stagnant believers, but ‘living protagonists’ participating in the salvation drama of God who works newly every day. ✉

LESSON

26

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Acts Chapter 26

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 26 is not a simple defense performed for personal protection before King Agrippa. This chapter is a testimony in which the gospel of the water and the Spirit was proclaimed most compactly and clearly before the greatest king and people in power of that time. Through the lips of Paul, it tells us what a person who possesses the already completed salvation says before the highest authority of the world, and how the essence of that gospel is revealed.

Acts 26:1–3, Attitude Before the King: About the Confident Testimony of the Gospel Beyond Excuses!

“Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You are permitted to speak for yourself.’ So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: ‘I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.’”

When Agrippa says to Paul that he is permitted to speak for himself, Paul stretches out his hand and answers for himself. He says, *“I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews,”* and rejoices especially that the king knows well all the customs and problems of the Jews. Paul’s attitude was not a servile excuse, but a testimony filled with conviction. This made clear that he did not come to beg for his life, but came to testify to the king about the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God accomplished in history.

Acts 26:4–8, The Starting Point: About the Declaration Toward the Fulfillment of the Hope Pointed to by the Law!

“My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?”

Paul says that all the Jews know his life spent from his youth among his own nation in Jerusalem, and reveals, *“if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.”* He declares that his standing here and being examined now is *“for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.”* Paul emphasizes that he is not a

destroyer of the law, but rather a person who has reached the hope of resurrection that the law had so pointed to and waited for, that is, the reality of the completed salvation passed through the baptism and the Cross of Jesus.

Acts 26:9–11, The Limit of Zeal: About the Ignorant Religious Passion That Makes One Oppose the Truth!

“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

Paul confesses that in the past he himself thought he must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and did these things in Jerusalem. He recalls that, having received authority from the chief priests, he shut up the saints in prison, cast his vote of approval when they were put to death, punished them often in every synagogue, compelled them to speak blasphemous words, and persecuted them even going to foreign cities. This shows that when human religious zeal fails to meet the truth called the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it can rather become a weapon that most violently opposes the work of God.

Acts 26:12–18, The Damascus Revelation: About the Total Transition of the Salvation Structure and the Impartation of the Mission!

“While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’”

Paul, who saw a light brighter than the sun on the way to Damascus, hears a voice saying, *“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”* The Lord sends Paul to the Gentiles and gives him the mission, *“to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”* This is the essence of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It makes one close the religious sight of humans and see the event of God, and makes one escape from the power of condemnation and obtain as one’s own the fact of the elimination of sin that Jesus has already

accomplished by the baptism at the Jordan River and the Cross.

Acts 26:19–23, The Content of Obedience: About the Ministry of Proclaiming the Completed Salvation As It Is!

“Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.”

Paul says, *“Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,”* but declared first to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, and to all the land of Judea and to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. The core he preached was the fact, *“that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.”* Paul’s obedience was not creating a new act, but proclaiming the history of salvation completed by the baptism, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus exactly as it is.

Acts 26:24–29, The Reaction of Power: About the Ridicule of the Intellect and the Demand for Decision Before a Shaken Conscience!

“Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, ‘Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!’ But he said, ‘I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.’ Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian.’ And Paul said, ‘I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.’”

As Paul makes his defense like this, Festus cries out with a loud voice, *“Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!”* Paul retorts that he is not mad but speaks words of truth and sanity, and asks King Agrippa, *“King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.”* That Agrippa answered, *“You almost persuade me to become a Christian.”* was the reaction of a conscience shaken before the gospel. The gospel of the water and the Spirit powerfully demands an ontological decision going beyond simple emotion from those in power.

Acts 26:30–32, The Confirmation of the Verdict: About the Declaration of Innocence and the Providence of God Toward Rome!

“When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, ‘This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.’ Then Agrippa said to Festus, ‘This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.’”

The king, the governor, Bernice, and those who sat with them all stand up, go aside, and acknowledge among themselves, saying, *“This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.”* Agrippa says to Festus, *“This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”* It was confirmed once again that the gospel is a truth that cannot be condemned by worldly law. However, the reason Paul was not set free was because his mission was to testify to this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the end at the center of the world called Rome, and God opened that way through this legal procedure.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 26 testifies that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not intimidated or reduced even a little before the authority of the king. Paul’s change was not a simple improvement of character but an event where the salvation structure itself was completely overturned, and the resurrection he preached was God’s public guarantee of the completion of the elimination of sin. Worldly power may ridicule this truth as mad words or avoid making a decision, but the fact of the completed salvation does not stop and advances toward Rome. This is the confident victory of the gospel that Acts Chapter 26 shows.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 26, verse 1 to 32 is a chapter showing how the gospel is proclaimed in a perfect form before the king and the governor through the testimony of one person. When reading this word from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, it can be known that Paul's defense is not a simple self-defense, but a final sermon publicly testifying to the fact of salvation that God has already accomplished.

When Agrippa said to Paul that he is permitted to speak for himself, Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense, saying that he considered himself happy to make his defense today before King Agrippa concerning all the things of which he is accused by the Jews. He revealed that the fundamental reason he was accused was because of the hope of the resurrection promised to the ancestors, and asked, "*Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?*" This hope of resurrection is not a vague expectation, but a conviction based on God's judgment that the price of sin was completely paid by the merit of the water's baptism by which Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, and the blood by which He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

Paul did not hide his past appearance of doing many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, shutting up the saints in prison, and casting a vote of approval when they were put to death. He prided himself on serving God more zealously than anyone else within the tradition of Judaism, but in reality, he was rejecting and opposing the salvation ministry that God accomplished. This well shows how dangerous a faith is that holds only onto human zeal and the tradition of the law without knowing what the gospel is. However, when a light from heaven,

brighter than the sun, shone around Paul and his companions at noon on the way to Damascus, he fell to the ground and heard the Lord's voice saying, "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*" What changed Paul was not the intensity of the light but the word of the Lord, and through this, he came to realize that Jesus, whom he was opposing, was exactly the living Savior.

The Lord appointed Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles and gave him the mission to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive the elimination of sin and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me. The transition from darkness to light does not simply mean the improvement of acts, but means obtaining the elimination of sin by believing the reality of the gospel that sins were transferred by the baptism of Jesus, the judgment ended on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to that fact. Paul confessed, "*Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.*" Here, repentance is turning away from one's own righteousness and moving the heart to the completed ministry of Jesus Christ, and that faith being revealed as life is exactly the fitting fruit.

