

Subject Study: “The Preaching of the Gospel” [Acts 13.14-17, 28-42]

- What are the big *themes* of the book? **Christ**. He’s the *major* theme of *every* book. Holy One and Just [3.14]. Lord of all [10.36]. Judge of mankind [17.31]. The Prince of life [3.15]. Must confess Jesus as Lord [God].
- 1. Read it. 2. Ask AI [Chat GPT or Grok]. 3. Bible software. 4. Use commentaries [J Sidlow Baxter; Jensen].

1. Son of God [Glorified]

2. Spirit of God [Given]. Miracles. Healings. Not the normal experience of every local church or believer. Only the **apostles** [and *close* representatives]. Cf. 2.43. 2 Cor. 12.12. To authenticate new work.

3. People of God [Gathered]

- The saints are not lone warriors. They gathered in local assemblies [*ekklēsia*, x24]. In many cities there was the Jewish synagogue, the pagan temple and now a Christian assembly.
- A church is a people, not a place or building [11.22, “ears”]. The local assembly has *four pillars* – see 2.42.
- Seven purposes for gathering [*synagō*, assembled together]. For prayer, bible teaching, bible reading, gospel preaching, breaking of bread, missionary reports and elders. Every gathering is for every believer.

4. Word of God [Gospel]

- Four great preaching episodes. *Two* of Peter [Acts 2, 10]. *Two* of Paul [Acts 13, 17]. Both to Jew & Gentile.
- Peter was **not** preaching the gospel as we now know it in all its fullness. To Paul was revealed “the mystery of the gospel,” [Eph. 6.20]. Set out in **Romans** – sole author.
- In Acts 2, Peter preached to a *Jewish audience*, charging them with the crucifixion of Christ [2.22-23]. In the gospels they rejected Christ on earth and in Acts they rejected Christ ascended to heaven.
- Emphasis of Peter’s message was “repentance”. A call to reject Jewish ground. Separate themselves from the nation. When Jewish ground is abandoned, the order is repentance, baptism, then the Spirit [2.38].
- When Gentiles are brought in, the order is faith, reception of the Spirit *then* baptism [10.43-48].

They Preached the Word [Scripture]

- Based on Scripture. 1 Sam. 13 [v.22]. John 1 [v.25]. Psalms 2 & 16 [v.35]. Hab. 1 [v.41].
- We have nothing but the word of God. They did not arrange fun days and BBQs; they preached the word!
- Faith does not result from strong arguments, eloquent persuasion, or sentimental stories. Rom. 10.17.

They Emphasised God [Source]

- Cf. v.17, 21, 23, 30. The gospel is *about* God and comes from the *heart* of God. The “gospel of God” [Rom. 1.1]. Divine in nature. Not learned in Tarsus schools of Gk. philosophy, or at feet of Gamaliel.
- The gospel is not, primarily, for man’s greater happiness. God always acts, firstly, for His own **glory** [Son].

They Focussed on Christ [Subject]

- The gospel concerns the person and work of Christ. His incarnation [v.23]. His name [v.23]. His majesty [v.25]. His innocence [v.28]. His cross [v.29]. His resurrection [v.30]. His purity [v.37]. Preach Christ!

They Appealed to Faith [Salvation]

- Faith in a *risen Christ* [v.39], not in his blood, or his work. Not ‘believing **about**’ [objective facts] but ‘believing **in**’ [John] and ‘believing **on**’ [Paul]. Subjective trust.
- The gospel is never presented as: *give your life* to Christ, *open your heart* to Christ, *make commitment* to Christ. Not confessing sins or saying sinner’s prayer. We are empty, bankrupt, guilty, helpless before God.

Not Satisfied with Success or Defeated by Disappointment [Steadfast]

- Acts 2: Cut to the heart. What shall we do!? 3,000 saved. Acts 10: “*While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*” Acts 13: Nothing. Jews went out of the synagogue. Gentiles begged them to speak again! Then, a week later, some believed.
- Acts 17: When heard of the resurrection, some *mocked* [scoff]. Others, we will hear again. Some believed.
- Acts shows how twelve *ordinary* men, *uneducated* and *untrained* [*idiōtēs*] turned the world upside down.
- Not one of them had a car, or much material wealth. Most were poor [lower class, marginalised]. But by the mighty power of the Spirit and a risen Christ, the message spread from **shore to shore**.
- The challenge to younger generations. Will we carry the banner? Will we seek to spread the gospel?