

Fellowship Of The First Christians

Acts 2:42-47

Part 6c

Some Additional Lukan Remarks

2:47 praising God, and having favor with all the people [unbelievers]. And the Lord [Jesus] was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

1. "praising God," not the apostles, for salvation and all His blessings. (Eph. 1:3; Jas. 1:17).
 - a. God had forgiven them of all their sins even the sin of having His beloved Son crucified.
 - b. It is God who was given the credit for salvation and for their growth. See also 1 Cor. 3:5,6
 - c. Without God there would be no increase and no spiritual or material blessings.
 - d. Those in Christ Jesus today should daily praise God for salvation and all His blessings!
 - e. Our existence and salvation all come by the love and grace of the God who created us in His image.
2. "having [enjoying] favor with all the people" is likely a hyperbole denoting many.
 - a. It is obvious that not everyone was friendly to the church. This is mostly a reference to the great receptiveness many had to the gospel.
 - b. The book of Acts vividly illustrates and records the hostility and persecution faced by these first Christians by both Jews and Gentiles.
 - c. The persecution began not long after Pentcost and was at first focused on the apostles. (Acts 4,5).
 - d. Jesus had forewarned Christians would be persecuted. (Matt. 5:10-12; Jn. 15:18-20).
 - e. Paul spoke of the certainty of persecution. (2 Tim. 3:12).
 - f. Peter warned that Christians should not be surprised they were persecuted. (1 Pet. 4:13).
3. The word "church" is not in this verse, but the idea is.
 - a. KJV has it, but it is not in the original Greek. "Church" is correctly omitted by the ASV, NASB, ESV, NIV, etc.
 - b. It is clear that the words "their number" is a reference to the body of Christ - the church (the saved). (1 Cor. 12:13).
 - c. Only those in Christ's body will be saved. (Eph. 5:23, 25).

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself {being} the Savior of the body.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

1) Paul emphasized that Christ “is the head of the church” and He is “the Savior of the body.”

2) He emphasized that “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

d. Like the brethren at Colossae, they had been delivered from the kingdom of darkness into Christ’s kingdom. (Col. 1:13).

e. Jesus is now Head of the body [the church], and King of those coming into His kingdom.

f. After Pentecost the kingdom is never spoken of as future. (Acts 8:12; 20:25; 28:31; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 15:24; Col. 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thess. 2:12; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9).

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

Acts 20:25 "And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face.

Acts 28:31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

Rom 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 15:24 then {comes} the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

Col 1:13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

Col 4:11 and {also} Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.

1 Thess 2:12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

Rev 1:9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance {which are} in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

4. It is God who saves, and it is God who adds to the saved.

a. God does not save arbitrarily. (Acts 10:34,35). See 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9.

b. He saves those who obey His Son. (Jn. 3:36; 14:6; Heb. 5:9).

5. Those obeying Acts 2:38 are automatically added to the universal church [the saved, the body of Christ, the kingdom].

a. There is no authority for “**joining**” the church.

b. There is no authority for **voting** one into the church.

- c. There is no authority for **requiring a probation period** or **long study** to be accepted as a member of the church.
- 1) These Christians were immediately added to the church [the kingdom, the body].
 - 2) These Christians were not required to go through a long study before baptism, but were baptized that same day. (Acts 2:41).
 - 3) Some had more knowledge than others, but all who repented and were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins were saved.
 - 4) They were not already saved, but these believers were saved after they obeyed the mandates of Acts 2:38.
6. "their number" is the saved.
- a. "Number" is not in the Greek text, but the idea is.
 - b. Literally the text reads, "And the Lord added the [ones] being saved together from day to day."
7. It is the joyful duty and blessing of the church (Christians) to welcome those whom Christ has accepted.
8. **"those who were being saved"** - "Their number" most likely included the apostles and the 120 mentioned in Acts 1. The apostles were included in the 120. (Acts 1:13-15).
- a. It is possible all those who had received John's baptism and received Christ before Pentecost or on Pentecost or after Pentecost are included in the word "number."
 - 1) Luke does not say there were only 120 believers.
 - 2) He records 120 believers had assembled in Jerusalem.
 - 3) Jesus had appeared to above five hundred brethren in Galilee after this resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:6).

1 Cor 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

- These eyewitnesses had become believers before Pentecost. They saw the risen Lord, and were later called "brethren" by Paul.
- We do not know when they were baptized "for the forgiveness of sins."
- This may have occurred on or after Pentecost, but some may have been baptized before Pentecost. It was likely on or after Pentecost.

4) Though not stated surely the seventy remained true to the Lord. (Lk. 10:1).

Luke 10:1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.

b. There is no evidence that the ones who had earlier received John's baptism were required to be baptized again.

1) Some may have been re-baptized, but Luke does not state this.

2) Whether some were re-baptized or not has no bearing on our salvation.

- c. Both John and Christ had baptized “for the remission of sins.” (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3).
- d. It would seem that those who had believed on the One [Christ] to come and embraced Him were added to the body of Christ assuming they continued to follow Jesus.
- e. Those who were re-baptized in Acts 19 had been baptized with John’s baptism after it had ceased to be a valid baptism. (Acts 19:1-7).

ACT 19:1 And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples,

ACT 19:2 and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

ACT 19:3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."

ACT 19:4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

ACT 19:5 And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

ACT 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.

ACT 19:7 And there were in all about twelve men.

9. “Those who were being saved” were added to the body [the church]. (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:23, 25).

1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself {being} the Savior of the body.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

a. One becomes a part of Christ’s body through baptism. (1 Cor. 12:13).

b. The body is the church. (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23).

Col 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Eph 1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

c. Jesus is the Savior of the body [the church]. (Eph. 5:23).

Note:

1. One does not join the church, but one is to join himself to the Lord’s church.
2. A Christian should “place membership,” that is identify himself with a local congregation.
3. Christians do this because it enables elders to “watch” over and feed the flock. (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:2-4).

Acts 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for 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.

1 Pet 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to {the will of} God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

1 Pet 5:3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

4. Joining oneself to a congregation enables a person to become more involved in the work of the church and helps the church to better serve his/her needs.
5. It should be repeated the church is a body and each member is vital.
 - a. The church functions without the cooperation of all its members.
 - b. The church would function much better and have a much greater impact on the world if its all members used their talents for the Lord.
6. Elders rule [oversee] a congregation - not saints everywhere. (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:2,3).
 - a. Most every community has some or many Christians who have never identified with a local congregation.
 - b. Elders need to work with these Christians if they will permit.
 - c. This can be a very difficult situation if they refuse to identify with a congregation.
 - d. There is no biblical example of how the early church handled this problem or if it was a problem.
 - e. Christians are never spoken of as Christians at large, but members of a congregation.
 - f. The church, the body of Christ, has lost much effectiveness because some never identify with a local congregation and many who do refuse to be a functioning member of Christ's body.
 - g. Thank God for all who remain faithful and active in the Lord's service.
 - h. These first Christians gave us a marvelous example to emulate.

Concluding Remarks

1. Acts 2 is certainly a great chapter that needs to be carefully studied from time to time.
2. An understanding of this chapter helps us understand the fulfillment of prophecy, the beginning of the kingdom [the church], the teachings of Christ, and many other essential matters about the church.

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)