

## JESUS, ISRAEL & PROPHECY

### Week 4 – Jesus Came to Fulfill All Righteousness

The Jewish people as a nation did not come to faith in Jesus. A remnant, however, believed in Him. But God had told the nation of Israel to repent! They had to repent as a nation to receive the Kingdom of God on earth. That hasn't happened as yet.

Let's return to the Jordan River where John was immersing Jewish people. Let's return with some background re: the story. . . the continuing story. For 430 years since the close of the OT, God had stopped sending prophets to the children of Israel. There was no prophetic voice. There was no voice from God to the Jewish people! Before God's voice ceased to speak to Israel, the prophet Malachi wrote: *"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse"* (Mal. 4:5-6). And, with that warning the OT was closed!

At the time of Malachi's warning, (430 B.C.), when the Holy Spirit had inspired Malachi to speak out to the Jewish people, the Jews had already returned to Israel from the Babylonian captivity and constructed the second temple. The Jews had given up their worship of idols. However, Malachi's warning was not without cause; it wasn't without a reason. The Jewish people were mistreating their wives, marrying pagans (Mal. 2:11), and not tithing (Mal. 3:8). The priests were neglecting the temple and not teaching the people the ways of God. The priests were offering polluted and blemished offerings (1:6-2:9). In short, the Jews were not honoring God (Mal. 2). Malachi was telling the Jewish people at the end of his prophecy – at the end of the OT – that there would be a restoration. In Malachi 4:6 we read that Elijah will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. The nation would undergo a transformation of the heart! Those changed hearts would only come about because of repentance and conversion – a turning. Israel's changed heart would stop God from coming and striking the earth with a curse!

Why was God going to send Elijah? Elijah had ministered during a time of crisis in Israel, when the nation was far from God. The Jewish people knew that. AND, Elijah hadn't died! II Kings 2:1-11 – God took Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind when he was by the JORDAN RIVER! Elijah's return would mean that the nation was far from God. In Elijah's day, Israel as a nation hadn't repented. In Malachi's day, Israel as a nation hadn't repented. Following the "intertestamental times" (between the OT and the NT; between Malachi and Matthew), 430 years had passed – and no voice from God! Israel as a nation had yet to repent.

After 430 years of silence, suddenly John the Immerser came on the scene. The emergence of John was like the sudden sounding of the voice of God following 430 years

of no revelation from God – no prophets warning the people – no angelic visits. In John, the prophetic voice spoke again!

John preached in the wilderness of Judea. John was immersing Jewish people at the southern end of the Jordan River Valley – the north part of the Dead Sea. Elijah was a Tishbite (I Kings 17:1). Elijah lived in the town of Tishbe - east of the JORDAN!! John's baptism took place in Bethabara, "beyond the Jordan" – east of the Jordan (John 1:28). John and Elijah ministered in the same wilderness! John was clothed in a garment made of rough camel hair bound with a leather belt. He ate locusts (which are kosher) and wild honey (God promised the Jewish people a land flowing with milk and honey which speaks of abundance [Ex. 3:8, 17; Jer. 11:5]). The prophet Elijah wore a similar garment (II Kings 1:8 – he wore a garment of hair with a belt around his waist). The message of John was like that of Elijah. They were both boldly proclaiming God as God and man as sinful. The story continues!

John was called by God to serve as the herald coming before the King of the kingdom of heaven. Elijah would come before the great and terrible day of the Lord. What did a herald do in those days? In the history and culture of the day, it was the custom of some Eastern monarchs or kings to send heralds before their entourage to announce that they were on their way. The kings would send an envoy to ensure that the roads were safe. A king traveling in a wilderness region would assign a crew of workmen to go before him to make sure that the roads were cleared of debris and obstructions. Potholes needed to be filled in. Causeways had to be built, crooked roads straightened, and the land leveled. Preparations needed to be attended to for the coming of the king!

Luke 3:4-5 – John was. . . *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth'"*

Matt. 23:12 - Jesus said, *"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"*

John was preparing the way – spiritually - for the coming of the Messiah. John told the Jewish people that they needed to prepare their hearts for the coming of the Messiah. The context of the baptism passages in Matthew, Luke, and John speaks of preparing the heart – which is the center of the entire being in Hebraic thought.

