

LESSON FOUR

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

A. DEFINITION OF THE APOSTOLIC GOSPEL:

Scriptural References:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship... " (Acts 2:42).

The gospel is "good news" of Salvation. The word "apostolic" simply refers to the apostles. Therefore, the term, "Apostolic Gospel" means the good news of Salvation which the Apostles preached.

Jesus spoke of "this gospel of the kingdom" which shall be preached in all the world. Again He said that "repentance and remission of sins" should be preached in his name among all nations. We may conclude the "gospel of the kingdom" is the message of "repentance and remission of sin" which must be preached in the Name of Jesus. This is the message that the apostles preached and therefore is the APOSTOLIC GOSPEL.

B. THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM:

Scriptural Reference:

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19).

Some may think that the Apostle Peter has literal keys and will stand at the gates of heaven to open to those who enter. This is far from the truth. The keys spoken of here are gospel keys. To Peter was committed the trust of preaching the gospel which would unlock the door of salvation to the unsaved. He used these keys upon three occasions:

1. To the Jews - Acts 2:38.
2. To the Samaritans - Acts 8:14-17.
3. To the Gentiles - Acts 10:44.

Since the Apostle Peter had the Gospel Keys which would unlock the door of salvation to the Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles, we should study closely the message that he preached.

C. THE JEWS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST:

Scriptural Reference:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

The Jews on the day of Pentecost were saved by believing and obey- ing the APOSTOLIC GOSPEL.

In order for Jesus to provide salvation it was necessary for Him: (1) To die; (2) Be buried; and (3) To rise again. Death, Burial and Resurrection are also essential in the receiving of Salvation. In order to be saved we must be identified with Christ in Death, Burial and Resurrection. This is exactly what the message Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, brought forth.

Death	-	Repentance.
Burial	-	Water Baptism in Jesus Name.
Resurrection	-	Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

In Acts 2:38 the Apostle Peter turned the key and opened the door of salvation to the Jews and three thousand souls were saved. This is still the message that saves today.

D. THE SAMARITANS:

Scriptural Reference:

"For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:16-17).

As we study chapter eight we shall see clearly just how the Samaritans were saved:

Faith	-	verse 12.
Baptism	-	verse 12.
Receiving the Holy Ghost	-	verse 17.

E. THE GENTILES:

Scriptural References:

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word." (Acts 10:44).

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48).

In the salvation of Cornelius and his household there were the same three steps taken as the Jews (chapter two) and the Samaritans (chapter eight):

Believed on Jesus	-	verse 43.
Received the Holy Ghost	-	verse 44.
Baptized in the name of the Lord	-	verse 48.

Attention should be given to verse 43 where Peter definitely states that remission of sins would be received by whosoever believeth in him THROUGH HIS NAME. What is His name? There can be only one answer - JESUS. When can a person receive this benefit THROUGH HIS NAME? Again there can be only one answer - when one is baptized in the name of JESUS.

F. THE ENTRANCE OF THE KINGDOM:

Scriptural References:

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

"Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16).

"... God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

The Kingdom of God during the church dispensation is not a material kingdom but a spiritual kingdom. It is Jesus reigning in the hearts of His saints. Actually when Jesus sits upon the throne of a man's heart, He reigns far more effectively than if He were reigning in a material kingdom. As He reigns in a man's heart, He has control over a man's desires, ambitions and emotions. Thus He is able to reign fully and His will is obeyed completely.

It is evident that entrance to the Kingdom of God is through the new birth, the work of regeneration, the act of being completely changed, transferred from one kingdom to another. We may understand the requirements of entrance when we study the gospel message preached by the Apostle Peter, to whom was given the keys to the Kingdom.

The Apostolic Gospel brings out clearly and emphatically that there is only one King who is Jesus our Lord. The truth of the Deity of Jesus and the power of His Name are essentials in the message to be preached to a lost world.

G. THERE IS ONLY ONE CHURCH:

Scriptural References:

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4-5).

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (I Corinthians 12:13).

There are hundreds of church organizations and denominations but there is only one church.

The church is ONE as far as place, area or distance is concerned. The church is ONE as far as race and nationality is concerned. The church is ONE as far as time is concerned. Members of the church living today are members of the same church as the apostles. It is the same and one church whether the members are living today on earth, or have died in the Lord; whether they lived in the days of the Apostles, during the dark ages, in the days of the reformers, or in these closing days of time.

She is the ONE and same church. Therefore, it is the apostolic church which must be waiting to be raptured when Jesus comes.

It is the APOSTOLIC GOSPEL which we find preached throughout the book of Acts and which still MUST BE PREACHED TODAY.

LESSON FOUR

SELF HELP TEST

A. Write a definition of the "APOSTOLIC GOSPEL."

B. What were the keys that Jesus gave Peter?

C. State the THREE times that Peter used the keys:

1.

2.

3.

D. Write a paragraph explaining clearly how a man may enter the Kingdom of God.