Paul emphasized that the Jews tried to seize and kill him, but having obtained God's help, his standing to this day and testifying before small and great was nothing other than what the prophets and Moses said would necessarily happen. That was exactly that the Christ would suffer, and that He would be the first to rise again from the dead, and would proclaim light to Israel and to the Gentiles. As Paul made his defense like this, Festus cried out with a loud voice, "*Paul, you are beside*

yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!” but Paul boldly answered, *“I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.”* This is because the content Paul preached was not personal speculation, but a truth based on the historical facts of the baptism at the Jordan River, the Cross, and the resurrection.

When Paul asked King Agrippa, *“Do you believe the prophets?”*, Agrippa stepped back a pace, saying, *“You almost persuade me to become a Christian.”* At this time, Paul said, *“I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.”* This earnest confession was the apostle’s love wanting to share even with those in power the true freedom that the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives, going beyond the longing for human freedom. Although Paul was in a bound body, he was truly free within the conviction of the elimination of sin, and although those in power were free in body, they remained in a state of being unable to make a decision before the truth.

The king, the governor, Bernice, and those who sat with them all stood up, went aside, and spoke among themselves, saying, *“This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.”* To this, Agrippa said to Festus, *“This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”* Acts Chapter 26 asks us whether we are boasting of human zeal or testifying to the completed hope. The person who knows this gospel, that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received judgment on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this, is bold in any situation and enjoys true freedom even in bonds. This is the final victory of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Acts Chapter 26 proclaims. ☒

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 26

1. How did the majesty of this gospel continue even before Governor Festus, who succeeded Felix, and King Agrippa?

In Acts Chapters 25 and 26, the appearance of Paul standing before Governor Festus and King Agrippa directly shows how much higher a spiritual status a person who possesses the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ has than the greatest people in power of the world. Governor Festus viewed Paul’s case as a political problem, but Paul transitions that place once again into a chapter of gospel proclamation. In particular, the defense performed before King Agrippa in Chapter 26 contains the essence of the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’. Paul testifies that the Lord he met on the road to Damascus said, *“I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”*

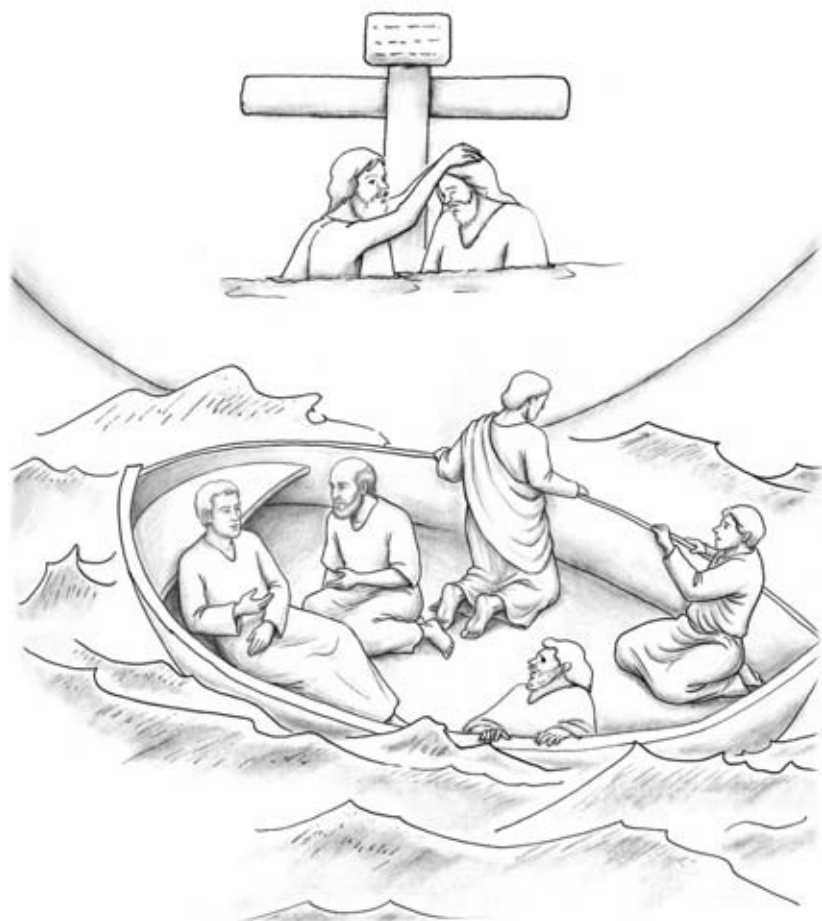
Here, the expression ‘the elimination of sin and those who are sanctified’ means the legal state realized only through the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’. Paul makes it clear that the message he preaches does not destroy the Jewish tradition or the law of Moses, but rather testifies to the completion of the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah prophesied by the prophets, that is, ‘the baptism and death bearing the sins of the

world'. Festus cried out that Paul's learning had driven him mad, but Paul retorts, saying, "*I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.*" and rather launches a counterattack toward King Agrippa, saying, "*Do you believe the prophets?*" This is the confidence that a righteous person with the conviction of the elimination of sin can have, and it is the majesty of the gospel that rather invites the judges of the world to the spiritual judgment seat.

Ultimately, Paul puts the climax on his defense by saying to King Agrippa, "*not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am.*" Although Paul was in the body of a bound prisoner, he was a 'spiritual freeman' who transferred all sins by the baptism of Jesus and obtained justification on the Cross. On the other hand, because Agrippa and Festus, wearing splendid royal robes, were 'spiritual prisoners' still bound by the chains of sin, Paul wanted them to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit like himself and become truly righteous people. This scene awakens us today as well that the one who has the gospel must not yield to the environment of the world, but rather must live conquering that environment as a channel of the gospel. ✉

LESSON

27



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Acts Chapter 27

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 27 is not simply a record of the experience of shipwreck that Paul suffered. This chapter is a grand history showing how a person who possesses the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit trusts and testifies to the absolute sovereignty and promise of God even amidst extreme crisis situations that he cannot control with his own power. The urgent sailing record of this chapter testifies to us what a person whose problem of sin and judgment has already been forever resolved holds onto and stands before the crossroads of life and death.

Acts 27:1–8, The Beginning of the Voyage: About the Gospel Walking the Path of Mission, Not a Safe Path!

“And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to one named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us.

And the next day we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty to go to his friends and receive care. When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under the shelter of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board. When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under the shelter of Crete off Salmone. Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.”

