

# Those Who Believed

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## INTRODUCTION

Beginnings are often significant. On a personal level, couples remember that first look, their first date, and the first song they shared. On a political level, those who respect the ideals on which our nation is established are concerned with upholding the original intent of the constitution. On a spiritual level, those who respect the Word of God are mindful of His divine pattern for the home (as set forth in Genesis 2) and for the church (as revealed in the New Testament). To this end, let us consider lessons that may be drawn from Acts 2:41-47, which offers an inspired description of “those who believed.”

*Acts 2:41-47 (NASB95) — 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

## BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS

Those who believed were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:18-22).

*Acts 2:37-38 (NASB95) — 37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

*Acts 22:16 (NASB95) — 16 ‘Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’*

*Romans 6:3-4 (NASB95) — 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

*1 Peter 3:18-22 (NASB95) — 18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, 20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. 21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.*

## **HEIRS OF GOD'S PROMISE**

Those who believed were heirs of God's promise (Acts 2:39; Gen. 12:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Eph. 2:13-18).

*Acts 2:39 (NASB95) — 39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."*

*Genesis 12:1-3 (NASB95) — 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*

*Joel 2:28-32 (NASB95) — 28 "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. 30 "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. 31 "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 32 "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the Lord has said, Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.*

*Ephesians 2:13-18 (NASB95) — 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; 18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.*

## **ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR SALVATION**

Those who believed were active participants in their salvation (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 2 Pet. 1:4-11).

*Acts 2:40 (NASB95) — 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”*

*Philippians 2:12-13 (NASB95) — 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

*1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NASB95) — 2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,*

*2 Peter 1:4-11 (NASB95) — 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.*

## **ADDED TO THE CHURCH**

Those who believed were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47; Matt. 16:15-19; Eph. 3:8-12).

*Acts 2:41 (NASB95) — 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

*Acts 2:47 (NASB95) — 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

*Matthew 16:15-19 (NASB95) — 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”*

*Ephesians 3:8-12 (NASB95) — 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.*

## **CONTINUALLY DEVOTED TO WORSHIP**

Those who believed were continually devoted to worship (Acts 2:42; John 4:23-24; Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 13:15).

*Acts 2:42 (NASB95) — 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

*John 4:23-24 (NASB95) — 23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

*Romans 12:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

*Hebrews 13:15 (NASB95) — 15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

## **IMPRESSED BY THE EVIDENCE**

Those who believed were impressed by the evidence of inspiration (Acts 2:43; 8:4-24; John 3:1-2; Heb. 2:1-4).

*Acts 2:43 (NASB95) — 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.*

*Acts 8:4-24 (NASB95) — 4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. 6 The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. 7 For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 So there was much rejoicing in that city. 9 Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; 10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." 11 And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. 13 Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. 14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give*

*this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” 20 But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 “You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 “Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 “For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.” 24 But Simon answered and said, “Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.”*

*John 3:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”*

*Hebrews 2:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

## **DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER**

Those who believed were devoted to one another (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; Rom. 15:26-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

*Acts 2:44-45 (NASB95) — 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.*

*Acts 4:32-37 (NASB95) — 32 And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles’ feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need. 36 Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), 37 and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.*

*Romans 15:26-27 (NASB95) — 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.*

*1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.*

## **CONTINUED IN PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP**

Those who believed continued in physical and spiritual fellowship (Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:19-25).

*Acts 2:46-47 (NASB95) — 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

*Acts 5:42 (NASB95) — 42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

*Hebrews 3:12-13 (NASB95) — 12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

*Hebrews 10:19-25 (NASB95) — 19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

## **CONCLUSION**

Recognizing the importance of the Biblical pattern, let us remain faithful (2 Tim. 3:14-17). With imperfect men, starting efforts are often flawed, subject to revision and improvement. However, as followers of One whose law is perfect, whose testimonies are sure, whose precepts are right, and whose commandments are pure, we can have absolute confidence that His ways are true and trustworthy (Psa. 19:7-9). With the Lord, His beginning efforts are pristine and perfect, not needing adjustment or modification, but remaining eternally valid (Psa. 119:160; Prov. 30:5-6).

*2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NASB95) — 14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

*Psalms 19:7-9 (NASB95) — 7 The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;*

*The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.*

*Psalm 119:160 (NASB95) — 160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.*

*Proverbs 30:5-6 (NASB95) — 5 Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6 Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.*