

“Christian!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. Reports of Caesarea make to down to headquarters in Jerusalem.
 - 1.1.1. Reports? – Well, Peter is going to retell the story, so let’s just hear it again from him.
- 1.2. How is Peter going to tell them... “I went to Cornelius’s house & ate with Gentiles, because God told me to!”
 - 1.2.1. Have you ever found it difficult explaining something you believe God told you to do?

2. PETER IN JERUSALEM! (1-18)

- 2.1. (3) This is their issue.
- 2.2. (14) **And all your household** – is known as “*people movements*” in missiology.
 - 2.2.1. When a whole family or a whole group makes a decision for Christ is a foreign concept to most of us.
 - 2.2.2. Do you think it’s valid when you hear of it happening today?
 - 2.2.3. Here is why it’s odd to us... **Culture!**
 - 2.2.3.1. In many communities the whole family does what **dad** does.
 - 2.2.4. A few years back they were talking about all the Dalit’s (untouchables) in India possibly coming to the Lord (250 million).
 - 2.2.5. Almost a whole village in Mindanao w/the Bailey’s ministry.
- 2.3. Peter doesn’t try to figure out the **theology** here, instead just tells of his **experience**. (just an ordinary conversation)
 - 2.3.1. Not hearsay but their own experience. (like blind man, “**whether he’s a sinner I don’t know. I was blind, now I see!**”)
 - 2.3.2. Note what he explains why He knew it was God (12,15-17).
- 2.4. One thing this teaches us is when God is doing a “new thing” ...**how to respond!**
 - 2.4.1. **Listen**(get facts, not hearsay), **sit quiet**, **test & hold fast!**
 - 2.4.2. 1 Thes.5:21 **Test all things; hold fast what is good.**
 - 2.4.2.1. Christians need to **test** what they hear and read, by comparing it with the Word of God.
 - 2.4.2.2. This is **difficult**, but it is **possible** for a spiritual believer.
 - 2.4.2.3. Each Christian has the **responsibility** and **ability** to do this.
 - 2.4.2.4. Some have more discernment than others.
 - 2.4.2.5. What is discovered to be **good** (in harmony with what has been given by the Holy Spirit in the Word) should be **retained**.

- 2.5. **Note Peters Trinitarian backup:** [1] **H.S.** came on them, just like us (15)
 [2] **Jesus** said that John baptized w/water, but you should be baptize w/H.S. (16)
 [3] **God** gave the gentiles the same gift (17).

3. **CHRISTIANS IN ANTIOCH! (19-26)**

- 3.1. 2 different churches play the primary role.
- 3.1.1. 1st in **Jerusalem** led by the apostles comprised mainly of Jewish bel's
- 3.1.2. 2nd church in **Antioch**, established by Hellenist (Greek speaking Jews), who had to flee Jerusalem after the martyrdom of Stephen (see Acts 8:4).
- 3.2. **Antioch** (Syria) – 300 miles north of Jerusalem on Med coast.
- 3.2.1. 3rd largest city in Roman Empire (after Rome & Alexandria)
- 3.2.2. Became home of many Jews during the Diaspora(dispersion).
- 3.3. (19) Ralph Winter said, “The 1st **1000 miles** are *insignificant* when compared to the **last 3 feet.**” (i.e. to the Jews only) [They obviously settled in the Jewish quarter]
- 3.3.1. Still is fruitful. Modern parallel, Korean population in L.A. in 1980's & 1990's. So many came, a section of L.A. was designated **Koreatown**.
- 3.3.2. Pastors & evangelist came from Korea to evangelize them w/outstanding success!
- 3.3.2.1. In **Korea**(25% pop Christian); in **L.A.** # of Christians among 1st **generation Korean-Americans** is reportedly nearly 70%.
- 3.3.3. You could say, **they preached the word to none but Koreans only.**
- 3.4. They estimated 500,000 in Antioch at this time. **25,000 were Jews**; no attempt yet to reach **475,000 Gentiles!** (till verse 20!)
- 3.5. (20) They **share their faith**(20), they are **grace-filled**(23), & they are **generous**(29).
- 3.5.1. **What a great definition for any who call themselves Christian!**
- 3.6. The **Antioch church** becomes the great beachhead for launching the mission to the Gentiles. {Paul adopts this church as his spiritual home}
- 3.7. (22) **Don't you love to hear what God is doing in other churches?**
- 3.7.1. I guess it always looks different, but look at his assessment (23).
- 3.8. (23) He witnessed **the Grace of God** there; He was **happy** for them; He encouraged them all (as was his name, & nature); & told them **w/purpose of heart they should continue.** (which means: **he encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts**) (NIV)
- 3.8.1. **I'm doing something odd this week. I'm switching pulpits with Pastor Gary from Revival. This Wed night he'll be here & I'll be there.**
- 3.8.2. **Why?** Well, God spoke to **his heart** to show unity in the valley by having diff pastors fill his pulpit. **For me...**not knowing anything about this, I felt the Lord telling me to switch pulpits one night. I didn't say anything to anybody. 2 days later we got a call from Revival.

