

The First-Century Church
"The Jerusalem Church -- Problem Solving"

Introduction:

1. We are beginning a series of lessons on "The First-Century Church."
2. By examining information written "to" and "about" various congregations in the Bible, we can learn many practical lessons that relate to the church.
3. These lessons will help us to know the Lord's will for His church today.
4. Lesson 1 is a study of the Jerusalem church with emphasis on its ability to solve problems.
5. The first point we need to make is that . . .

Discussion:

- I. THE JERUSALEM CHURCH CONSISTED OF MANY PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT AREAS AND BACKGROUNDS
 - A. When the Lord's church was established in Jerusalem on Pentecost, people from "every nation under heaven" lived there (Acts 2:5).
 - B. More specific information is given in vs.9-11.
 - C. The size of this new congregation is revealed in vs.41.
 - D. With such a large congregation consisting of people from different areas and backgrounds, problems would arise.
 - E. In order to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), these problems would have to be solved.
 - F. Let us turn our attention to the fact that . . .
- II. THE JERUSALEM CHURCH SOLVED PROBLEMS IN 3 AREAS
 - A. "The Problem of Need"
 1. Some people in Jerusalem were poor.
 2. This problem was solved through the generosity of the members.
 - a. Acts 2:44-45
 - b. Acts 4:32, 34-35
 - c. Acts 4:36-37
 - B. "The Problem of Neglect" (Acts 6:1-7)
 1. Certain widows were neglected, and murmuring resulted (vs.1).
 2. This problem was solved under the leadership of the apostles with cooperation from the members (vs.2-6).
 3. The results are given in vs.7.
 - C. "The Problem of Controversy"
 1. Paul was selected as "the apostle to the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15), and Peter had taught and baptized the first Gentiles (Acts 10).
 2. Some Jewish Christians accepted the conversion of Gentiles (Acts 11:1-4, 18).
 3. However, some Jews insisted that Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved (Acts 15:1).
 4. This issue was brought before the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15:2-5).
 5. This problem was solved (Acts 15:6-29).
 6. The results are given in Acts 15:30-31.

Conclusion:

1. The Jerusalem congregation provides a model for problem solving.
2. Important keys that relate to solving problems in the church include brotherly love, leadership, organization, cooperation, and a commitment to following God's plan.