John had been living in the wilderness – in the empty, lonely, barren, hot, dry, wind-blown wilderness – in the desolate wilderness – away from the "system" of the day! Away from the manmade system of Rabbinical Judaism – what the Rabbis were teaching apart from the Tanakh/the Hebrew Scriptures/the OT. John was calling the Jewish people away from how Judaism had been perverted. The religious leaders had embellished upon the written law. God had given the children of Israel 613 commandments (all found in the Torah – the first five books of Moses). The religious leaders had added to those 613 commandments. John was calling them away from the manmade system, and calling them out to a desolate spot where they could begin to focus on the desolation of their hearts.

Perhaps John lived among the Essenes – religious Jews who did not marry, but adopted children. (Remember, John’s parents were elderly at the time of his birth) The Essenes lives in the desert of Judea near Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.

God called John at this time! John proclaimed a new government – the kingdom of heaven – a physical, literal kingdom! (“the kingdom” depicted by the stone that we read about in Daniel 2:35, 45 that crushes all the previously established kingdoms). Yet John did not proclaim this kingdom in Jerusalem, the nation’s governmental center. Instead he preached twenty miles to the east of the capital city. John was calling the people to repent because the King was coming! With the Messiah’s entrance – the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Because the King of the kingdom was about to arrive, John, in his message, was NOT preparing a physical road, but an entrance, so to speak, into men’s hearts – for the King to enter. John was calling people to humble themselves and prepare for the arrival of the King. John’s great message is that things *can* be set right. The Messiah is here to do things that are too big for man: filling valleys, leveling mountains, setting crooked roads straight and rough roads smooth. The Jews at that time thought that the problem was mainly with the Romans who politically oppressed them. John focused on their internal problem – the problem with themselves - that problem was their heart attitude toward God – they needed to get right with God.

Was John standing out in the Jordan River – in the wilderness alone?

Matt. 3:5-6 - *“Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him <sup>6</sup> and were baptized by him in the Jordan, **confessing their sins.**”*

Jerusalem was spilling out to hear John – all Judea was flocking to the Jordan – and all the area around the Jordan came to hear John. And, they weren’t just going out to him – they were being baptized by him and confessing their sins. The people were spilling out to hear him and get immersed in the waters of the Jordan. Why? There was a great deal of Messianic fervor among the people. There was a keen expectancy for the Messiah to appear! It was believed that Elijah would appear before the “great and terrible day of the Lord.”

From the Scriptures they knew that God was calling the NATION of Israel to return to Him:

- Isaiah 55:6 – God is telling Israel, *“Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.”*
- Jeremiah 3:14-15 – *“Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD; “for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. <sup>15</sup> And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”*
- Hosea 5:15 – God is speaking – *“I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”* Israel was called upon to repent of their sins!
- Joel 2:12-14 - *“Now, therefore,” says the LORD, ‘Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. <sup>13</sup> So rend your heart, and not*

*your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.”*

They knew the Messiah would not set up the Kingdom of God if they, as a nation, weren't right with God.

Eze. 36:24-27 - God told the Jewish people, as a nation, *“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you . . . .”*

God would bring the Jewish people to the land in unbelief. That's the condition of Israel today. While there are religious Jews in Israel today, many Jewish people are secular. Many are looking for spiritual fulfillment. While God is gathering them to the land, God hasn't yet restored Israel as a nation. He hasn't sprinkled them with clean water nor given them a heart of flesh, nor given them His Spirit.

The Jewish view of eschatology/end times in Jesus' day can be found in “The History of Jews in the Time of Jesus Christ” by Emil Schurer:

- A time of tribulation, a time of trouble would come before the Messiah. The Jewish people in Jesus' day thought that they had already gone through trouble (“the time of the Gentiles” when Gentile domination has been the order of the day since Babylon in 586 BC).
- A herald in the spirit and power of Elijah would appear.
- The Messiah would come on the heels of the time of trouble and the herald.
- The nations of the world would gather together to fight against the Messiah.
- The Messiah would turn the tables on the nations and crush them. The Messiah would crush Rome.
- The Messiah would purify the city of Jerusalem.
- The Messiah would gather all the Jewish people into Jerusalem and He would set up His Kingdom for the Jews forever.

Sounds quite Biblical. The Jewish people, however, compressed all of these events. They didn't view any of it as happening in the future. They wanted this all to transpire NOW! The Jewish people in Jesus' day were NOT expecting Jesus to leave the earth. They were expecting Him to set up the Kingdom during the time of His first coming. In Luke 19:11-12 we read that as Jesus was making His way to Jerusalem – to enter Jerusalem triumphantly on the colt of a donkey – many joined Him expecting Him to deliver the kingdom to them at that time.

