

Acts 078
Ecclesiastical Separation
Acts 13:50-52
September 10, 2025
Dr. Andy Woods

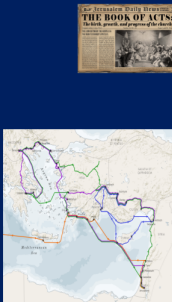
We are in Acts 13:50-52 this evening. If you are joining us for the first time, this is a great time to jump into this study. We have been moving verse-by-verse on Wednesday evenings through the Book of Acts. We have had some time off for the summer, and now we are back to it.

The outline for the Book of Acts is given in Acts 1:8, where Jesus says to His disciples:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remote part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Structure (Acts 1:8)

- Jerusalem (Acts 1–7)
- Judea and Samaria (Acts 8–12)
- **Remotest part of the earth (Acts 13–28)**
 - 1st missionary journey (Acts 13–14)
 - Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-35)
 - 2nd missionary journey (Acts 15:36 –18:22)
 - 3rd missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:17)
 - Trip to Rome (Acts 21:18–28:31)



Those three sections that I have underlined there, most believe, is actually an outline of the Book of Acts. When Jesus said, "You shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem," that is Acts 1-7, the witness of the new church in Jerusalem. Then when Jesus says, "You shall be My witnesses in Judea and Samaria," that would be Acts 8-12, where the church through persecution—it is funny how God uses persecution to get the church moving in the right direction, in light of today and things that have been happening in the news recently—but persecution pushed them out of their comfort zone into the surrounding areas of Judea and Samaria. Acts 8-12 records the church's witness there.

Then Jesus says, "You will be my witnesses to the remotest parts of the earth." That would be the three missionary journeys of Paul, where the gospel and the activity of the church gets outside the borders of Israel for the very first time, which was unheard of. The gospel had never left the borders of Israel. In Jesus' whole ministry, as the incarnate Son of God, He never left Israel. He never went on a missions trip or raised

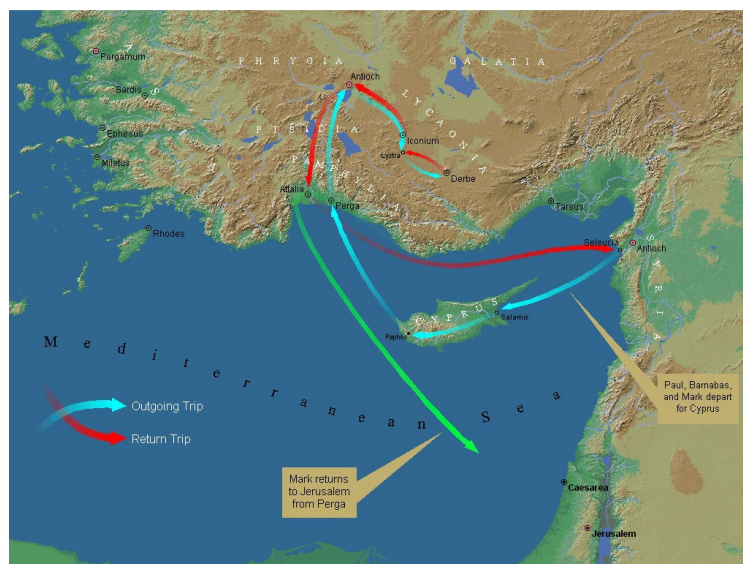
money to go on a missionary journey. His whole ministry took place within the borders of Israel.

Now, for the first time, God raises up Paul. We have read about his conversion in Acts 9. He begins to take the gospel to the remote parts of the earth. You have his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). That is what we are in the middle of studying. There is going to be a big issue coming in Acts 15, because now the Jewish-centered leadership of the church in Jerusalem has to figure out, "What are we going to do with all these Gentile converts? Do they have to submit to the law of Moses to join the church or not?" They have to make a big decision there in Acts 15.

At the end of Acts 15 through midway through Acts 18 is the second missionary journey, followed by the third missionary journey. Then, finally, Paul takes the gospel all the way to Rome, which was always Paul's desire to get to Rome, because all roads lead to Rome. If he can get the gospel to Rome, it is going to go everywhere. We are the recipients of it 2,000 years later on another continent, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, because Paul got that gospel to Rome.

The trip to Rome starts in Acts 21 and goes to the end of the book. Then Paul is going to get thrown into jail for two years, and the Book of Acts cuts off right as that two-year jail sentence starts. We do not even know if he is going to get out of jail through the Book of Acts, we have to read other Scripture to see that he did get out of jail.

