

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 03 Dec 2017 Acts 13 The Gospel Message
- 2) 10 Dec Acts 14 Misguided Worship**
- 3) 17 Dec Acts 15a Available to ALL
- 4) 24 Dec Luke 2 Christmas – The Promised One
- 5) 31 Dec Acts 15b Strengthened
- 6) 01 Jan 2018 Acts 16 A changed Family
- 7) 07 Jan Acts 17 The Unknown Known
- 8) 14 Jan Ps 139 Sanctity of Life – Value ALL
- 9) 21 Jan Acts 18-19 Incomplete Picture
- 10) 28 Jan Acts 20-21 Delivered
- 11) 04 Feb Acts 22-25 The Testimony
- 12) 11 Feb Acts 26-27 Answering Critics
- 13) 18 Feb Acts 28 Always on Mission

INTRODUCTION

- Paul and Barnabas continued to speak “in such a manner” that a large number of people believed in Christ. WOW!
- We also see that it was qualified church leaders (elders) who selected other church leaders from within the local congregation.

Passage	Comments
Acts 14:8-10; 14:20-22	<p>Healing of a Lame Man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One would think that healing someone would invoke only good reactions – but no good deed goes unpunished at times... Ps 109:4-5 • Lesson to be Learned. Never be naïve and think everyone will understand your biblical actions. Expect to be maligned, misunderstood, & persecuted, just as Jesus was – because that is what He promised John 15:20
Acts 14:23	<p>Elders Appointed Elders in Every Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To do this verse justice would take several lessons by itself • This single verse is a powerful principle in Scripture that is overlooked by many churches today, but it should not be glossed over • In brief, what does the Bible say about who should select the Elders/Pastors/Shepherds/Bishops for God’s churches? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is it God? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it other Elders? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it the Church body? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it a committee of nice people? <input type="checkbox"/> Or, are there alternatives?... Acts 20:28 • There are 2 main positions on this issue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Congregational-ruled churches believe the church body, as a whole, determines who their next Pastor is ♦ Elder-ruled churches have elders select the next Pastor
<p>Note 1: If you read enough Christian tabloids, newsletters, books, and blogs there seems to be within the Southern Baptist camp, at least since the 1990s, some momentum to move from congregational-rule to elder-rule or elder-led type of polity (church style of governing). Every pundit skillfully articulates their position and quotes their favorite passages of scripture to justify their stance. What is a layman to do?</p> <p>Note 2: Honestly, Scripture leans toward elder-rule. Consider how deacons were selected (assuming the 7 men in Acts 6 were deacons): Elders told the church what the qualifications were and the church brought their selections back to the elders for approval and anointing. Paul even told Titus and Timothy (other elders) what deacon and elder qualifications they were to look for. It does seem odd for a church to rely on the majority to make tough spiritual decisions, when the majority are not spiritually mature, and who are easily manipulated – for “wisdom comes with age” [Job 12:12].</p> <p>Note 3: That being said, however, Scripture is not dogmatic about how a church should govern themselves. A church could be elder-led, elder-ruled, congregationally-governed, or a host of other types of hybrid rule, yet God is still able and willing to bless each church no matter how they choose to govern themselves as long as His sheep are fed and cared for; they are growing spiritually, they evangelize the lost, and they foster peace and unity within their ranks with truth & love.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whatever you bind/loose on earth will be bound/loosed in Heaven; and if two or more agree together it shall be done for them</i> – IOW, God honors our governing decisions which do not violate His direct will or mandates Matthew 18:18-19 <p>Note 4: Even if the 7 churches identified in Revelation 2 & 3 had the “right” church polity (whatever it was), more than half of them suffered severe problems from being dead (Sardis); lacking love (Ephesus), holding to false doctrines (Pergamum); tolerating immorality (Thyatira), and having wealth but no zeal (Laodicea).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their type of church polity had nothing to do with causing or fixing the problems they had. The common denominator was not the style of governing they had, but the sinful nature of the people within their church body – and even of the leaders. <p>Remember – a church is only as good as its leaders – i.e., their Elders!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the bulk of God’s people are obedient and love Him with all of their heart, soul, and mind, and their neighbors as themselves, then it does not matter what style of leadership we have in place. After all, Paul told Timothy that rules, by-laws, and constitutions were not made for the righteous but for the disobedient..... 1Tim 1:9 	
