

# Local Churches In The N.T. #2

## Jerusalem

### Introduction:

- A. Today, we are going to examine the church at Jerusalem.
  - 1. We should be able to see in it what God expects in every local church.

## I. Jerusalem's Local Identity.

- A. Their earliest identifications:
  - 1. Simply identified as Believers – Acts 2:44; 5:14.
  - 2. They were added to the Universal church... – Acts 2:47.
  - 3. ...but later recognized as a Local church – Acts 5:11; Acts 15:4,
  - 4. They were called disciples – Acts 6:7; 9:26.
  - 5. They were identified as saints – Acts 9:13.
  - 6. They were recognized as brethren – Acts 6:3; 9:30.
- B. They were later distinguished from other Local churches.
  - 1. By the time of the persecutions there were other Local churches.
    - a. Those scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word – Acts 8:4.
    - b. Other Local churches were being organized in Judea, Samaria and Syria – Acts 8, 9:10,25,31.
  - 2. From that time forward, the church at Jerusalem was self-identified – Acts 8:1; 11:22.
    - a. Either stated or understood from the context – cf. Acts 12:1; 15:4,22.
    - b. Later they are called the saints at Jerusalem – Rom.15:25,26.
- C. The Jerusalem church became an entity separate and apart from other Local churches.

## II. The Jerusalem Church In Its Infancy.

- A. From the beginning they worshiped God.
  - 1. Acts 2:42-- "*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.*"
- B. They were together and had all things common – Acts 2:44,45.
  - 1. They saw to each other's needs – Acts 2:45; 4:34-37.
  - 2. This was done out of a heart of love for their brethren.
  - 3. This sacrifice on the part of the members of this church reduced them to poverty.
- C. They were united in thought and practice – Acts 2:46; 4:32.
  - 1. One accord - united – Acts 4:23,24.
- D. They depended upon the Lord for strength.
  - 1. They affirmed their commitment to the Lord – Acts 4:19,20.
  - 2. They asked for boldness – Acts 4:29,30.
  - 3. They believed in prayer – Acts 12:12.
- E. They were disciplined by the hand of God – cf. Acts 5:1-11.
- F. They were active in proclaiming the word – Acts 5:12-14,42.

## III. The Jerusalem Church Developing.

- A. Developing self-sufficiency.
  - 1. At first all matters were seen to by the apostles.
  - 2. Changes came when the Apostles instructed them to appoint men to serve the tables – cf. Acts 6:2-4.
  - 3. There appears to have been a period of time when the church was being weaned from the apostles – cf. Acts 9:26-30.
- B. Developing the Local organization.
  - 1. At what point in time they first appointed elders, we do not know.
  - 2. By about 44 AD there are elders in Judea – Acts 11:29,30.
    - a. This does not prove the church in Jerusalem itself had elders.
  - 3. By 49 AD the church in Jerusalem did have elders – cf. Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23.
  - 4. Nine years later the church still had elders – Acts 21:18.
- C. Developing the missionary spirit.
  - 1. When persecutions came they went everywhere preaching the word – cf. Acts 8:1-4.

2. Their involvement grew after the conversion of the Gentiles.
  - a. Barnabas was sent out to Antioch by the church at Jerusalem – cf.Acts 11:22.
  - b. They sent Judas and Silas with the Jerusalem Conference Epistle – cf.Acts 15:27.

#### **IV. The Jerusalem Church In Maturity.**

- A. Not much known after the Jerusalem Conference (49 AD).
  1. Unless the book of Hebrews was addressed to them.
- B. The Jerusalem conference give us some insight.
  1. The church was fully organized.
  2. They were willing to listen to both sides of an issue.
  3. They permitted the whole church to hear the issue – cf.Acts 15:22.
  4. They were willing to heed the teaching of the Holy Spirit.
  5. They readily marked the false teachers – cf.Acts 15:24.
  6. And accepted responsibility to the extent they sent some men to correct the matter – cf.Acts 15:27.

#### Conclusion:

- A. The Jerusalem church never attained unto the prominence of other local churches.