

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Be Like Jerusalem? (Part 1)

(Jerry Fite)

It would be Jerusalem where repentance and remission of sins in the name of the Lord would first be proclaimed (*Luke 24:47*). Jesus, before His ascension into heaven, instructed His apostles to stay in Jerusalem until they were empowered from heaven with the Holy Spirit (*Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8*). Jerusalem would be where the apostles first bear witness of the resurrected Jesus as their testimony spread out further to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the world (*Acts 1:8*). Jerusalem is where the church, those receiving the remission of sins in the name of the Lord, was first established (*Acts 2:38-41, Acts 8:1*).

More than one zealous soul, refusing to be satisfied with the vast terrain of small local churches, has sought to raise the eyes from the status quo with the clarion call, “Let’s be like the Jerusalem church”. Quit thinking small, and let us set our sights on being 3,000 to 5,000 strong.

The Jerusalem church probably grew quickly to over 10,000 saved souls, when you

consider the 3 and 5 thousand census numbers did not include women and children (*Acts 2:41, 4:4*). The church grew greater in number from their initial large beginning. They did not dwindle. More and more were receptive of the faith of the gospel of Christ, even among the priests. The numbers multiplied: “*And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith*” (*Acts 6:7*).

A number of factors contributing to the initial large numbers were at work in Jerusalem when the church was first established. Pentecost was during one of three feasts which demanded the presence of all males in Jerusalem (*Deuteronomy 16:16-17*). Jewish men along with Greek proselytes, who had converted to honoring the one true God through the Law of Moses, were gathered in Jerusalem from many parts of the world when remission of sins in the name of the Lord was first preached (*Acts 2:9-11*). No doubt faithful souls, anticipat-

ing the coming of the promised Messiah through prophecies of the Old Testament, were not hard to convince when Peter established the resurrected Christ as fulfilling these known prophecies. Couple this with God confirming the apostles with miraculous empowerment to speak the language in which those gathered from other parts of the world were born, many responded at once. Pent-up anticipation and strong confirmation unleashed large numbers among the gathered multitude when remission of sins was initially offered in the name of the Lord.

The emphasis upon spreading the gospel message was strong in Jerusalem. The apostles did not teach just on Sundays, but daily (*Acts 5:42*). Internal problems in the church did not detract from preaching and teaching the Word (*Acts 6:3, 4*). A church may not begin today when a large number from many parts of the world have gathered in one place; but a church should grow when spreading the word of God is a daily, undistracted interest.