

Conversions in Acts

"The Church"

Introduction:

1. After Jesus was resurrected and before He ascended to heaven, He gave the Great Commission to the apostles (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8).
2. As Luke showed how this mission was fulfilled in Acts, he also wrote about a number of conversions that occurred.
3. Studying these conversions helps us understand how we become Christians today.
4. As Luke wrote about these conversions, quite often he mentioned "the church."
5. By studying these references we can learn some important information about the Lord's church.

Discussion:

- I. ACCORDING TO ACTS 2, THE CHURCH WAS ESTABLISHED IN JERUSALEM
 - A. During His ministry, Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:13-19).
 1. He would build His church upon the foundation that He is *"the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
 2. *"The gates of Hades"* would not prevent His church from being built.
 3. Jesus spoke about His church and the kingdom of heaven interchangeably.
 4. Jesus gave *"the keys of the kingdom"* to Peter.
 - B. In Acts 2, the occasion was Pentecost (vs.1), and Peter was the main spokesman (vs.14).
 1. Peter showed how Jesus overcame the gates of Hades when He was resurrected (vs.25-32).
 2. Peter declared that Jesus is *"both Lord and Christ"* (vs.36).
 3. Peter revealed *"the keys of the kingdom"* (vs.38).
 - C. The church in Jerusalem consisted of those who were saved (vs.41-47).
 1. This congregation is described in vs.42-47a.
 2. It grew when the Lord added those who were saved to it (vs.47b).
 3. It is mentioned many times in Acts (5:11; 8:1, 3).
- II. AS THE GOSPEL SPREAD FROM JERUSALEM, "CHURCHES" [CONGREGATIONS] WERE ESTABLISHED IN VARIOUS AREAS
 - A. Individual congregations in different cities are mentioned.
 1. A congregation was formed in Antioch (11:19-26).
 2. Luke mentioned the congregation in Caesarea (18:22).
 - B. Congregations in larger areas are also mentioned (9:31; 15:41; 16:5).
 - C. These "churches" were not different religious groups -- men invented "denominationalism" many years later.
 - D. By examining these references to various churches we learn that God wants those who are converted to worship and serve Him in a congregation.
 1. Luke emphasized this pattern as he wrote about people being converted to the Lord.
 2. Paul's example in Acts 9:26 also confirms this point.