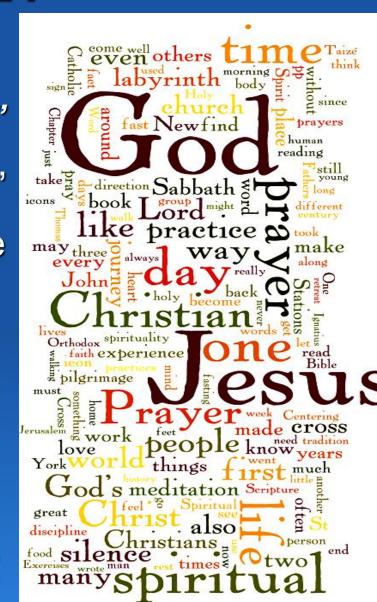


- Acts is the bridge that spans two eras: the Old and New Testaments
- > The bridge is a 100% Jewish bridge
- > All writers of the OT were Jews (Hebrews)
- > All writers of the NT were Jews (except for Luke)

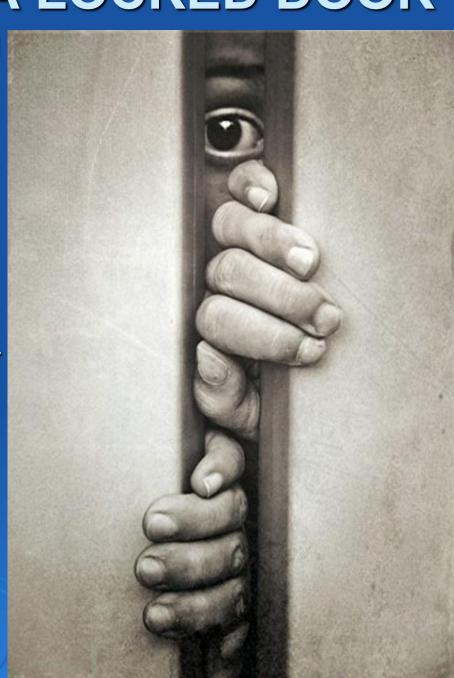
### WHY DO WE BELIEVE WHAT WE BELIEVE?

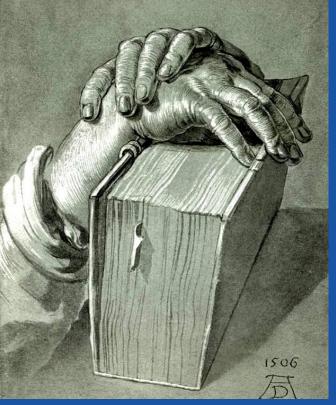
- Dr. Robert McGee "...we have to pause and seriously examine why we believe what we believe..."
- No longer a search for the truth, but rather an effort to uphold and defend a particular doctrine
- Mysteries of Biblical prophecy are still playing out
- Progressive revelation causes unexpected twists and turns
- Apologetics = arguments and justifications in favor of certain religious doctrines



#### CRACKING OPEN A LOCKED DOOR

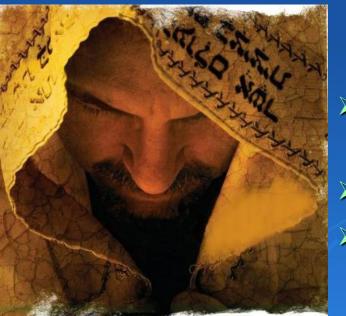
- Let's not miss what God is doing
- Key to the door:
- 1) understand the ancient people of the Bible
- 2) know their times and mindsets
- 3) grasp the intention of their words
- 4) Recognize the context of their circumstances
- Spiritual maturity shows us that God's principles aren't so straightforward or easy to apply as we thought in our youth
- No one knows all the truth because God keeps revealing more





# BIBLE GUARANTEES IF WE SEEK, WE WILL FIND THE TRUTH

- Truth will set us free from the bondage to sin
- Freedom does not come from customary manmade doctrines
- Jesus Christ was a hereditary, genealogical, cultural Jew whose name was Yeshua
- Religion of the Jews was Judaism, but not called that in Bible times
- Judaism consisted of many factions
- Distinct split between Holy Land Jews and Diaspora Jews



#### SYNAGOGUE AND TEMPLE AS RIVALS

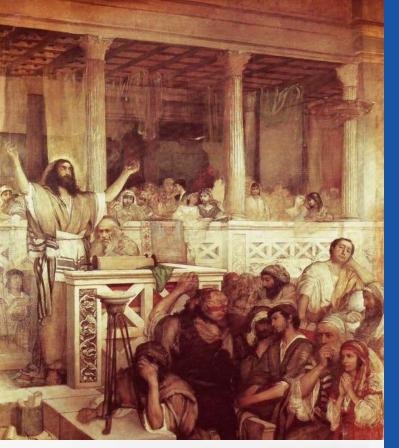
- Factional splits played an important role in the NT stories & outcomes
- Sadducees and Pharisees were the 2 primary social/religious/political parties of the era
- The Synagogue was the center of everyday Jewish life
- Most Diaspora Jews never went to the Temple; too far away
- Yeshua and His followers, and all regular Jews, were products of the Synagogue, not of the Temple







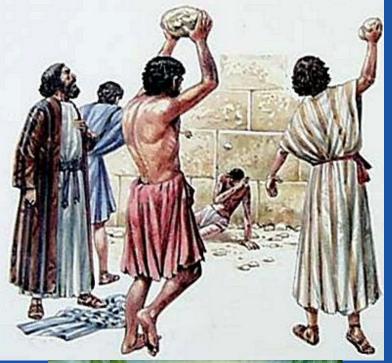
- Halakhah = merging and mingling of Biblical Torah, Traditions and ancient customs
- Hellenist Believers vs. Hebrew Believers
- A thoroughly gentile Roman world
- Diaspora Jews adapted to their gentile surroundings and began looking more and more like their gentile neighbors
- Holy Land Jews more pious, and stayed more apart from gentiles

