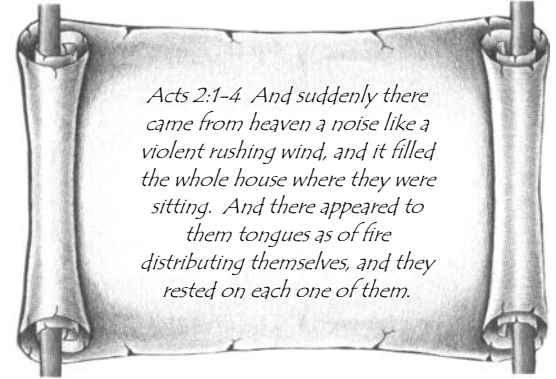
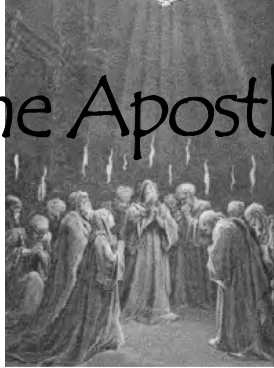


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Session 2

The Apostles Church



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Introduction: The Importance of Church History

"We should read Christian History because Christianity is a historical religion, based on a historical person and the words of two Testaments full of historical accounts." Chris Armstrong

I. Major Events in the Early Church

- 30-32: Pentecost (*Acts 2:1-41*)
- 32-33: Increasing Numbers (*Acts 2:47*)
- 33-34: Stephen Stoning and Persecution (*Acts 8:1-3*)
- 33-34: Saul's Conversion (*Acts 9:1-31*)
- 37-41: Gaius Caligula became emperor of Rome and declared himself a god.
 - 40: Paul went to Jerusalem to consult with Peter (*Gal 1, 18-20*).
- 40-51: Paul traveled to Asia Minor and Cyprus, establishing churches and writing the earliest epistles which would become part of the New Testament canon.
 - 43: Romans under Aulus Plautius invaded Britain. London was founded.
- 44: James, brother of John, was executed by Herod Agrippa I (*Acts 12, 1-3*).
- 47: First recorded use of the term "Christian" occurred in Antioch, Syria.

- 54: Emperess Agrippina had Emperor Claudius murdered and installed her 16-year-old son Nero as the new emperor.
- 55: Peter traveled to Rome where his leadership over the church of Rome established the tradition of the papacy. He has come to be regarded as the first bishop of Rome (pope).
- 64: Roman emperor Nero (37 - 68) accused the Christians of having started the fire which destroyed large sections of Rome, initiating widespread persecution.
- 66: Jews revolted against Roman government (through 70)
- 67: Nero ordered the execution of both Peter and Paul.
- 68: Qumran (Essenes) community was destroyed by Rome. The site of their "Dead Sea Scrolls" would be found in 1949.
- 70: Titus, son of Roman emperor Vespasian, captured and destroyed Jerusalem, destroying the Temple in the process.

II. The Twelve Apostles (& Paul)

- PETER:** Martyred in Rome about 66 AD, during the persecution under Emperor Nero. He was crucified, upside down at his request, since he didn't feel worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.
- ANDREW:** Went to the "land of the man-eaters," in what is now the Soviet Union. Christians there claim him as the first to bring the gospel to their land. He also preached in Asia Minor, and in Greece, where he is said to have been crucified on an X shaped cross.
- "Aigeatis who was the governor of Patros became enraged at Andrew for his preaching and ordered him to stand before the tribunal. When Andrew resisted the tribunal the governor ordered him crucified. Andrew remained tied to the cross with thick tight ropes for three days and his last words were: "Accept me, O Christ Jesus, whom I saw, whom I love, and in whom I am; accept my spirit in peace in your eternal realm."
- JAMES:** Son of Zebedee. By order of Herod Agrippa, he was beheaded in Jerusalem about the feast of Easter, 44 AD.
- "It has been said that when the apostle James was led out to die, a man who had brought false accusations against him walked with him to the place of execution. He had doubtless expected to see James looking pale and frightened but he saw him, instead, bright and joyous, like a conqueror who had won a great battle."
- JOHN:** Son of Zebedee is the only one of the company generally thought to have died a natural death from old age. He was the leader of the church in the Ephesus area and is said to have taken care of Mary the mother of Jesus in his home. During Domitian's persecution in the middle 90's, he was exiled to the island of Patmos. There wrote the book of Revelation. An early Latin tradition has him escaping unhurt after being cast into boiling oil at Rome

PHILIP: Possibly had a powerful ministry in Carthage in North Africa and then in Asia Minor. While in Hierapolis, it is said that the wife of the Roman proconsul was healed by the apostles Philip and Bartholomew, that she became a Christian and that her husband ordered Philip and Bartholomew to be put to death. Philip was imprisoned, severely flogged and later crucified.