The reason the Book of Acts stops there is because it is understood that once it hits Rome—and all roads lead to Rome—it is going to go everywhere. That is where we are in the big picture of the Book of Acts. We are in that first missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas have left from Syrian Antioch, in the northern tip of Israel, which is where all the missionary journeys will start. Missionary journeys one, two, and three will start from Syrian Antioch.



Paul and Barnabas leave, and they go to the island called Cyprus, which on a map looks real tiny. That island looks really small until you go there, you realize how huge that is. I have been there, and some of our group was on that trip. We went to Cyprus and the bus broke down. There we are in Cyprus with this broken down bus praying, "Help us to get picked up." It is there you realize how big that island is.

They go to Cyprus. From there they leave and make their way onto the mainland and head up to another Antioch, which is not Syrian Antioch. Syrian Antioch is where they launched their missionary journeys from, but this Antioch up here is Pisidian Antioch. There are two Antiochs.

They go up here to Pisidian Antioch, and it is in Pisidian Antioch that we get Paul's first message in the synagogue. These are the first recorded words of Paul in terms of a public teaching. Remember, Paul always went to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. He always went to where there was common ground—Hebrew Bible being common ground. He would try to prove that Jesus or Yeshua is the long awaited Messiah, according to Hebrew Bible. Paul, in Romans 1:16 will say: *"to the Jew first and also to the Greek."* He always gave Israel the first opportunity to believe.

Typically what happens is Israel is not interested in what Paul is teaching. They kick him out of the synagogue. So he takes the exact same message to the Gentiles, the non-Jews. He does not use Hebrew Bible when he is talking to the Gentiles because they do not have Hebrew Bible. He uses the Bible that they do have, which is Creation—nature.

He starts with the general revelation and works his way there from that to the gospel. I am going to have a chance actually, this Saturday, to talk about that at our first ever missions conference. I am going to have a chance to speak there. I am going to talk about Mars Hill and how Paul started with general revelation and worked to the gospel, and use that as a template for how we can evangelize the lost.

He would go and he would do that. He would become so successful that the unbelieving Jews in the synagogues where he went would be jealous, and they would drive him out of the city. That is what pushed Paul to his next geographic location.

He has gone to the synagogue in Pisidian, Antioch. He has given a Scripture-filled talk, because if you look back at verse Acts 13:15, you see that as he is sitting there he is asked to speak. They basically said, "Do you have anything to say?" Paul says, "Yes, I do. I have a lot to say." He stands up and he gives this talk laced with Old Testament Scripture.

"Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand and said, 'Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen'" (Acts 13:16).

If you go back to Acts 13:15, as he is sitting there in the synagogue, the synagogue leadership says,

"Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it" (Acts 13:15).

They were probably sorry that they ever gave him that invitation. He gives this tremendous Scripture-filled address, no notes that I can see, no fancy handouts, no PowerPoint. How did he do it? He had the Holy Spirit—that is how he did it. From memory, he weaves all of these Scriptures together, and points to Jesus Christ. The people in the synagogue cannot believe what they are hearing because they have never really heard the message of grace.

All they have heard when they visited the synagogue there in Pisidian Antioch was to try harder to keep the Law—circumcision, all of these mandates of the Law. Paul did not talk about that as a Jew. He talked about Jesus, and he says, "The gospel is free." That leads to the results of this message (Acts 13:42-52).

There are some immediate results that people say, "You have to come back next week because we need to hear part two. We have never heard anything like this." Then as you go down to Acts 13:44-49, you see that the leadership within Israel does not like it because Paul is becoming more popular than them. In fact, if you look at Acts 13:46, it says,

"Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said it was necessary that the Word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourself unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

That is, in essence, what is starting to happen in Paul's ministry. He is going to go into these synagogues, get rejected—of course, they are not rejecting him, they are rejecting the message, ultimately—he turns to the Gentiles and they start believing in droves. In fact, there are so many Gentiles that start getting saved at this point that the church does not even know what to do with these people because the church is still headquartered in Jerusalem under Jewish leadership. With all these Gentiles getting saved, they ask, "What do we do with these people? Do they have to submit to the Law of Moses to join the church?" They have a big powwow about that. That is what is going to get resolved in Acts 15.

That takes us to where we are tonight in Acts 13:50-52, where we have the results for the apostles. There are the immediate results of Paul's presentation in the synagogue (Acts 13:42-43), some subsequent results, as it looks like Jewish leadership is turning its back on this message. There is an openness amongst the Gentiles. Now we have some results for the apostles: Jewish opposition to the gospel (Acts 13:50); the apostles' response (Acts 13:51); then the impact on the Pisidian Antioch church (Acts 13:52).

"But the Jews incited devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district" (Acts 13:50).