When it is decided that Paul should go to Italy, he is delivered to a man named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment, along with some other prisoners, and boards a ship. As they begin the voyage, they go slowly for many days and the wind does not permit, so they barely arrive at a place called Fair Havens, which shows that the will of God does not necessarily mean only a smooth tailwind. The gospel of the water and the Spirit forever guarantees the salvation of the soul, but it does not always make the voyage of the flesh comfortable. Because Paul had already obtained the elimination of sin and eternal life by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus, what remained now was only the journey of the mission to testify to that fact in Rome.

Acts 27:9–12, Paul’s Warning: About the Discernment of the Holy Spirit Going Beyond the Experience of the World!

“Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, ‘Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.’ Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, and winter there.”

Because the period of fasting had already passed, making sailing dangerous, Paul advises them, saying, *“Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.”* This was not a simple guess, but a spiritual discernment coming from within the Holy Spirit. However, the Bible records that the centurion *“was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.”* The world always tries to trust the visible judgment of experts and human experience rather than God’s promise, but the witness of the gospel sees the truth beyond the situation.

Acts 27:13–20, The Tempestuous Wind Euroclydon: About the Moment When All Human Control Announces Its End!

“When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive. And running under the shelter of an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty. When they had hoisted it, they used support ropes to undergird the ship; and, fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands, they struck sail and so were driven. And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next day they lightened the ship. On the third day we threw the ship’s tackle overboard with our own hands. Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.”

When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had achieved their purpose, they weighed anchor and continued sailing, but not long after, a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon arose greatly from the midst of the island. When the ship was caught by the wind and could not head into it at all, they threw the cargo overboard into the sea and even threw away the ship’s tackle. The description, *“Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up,”* symbolically shows how powerless human skill and wisdom are in guaranteeing life. That place of despair where all sense of direction has disappeared becomes the stage proving that only the word of God becomes the only way.

Acts 27:21–26, The Words of the Angel: About the Fulfillment of God’s Promise Overwhelming the Desire for Survival!

“But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, ‘Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.” Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island.’”

Standing in the midst of the multitude who had not eaten for many days and had fallen into despair, Paul declares, saying, *“And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.”* He conveys that last night an angel of God stood by him and said, *“Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.”* While doing so, Paul confesses, *“Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.”* This is the center of the one who has the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and shows the fact that the purpose of salvation is greater than human crisis.

Acts 27:27–32, God’s Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: About the Gospel of Obedience, Not Neglect!

“Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. And they took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found it to be fifteen fathoms. Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, ‘Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.’ Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.”

On the fourteenth night of sailing, the sailors sense that the ship is drawing near to land and try to escape to save only themselves. At this time, Paul warns the centurion and the soldiers, saying, *“Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.”* and stops them. This means that God’s sovereign promise does not justify human irresponsible neglect. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a fatalistic resignation, but establishes an order of living faith that makes one fulfill one’s respective responsibilities in the present place because one believes God’s promise.

Acts 27:33–38, Paul Breaking Bread: About the Order of Grace Established in the Shadow of Death!

“And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, ‘Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.’ And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.”

As day is about to dawn, Paul implores the many people to take food, saying, *“Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.”* And it is recorded, *“he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.”* This meal performed by Paul in the extreme situation right before the shipwreck was not a simple meal, but a holy act infecting everyone with the peace and the order of grace of the one who has already obtained the elimination of sin, which not even the threat of death could shake.

Acts 27:39–44, Shipwreck and the Rescue of All: About the Promise Fulfilled in the Way Determined by God!

“When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves. And the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.”

When the ship is driven to a place where two currents meet and runs aground, the prow sticks fast and becomes immovable, and the stern is broken up by the large waves. The soldiers try to kill the prisoners, but the centurion, wanting to save Paul, stops them and commands those who know how to swim to jump overboard first. The conclusion, *“and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land,”* shows that God’s promise is perfectly fulfilled not through the seemingly safest path that humans expect, but through the process of refinement determined by God.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 27 testifies that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a mystical spell that removes the storm, but an unshakable anchor that confirms the direction to go even within the storm. The one who has the conviction of

salvation exercises bold discernment within a crisis, and God's promise is necessarily fulfilled beyond human limits. The will of God is not simply protecting the external environment called the ship, but protecting His people and their mission. Acts Chapter 27 is a history proving the fact that the one who has the completed salvation stands at the center of the community, holding onto God's promise in any tempestuous wind.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 27, verse 1 to 44 is a record vividly showing with what the gospel saves people in the midst of a massive storm. When reading this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, this journey of the voyage is not a simple survival skill or a lesson on overcoming crisis, but becomes a powerful sermon on how a person who knows the already completed salvation holds onto an unshakable center in the midst of extreme confusion. In the process of Paul being escorted to Rome, he foresaw that the voyage would be dangerous and warned that this voyage would end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives, but the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the words of Paul. This shows the reality where human experience and the opinion of the majority sometimes precede the voice of God, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit awakens us that the standard of salvation at least must be placed not on human judgment but on the fact that God has already accomplished.

When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their desire, they weighed anchor and sailed, but not

long after, a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon arose greatly from the midst of the island, and the ship was caught and could not head into the wind. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the great tempest remained, and even all hope of salvation was completely gone, the people threw the cargo overboard and threw away the ship's tackle with their own hands, struggling desperately for survival. Such an extreme crisis shows how easily the things humans usually relied on collapse, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit says that the hope of salvation is based on a historical event, not on a situation. This is because the eternal event that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testified to this is the reality of salvation that cannot be erased by any storm of the world.

When everyone was despairing and not eating, Paul stood in the midst of them and proclaimed, *"I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship."* He confessed, *"For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me."* This boldness did not come from vague optimism, but from absolute trust in God's promise. The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes one rule over the present fear by taking the already ended salvation as the basis, and makes one convinced that the life promised by God will be preserved even if the ship is broken.

On the fourteenth night, when the sailors sensed that they were drawing near to some land and tried to escape by letting down the skiff into the sea to survive, Paul warned the centurion and the soldiers, saying that unless these men stay in the ship,

you cannot be saved. As day was about to dawn, Paul urged the many people to take food, saying, *“for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you,”* and he took bread, gave thanks to God in the presence of everyone, and began to break and eat it. The reason he could offer a worship of thanksgiving even though the storm had not yet completely stopped was because the conclusion of salvation had already been confirmed. A person who knows that the power of sin and death has already ended obtains new strength to be able to eat the food of life and rise again even in the midst of the storm.

