

Crises in the Church at Jerusalem

Acts 8:1

Introduction:

- A. The church at Jerusalem was the first and only church for a year or so.
 - 1. How pleasant it must have been to be a part of it!
 - a. To have enjoyed that closeness! (Acts 2:44, 46)
 - b. To have enjoyed that growth! (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 6:6,7).
 - c. To have enjoyed that popularity! (Acts 2:47).
 - 2. How trying it must have been to face the crises that soon came!
- B. Studying the six *crises* in the church at Jerusalem should help us to deal with modern problems:

Discussion:

- I. The Crisis of Rapid Growth. (2:41, 47; 4:4).**
 - A. Created a problem of indoctrination. (Cf. Acts 5:42).
 - B. Created a problem with envy and persecution. (Acts 4:1-4, 14-22).
- II. The Crisis of Material Need.**
 - A. Met it by liberality and sacrifice on part of members. (Acts 2:44,45; 4:34-35).
 - B. Met it with own possessions and resources - did not beg the world.
- III. The Crisis of Internal Sin. (5:1-13)**
 - A. Problem solved by discipline
 - 1. In this case, it was direct divine discipline.
 - 2. In later cases, by divinely instructed discipline. (Cf. Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3; Tit. 2:10).
 - B. Discipline produced four good effects:
 - 1. Fear came upon the church (v. 11).
 - 2. Church was united (v. 12).
 - 3. The *rest* dared not join them (v. 13)
 - a. Who were the *rest*? Likely rest of rich and great like Ananias (Barnes)
 - b. At any rate, the idea seems to be that the uncommitted were deterred.
 - 4. The believers were increasingly added (v. 14).
- IV. The Crisis of Partiality and Neglect. (6:1-6).**
 - A. Problem produced another problem - complaining.
 - B. Problem solved by appointed seven men - all with Grecian or Hellenists names.
 - C. Problem not solved by taking apostles away from their work of teaching & preaching.
 - D. Problem solved within frame work of the church.
- V. The Crisis of Persecution (8:1).**
 - A. Endured by putting God's will first. (4:19,20).
 - B. Borne by "looking steadfastly into heaven" (7:55 KJV).
 - C. Overruled by God's providence. (8:4).
- VI. The Crisis of Doctrinal Controversy. (15:1-5).**
 - A. Was not settled by compromise. (Cf. Gal. 2:1-5).
 - B. Was not settled by brotherhood consensus.
 - C. Settled with open discussion (vs. 6,7).
 - D. Settled by words of the Holy Spirit (v. 28).

Conclusion:

- A. We cannot expect the church to be problem free (cf. 1 Cor. 11:19).
- B. We can meet and solve our problems with a steadfast faith in Christ and His word.