BARTHOLOMEW: Had widespread missionary travels attributed to him by tradition: ministering with Philip and escaping death after being arrested with Philip. Then on to India with Thomas, back to Armenia, and also to Ethiopia and Southern Arabia. Honored in Eastern Orthodoxy. Martyred by being flogged to death in 68 AD.

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Believed to have preached the gospel throughout North Africa, from Egypt to Mauritania and even into Britain. Upon leaving Britain, Simon, went to Persia and was martyred there by being sawn in two after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god.

MATTHEW: The tax collector and writer of a Gospel, remained in the Holy Land for 15 years after Ascension – mainly ministering to Jews. Traveled throughout Persia. Ministered in Ethiopia. Accounts having him martyred in Ethiopia - being stabbed to death with a halberd (a pike fitted with an ax head) in Nadabah.

THOMAS: He was called the Twin. Ministered in Babylon, Syria, India and possibly as far as China. Was probably most active in the area east of Syria. Christians of Malabar called themselves "Christians of St. Thomas." While in India, he suffered martyrdom; being killed with a lance by four soldiers. (possibly buried in Mylapore, India, which is now a suburb of Madras).

JAMES: The son of Alphaeus, is one of at least three James referred to in the New Testament. May have ministered in Syria. The Jewish historian Josephus reported that he was stoned and then clubbed to death.

JUDAS / JUDE: Jude was the writer of the epistle of Jude. Was one of the first apostles to leave Jerusalem for a foreign country. Ministered briefly with Bartholomew and Thomas. Spent most of his time in Syria and northern Persia. It is likely that he was martyred there and buried in Kara Kalisa near the Caspian Sea, about 40 miles from Tabriz, in modern day Iran.

JUDAS ISCARIOT: Committed suicide after betraying Jesus.

III. Taking the Gospel to a Complex Culture

Message to the "Religious"

(Acts 13-16-41)

Message to the "Idolators"

(Acts 17-16-31)

What Could Paul take for granted and capitalize on?

1. Belief in One true God.
Acts 13:16
2. Acceptance of the authority of the OT
Acts 13:15
3. Biblically literate
Acts 13:16-35
4. Familiar with concept of Messiah
Acts 13:23,25
5. Obligation to obey the Law of Moses
Acts 13:39
6. Acceptance of the coming Judgment
Acts 13:30-31
7. Familiar with John the Baptist/Jesus
Acts 13:27-30

1. Belief in the spiritual realm.
Acts 17:24-28
2. Experience of Gods care for them
Acts 17:26
3. Sense the uniqueness of human
existence
Acts 17:28
4. Desire for worship
Acts 17:22-23
5. Inadequacy of Idolatry
Acts 17:24-29
6. Sense that we live in a moral
universe
Acts 17:30-31
7. God is greater than human persons
Acts 17:29

IV. Worldview Evangelism

1. RESPECT

How is it possible to respect non-believers?

1. All people bear the image of God
2. We are sinners
3. Not a technique - comes from a new heart of love.

2. UNDERSTANDING WHAT OTHERS BELIEVE

Have to listen.

What is there in their belief system that I can commend?

What are points of commonality that I can speak to and demonstrate how Christ relates to points in their belief system

3. BUILDING BRIDGES

What matches up with a biblical worldview that you can use as bridge to the gospel.
Common yearnings of the heart of everyone - meaning/significance.

4. CLEAR, REASONED PRESENTATION

Paul's speeches both to religious and to pagans reflect thought & study.
This is not at odds with dependence on Holy Spirit - you need insight from the Holy Spirit to make a clear presentation.

5. IMAGINATION & LANGUAGE

Paul used the 'lingo' of each people group. Become familiar with the language of the people you're trying to reach.

6. CHALLENGE

Always an inherent challenge in the presentation of the gospel – both to mind and will.
Paul challenges the mind: To look on Jesus as Messiah & God.
Paul challenges the will: Surrender to Christ for right standing before God.

To Ponder . . . Consider some of the people who are closest to you who are not Christians. How can you apply aspects of Worldview Evangelism this week in these relationships.