



Conducted by
Frank Worgan

1. "Was Paul a married man?"

The thought that Paul may have been a married man may seem strange at first; but we have to consider it as a possibility.

- a) He certainly claimed the *right* to be married when he wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:5).
- b) When he wrote that letter, he was undoubtedly, without a wife (See 1 Cor. 7:8).
- c) The real heart of the question is whether this was because his wife was dead and he was, therefore, a widower, or whether his wife had divorced him when he became a Christian.

That his wife rejected *him* when he rejected *Judaism* is a distinct possibility - a virtual certainty - because this is what commonly happened. Any Jew or Jewess who became a Christian would certainly be:-

- 1) excommunicated from the Temple,
- 2) ostracised from formal society.
- 3) rejected by family and friends.
- 4) and if married, divorce would almost certainly follow.

Thus, it is very likely that Paul was, at first, rejected by his ultra-orthodox Pharisee family when he became a Christian. Phil. 3:4-5 revealed just how 'orthodox' his upbringing must have been. Only towards the end of his ministry do we find mention that some of his relatives had become Christians (Rom. 16:7).

d) I do not think that there is any serious doubt that he was a member of the Sanhedrin *before* he became a Christian, because, when Acts 8:1 states that he was '*consenting*' to the death of Stephen, it means that he '*cast his vote*' in favour of Stephen's death. In fact, he states this in Acts 26:10.

This implies his membership in the Sanhedrin, and it is true that one could not be a member of the Council under the age of 30, or unmarried. Indeed, Judaism taught that

an unmarried man '*diminishes the divine image*' in the world. And, '*a man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, without good*'. Rabbi Eleazar said, "A man who has no wife is not even a man, as it is stated; 'Male and female He created them and He named *them* 'man' " (Gen. 5:2).

The answer to the question therefore, must be: At one time Paul was married, but, by the time he wrote 1st Cor. 7:8 he was no longer a married man.

2. "*Was Barnabas an apostle? A brother has said that he was!*"

Whoever said that Barnabas was an apostle should have explained that there are three sorts of apostles mentioned in the N.T. The word itself, '*apostolos*', simply means '*one sent*'.

1) Because Jesus was sent by God, he is described as "*the apostle and high priest of our confession*". Heb. 3:1.

2) During His ministry He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve, "*whom He named apostles*". The twelve were apostles of Christ, because He chose them and sent them out.

3) In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit instructed the Church at Antioch to "*set apart for me Barnabas and Saul . . .*", and the Church prayed and fasted and sent them out.

In Acts 14:14 it is recorded, "*when the apostles, BARNABAS and Saul heard . . .*"

Barnabas was not an apostle in the same sense as the Twelve; that is. He was not an apostle of Christ; because he did not meet the qualifications.

a) He had not accompanied Christ from the time of John's baptism;

b) was not a witness of the resurrection;

c) had not been chosen by Christ personally.

But he was an apostle of the Church at Antioch in Syria, because they sent him out; and it was to that Church that Paul and Barnabas reported at the end of that First Missionary Journey.

3. "*When did the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit?*"

Acts 8 records that the Samaritans believed and obeyed the Gospel preached by Philip.

We may be sure that, because they identified themselves with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus by being baptised into Him, they received the promised gift - the '*dorea*', - that is, the '*free gift*' - of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:38.

Bear in mind that, contrary to what some teach, this promise was not only given to the Jews, but also '*to all who are afar off*' - a phrase which any Jew would recognise as referring to Gentiles. This is, in fact, how Paul describes the Ephesians in Eph. 2:13.

But, when Peter and John came from Jerusalem and realised that the Samaritians had '*received the word*', they laid hands upon the converts, to impart something extra - a spiritual gift.

In accordance with Acts 2:38 and 5:32, everyone who believes and is baptised receives '*the gift of the Holy Spirit*' - i.e., the Spirit as an indwelling Presence. But the apostles had the power to lay hands on people and, in this way, to impart miraculous powers.

Romans 1:11 refers to this apostolic power, in the letter Paul wrote to the Church at Rome, which, up to that time, he had not visited. How would he impart the gift? Read 2nd Tim. 1:6.

We must remember that those on whom the apostles laid their hands did not themselves have the power to impart spiritual gifts to others. For instance, Philip the evangelist had the power to perform miracles (Acts 6:6). But he did not have the authority to pass on this power to those Samaritans who had obeyed the Gospel and

who, obviously, had received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. The apostles in Jerusalem, therefore '*sent down Peter and John*', who, having assured themselves of the genuineness of the Samaritan conversions, laid hands on them, and the effect was that Simon '*saw that by the laying on of the hands of the apostle the Spirit was given*'.

Furthermore, since the qualifications required of those who became an apostle of Christ, as revealed in Acts 1:21-22, make it impossible for them to have successors, that authority and power died with the original apostles.

I do not think there is any other conclusion to which we can arrive other than to say that all who obey the Gospel receive the gift of the Spirit, but, in N.T. times, there was a special endowment of the Spirit (I use that word for want of a better!) which was received by the imposition of apostolic hands.

This passage, Acts 8:5-19, reveals that the Samaritans received both the '*dorea*' - God's free gift of the Spirit, and the extra '*charisma*' - the grace-gifts - at the hands of the apostles.

*(All questions please to: Frank Worgan, 5 Gryfebank Way, Houston,
Renfrewshire, Scotland PA6 7NZ)*