

Lifting Up The STANDARD

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

Issue 13

Are We Guilty of Proof Texting Concerning The Local Church? - Acts Ch.3



“Together In The Temple”

Acts 3:1

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.”

To suggest this portion of Scripture has anything to do with the Battle of Jericho we would need to take it totally out of context. The same thing is true concerning the local church.

Again, we will emphasize that does not mean the local churches were not underway, it simply means this chapter is focusing on another subject.

Let us look at what takes place in this chapter.

Verse 1

Peter and John went to the temple at 3 P.M.

Verses 2-8

They healed a lame man at the temple.

Verses 9-11

This caught the attention of “all the people.”

Verses 12-26

Peter saw an opportunity to preach.

Peter challenged Israel with the fact they had rejected their Messiah.

Verse 13,

“whom ye delivered up, and denied.”

Verse 14,

“ye denied the Holy One.”

Verse 15,

“And killed the Prince.”

Verse 17,

“I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”

Verse 19,

“The times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

Peter’s Message

1. Peter referred to “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers.”
2. He referred to Christ as “the Holy One” (v.14). Israel’s **Messiah** is referred to as the “Holy One” **forty times** in the Word of God.

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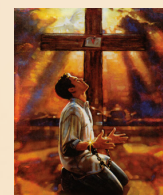
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4. He referred to Christ as their **“Prince.”** (Someone in line for the throne) (V.5).
3. Peter said they did it through **“ignorance.”**

Israel’s Old Testament Law About Ignorance

In Leviticus 4:2, Moses was commanded of God concerning what he was to do if the children of Israel should **“sin through ignorance.”** Peter referred his Jewish listeners to that Scripture.

Peter’s Jewish Listeners Understood This Provision For Israel

- **Leviticus 4:2**, *“If a soul shall sin through ignorance.”*
- **Leviticus 4:13**, *“if...Israel sin through ignorance.”*
- **Leviticus 4:22**, *“...hath sinned...through ignorance.”*
- **Leviticus 4:27**, *“If...people sin through ignorance.”*
- **Leviticus 5:15**, *“If...sin through ignorance.”*
- **Leviticus 5:18**, *“atonement concerning his ignorance.”*
- **Numbers 15:24**, *“if ought be committed by ignorance.”*
- **Numbers 15:25**, *“it shall be forgiven...for it is ignorance.”*
- **Numbers 15:25**, *“their sin offering... for their ignorance.”*
- **Numbers 15:26**, *“forgiven...the people were in ignorance.”*
- **Numbers 15:27**, *“And if any soul sin through ignorance.”*
- **Numbers 15:28**, *“atonement...sinneth by ignorance.”*
- **Numbers 15:29**, *“law for him that sinneth through ignorance.”*

Peter said,

“I wot that through ignorance ye did it” (V.17).

The nation of Israel had a way out of their dilemma. They could use this section of the Law and still receive their Messiah.



No Law About Ignorance In The Local Church Age

Paul makes that comparison in Acts 17:30 where he said,

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”

Peter continued saying if Israel would repent as a nation the **“times of refreshing shall come.”**

Verse 19,

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

(See Isaiah 35)

Peter said that God would send Christ, their Messiah to them.

Verse 20,

“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.”

Peter reminds them that they were children of the covenant.

Verse 25,

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”

“The Princes Were Ignorant”

First Corinthians 2:7,8 says,

“none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

The **nation** of Israel had, **“sinned through ignorance”** and according to Old Testament Law, because they did it in ignorance, the **nation** could repent and still be

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used of God to bring the Gospel to the Gentile world. Below are only a few of the places where princes are mentioned in Israel.

- **Numbers 1:44**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **Numbers 7:2**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **Numbers 7:84**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **First Chronicles 22:17**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **First Chronicles 23:2**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **First Chronicles 28:1**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **Second Chronicles 12:6**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **Second Chronicles 21:4**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **Ezekiel 19:1**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **Ezekiel 21:12**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **Ezekiel 22:6**, “*princes of Israel.*”
- **Second Chronicles 12:5**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Second Chronicles 22:8**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Second Chronicles 24:17**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Nehemiah 12:3**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Nehemiah 12:32**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Psalms 68:27**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Jeremiah 24:1**, “*the princes of Judah.*”
- **Jeremiah 26:10**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Jeremiah 29:2**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Jeremiah 34:19**, “*princes of Judah.*”
- **Jeremiah 52:10**, “*princes of Judah.*”

Once again, we see the focus is not on the local church it is totally on the Nation of Israel. We do not have any *princes* in the local church age.

Are We Proof Texting From Acts Chapter Three?

1. It is very obvious if we study the Bible rather than commentaries that the focus of Acts chapter three is on the Temple in Jerusalem, the miracle concerning the healing of the cripple, and the comments made by Peter.
2. Peter's comments were all directed to the Nation of Israel

and their relationship with their Messiah.

3. Because the nation had killed their “*Prince*” in ignorance they could have taken advantage of the Old Testament Law that allowed them a pardon when they “*sin through ignorance.*”
4. Peter challenged Israel to remember the covenant God had made with the nation when he said, “*Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed*” (Verse 26).

Nothing Peter said had anything in common with local church doctrine.