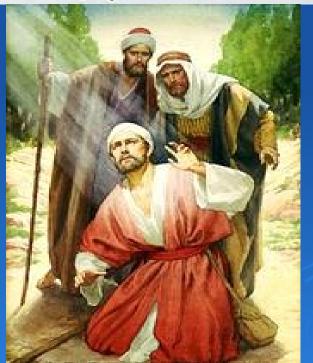




### NOT THE MESSIAH THEY EXPECTED

- Traditions taught the Jews to expect a liberator
- Yeshua turned out not to be a military leader
- His kingdom would, for now, be spiritual, not physical
- Despite His presence and miracles, it didn't sway most Jews from their expectations
- Disciples all continued in their traditional Jewish ways
- Peter and the disciples used Pentecost as a springboard to preach the Gospel to other Jews





### PAUL APPEARS ON THE SCENE

- Stephen a Greek-speaking Samaritan Jewish Believer
- Wrongly convicted by Sanhedrin and stoned to death
- Believers fled Jerusalem
- Paul sent after some Believers who fled to Damascus
- His encounter with Christ turned him into a zealous Believer

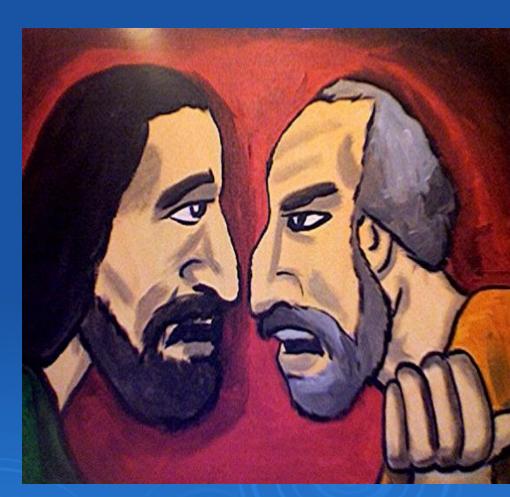


## GENTILES RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Peter and James the leaders of The Way
- Cornelius is visited by an angel
- Peter receives a vision
- God told Peter to stop calling gentiles unclean
- God created gentiles common, not unclean
- A second Pentecost, this time upon gentiles
- Peter ambivalent about circumcision for gentiles, Paul outspoken against it

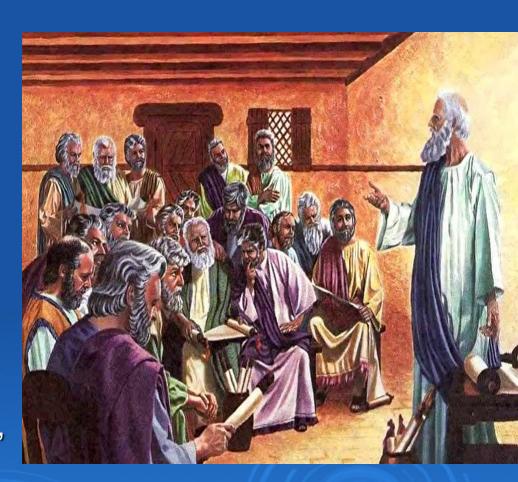
## ACTS CHAPTER 11: THE CIRCUMCISION FACTION

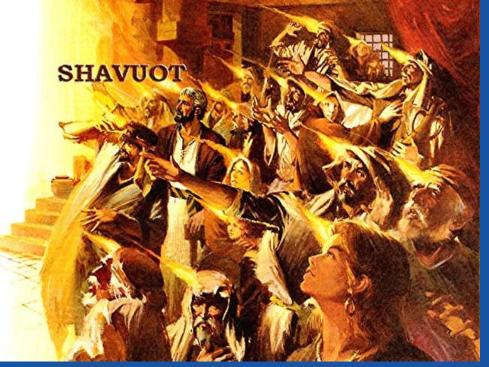
- Circumcision faction felt that new gentile Believers still needed to be circumcised
- Circumcision meant to convert and become a Jew
- Peter understood God's message, but he was only 1 man
- The issue was one of ritual purity, and that Peter had voluntarily subjected himself to defilement by visiting a gentile and eating with him
- "The uncircumcised" = gentile

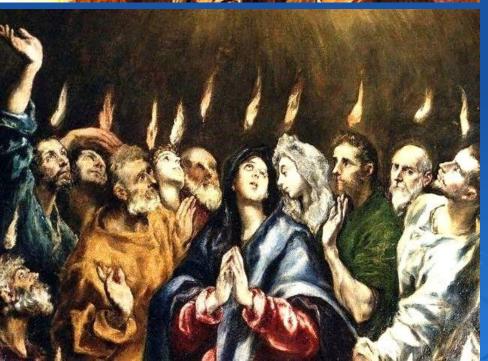


### THE ISSUE IS ALWAYS RITUAL PURITY WITH GENTILES

- In Acts 15, the provisions placed on the gentile Believers was about ritual purity
- Peter repeats his story of the vision in Jerusalem as his defense
- Acts 11:9 "Stop treating as common what God has made clean"
- God created gentiles clean
- Only Judaism had declared gentiles as unclean
- Gentile Believers not "stuck" at the "common" spiritual status......God can elevate them to "holy" status







#### GOD'S DOING, NOT PETER'S

- The visible coming of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem was the signal for the mission to begin for the Jews
- It was the same for the gentiles in Caesarea Maritima with Cornelius
- Peter took the same attitude as Gamaliel
- > Acts 5:38, 39