And, what of the disciples? The Gospels make it very clear that Jesus' death took the disciples by surprise.

Matthew 16:21-23 *“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and*

*scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.* <sup>22</sup> *Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!'* <sup>23</sup> *But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.'*”

Look how far into the Gospels that Jesus begins to speak of the cross! The disciples were astounded at Jesus' death. They were taken by surprise that their Teacher, their Rabbi would speak such words. At Jesus' arrest, fear came upon them. Peter denied Jesus; the others fled. The only disciple at the foot of the cross was John.

Aren't we rather shocked that the disciples were so clueless? We have a tendency to read back into the OT a level of NT understanding which did not exist in those days. Hindsight is 20/20. For us, as we understand that there is an unfolding of God's plan in Scripture, we become more aware of the limitations on the people's understanding at various stages of Israel's history. They didn't have the benefit of hindsight. Yet, they were living in the midst of the fulfillment of prophecy concerning Jesus' death (Psa. 22; Isa. 53). Shouldn't they have known? Many had an agenda – not unlike us today. What they wanted to have transpired took the upper hand.

Consider what Jesus told the two followers of His who were returning to their home in Emmaus who were anticipating that Jesus would redeem Israel at that time – that He, Jesus, would deliver the kingdom to the Jews and would NOT be crucified.

Luke 24:25-26 - *“Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’”*

Their eschatology seemed to line up with Scripture. They just got the time wrong! Not surprising given I Peter 1:10-11 – *“<sup>10</sup> Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, <sup>11</sup> searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”*

Even the prophets who preached and wrote of God's plan by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit could not distinguish between the timing of the Messiah's sufferings and His returning in glory!

YET – look how John the Baptist/Immerser announces Jesus – John 1:29 – as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. What does Lamb of God mean? He would suffer – He would be slaughtered as a lamb. Gen. 22 – that lamb that was promised by God to Abraham would be the substitutionary sacrifice. Ex. 12 – it was the blood of the lambs at the first Passover that delivered the Jewish people from bondage to slavery in Egypt. Isa. 53:5-6 is the premiere Old Testament look at the cross, the death and the atonement of Christ. Isaiah was written over 700 years before Jesus' birth!

Why didn't the people realize? They wanted the Kingdom delivered to them NOW!

Does our agenda get in the way of what we know Biblically? Does God's will interfere with our plans, our schedule, our timetable? Do we find ourselves not submitting to God's will? We need to die to self. We need to have a "cross experience." The cross experience is when God's will crosses our will and we submit to HIM!!

We must also remember what God told Isaiah in Isaiah 6. God told the prophet that He was sending him to a people who would not see nor would they hear! Blindness in part has happened to Israel (Rom. 11:25). Blindness didn't occur because they rejected Jesus. That blindness was upon Israel before Jesus entered the world.

We observe in these passages regarding John's baptism that Jewish people were submitting to baptism? BAPTISM – among the Jewish people? How do Jewish people view baptism? Jewish people, for centuries, have despised baptism. Why? During the Inquisition which began in 1478 and ended in 1834 (per historians), Jewish people were rooted out and forced to convert and be baptized. If they did not comply, they were either killed or kicked out of the country.

What was "immersion" to the Jewish people? Immersion under water was NOT unfamiliar to the Jewish people. Leviticus 15 speaks about the Jewish purification rites. Jewish people immerse themselves and have done so since Moses' day! Some synagogues have a mikvah: the mikvah is a collection of running water where the Jewish people immerse themselves. It is seen by Rabbis today as a transition from death to the renewal of life. Lev. 15 speaks to cleansing from defilement in water – the individual is "bathing" himself. Lev. 15:13 speaks specifically of cleansing in running water. The uncommon aspect of this account in light of the culture was that at the Jordan River, Jews were submitting to being immersed. Immersion was a common ritual for Jews – the mikvah. And it was a common ritual for Gentiles who wanted to be included in the assembly of Israel. The Gentiles were the pagans who believed in many gods. Therefore, Jewish people immersed Gentiles. Jewish people were NOT immersed by others. They immersed themselves! For a Jewish person to submit to being immersed was to say, "I'm as bad as a heathen Gentile." This is truly an act of humility on the Jews' part – those who submitted to John's baptism – it was an act of humble repentance, a radical submission to the Lord! Remember, God told Israel that He would sprinkle them with clean water – Eze. 36:25. ALSO - Joel 2:28 – water – symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Isa. 62:7 – God “. . . will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth”!

