

Lesson 1

Normal Christianity



1. Old vs New

If we were to read examples of what normal Christianity looks like in the Bible, which books would we read? Do we look in the Old Testament?

In the Old Testament you won't find a Disciple like you and me. Most of the Old Testament contains the Old Covenant.

Many people believe that if you divide the Bible between the Old Testament and the New Testament, that it is also a division between the old and new covenants. This is not true. The Old Covenant was between God and the Israelites. So everything that happened before Moses, was not part of the old covenant.

Hence, today according to scriptures such as Gal 3:29, we are heirs of the promises God made with Abraham.

Galatians 3:29 and if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

The same applies in the New Testament. The four gospels are not new covenant as Jesus established the covenant only at the last supper.

Matthew 26: 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

So what is our example then of what normal Christianity is?

The life of Jesus and the Book of Acts are the clearest pictures we have today of what it really means to be a normal Christian.

Once Jesus was baptized in water and the Holy Spirit, He began to bring the Kingdom to the world. The Kingdom advanced further when the disciples got baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2)

In the book of Acts, we read about people who loved Jesus and were willing to pick up their crosses and follow Him. We read about how the Holy Spirit works in and with them to advance the Kingdom of God.

We read how they had many supernatural experiences like being led in dreams, seeing visions, being transported in the spirit etc. We also see them do what Jesus did by healing the sick, casting out demons, cleansing lepers and raising the dead.

The Book of Acts is the normal Christian life. Now when we go to church and look around us, we see a very different picture from what we read in the book of Acts.

Discussion: Why do you think, this is?

When you go to different churches, they all have different ideas of what it means to be a Christian and what your life as one, should look like. This has caused a lot of confusion among believers and also introduced much false teaching.

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever.

Discussion: How does this scripture influence the way we should be living?

If Jesus has not changed, then the Holy Spirit has not changed and our mission has not changed. We believe scripture when it comes to salvation and healing, but what about the rest of what He tells us to do?

The book of Acts can be seen as a book only about the first disciples and all they did to expand the Kingdom or as a book that shows you what the Holy Spirit is capable of doing in any believer.

Does your life look anything like those in the book of Acts?



2. Church History

How did history change the church?

2.1 Catholic Church

In 300 A.D there was an emperor called Constantine. He took Christianity and turned it into a state religion. Many people still believe he did a good thing as the persecution of the early church stopped when he did this. He actually messed up the church by introducing religion into real Christianity. This is still influencing many churches and denominations all over the world.



The Catholic Church was born out of what Constantine did. When you think about what this church system is all about, what do you think about?

A pope and priests and large expensive buildings, mass services etc.

You won't find this in the book of Acts or the life of Jesus.

Jesus actually came to break a system similar to this church system. He broke down the temple and made us into the new living temple and did away with all religious traditions. He also said not to call anyone on earth your "Father" except for your Father in heaven. The word pope comes from the word father and he is worshipped by many as if he was a type of Jesus.

The Jews normally had Saturday as their holy day. Constantine changed it to Sunday. Most people do not know that Constantine was part of a cult of sun worshippers as a high priest. That's why the holy day was changed to Sunday. With that, many of that cults' practises were introduced into the system.

The moment the church accepted this new system, the power of the Holy Spirit ceased and the dark ages started.

2.2 Martin Luther

Martin Luther came with his 95 thesis on 31 October 1517 and nailed it to the church door. A reformation started and the Lutheran church was born. He tried to take the church away from the Catholic system and reform it back to the book of Acts.



He managed to change a few things but unfortunately, many things from the Catholic system stayed in the Lutheran church and failed to reform the church.

They kept meetings on Sundays with one priest performing all the church duties, appointing more priests and doing mass services etc.

Discussion: What are the major differences between the church in the book of Acts and the Catholic & Lutheran churches?

2.3 Baptist Church

In the beginning of 1600 AD in England, the Baptist movement started and many people got saved because of it. It was however, not long before this church was persecuted by the Catholic and Lutheran churches. So the people in the Baptist movement ran away and settled in Holland in 1609. They opened the first Baptist church and started to baptize people according to the Bible.

In the book of Acts, people were baptized by complete submersion and the baptism had great importance to the first believers. Every time a new believer came to faith, they were baptized almost immediately.

Looking at baptism, in the Catholic and Lutheran churches, does it look the same as in the book of Acts?

The Baptist church started a revival and reformed the church a little bit more back to the book of Acts but the fire also died out after a while and people started doing church in the same manner as the Lutheran church.

2.4 Methodist Church

In 1738 the Methodist church was started by John and Charles Wesley. They preached sanctification by faith. Martin Luther believed that you are under sin and can't do anything about it but they believed that

God had called us to be holy and Jesus came to forgive and set us free from sin. They understood that we should be holy, because God is Holy.

1Peter1:16 For it is written, you will be holy, for I am Holy.

2.5 The Foundation

So looking back over the last couple of hundred years, God has slowly started to bring the church back to the truth, back to the book of Acts and restoring the foundation of the believers.

Heb 6:1-2 therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

If we take the first three foundations mentioned in this scripture: repentance, faith towards God and baptism, we can see how God used the Lutheran church to restore faith towards God. (Not faith in a pope or priest)

He restored repentance towards dead works and called us back to living Holy lives through the Methodists.

He restored baptism through the Baptists.

The next church movement was the Adventist church in 1830 with Finney & Moody in 1821-1871. This movement brought back to the church, the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.

Looking back over the church movements, still something very important was lacking. They all failed to bring back the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion: Why did they fail to bring back the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Our foundation needs to be the Bible in all its truth. Otherwise, you will always have church influenced by theology and be without life.

2.6 Revival History

In 1906, the Azusa street revival started and the Holy Spirit was poured out on people, bringing back the gifts of the Spirit with power.

At the same time in Wales, a revival started with Evan Roberts. Over 100,000 people were saved and amazing miracles happened. This revival was so radical, that even the jails closed down as there were no criminals to be found.

In 1904 the apostolic movement started and the fivefold ministry was restored back to the church.



3. Who are you?

Today we have thousands of churches all over the world, and hundreds of denominations. Almost all of them have different beliefs when it comes to the foundational teachings of Christianity. Some churches operate in greater power under the fivefold ministry than others and still other churches don't even acknowledge the Holy Spirit.

However, from the outside they all still look the same. Big buildings that are full of people whose lives look nothing like those in the book of Acts.

So the big question is: what is the church supposed to look like? To answer this question, we need to understand why Jesus came and why He sent the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion: What did Jesus mean when he said on the cross: It is finished?

His whole life was one prophetic act of fulfilling the old covenant as a man. During his lifetime he overshadowed the old covenant and ushered in the new covenant.

Joseph, Jacob, Egypt, the Red Sea, the Promised Land, the serpent on the stick were just a picture of the greater glory that was about to come.

With the law fulfilled and our sins forgiven, we were crucified with Christ and resurrected again with Him as a new creation, a royal priesthood.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

1 Peter 2:9 but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

God calls you a son

Romans 14; 14 – 17 for all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

What is important from the above passage is "all who are led by the Spirit of God"

The Holy Spirit is an indwelling abiding Spirit who wishes to glorify Jesus who in turn, glorifies the Father. The Holy Spirit can only do this in believers, who allow Him to do what He did in the book of Acts.

I am proposing, that we are disciples of Jesus and that our lives should look like those in the book of Acts.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."