When day broke, they did not know which land it was, but discovered a bay with a sloping beach and decided to run the ship aground there, but meeting a place where two waters meet and flow, the ship ran aground; the prow stuck fast and could not move, and the stern was being broken up by the great waves. The soldiers thought it best to kill the prisoners, fearing that they might swim away and escape, but the centurion, wanting to save Paul, stopped their intention and commanded those who knew how to swim to jump into the sea first and go out to land. By making the remaining people go out relying on boards or parts of the ship, finally all the people landed and were rescued. This conclusion, where the ship was shattered to pieces but the people survived without a single one missing, shows exactly the structure of the gospel that even if the human means we relied on are broken, the life promised by God remains.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 27 teaches us that although a storm may tear down human meticulous calculation, it can never tear down God’s promise. Whatever the ship of our life is, it can be broken someday, but our life secured by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ is never destroyed. The person who knows this gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received judgment on the

Cross, and the Holy Spirit confirms this, is not overwhelmed by fear while not denying the power of the storm. Like Paul's confession, "*It will be just as it was told me,*" we too must cross the storm of life trusting God's promise to the end within the completed salvation. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 27

1. How is the purpose to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to Rome accomplished in the situation of hardship that the Apostle Paul suffered in the whole chapter of Acts 27?

The crisis of the tempestuous wind Euroclydon and shipwreck that Paul suffered in Acts Chapter 27 is a dramatic process showing how the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ necessarily advances toward the center of the world called Rome, going beyond human limits. The reason Paul could maintain peace to the end and encourage people even in this situation of hardship was not simply because of a positive personality, but because he had the ‘conviction of a righteous person’ who became reconciled with God as the result of all his sins being transferred by the baptism of Jesus. To Paul, whose problem of sin was resolved, the tempest was not a life-threatening disaster, but rather a ‘massive pulpit’ prepared to testify to the livingness of God and the gospel of salvation to the 276 soldiers and sailors who were in the ship.

The specific method by which the purpose of the gospel is accomplished in this chapter lies in showing the ‘model of redemption’ through life. When everyone lost the hope of living and stopped eating and drinking, Paul proclaims, “*For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all*

those who sail with you.’” This is as if visually showing the principle of redemption that when humanity was dying in the sea of sin, God passed all the sins of humanity over to the one person, Jesus Christ, through baptism, and saved all of us by the sacrifice of that one person. The event where the lives of everyone aboard the ship were preserved because of the one person Paul was a powerful sign making them foretaste the vitality that the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’ of Jesus Christ has on the way heading to Rome.

Ultimately, the hardship of Chapter 27 became not an obstacle to the propagation of the gospel, but a channel showing how the ‘Kingdom of God’ triumphs against the massive empire called Rome. The act where Paul took bread, gave thanks, and shared it inside the ship was not a simple meal, but a spiritual feast sharing the gospel of life with those standing before the fear of death. Through this process, Paul was imprinted on the Roman army and the Gentiles not as a simple prisoner but as a ‘man of God’, and this provided a spiritual and social foundation for him to freely preach the gospel even in a state of house arrest when he arrived in Rome. God, who refined the purity and power of the gospel through tribulation, ultimately used even the tempest as a strong wind carrying the gospel of the water and the Spirit right to the heart of Rome. ☒

LESSON

28

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Acts Chapter 28

Viewed from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

Acts Chapter 28 is not an after-story dealing with the journey after the shipwreck or a biography recording Paul's personal old age. This chapter shows the process in which the gospel of the water and the Spirit reaches the clearest conclusion of victory from the bound place that seems the weakest. The history of this chapter testifies to us how the already completed salvation reaches Rome, the center of the world, and what it leaves as the final legacy.

Acts 28:1–6, The Incident of the Snake in Melita: About the Gospel That Nullified the Power of Death!

“Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his

hand, they said to one another, ‘No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.’ But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.”

When Paul, who landed on the island of Melita, gathers a bundle of sticks and puts them on the fire, a viper comes out because of the heat and bites his hand. The natives thought he was a murderer and could not escape disaster, but it is recorded of Paul, *“he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.”* This incident is not a device to show off personal ability or to deify the apostle. This is a symbolic sign showing that the power of death has already been nullified by the baptism and the Cross of Jesus, and it is an event revealing that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has perfectly eliminated the poison of sin destroying the soul.

Acts 28:7–10, The History of Healing the Sick: About the Incidental Fruit Confirming the Essence of the Gospel!

“In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things

as were necessary.”

When the father of Publius, the highest person on the island, lies sick of a fever and dysentery, Paul goes in, prays, and lays his hands on him and heals him. Because of this, the other sick people on the island come, are healed, and treat them with generous courtesy. However, the Bible does not place these miracles at the center or magnify the admiration. This is because the healing of sickness is not the essence of the gospel, but merely a result confirming that the way of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus that Paul preaches is true. The gospel of the water and the Spirit concentrates on the reality of eternal life beyond the healing of the flesh.

Acts 28:11–15, Arrival in Rome: About the Promise of God Fulfilled Piercing Through Delay and Tribulation!

“After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.”

After three months, Paul’s party rides the Alexandrian ship and finally enters Rome. When heading to Rome after meeting the brethren in Puteoli and staying for seven days, the brethren come out to meet them as far as the Appii Forum and Three Inns.

It is recorded of Paul, “*When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.*” This was the moment when the promise of Acts 23:11, saying, “*so you must also bear witness at Rome,*” was accurately fulfilled, having gone through the voyage, shipwreck, and numerous delays. The gospel of the water and the Spirit necessarily reaches the promised destination despite human hindrance.

Acts 28:16, The Bound Freeman: About the Paradoxical Victory That Cannot Confine the Word of God!

“Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.”

When entering Rome, Paul is permitted to stay by himself with one soldier who guards him. Paul was put in a bound state called house arrest, but the gaze of the Bible stays not on the imprisoned Paul, but on the unconfined gospel. Although the body of the one who possesses the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be bound in chains, the vitality of that testimony is never bound. Paul’s imprisoned place rather became a strategic key point where the gospel is safely proclaimed in the heart of Rome.

Acts 28:17–22, Conversation with the Jewish Leaders: About the Confrontation with the Gospel Structure That Tears Down One’s Own Righteousness!

“And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: ‘Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who, when they had examined me, wanted to let me go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. But when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.’ Then they said to him, ‘We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere.’”