Isa. 62:11-12 “*Indeed the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the world: “Say to the daughter of Zion, surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.” And they shall call them The Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD; and you shall be called Sought Out, a City Not Forsaken.*”

God called them as a nation. He made His covenants with the nation. He will redeem them as a nation. . . in the future! God's message to the Jewish people throughout the OT was to repent. The OT teaches that the just, those who are righteous (who have a right standing with God), shall live by faith (Hab. 2:4).

The word *repent*, metanio, means more than just sorrow. It means to turn around. It means a change of opinion. A change of purpose. A change of direction. A change of mind. A change of will. A change from sin to holiness – because one has been declared righteous by God – in justification one has been clothed in God's righteousness. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance.

Why did the religious Jewish leadership show up at John's baptism?

- Some say for immersion/baptism (Matt. 3:7).
- The priests and Levites were sent by the Pharisees to ask questions (John 1:19, 24) - to check out John – to ask John, “Who are you?”
- Since John was drawing such a crowd, they needed to find out about this individual.
- They were afraid of their position under Rome – being taken away. John was proclaiming the Kingdom of heaven. Rome wouldn't take this lightly.

John proclaimed a new government (“the kingdom” depicted by the stone that we read about in Daniel 2:35, 45 that crushes all the previously established kingdoms - empires). God's kingdom is going to be a new rule on earth – God's rule on earth. John was calling Israel to realize that their nationality couldn't save them. Their race couldn't save them. They thought it could – because Abraham was their father. Jewish thought had degenerated to the point of believing that “all Israel has a share in the world to come.” And that “Abraham sits at the gates of Gehenna to save any Israelite consigned thereto.” So, according to Pharisaic Judaism – to be born a Jew physically was enough to enter into the Kingdom. (That's why Nicodemus had such a tough time understanding Jesus' statement that man needs to be born from above – born of the Spirit). The idea of someone else immersing them in water was telling them that they couldn't earn their salvation – and they did not like that message!

Matthew 3:13-15 - <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” <sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.

John recognized that Jesus was the Messiah and did not need to repent. Why did Jesus subject Himself to John's baptism?

- To fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:15).
  - His baptism was a public demonstration. God declared Him as the Son of God. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit. And Jesus identified Himself with sinners (II Cor. 5:21). This was the role of the Messiah as seen in the Hebrew Scriptures.

- To fulfill prophecy – John’s baptism was a fulfillment of Isa. 40:3.
- To be made known to Israel. He would publicly identify Himself as the Messiah.
  - Priests began their ministry at age 30 (Num. 4:3). The priest offered the sacrifice on behalf of the people. Jesus’ baptism spoke to His sacrifice.
- To be numbered and identified with the believing Remnant being prepared by John.
- To be identified with sinners – II Cor. 5:21.
- To receive the special anointing for His ministry – the anointing of the Holy Spirit – Isa. 61:1.
- To foreshadow His death and resurrection.

And so, Jesus came – the One Who would fulfill all righteousness - the One Who was of the seed of a woman – the Redeemer – promised to the world through Israel.

Jesus came – here is the One Who was the stump of Jesse. . . One of lowly origin.

John’s baptism was the baptism of repentance; those who were baptized by him identified themselves with the message of John and prepared themselves to accept the Messiah. Those who were baptized by John identified themselves with the message of the preparation of the physical Kingdom – the Millennial Kingdom – (Messianic Kingdom – when the Messiah would reign from Jerusalem). The baptism of John was for the purpose of getting the nation of Israel ready for the arrival of their King!

In the baptism of the Church, one identifies with the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah (Romans 6:3-4 – water baptism pictures the reality of being immersed into Jesus’ death when we trust in Him and are justified [declared righteous] [Gal. 2:20] and then being raised and walking in newness of life).

*Matt. 3:11-12 – “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up.”*

John was content with being number two. John consistently and passionately directed the people’s attention to Jesus – their promised Messiah! John’s baptism (dip; immerse) was a water immersion. Jesus would immerse with the Holy Spirit. Baptism of the Holy Spirit: this is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that God promised with the New Covenant (Ezekiel 37:14; Joel 2:28; Zech. 12:10).

