

# IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, we discover: A God-honoring life was <u>expected</u>, not merely <u>suagested</u>! This included doing good works, along with everything else that comes with the New Covenant's changes in one's nature. Good works and other godly character traits: It was their EXPECTATION – they said it was needed, and they looked for it. It was their CONDUCT – what they did; and

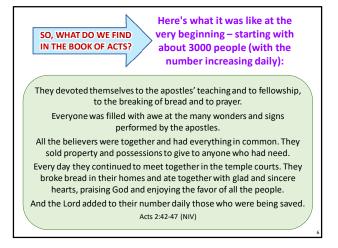
- if they didn't do it, the others did
  - NOT consider them "saved."



TODAY, people have lowered their standards and

expectations for claiming a person is "saved."





# WHAT CAN WE OBSERVE FROM ACTS 2:42-47?

### FIRST, we must note that this passage contains <u>no commands</u>! This was their <u>response</u> to

accepting the Good News!

- A strong desire to live and grow as the body of Christ.
   ✓ Learning Scripture and its significance to life.
  - ✓ A God-focused interaction with other Christians.

# • Taking care of each other.

 With such interaction, they knew who had genuine needs.

### Fellowship and joy.

Interacting with each other and with "outsiders."
 Having God as an integral part of their daily lives.

### Some observations about this situation:

- They didn't spend *all* their time in a "church building" (which, for them, was the temple).
  - ✓ It was still an important part of their lives.
  - They were eager to grow in their salvation.
  - ✓ When they were at the temple, it wasn't necessarily <u>all</u> <u>3000 people</u> at the same time! However, some of these things <u>can't</u> occur without <u>aroup</u> interaction.

# They didn't cease to do "daily living."

✓ But God became an integral part of it.
 ✓ Interacting with other Christians also became an important part of daily life.

### OUR FOCUS IS ON WHAT THE <u>PEOPLE</u> DID.

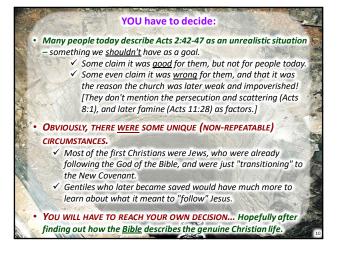
- There are certain things they didn't do, but others did.
  - ✓ <u>The apostles</u> performed signs and wonders.
     ✓ <u>God</u> saved people. (A few days later, there were 5000
  - people doing this.)

### An important question:

• Most of these people were Jews. They <u>already</u> knew much about Godly living from the Old Testament (unlike Gentiles, who would be saved at a later date).

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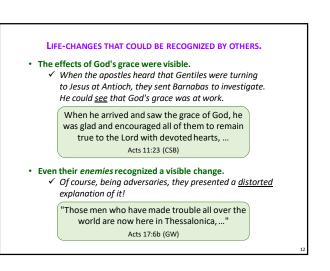
- So THE QUESTION IS: When the Good News was given to the Gentiles, <u>did the standards change</u>?
  - After all, they didn't know as much about such matters as did the Jews.
- AND THE ANSWER IS: There was NO change in standards.
   ✓ In fact, there are more verses written to the <u>Gentiles</u> that stress the need for visible evidence, than to the Jews (who already understood what was expected of them).

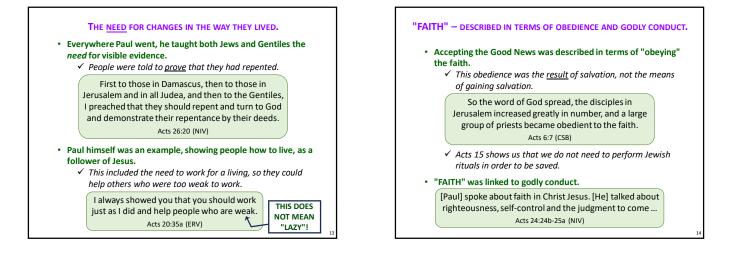


### In Acts: Salvation resulted in visible changes.

### VISIBLE GROWTH IN THEIR FAITH AND LOVE.

- A strong desire to *live* and *grow* as the body of Christ; taking care of each other; fellowship and joy – *Acts* 2:42-47 (the passage we just looked at).
  - ✓ Another example of this in Acts 4:23-37.
  - These things continued until persecution scattered the Christians. But there is no evidence that it <u>ended</u> once the scattering occurred – though it had to change in some ways (such as it would involve smaller groups).
- Their love was evident in how they helped each other. It was an ongoing way of life – many examples in the book of Acts.
   ✓ One example: Dorcas made clothes for the needy
  - widows; she was always helping the poor Acts 9:36-39.



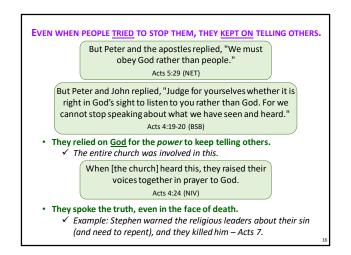




- They "honored" God's Word by the way they lived Acts 13:48. They held its message in high esteem and obeyed it.
- They shared the Good News wherever they went examples throughout the book of Acts.
- Nothing stopped them. If people didn't want to hear it, they shared it with others.

The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. But the Jewish leaders ... stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium.

Acts 13:49-51 (NIV)



### PERSECUTION DID NOT STOP THEM.

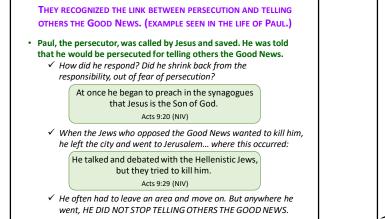
✓ When those who killed Stephen started persecuting the other Christians, the Christians responded by telling <u>others</u> the Good News!

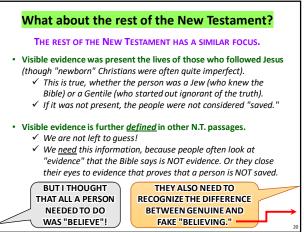
On that day widespread persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. Most believers, except the apostles, were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ... The believers who were scattered went from place to place, where they spread the word. Acts 8:1b, 4 (GW)

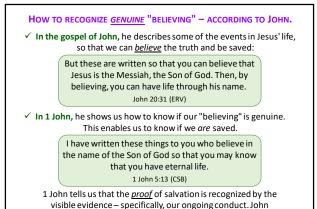
 $\checkmark\,$  From the beginning, they relied on God's power to keep going.

When [the church] heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. ...

Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Acts 4:24, 29 (NIV) In Acts: Persecution was considered a normal part of following Jesus. (Jesus had told them it would be that way... and they believed him.) THIS FACT INFLUENCED THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD PERSECUTION. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Acts 5:41 (BSB) After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, ... About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, ... Acts 16:23a, 25a (NIV)

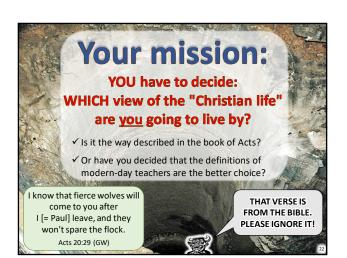


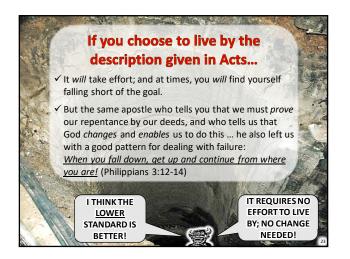




warns us that claims to salvation without this evidence

merely proves we are *liars*. (1 John 1:6, 10; 2:4 4:20; etc.)





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