1. There is no record of anyone trusting Christ as their personal Saviour in this chapter.
2. There is no focus whatsoever on the local church in Acts chapter three.

This does not mean that local churches were not meeting. It simply means we must take these Scriptures totally out of context if we are going to apply them to the local church.

The Offer For The Kingdom Was Made By The Trinity

The Father sent John the Baptist to Israel to prepare the way of the Messiah. They beheaded him.

The Son Himself presented the Nation of Israel with the kingdom. They crucified Him.

The Holy Spirit offered the kingdom to Israel as recorded in the first part of the Book of Acts. We have seen in an earlier article that the Holy Spirit was in charge of everything that was happening in the Book of Acts. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit the kingdom was offered to Israel by Peter and finally by Stephen in Acts chapter six.

Concerning Stephen's words we read “*And they were not able to resist the wisdom and **the Spirit by which he spake***” (Acts 6:10). Israel rejected the Father, the Son and finally the Holy Spirit. They murdered Stephen and for two-thousand years have suffered the consequences of rejecting their King.

It has no doubt become obvious to the readers of this series of articles that I believe that Christians were assembling during the ministry of Christ on this earth. I also believe the day of Pentecost had absolutely nothing to do with the establishing of the local church age; however, **I might be wrong!** We must all determine what we believe is right, but we should be very careful not to proof text to promote what we believe is right.

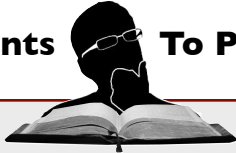
In our next article we will look at the fact that “*as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet.*” (Acts 4:31).

Why did they start doing that and why did they stop?

Three times to this point we read “*they were with one accord.*” It didn't last long. Soon we read, “*there arose a murmuring*” (Acts 6:1).



Points To Ponder



Have You Ever Wondered...

How did multitudes of people who were saved during the ministry of Christ survived spiritually, if they were not meeting in local churches?

How did all the churches throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria have rest after Paul was saved if there were no churches meeting before he was saved?
(Acts 9:31)

Why did Peter say be baptized for the remission of sins?
(Acts 2:37,38)

Why did Peter tell his listeners that they would receive the Holy Ghost *after* they were baptized?
(Acts 2:38)

Why at least seven years, and more probably twelve years after the day of Pentecost, did Peter tell Cornelius it was *"unlawful"* for him to fellowship with Gentiles?
(Acts 10:28)

Why at least seven years, and more probably twelve years after the day of Pentecost, were the apostles at Jerusalem upset with Peter for meeting with Cornelius?
(Acts 11:1-3)

Why did Ananias and Sapphira die for lying when Cain, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Isaac, all the sons of Jacob, Laban, Rahab, Saul, Gehazi, and others lied and were not put to death?
(Acts 5:5,10)

The Reality, The Reason And The Recovery From Discouragement



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Hymns Written By P.B. Bliss



Almost Persuaded

In the early 1870's, Mr. Bliss was listening to a sermon by Rev. Brundage, a friend of his, in a little church in the east. The preacher closed his appeal with, *"He who is almost persuaded is almost saved. But, to be almost saved is to be eternally lost!"* These words impressed Bliss so deeply that it led him to write this great hymn.

Hold the Fort

In 1864, General Hood, during the Civil War, was successful in harassing Colonel Sherman's Army from the rear, thereby delaying its advance to the objective. As the situation looked hopeless they saw a white flag waving on a distant mountain twenty miles away signaling this message, *"Hold the Fort! I am coming. Sherman."* Three hours later the enemy had to retreat as the reinforcements came. In May, 1870, at a special Sunday School meeting in Rockford, Illinois, Whittle's telling of this story greatly moved Bliss. The next day in a Chicago YMCA meeting, Mr. Bliss wrote a chorus on a blackboard and sang for them extemporaneously. The audience joined in and the effect was electric.

Jesus Loves Even Me

One night, Mr. Bliss, weary after many days of labor in downtown Chicago, was resting at the Whittle home at 43 South Street. His heart was overflowing with joy and he sat meditating upon Romans 5:5. As he meditated and prayed, with tears in his eyes, he took pencil and paper and wrote, *"I am so glad that our Father in Heaven, Tells of His love in the Book He has given..."*

Let the Lower Lights be Burning

On occasion, Mr. Bliss would travel with Moody and be a participant at his meetings. One time Mr. Moody was telling the story of a shipwreck in one of his messages. On a dark stormy night, a large passenger boat cautiously edged toward the Cleveland harbor. The pilot knew that he could only find the harbor channel by keeping two lower shore lights in line with the main beacon. *"Are you sure this is Cleveland?"* asked the captain. *"Quite sure, Sir,"* replied the pilot. *"Where are the lower lights?"* he asked. *"Gone out, Sir!"* was the reply. The pilot turned the wheel, but in the darkness, he missed the channel. The boat crashed on the rocks and many lives were lost that night. Mr. Moody's closing words were, *"Brethren, the Master will take care of the great lighthouse; let us keep the lower lights burning."* At the next meeting with Mr. Moody, Mr. Bliss sang this song... *Let the Lower Lights Be Burning*. It was published in 1874. It is said that this was the favorite hymn of Billy Sunday.