Acts 14:2-7; 14:11-19	<p>They Spoke in Such a Manner that Many Believed!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why don’t we have more details of how they spoke so we can emulate it & potentially save many ourselves? • Consider This. The Gospel message is not a packaged sermon or a memorized set of passages. Yes, we need to be knowledgeable of the Gospel, but like Paul and Barnabas, we need to know our audience, and in all situations, we need to be flexible, gentle, accurate, and, even BOLD – knowing that we could still be crucified! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ For Jewish audiences, Paul began w/ Moses or Abraham ♦ For Gentile audiences, Paul began at Genesis 1 by declaring that God was the creator of all things Acts 17:24 • And Consider This. Paul & Barnabas had success here in vs 1, but as they continued to boldly proclaim the Gospel they ran into problems. They divided the city, they got ran out of town, and Paul got stoned – Just a typical day for a bold Christian
The Ugly side of Mobs	<p>Mob Rule: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv2-6. Sometimes it is other religious elements who stir up trouble for those who are faithfully preaching the Gospel • Other times, the antagonists of the Gospel are unbelievers who just don’t want to hear the truth Acts 16:22 • In both cases, Gospel blindness was the culprit, and Christians were not going to win the day – Instead, they would suffer pain and loss <p>Most of the Time Christians Do Not Do Well with Mobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses tangled with mobs of malcontents amongst his own people for 40 years. Sometimes he won, one time he lost bad (Meribah). Christians have not fared much better: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Stephen got stoned to death ♦ Paul was almost stoned to death ♦ Even Jesus had to escape from one mob out to do him harm, only to die at the hands of a mob John 4:28-30 • Mobs don’t think logically – led by emotions, they want their way NOW. The simple-minded believe everything Pr 14:15 • Mobs are often irrational. Caught up in the frenzy – they can react violently (street mobs) and unbiblically (church mobs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Illustrations: Salem witch trials, lynchings, race riots • Even in Christian churches, crowds can be spun up by manipulative means, such as by emotional appeals & politicking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Logic goes out the window, and chaos reigns. BUT, remember, God is not the author of confusion..... 1Cor 14:23
The Good Side of Mobs	<p>Mob Rule Can Work in Favor of the Believer</p> <p>Sometimes a few lone voices can bring order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeremiah was saved from the mob by one lone voice Jer 38:7-13 • Another time, Jeremiah was apprehended and was about to be executed when men of reason defended him (the officials and all the people told the priests and prophets to back off) Jer 26:16-17 • Jeremiah’s Rule of Thumb for dealing with crowds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Don’t Buckle Under Pressure..... Jer 26:8-13 • Nehemiah used mob intimidation to make things right. He set up a great assembly against the rich rulers..... Neh 5:16-13 • Apostle Paul was saved several times from mob violence (e.g., an unnamed town clerk in Ephesus)..... Acts 19:35-41 • Church troubles do allow good ones to rise to the top 1Cor 11:19
How Do We Keep from Being Controlled by a Mob?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not follow the masses in doing evil Exodus 23:2 • Know the issues – Know the Bible – Know who are the Wicked and who are the Righteous Mal 3:18 • If you need more time to discern the right course of action (e.g., taking action against an elder), then opt to slow the process down
Acts 14:24-28	<p>Encouragement and Time are Key Elements to Christian Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must make time to visit others & “declare all that God has done” • And we must receive encouragement and give encouragement • How can we do a better job in this area?

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / CONSIDERATIONS

- The one big question modern day churches of every persuasion need to ask themselves is, “**Are we a Family or are we a Business?**”
 - ♦ If we are a family, we will look after each other, and have each other’s backs as we promote God’s teachings inside & outside the church
 - ♦ If we are more of a business, then watch out for politicking and mob control in the ugly sense of the word

NEXT WEEK: Acts 15. Legalism is alive and well, and even the most eminent of Apostles can have a bad day.

