

# CHRISTIANITY - THE FIRST 100 YEARS

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The Old Testament Prophets Told of the Church
  - A. Isaiah 2:1-2
  - B. Micah 4
  - C. Daniel 2
  - D. I Tim. 3:15
  
2. Church Established on Pentecost Following the Ascension
  - A. First announcement of the plan of salvation
  - B. First sermon in the Christian Age
  - C. 3,000 Jews from around the Mediterranean Sea were baptized
  
3. The World was Truly the Field
  - A. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-
  - B. Within 50 years there was a church in every major city
  - C. Within 300 years Christianity had conquered the known world

## I. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF THIS RAPID SPREAD?

1. Persecution by Jews Scattered Primitive Churches
  - A. Went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4)
  
2. Universal Peace and Universal Language
  - A. Roman legions stretched from Brittan to India
  - B. From the Black Sea to the Atlantic
  - C. The armies of Alexander spread Koine Greek
    1. Most perfect language ever devised
    2. Lingua franca on the empire
  
3. The Apostles Had Seen the Risen Lord
  - A. Peter preached with power on Pentecost

- B. The resurrection was prominent in New Testament preaching
4. The Early Church Looked for the Immediate Return of Christ
    - A. They were not in love with the present age
    - B. They looked for a better world
    - C. They willingly went to their deaths
  5. The Person and Influence of the Apostle Paul
    - A. Every few hundred years a giant marches across the sands of time:
      1. In the Old Testament there was Noah, Abraham, Moses
      2. In history: Alexander the Great, Mohammed, Napoleon
    - B. To Paul the world was the field
      1. Paul was cosmopolitan:
        - a. Jew by birth
        - b. Pharisee by religion
        - c. Greek by environment
        - d. Roman by citizenship
        - e. A persistent persecutor
        - f. A profound penitent
        - g. A powerful preacher
        - h. A patient prisoner
      2. Traveled over 12,000 miles, established most New Testament churches, and wrote over half of the New Testament
        - a. In all this he could plead a physical handicap
      3. At life's end great churches stretched from Jerusalem to Rome

## II. AS THE SECOND CENTURY DAWNED THE APOSTASY WAS UNDERWAY

1. The Apostles Warned of This in Their Writings
  - A. Paul, Peter, and John (i.e. I Tim. 4)

- B. Person of Christ Replaced By the Church
  - 1. System of sacraments negates grace
  - 2. Salvation comes through the church
- C. Compromise With Prevailing Beliefs
  - 1. Later Catholicism/Orthodoxy was to be a mixture of Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity
  - 2. Church and State were to be united
    - a. Thus the seeds of self destruction were sown
    - b. Church was to become politically powerful
    - c. No longer the church of Christ
- D. Beginnings of a fundamental change in Christianity, both in form and substance, to take place over the next 200 years

III. OUR TASK IS TO REPRODUCE THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

- 1. The Teachings of the Master Must Be Made Relevant to the Present
- 2. This Calls Forth the Best in Us All: The Paul Within Each of Us

CONCLUSION: The painful lesson of history teaches us the sure danger and folly of drifting away. THE GOSPEL IS IN EARTHEN VESSELS.

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BY

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Transcribed from a handwritten manuscript by Scott Tinker, November 6, 2006