

JERUSALEM, A GOOD MODEL

Int.

1. Aim: To show the example of the church at Jerusalem so we can learn how to live today.
2. Acts 2:42-47
 - a. Jerusalem was the first church
 - b. It had been predicted that the birth place of the church would be here - I sa.2:2-3
 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, [that] the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
3. From this prophecy we learn:
 - (1) That Jehovah's house was to be established in Jerusalem
 - (2) Jehovah's house would be exalted and all nations would flow into it
 - (3) The time of the fulfillment would be in the latter days:
4. Paul in 1 Tim. 3:15 speaks of "The house of God which is the church of the living God"... and this shows that Jehovah's house is the church - and we learn when and where this church was to be established. In Jerusalem in the latter days.
5. Jesus said: Luke 24:46,47 "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

- a. The church that is the model church began in Jerusalem
 - b. It was the day of Pentecost - The first members were the Jews
6. Our battle cry should be "Back to Jerusalem." It is our model, example, or pattern in ...

Discussion

I. GREAT LEADERSHIP

- A. No congregation has had such good leadership at its beginning, or at any other time in their history
 1. Jesus had selected 12 men to be Apostles
 - a. Jesus tutored and trained them for about 3 years
 - b. They were the best that could be found
 - c. Judas allowed himself to be tempted by his love for money and "by transgression fell" - Acts 1:5 - Judas was replaced by Matthias. Acts 1:26
 2. Eph. 2:20
 - a. EPH 2:20 "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;"
 - b. The apostles had to be proven to be holy and without blame
 - c. They were in the foundation of the church
 - d. It was not until after his ascension that He placed the apostles in the church.
 3. There could be no better way a church could start with such good leadership
- B. We must have good leadership like the Jerusalem church - Acts 15:2
 1. Elders and Deacons, teachers, preachers
 2. Qualifications are given - I Tim. 3 Tit.1 - Doctrine, family, life
 3. Encourage and uphold those who are our leaders

4. Preachers have certain qualifications they must meet:
 - a. 1 Tim. 4:12
 - b. Be an Example
 - c. Practice what we preach
5. Instill a desire in young men to aim to be leaders - train them and teach them
6. A church must have good leaders like the church in Jerusalem

II. **IT WAS A POPULAR CHURCH**

- A. Acts 2:47 "Praising God and having favour with all the people..."
 1. Lk. 2:52 - same word as used about Jesus "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."
 2. We use the word "popular" in a good sense
 3. All unprejudiced and thoughtful people in Jerusalem spoke well of the church
 4. No one can find fault with genuine christian living.
- B. Same ought to be true of the church today
 1. Some think we ought to be cranky and ugly and repulsive to everyone in order to be sound and faithful
 2. To present the church exactly as our Lord desires it to be, will provoke admiration from the thoughtful unprejudiced people of today
 3. Do not have to be ugly and rude to be godly

III. CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE RIGHT THING

- A. Acts 2:42 "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers."
1. The devil is always busy trying to lead us astray - as he was the early church
 2. But they remained steadfast in the faith
 - a. Steadfast = to persevere, be constantly diligent
 - b. Doctrine - teaching the truth
 - c. Fellowship - love for one another
 - d. Breaking of Bread - Lord's supper
 - e. Prayers -devout, sincere, dependent upon God
- B. We must remain steadfast in the church today
1. When we are baptized into Christ we are started on the way to heaven
 2. But if we get there we must "continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,..." Col. 1:23
 3. **I Tim. 1:3** "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,"
 4. **1 Cor. 15:58** "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - a. Steadfast = be settled
 - b. Unmoveable = negative of to move away, let nothing shake your faith, let nothing move you away from the hope of the gospel

5. Must abide in the teaching of the Lord and avoid false teachers -
 - a. I Jn. 4:1 " Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - b. I Thes. 5:21 "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

IV. IT WAS UNITED

- A. They were a united congregation
 1. Acts 4:32a "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul:..."
 2. As one body possesses one heart and one soul, so this first body, the church
 3. This was an answer to the prayer of Jesus - Jn. 17:20,21 "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
- B. Every congregation should strive to follow the example of the Jerusalem Church about unity
 1. Eph. 4:3 "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
 2. Ps. 133:1 "Behold, how good and how pleasant [it is] for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

V. THEY WERE A SUCCESSFUL CHURCH

- A. Acts 2:47 "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 1. They taught daily - Acts 5:42 "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." - they were growing
 2. Since the Lord added daily they must have had daily converts.

- B. We need to model this church after that first church
1. Teach daily - from house to house - Then we could have daily converts
 2. We can't have converts without teaching. It is not done in any other way.
 3. We need to have every member being evangelistic - teach others the gospel
 4. Acts 8:4 - "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 5. Not necessary to have a formal gathering to baptize - Acts 8 Philip & Eunuch
 6. The First church grew by multitudes in the early years because they taught the lost !

VI. THE JERUSALEM CHURCH HAD CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- A. Our Lord exercised strict discipline in that first church
1. Acts 5:1-11 - Ananias and Sapphira
 2. They were not commanded to sell anything, but they volunteered to do so.
 3. It was wrong for them to lie about what they had given - slain by the Lord
- B. Discipline must be practiced in the church today
1. The commands are plain and plentiful -
 - a. II Thes. 3:6 "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - b. Rm. 16:17,18 "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - c. I Cor. 5:1-11

2. The church will grow and prosper if we do what the Lord says
3. Acts 5:11,14 great fear came on the church, but it did not die, it multiplied

VII. THEY HELPED EACH OTHER

A. They fed their hungry and clothed their naked

1. Acts 4:32 & 34-35 "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any [of them] that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses **sold them**, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid [them] down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."
2. They were taught that they were all members one of another - sold possessions
3. Rm. 12:5 "So we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

B. The church today must be involved in caring for each other

1. Gal. 6:10 "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
2. Be known as a caring church - widows, orphans, sick, bereaved, needy, poor, downtrodden, lonely, broken hearted

Conclusion

1. The church at Jerusalem was composed of ordinary people who heard and obeyed the gospel. They were dedicated workers in the church.
2. These people were happy doing the will of God for we read in Acts 2:46 "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with **gladness and singleness of heart,**"
 - a. Gladness of heart
 - b. Christians should be the happiest people on earth - we are redeemed, reconciled, and we will be rewarded !
3. Let us look at the model church in Jerusalem and learn how to have a great congregation for God:
 - a. Good leadership - qualified men
 - b. Popular - respected by the people
 - c. Steadfast in doctrine and living
 - d. United - in love for one another
 - e. Successful - taught the gospel daily
 - f. Practiced discipline
 - g. Helped each other
4. The Church at Jerusalem lasted about 37 years from - AD 33 to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.
 - a. It was not a perfect church - but it was a good church -faithful to God
 - b. We can learn from their example of what the church today should do.
5. We are 32 years old and growing - we must continue to remain true to the word !

Sermon by Arthur Pigman - June 24, 2007 Sunday Morning
Evans Church of Christ
515 Gibbs Road
Evans, Ga. 30809
706-855-1249
arthurpigman@cybrtyme.com
www.evansgachurchofchrist.org