Paul invites the high-ranking men among the Jews, explains the circumstances of his being handed over into the hands of the Romans in Jerusalem, and says, *“because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”* The Jews had not heard bad rumors about Paul, but say that because they know that concerning this sect it is opposed everywhere, they want to hear about his thoughts. The essence they opposed was not a crime, but the structure of the gospel to completely deny human legalistic acts and righteousness and to rely only on the merit of the baptism and the Cross of Jesus.

Acts 28:23–28, The Final Proclamation: About the Historical Movement of Salvation Divided According to the State of the Heart!

“So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, ‘Go to this people and say: “Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”’” *“Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”*”

It is recorded that Paul reasoned from morning till evening, *“He explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets.”* When some were persuaded by the things which were spoken and some disbelieved, and they dispersed not agreeing among themselves, Paul warns the stubborn ones by quoting Isaiah’s prophecy. And then he makes a final declaration, *“Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it.”* This was not simple anger, but a proclamation of a historical transition that the gospel of the water and the Spirit now expands in earnest toward the whole world beyond the boundaries of the nation.

Acts 28:30–31, The Last Sentence of Acts: About the Eternal Acts of the Uninterrupted Propagation of the Gospel!

“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him..”

The Acts of the Apostles ends with the sentence that Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house, received all who came to him, and *“preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”* The Bible did not leave a record of the result of Paul’s trial or his martyrdom. This is because the protagonist of the Acts of the Apostles is not the individual apostle, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit itself. The gospel does not stop at the recorded letters, and is spreading to the whole world even now without anyone forbidding it.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 28 confirms the fact that the gospel of the water and the Spirit necessarily triumphs going beyond storms, shipwrecks, and bonds. The power of death was nullified, miracles appeared as signs guaranteeing the truthfulness of the gospel, and the way of salvation was completely expanded to a universal proclamation. This gospel, that sin ended by the baptism of Jesus, judgment ended by the Cross, and eternal life was confirmed by the resurrection, continues without stopping even after the Acts of the Apostles ends. This is the completion and the new beginning of the gospel that Acts Chapter 28 proclaims.

A Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The word from Acts Chapter 28, verse 1 to 31 is the end of the record called the Acts of the Apostles, and at the same time, it is a passage that clearly shows that God's gospel is never the end. When reading this text from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by Pastor Paul C. Jong, all the scenes where shipwreck and house arrest, rejection and hospitality intersect converge into one great declaration that the gospel is not blocked by anything. After being rescued, Paul's party, who came to know that the island was called Melita, received special sympathy from the natives, and when Paul gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out and bit his hand. The natives went back and forth between the extremes of judgment, thinking him a murderer and then calling him a god again seeing that he suffered no harm, but the essence is not the mystery of the miracle but the fact that the witness of the gospel is not bound by the interpretation of the situation. Because the person who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit stands on the completed fact that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this, he does not lose his center even in the midst of crisis.

When the highest person of that island called Publius received Paul's party and kindly let them stay for three days, Paul saw the father of Publius lying sick with a fever and dysentery, prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him. Because of this event, other sick people in the island came, were healed, and treated Paul's party with generous courtesy, and the purpose of the power revealed here was not to replace the gospel but to perform the role as a sign pointing to the gospel. Although signs become a channel to gather people, because what saves the

soul is only the content of the gospel, power opens the door of evangelism and the gospel opens the way of life. After three months, Paul's party departed riding an Alexandrian ship and finally arrived in Rome, and Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with a soldier who guarded him.

Three days after arriving in Rome, Paul invited the high-ranking men among the Jews and confessed that his being bound was due to the hope of Israel, speaking first of the fulfillment of the promise instead of a political explanation. When they appointed a date and many came to the house where he lodged, Paul reasoned from morning till evening, testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus using the Law of Moses and the words of the prophets. Reactions were divided, with some believing the words and some not believing, which shows that although the gospel may not satisfy everyone, it must be presented fairly to anyone. Quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, Paul pointed out their stubbornness of hearing but never understanding and seeing but never perceiving, and proclaimed, *“Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!!”*

That Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house, received all who came to him, preached the kingdom of God, and taught all things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ boldly and without hindrance is the last record of the Acts of the Apostles. The fact that although the door of a prison can be closed, the word of God cannot be closed, and although a person can be bound, the gospel is never bound, is concentrated in this last sentence. Acts Chapter 28 gives us the conviction that although the ship can be broken, the mission is never broken, and although there can be rejection from the world, the advance of the gospel does not stop. This gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus Christ took charge of our sins at the Jordan River, received

judgment on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit testifies to this in the hearts of those who believe, has reached even us today, going beyond Melita and Rome.

In conclusion, Acts Chapter 28 declares that the journey of the gospel is not bound to a specific place or environment but continues even now. That gospel which Paul boldly proclaimed in the house of his house arrest is alive and moving even now, going beyond the time of 2,000 years, and is changing the hearts of people. The saint who possesses the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live a life writing down the history of Acts Chapter 29, preaching the truth boldly and without hindrance in any situation. That the gospel does not stop and the kingdom of God is never defeated is the great conclusion that the Acts of the Apostles left us. ✉

Questions and Answers from Acts Chapter 28

1. In the whole chapter of Acts 28, amidst all the adversities where the Apostle Paul suffered hardships, how was there progress in the propagation of the gospel, and how did God help?

Acts Chapter 28 shows how all the hardships and adversities of Paul become the period of victory confirming the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’. The incident where Paul, who landed on the island of Melita, suffered no harm even after being bitten by a viper became an opportunity that powerfully proclaimed to the Gentiles that he is not simply a lucky person, but a person having the ‘authority of a righteous person’ who transferred his sins by the baptism of Jesus and received the seal of the Holy Spirit. Through this incident that surprised the natives enough to call him a ‘god’, Paul opened the door of the gospel by healing the father of the chief Publius and the sick people of the island. This means that God helped by turning even the life threats experienced by the gospel evangelist into a glorious channel revealing the livingness of God.

That Paul, who finally entered Rome, was able to stay in his own ‘rented house’ and meet people relatively freely despite his status as a prisoner, was the result of God’s detailed help. There, Paul invited the Jewish leaders and preached the ‘gospel concerning Jesus’ quoting the Law of Moses and the words of the prophets. The core of the message he preached was the fact that one can never eliminate sin by human legalistic zeal, and

obtains salvation only by believing the legal procedure (the water and the Spirit) appointed by God. Although some did not believe, Paul, quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, boldly proclaimed that this gospel of salvation will now flow to the Gentiles and save them.

