

The Birth of the Christian Church

Course Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. The Context
- III. The Jewish Tradition
 - a. Judaism and Christianity (Suggested reading: *Our Father Abraham* by Marvin R. Wilson)
 - i. Jesus
 - ii. Early converts and church leaders
 - b. Jerusalem: Center of Institutionalized Judaism (Suggested reading: *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias)
 - i. The temple system
 - 1. Socio/economic Structures
 - 2. Political Structures
 - 3. Religious Structures
 - c. Jesus' threat to this system
 - d. The pilgrim festivals (Suggested reading: *First Christians* by Paul L. Maier)
 - i. Passover
 - ii. The Festival of Weeks (Pentecost)
 - iii. The Feast of Booths
- IV. The Event: The Birth of the Christian Church (Suggested reading: *The Message of Acts* by John Stott)
 - a. The setting
 - i. Upper Room
 - ii. The 120 followers of Christ
 - b. The descent of the dove: Acts 2:1-13 (NIV) (Suggested reading: *Commentary on Acts* by F.F. Bruce)
 - i. External marks
 - ii. Internal marks

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- c. The results
 - i. Some mocked
 - ii. Others believed
 - iii. Others persecuted
- V. The Aftermath: Life in the Jerusalem Church
 - a. Makeup of the Jerusalem Church
 - i. Hebrews
 - ii. Hellenists
 - iii. Proselytes
 - iv. God-fearers
 - b. Tensions within the Jerusalem Church
 - i. The sharing of possessions: Ananias and Sapphira
 - ii. The “Distribution”
 - iii. Jerusalem Jews
 - 1. Dependent on temple
 - 2. Traditional
 - 3. Cultured
 - 4. Cool and calculating
 - 5. Legalistic
 - iv. Galileans
 - 1. Self-supporting
 - 2. Independent spirits
 - 3. Simpler way of life
 - 4. Hot-tempered
 - 5. Innovative
 - c. Leadership in the Jerusalem Church (Suggested reading: *The Emergence of the Church* by Arthur Patzia)
 - d. Practices in the Jerusalem Church (Suggested reading: *Life and Practice in the Early Church: A Documentary Reader* by Steven A. McKinion)