- 3.9. (24) Not because of **what he did**, but **who he was!**
- 3.9.1. A **man** of character, all from **within**.
- 3.9.2. The **source** of character, all of **grace**.
- 3.10. We are so apt to associate Pentecost w/**miracles & marvels** that we fail to realize its **power for ordinary life!**
- 3.10.1. I was thinking this week, what if it's "more spiritual" to *hear from the Lord & obey*, **than** to "do a miracle".
- 3.10.1.1. We ask, "why isn't God working in *such in such way* in the church anymore, when He might be trying in ordinary life."
- 3.11. He was a **good man, full of H.S., full of faith**.
- 3.11.1. The need today is **not** so much for **clever men as for good men!**
- 3.11.2. The need today is **not** men full of **themselves** but full of the **H.S.!**
- 3.11.3. The need today is **not** for those who will just **take God** but those who will **take God at His Word**.
- 3.12. (25,26) Barnabas needed help – Paul was near the area, in Cilicia.
- 3.13. (26) **Christian** - Suffix **-ian** = "belonging to, coming from, being involved in, or being like something".
- 3.14. Why not by His personal name, **Jesus-ians**? [He shall save his people from their sins]
- 3.14.1. He desires not **just** **pardoned criminals** but **privileged children!**
- 3.14.2. **Christ** = *anointed one*. [**this anointing which you have received from Him abides in you**. 1 Jn.2:27]
- 3.15. **Names so far have been: Believers**(**Faith** is foundation for all other relationships w/God); **Children**(**Our relationship** - we become children/sons of God thru faith; it states our standing/position); **Disciples**(learners, teachable, under instruction); **Saints**(**Separation** from uncleanness & ordinary life...to God; consecrated to God for **His use**; all true members R called this); **servants**(**His possession**, His slaves); **Faithful**(**Reliance** on God, devoted); **Brethren**(One Father, **common** life, **common** interest, **common** love); **Friends**(**Friend of God** - 1 man called this in OT, Abraham; now applied to all Christians); **Beloved**(Special **personal affection**); **Heirs**(Includes **possession** of all Jesus owns is ours); **His Own**(Special **possession** by God, **protection** by God, **affection** from God); **Christians**(8x's in NT – some say used in derision; **others say** divinely given by God).
- 3.15.1. If you were asked "are you a Christian" could you answer... "I am a **believer in Christ, a child of God, a disciple learning of Christ. A saint consecrated to God, a servant working for Christ. I am faithful to God, one of the brethren & lover of the brethren. One of God's friends, his beloved, His heir, His very own!**" 😊
- 3.16. **Christian** –
- 3.16.1. Unfortunately words take on **other meanings** over time.
- 3.16.2. **Example: Box of Arm & Hammer Baking Soda**. Place in refrig to attract odors.
- 3.16.2.1. Same happens with **words**, they attract odors over the years.

- 3.16.3. **Example:** When a coin has been used so long, its impression is almost effaced.
 3.16.3.1. Words are like coins.
- 3.16.4. **Christian?** A **Jew** might think of Hitler (claimed Christianity at one time)
- 3.16.5. **Christian?** A **Muslim** might think of the Crusades.
- 3.16.6. **Christian?** A **Foreigner** might think of Bill Clinton or Madonna (pre-*Kabala* days) because they are from America. [true story]
- 3.16.7. **Christian?** An **unbeliever** might think of a bad example he/she saw in a name-only Christian.
- 3.16.8. **Joseph Parker** said, “By Christians I understand Christ **followers**, Christ **lovers**, Christ **worshippers**, Christ **ones**.”
- 3.17. If derogatory, then would be like:
- 3.17.1. **Moonies** - referring to the disciples of *Sun Myung Moon*.
- 3.17.2. **Quakers** – officially called "The Society of Friends". When George Fox (founder) was arrested he told the magistrate he should be "*Quaking before the Lord*." Then Justice Bennett responded "Get this **quaker** out of here!"
- 3.17.3. **Methodists** - The term "Methodist" was a *pejorative* term given to a small society of students at Oxford (like the Wesley's) who met together & focused on Bible study and a **methodical approach** to scriptures and Christian living.
- 3.18. NT idea of a **Christian**:
- 3.18.1. Every Christian a **convert**, **no compromisers**;
 Every **convert** an active, aggressive **agent**, **no substitutes**;
 Every **agent** a fully consecrated, intensely vitalized **worker**, **no lukewarm ones**;
 Every **worker** endowed with power from on high.
- 3.19. **How do you like the term Christian today? What term do you like/use now?**
- 3.19.1. I've always liked, "**Follower of Jesus**" instead of the title Christian, because it states "**you're going somewhere, & following someone**".¹

4. **RELIEF IN JUDEA! (27-30)**

- 4.1. (27) A group of **prophets** (like OT "*school of prophets*")
- 4.2. (28) **Agabus** – predicts a famine, which did occur.
 4.2.1. Confirmed by a # of ancient sources including the Roman historian **Suetonius**.
 4.2.2. Even dates it correctly with the chronology of the Roman Empire.
- 4.3. But **verse 29** is why Luke puts this in here. **To show** that the Gentile Christians in Antioch participated in the famine relief effort.
 4.3.1. They were **generous givers!**
- 4.4. They **shared their faith**, they were **grace-filled**, & they are **generous**.
 4.4.1. A church well taught is a church that **lives well**, **works well**, **gives well**.

¹ Greg Kokel used this many years ago.