

Acts Class 8 Notes

Acts Chapter and verse:

10.9 Peter prays at "the 6th hour," i.e. he keeps the hours of prayer that we still have to this day in the Orthodox Church. In the Church, the first hour of the day is 7am, the 3rd hour 9am, 6th hour is noon, and the 9th hour is 3pm. Thereafter we also have corresponding hours "of the night," the first hour of the night being 7pm, etc.

10.13ff. 10.13: A command comes to transgress the literal meaning of a former commandment, which was a command of fulfilled type in Christ--God has the power to cleanse what was formerly called unclean. St. Peter objects (.14), but Christ says what God has cleansed you must not call common (.15).

10.20--God sends messengers even to the chief Apostles.

10.28--"God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."--and interesting statement in the debate over whether women should enter the Church during "unclean" periods.

10.34-35 10.34-35 "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." St. Clement of Alexandria states "the same nature exists in every race, and the same virtue." God shows no partiality with regard to nationality or ethnic origin!

10.38 Christ is the Greek and Messiah the Hebrew for "the Anointed," referring to Christ's appointed leadership over God's people by virtue of being God the Word incarnate. Of necessity the word "Christ" refers us to the Father, who anoints, and to the Holy Spirit, with whom Christ is anointed.

10.39 "We are witnesses," lit. martyrs of all things which Christ did

10.40 God raised Jesus, and "showed him openly, not to all people, but to witnesses chosen before God," that is, to those that knew Him.

10.47 As with the Ethiopian who asked a similar question in chap. 8.38, so also St. Peter here says "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which

have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" Note here that they had, to some degree, the Holy Spirit even before Baptism. The Holy Spirit needs to be present in some manner to incline the heart to the Baptism and toward the Church.

10.48 There is a question here as to whether they were Baptized in the name of Jesus only, or in the name of the Trinity. St. Ambrose says that it is not to worry, for even the name of Christ instantly affirms not only the Son, who is the Anointed, but of necessity the Anointer, who is the Father, and the Anointment, the Holy Spirit, as we just read in 10.38, that God the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit.

Listen to St. Bede the Venerable on this matter: "Since the rule of the Church is that the faithful are baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, a question arises as to how it is that in the whole text of this book Luke bears witness of the giving of Baptism only in the name of Jesus Christ. The blessed Ambrose resolves this question as follows: 'Through the unity of the name the mystery is completed. If you say "Christ," you have designated at the same time God the Father, by whom the Son was anointed, and the Son who was himself anointed, and the Spirit with whom he was anointed, for it is written, 'Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit'....Hence, as authority may be joined to reason, scripture indicates that we can also properly be baptized in the Spirit when it says, "but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit." And the Apostle says, "For in one body we were all baptized into one Spirit." According to another way of looking at the question, it is particularly appropriate for us to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, since, as the Apostle says, "All of us who have been baptized in Christ Jesus have been baptized in His death, and so forth" (St. Bede the Venerable, citing also St. Ambrose of Milan). Thus we see that it was valid at the time of the Apostles to baptize thusly.

Of course, the more heresies that arose, particularly those that would affirm the name of Jesus, but would deny the Holy Trinity, called for a stricter application of the rule. As we see even in the Apostolic canons "If any bishop, or presbyter, contrary to the ordinance of the Lord, does not baptize into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but into three Unoriginate beings, or three Sons, or three Comforters, let him be deposed" (Can.49). And likewise Canon 50: "If any bishop or presbyter does not perform the one initiation with three immersions, but with giving one immersion only, into the death of the Lord, let him be deposed. For the Lord said not, Baptize into my death, but 'Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'"

But after all of this, I will offer a more simple explanation based upon the text,

that seems a little more evident to the Greek Fathers. Linguistic ambiguity. If someone were to say they went about collecting taxes "in the name of Caesar," they would simply mean that it was on the authority of Caesar. But when the Empire was divided into different regions, even though they would have been said to go out in the name of Caesar, the actual formula would read something like this: "I order you to pay taxes by the authority of the Emperor (Name), the Co-Emperor (Name), and the Co-Emperor (Name)."

They did everything in His name, for our Lord Himself said that whatever is asked in His name shall be given (Jn 14.13). Therefore, they did everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, not that that was the formula (For St. John C. in his commentary on Acts on this chapter says simply that they were commanded to be baptized with the baptism that we were baptized with, i.e Trinitarian), but that we do everything in His name that is good. We give alms in the name of Jesus, we pray in the name of Jesus (not that we neglect the Trinitarian formula, but we approach in the name of the Lord), we fast in the name of Jesus. That is to say, they made it clear that this Trinitarian baptism, prayers, etc. were done in the authority (hence "the name of"

11.1 "The Gentiles received the Word of God."

11.2 Peter gets into a contention with the "party of the circumcision", i.e. those who thought that the observances which had strictly typical significance and were fulfilled in Christ should still be observed according to the law, even though they had been perfectly fulfilled in the recapitulation of the human race, which is our Lord Jesus Christ.

11.5ff St. Peter was given a vision by God, showing him that the divisions between Jews and Gentiles are erased in the Church. This goes together with Acts 15 See notes on **Judaism**.

11.15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning"--i.e. the mystery of Pentecost made present to the new believers!

11.26 "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch"--it is amazing that the native Christianity of the land remains Orthodox Christianity to this day, despite pressures exerted for centuries from the outside. Praise the Lord! In any case, the followers of Christ are given the name Christian, which being dissected comes from the Greek Christos (Christ) and the Latin ianus (lit. "belonging to"), and thus

Christians are literally "those who belong to Christ."

11.29 The model of the early Church is the model for the Church today, that "the disciples [i.e. all of the faithful], each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea." .30--they sent it to the elders [lit. presbyters] by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. As of yet, Sts. Paul and Barnabas are not ordained to full Apostolic authority (cf. Acts 13.3). They seem to function here as perhaps deacons, in that they are tending to 'serving tables' as the original 7 deacons of Acts did, but this is not certain.