The final scene of the Acts of the Apostles ends with Paul *“preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”* to everyone who sought him for two years. From the perspective of the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’, this unhindered propagation shows that adversity does not block the gospel, but rather, the environment called hardship became the soil testifying to the gospel more purely and powerfully. God placed Paul in the adversity of the Roman prison and chains, but made those bonds rather become a safe protective shield planting the gospel in the heart of the empire. Ultimately, Acts Chapter 28 concludes by testifying to us the great progress that “the gospel of the water and the Spirit is never bound,” regardless of the environment.

2. Like this, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Paul sowed in Rome has been transmitted even to us today and made us be born again as righteous people. Now, what is the next step we must take, taking over the baton of this gospel? Shall we talk more about the practical part of living out this perfect gospel with our lives?

The first practical step we must take, taking over the baton of the ‘gospel of the water and the Spirit’, is ‘proclaiming the identity of a righteous person in all areas of life’. Just as Paul

considered himself not a prisoner but an ‘ambassador of Christ’ even in the state of house arrest in Rome, we too must consciously hold onto the fact in our daily lives, “I am a perfect righteous person who has received the elimination of sin by the baptism and blood of Jesus.” Practically, when opening our eyes in the morning, a training is needed to start the day within the seal of the Holy Spirit, meditating on the righteousness of Jesus who already took charge of all my sins, rather than looking first at our own weakness or the worries of that day. When this conviction is internalized, we can finally not become servile before the temptation of sin or the condemnation of the world, and can manifest the authority suitable for children of God.

The second practice is ‘transitioning the concept of repentance from a legalistic confession to a gospel-centered thanksgiving’. Although many people remain in the religious act of begging for forgiveness with tears, fearing they might lose salvation whenever they commit a sin, we who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit must offer a prayer of confession and thanksgiving, saying, “God, thank You for making even these faults of mine already all transferred by the baptism of Jesus 2,000 years ago and resolving them on the Cross.” This is not self-indulgence, but a powerful sanctification process of the Holy Spirit that makes us never want to dwell in that sin again by reaffirming God’s love that made me a righteous person. Such gospel-centered repentance immediately rescues us from the swamp of condemnation and becomes a practical driving force making us advance again toward a holy life.

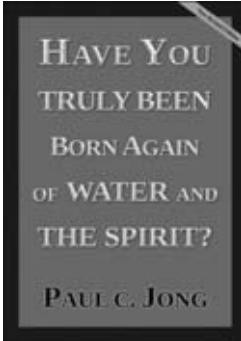
Lastly, we must become ‘daily-life missionaries who make the testimony of the gospel the mode of life’. Just as Paul taught all things concerning Jesus without hindrance to everyone he met, we too must capture the opportunity to preach this perfect

gospel to those we meet at home and at work. It is not simply a recommendation saying “Let’s go to church,” but we must be ready to clearly explain that legal procedure, “how Jesus took away your sins through His baptism, and how He paid the full price for those sins on the Cross,” to those who are pressed down by the burden of sin in life. Our good deeds must become a vessel containing this gospel, and proving the fact that “this gospel which made me a righteous person is necessary for you too” through the peace we do not lose even amidst the hardships of life, that exactly is the glorious stride that we, who have taken over the baton of Paul, must walk. ☒

The Christian book series by Paul C. Jong

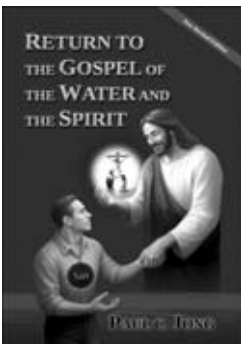
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HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

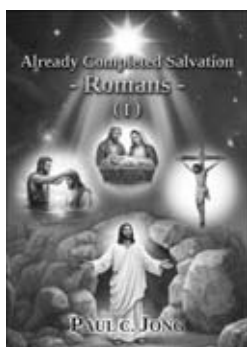
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

Already Completed Salvation - Romans - (I)



“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Romans 1:17

Romans is called the ‘Magna Carta of the Gospel.’ However, to many Christians, Romans still feels like a difficult and complicated theology textbook. This book breaks down exactly that barrier.

The author expounds on Romans chapters 1 through 9 from the single consistent perspective of ‘the gospel of the water and the Spirit,’ that is, the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ. Just as the high priest transferred the sins of the people onto the offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament atonement sacrifices, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred onto His body by receiving baptism from John, and saved those who believe by fully bearing the punishment of those sins on the Cross. When reading the words of the Bible through the lens of this gospel of the water and the Spirit, one finally comes to realize how sophisticated Paul’s argument is.

This book leads the reader to wrestle with the Bible themselves through a ‘Q&A’ (asking and answering) method. While finding the answers from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit through key texts and questions in each chapter, it can be utilized not only for personal meditation but also as material for small group Bible studies and discipleship training.

IS THE AGE OF THE ANTICHRIST, MARTYRDOM, RAPTURE AND THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM COMING? (I)

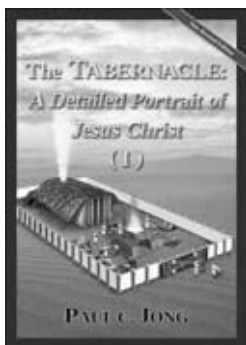


After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, traffic to “www.raptureready.com,” an Internet site providing information on the end times, is reported to have increased to over 8 million hits, and according to a joint survey by CNN and TIME, over 59% of the Americans now believe in apocalyptic eschatology.

Responding to such demands of the time, the author provides a clear exposition of the key themes of the Book of Revelation, including the coming Antichrist, the martyrdom of the saints and their rapture, the Millennial Kingdom, and the New Heaven and Earth—all in the context of the whole Scripture and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This book provides verse-by-verse commentaries on the Book of Revelation supplemented by the author’s inspired sermons. Anyone who reads this book will come to grasp all the plans that God has in store for this world.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]

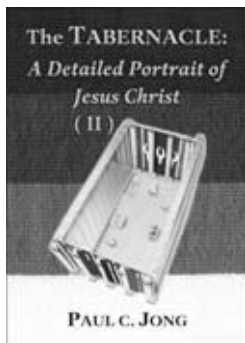


How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle’s court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament’s time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament’s Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle’s court.