I Cor. 12:13 – “*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. . . .*”

In the context of Matt. 3:11-12 - to baptize with fire means to bring the fires of judgment which will purify. In that purification the wicked will be destroyed like chaff. Chaff is the worthless residue of a wheat stalk after the kernel of grain has been removed. The Jewish leadership thought that the Messiah would come with judgment but only against Israel’s enemies.

Big picture: Jesus' first and second comings are seen in His baptism. He is the Son of God Who came to identify with sinners. His baptism, His immersion down into the water speaks to His death. His coming up out of the water speaks of His resurrection. John's comment regarding the fire of judgment speaks to His second coming. This is God's magnificent, majestic, awesome plan. May He give us peace to accept it and boldness to share it with those who are lost.

QUESTIONS:

What didn't you grasp?

What was new to you?

With what are you having a problem?

What themes did you observe?

What is most significant to you re: Jesus' baptism?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

If you are grappling with anything in this lesson – study it out yourself and come to your conclusions. Remember, support your conclusions with the Bible (chapter and verse).

Read about Jesus' baptism in all four Gospels.

Write/journal how Jesus' baptism fits into God's plan of redemption.

If you think sharing the message of Jesus' baptism will lead to a further Gospel presentation to a friend, neighbor, relative, acquaintance who doesn't yet know Jesus, write out what you would say.

## ADDENDUM/Week 4

What were the outworkings of John's baptism of repentance noted in Scripture?

The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance. Those who confessed and repented of their sins and were immersed by John were obedient to his message regarding preparing the way of the Lord. Salvation is always by grace through faith in God's revealed message. God's has been unfolding His message through the ages. God's message always points to the Messiah Jesus.

In Acts 18:24-28 and in Acts 19:1-7 we read of those who had heard only of John's baptism. Remember, the book of Acts presents transitions: from the ministry of Jesus to the ministry of the apostles; from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant; from Israel as God's witness nation to the Church (comprised of both Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus) as God's witness people. Salvation isn't a process; however, the transition is often a process. We need to understand the book of Acts transitionally. If we don't grasp it as such, we are going to be in a state of confusion.

### Acts 18:24-28

- Apollos – a Jewish man from Alexandria, who was mighty in the Scriptures (v. 24). Alexandria was a large Jewish enclave in Egypt.
- He “had been instructed in the way of the Lord,” and “he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord” – per his OT understanding. Remember, OT saints were saved by grace through faith in God's revealed message. Apollos taught those things which he knew of God pre-cross, pre-resurrection.
- He only knew of the baptism of John. (“Knew” – attention placed on) The baptism of John was preparing for the coming of the Messiah through confession of sin and repentance.
- It is based on Apollos' belief and also on his limited knowledge that Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos more accurately (exactly). They taught him about Jesus death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Some have suggested that Apollos was baptized by Aquila in the name of Jesus. The text does not say.
- John MacArthur has labeled Apollos as an OT saint. Apollos came to faith in God by looking forward to the coming of the Messiah.
- Results: the disciples were exhorted to receive Apollos (as a brother in the Lord). And, Apollos was used of God to refute the Jewish people publicly – testifying from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

- NOTE: John the Immerser is noted in Matthew 11:13 as an OT prophet.
  - John was not born again under the New Covenant. John lived and died before the completion of Jesus' work at the cross and the empty tomb.
  - "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." An era ended with John. The message within the prophets and the law anticipated the herald of the Messiah.
  - There were those in Jesus' day who were caught up in the Messianic fervor and who were going after Jesus to receive freedom from oppression. They were desirous of Jesus for their own reasons.
  - OT saints who were looking forward to the Messiah were saved. Those who submitted to John's baptism, if their heart commitment was genuine, would have been labeled as OT saints.

### Acts 19:1-6

- Paul encountered disciples in Ephesus. These men were disciples of John the Immerser (v. 3). They did not yet fully understand the New Covenant based on their answer to Paul in v. 2, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."
- Paul explained to them that John's baptism of repentance was preparatory and that John told the people that they should believe on Jesus (v. 4).
- Upon hearing these words from Paul, John's disciples were baptized in the name of Jesus.
- When Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. This signified their inclusion into the Church since believers are baptized by one Spirit into one body (I Cor. 12:13). God's purpose was to emphasize the unity of the Church.
- Why did this not happen to Apollos?
  - REMEMBER, the book of Acts is a book of transitions.