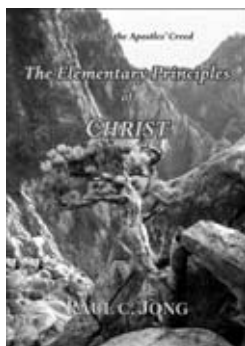
The TABERNACLE: A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (II)



As God had commanded Moses to build the Tabernacle in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, God wants us to also build a Sanctuary in each of our hearts so that He may dwell in us. The material of faith with which we can build this Sanctuary in our hearts is the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. With this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must wash away all our sins and be cleansed. By telling us to build Him a Sanctuary, God is telling us to empty our hearts and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must all cleanse our hearts by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When we cleanse away all the sins of our hearts by believing in this gospel Truth, God then comes to dwell in them. It is by believing in this true gospel that you can build the holy Temples in your hearts. It is highly likely that until now, at least some of you have probably been offering your prayers of repentance to cleanse your hearts, trying to build the Temples by yourselves. But now is the time for you to abandon this false faith and be transformed by the renewing of your minds by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Elementary Principles of CHRIST — The Faith of the Apostles' Creed



We must have the faith that the Apostles had and believe as they did, for their faith and beliefs came from the Holy Spirit. The Apostles believed in Jesus Christ, His Father, and the Holy Spirit as their God.

The Apostle Paul confessed that he died with Christ and was brought to new life with Him. He became an instrument of God by believing that he was baptized into Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:27). In God's gospel are found the baptism that Jesus received, the blood that He shed on the Cross, and the gift of the Holy Spirit that He has bestowed on everyone who believes in this true gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Do you know and believe in this original gospel? This is the very gospel that the Apostles had also believed. We, too, must therefore all believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (I), (II), (III), (IV), (V), (VI)



There are countless new Christians throughout the world, who have just been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we have been spreading. We are indeed yearning to feed on the bread of life to them. But it is difficult for them to have fellowship with us in the true gospel, for they are all far away from us.

Therefore, to meet the spiritual needs of these people of Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the author proclaims that those who have had their sins taken away by believing in the Word of Jesus Christ must feed on His pure Word in order to defend their faith and sustain their spiritual lives. The sermons in these books have been prepared as new bread of life that will nourish the born-again to edify their spiritual growth.

Through His Church and servants, God will continue to provide you with this bread of life. May God's blessings be on all those who have been born again of water and the Spirit, who desire to have true spiritual fellowship with us in Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Prayer: Misinterpretations and Truth — Sermons on the Lord's Prayer



In order to interpret the Lord's Prayer correctly, we must first correctly understand the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which was spoken to us by the Lord. We have Truth in us when we not only know and understand the gospel of the water and the Spirit but also believe it with our hearts. The true gospel, which we believe in, has led us so far, so that we can lead truly faithful lives that the Lord wants from us in the Lord's Prayer.

The TABERNACLE (III): A Prefiguration of The Gospel of The Water and the Spirit



Do you know the implication of the blue, purple and scarlet threads that were used in the screen gate of the Tabernacle? In order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, you should understand what you need to know and believe. Now is the time that all human beings should believe wholeheartedly in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that is foreshadowed in the Tabernacle.

Jesus Christ is the very Author who has planned and accomplished the truth that is manifested in the blue, purple and scarlet threads of the gate of the Tabernacle. The real substances of the blue, purple and scarlet threads are the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood He shed on the Cross, and His resurrection from the dead.

If you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, would it be possible for your sins to still remain intact in your hearts? If your sins still remained in your hearts as you believe in Jesus, you will have a problem in your faith. Such a misguided faith results from your ignorance of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Hence, you should understand that there are many false gospels and false preachers in this world who are preaching man-made false doctrines in Christian communities. I advise you to accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that all your sins may be taken away and that you may depart from these false gospels.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF YOU TO BE BORN AGAIN?



Christians today need to change their thoughts. They must believe in the God-given gospel of the water and the Spirit as their true salvation. We all ought to thank the Lord for giving us this gospel of the water and the Spirit. How can we instead say that the Lord's work of salvation that has delivered us from all the sins of the world is flawed?

Through this book on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, everyone must now be born again by believing in the salvation the Lord has fulfilled once and for all. If you are still unsure about this, you need to once again contemplate deeply on the righteousness of God that the Lord has given to you.

IF YOU HAVE CONFUSION AND EMPTINESS IN YOUR HEART, SEEK THE LIGHT OF THE TRUTH (I) & (II)



This book explains how much the Nicene Creed, produced at the Council of Nicaea in Late Antiquity, has had a bad influence on Christians today.

In this age, in order to meet the truth of being born again, you must study a little more. And you need to know more deeply about the creed of faith that you have believed so far.

Now you must find in this book the meaning of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist that was omitted from the Nicene Creed. So, it should be an opportunity to receive true salvation and peace in your heart.

Now you will discover the true value of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the baptism that Jesus received. You will come to know more deeply and clearly how the Word of the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist has affected your soul and you will therefore give glory to God by faith.

Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

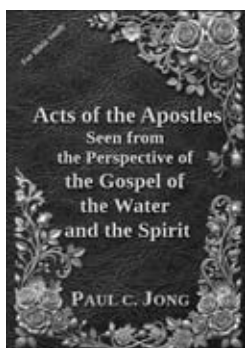
The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Acts of the Apostles Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The Acts of the Apostles is commonly read as a record of the growth and miracles of the early church. However, the core that the Bible intends to say through the Acts of the Apostles does not lie only in testifying to the work of the Holy Spirit. How the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit was testified to the whole world, that is the central message of the Acts of the Apostles.

This book explains the Acts of the Apostles from Chapter 1 to Chapter 28 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is a record following how the gospel of Jesus Christ—who had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and then resurrected from the dead—was testified.

By reading this book, we come to confirm how the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord is propagated to the end of the earth. Furthermore, we will clearly receive testimony on how this gospel saves sinners from the sins of the world through the two structures of the baptism and the Cross.

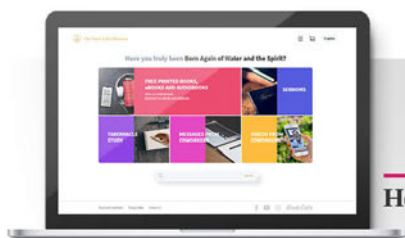
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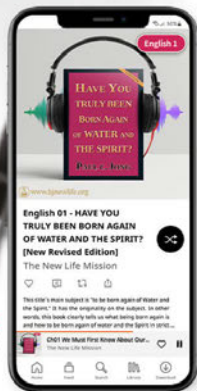
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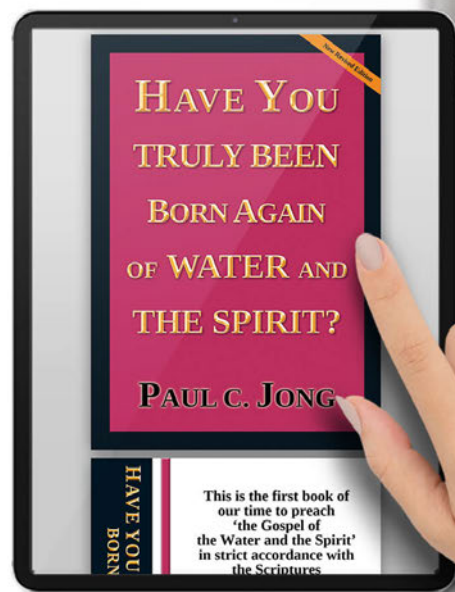
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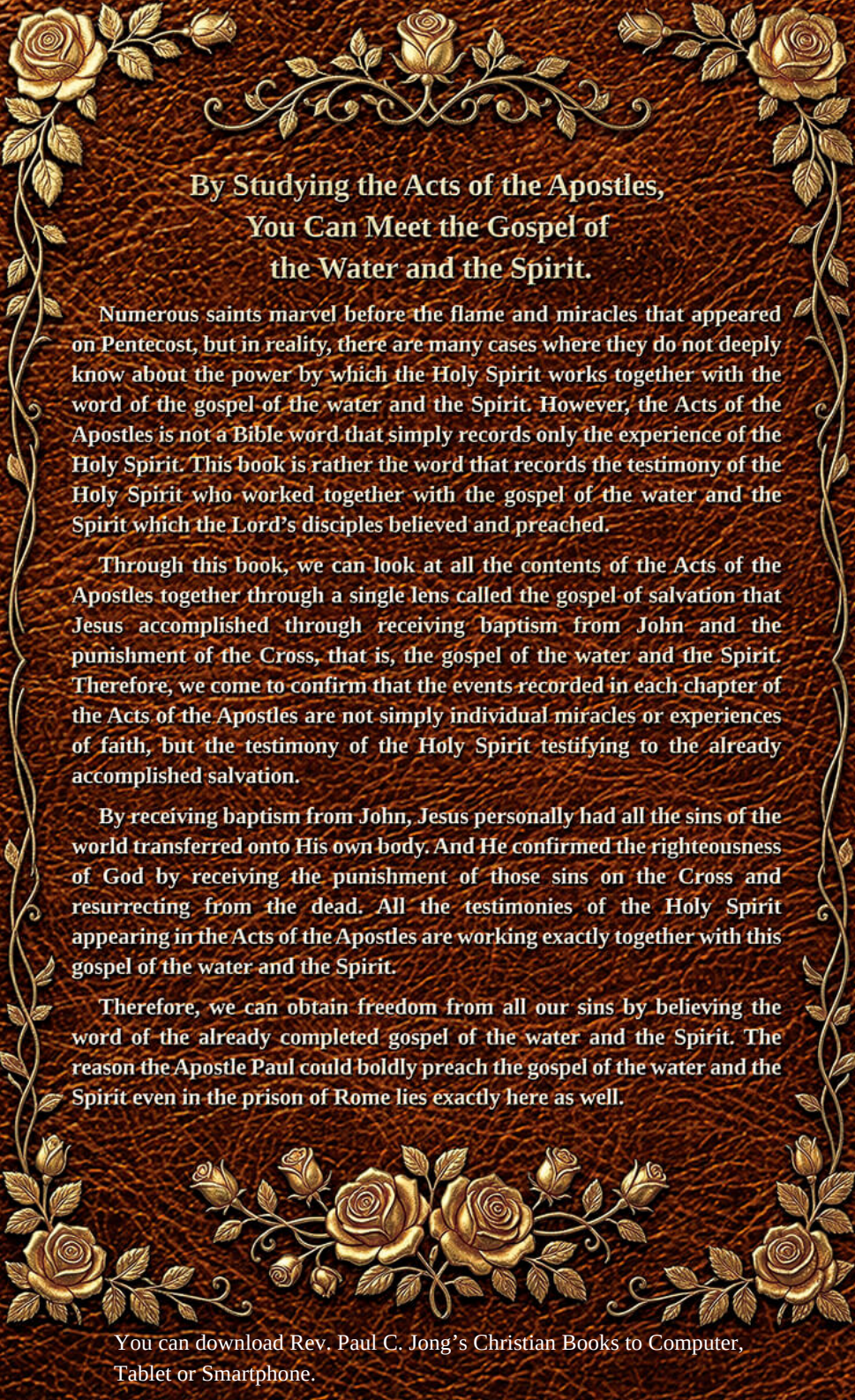
Pastor **PAUL C. JONG**

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads ‘The New Life Mission’ and propagates the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with his co-workers.

He believed in Jesus who was crucified on the Cross, but because the problem of sin was not resolved, he was in suffering for a long time. Meanwhile, he came to believe the fact that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist and vicariously received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

Since then, he is propagating the gospel of the water and the Spirit through literature ministry to those who believe only in the Cross.

His books are a series of 69 volumes in total, and have been translated into more than 110 languages and are being read in more than 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are provided for free at www.bjnewlife.org, and paper books can be purchased on Amazon.



By Studying the Acts of the Apostles, You Can Meet the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.

Numerous saints marvel before the flame and miracles that appeared on Pentecost, but in reality, there are many cases where they do not deeply know about the power by which the Holy Spirit works together with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. However, the Acts of the Apostles is not a Bible word that simply records only the experience of the Holy Spirit. This book is rather the word that records the testimony of the Holy Spirit who worked together with the gospel of the water and the Spirit which the Lord's disciples believed and preached.

Through this book, we can look at all the contents of the Acts of the Apostles together through a single lens called the gospel of salvation that Jesus accomplished through receiving baptism from John and the punishment of the Cross, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we come to confirm that the events recorded in each chapter of the Acts of the Apostles are not simply individual miracles or experiences of faith, but the testimony of the Holy Spirit testifying to the already accomplished salvation.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus personally had all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body. And He confirmed the righteousness of God by receiving the punishment of those sins on the Cross and resurrecting from the dead. All the testimonies of the Holy Spirit appearing in the Acts of the Apostles are working exactly together with this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Therefore, we can obtain freedom from all our sins by believing the word of the already completed gospel of the water and the Spirit. The reason the Apostle Paul could boldly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit even in the prison of Rome lies exactly here as well.