This decision that Paul and Barnabas made to give preference to the Gentiles from this point on—even though he is going to follow the same pattern of giving the Jews in the synagogue the first bite of the apple—it is pretty clear that Paul at this point is going to have a ministry primarily to the Gentiles. To my mind, that gets announced in Acts 13:46. Of course, the Jews, when they hear that, they do not like that either. They oppose Paul. It says "they urged"—which in the Greek means "excite or stir up." The unbelieving Jews are not portrayed well in the Book of Acts. They are the problem.

We do not develop from that a Replacement Theology idea that God is through with Israel, because we know that in the end time there is going to be a turning of Israel back to God. Even though that is true, it does not subtract from the fact that these Jews in the first century were complete and total troublemakers everywhere the gospel went. Certainly there are Jewish converts, but generally speaking, everywhere the gospel went, they just stirred up animosity against Christ's church.

That is why Paul, in Romans 11, is going to say something to this effect: "The Jews currently are your enemies—meaning they are the troublemakers when you read the Book of Acts—but they are beloved on behalf of the fathers or the patriarchs. Even though they are in disobedience and are causing problems, do not harden your heart towards them, because do not forget it is not you supporting the root, it is the root that supports you."

In other words, we would not have anything as New Testament Christians had God not worked through the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We would not have a Bible. We would not have a Savior. We would not have a coming kingdom that we pray for: "Thy kingdom come." We would have nothing. Even though you run into trouble-making Jews sometimes, or unbelieving Jews, we should not develop a hardness towards them, because Israel and her current position is not always going to be what it is.

This is what you are not getting from a lot of the MAGA pundits today, like Candace Owens and Tucker Carlson and people like that. They are bashing the Jews all the time. They will find every verse in the Bible where a Jew does something wrong, and they act like that is the end of the story. This is where, if you have a knowledge of eschatology—the study of the end—which a lot of these people do not have—Candace Owens, I think is married to a Roman Catholic, Roman Catholicism teaches Replacement Theology—if you do not have an eschatology that Israel is going to turn back to God at some point, then you look at the current behavior of the Jews and you just develop a hardened heart, a critical spirit towards them.

This is what happened to Martin Luther, as you probably know. At the end of his life, he wrote a horrific tract called "The Jews and Their Lies." You can find it for free on the

internet and download it and read it. It is just unbelievable, the stuff he says about the Jews. He got angry with them, because he thought they were all going to get saved in the new-found Protestant Reformation, and they did not. The more he tried to reach out to them, the more resistant they got.

He got sick of it and wrote a terrible tract at the end of his life against them, called "The Jews and Their Lies." As you read it, it reads something like what Hitler would implement. Hitler, in "Mein Kampf," quoted Martin Luther three times, I think. He called Luther his favorite theologian. It is almost like Luther, under satanic influences—I am a person that has a high regard for Martin Luther and everything that he accomplished, but, boy, the guy had a dark side—it is almost like a demon whispered a bunch of stuff in his ears, and he wrote it down in this tract, "The Jews and Their Lies."

There is stuff about how they should receive insignias and marks on their bodies to keep track of them. Is that not what Hitler did? Is that not why Holocaust survivors have numbers and things on their skin? He talked about how they should be cut off from the financial world—all of these things coming from Martin Luther. It was so bad that even the Lutheran Church itself modernly said, "We apologize for what our forebear said." It is not only me as a non-Lutheran criticizing him, it is the Lutherans themselves that are embarrassed by this.

It is almost like a demon was talking in his ear. Then Hitler came along and took a demonic blueprint and implemented it, in what we call the Holocaust. That is what can happen to us when we develop a hardened heart towards the Jewish people. You become used of Satan to instigate things that Satan wants to instigate, which is that he wants to eradicate the Jewish nation and the Jewish people because he knows if he can do that, he can stop God's plan.

God has said, "I am going to bless the world through Israel" (Genesis 12:3). Satan says, "We will see about that. I will blot out the Jewish people." That is why you go through the Bible. There are all these attempts to blot out the Jews: Haman, in the Book of Esther; Pharaoh, as we are reading in the Book of Exodus.

That is why, even though Jews are causing problems here, do not think that this is the end product. God is not through with the Jew, which means God keeps His promises. If he is going to keep His promises to them, who else is He going to keep His promises to? To us. God's faithfulness to Israel vindicates His character.

The unbelieving Jews urged, or excited or stirred up, wealthy converts to Judaism to attack and come against the church. This forced the expulsion of Paul and Barnabas out of Pisidian Antioch to Iconium. You will notice that it talks about how they stirred up the women:

"But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city" (Acts 13:50).

I have seen this in leadership a number of times. Someone on some leadership board will be upset about something, and you wonder what is bothering them. Why are they upset about this or that? Generally speaking, not every time, but many times it is their wife stirring them up. There have been a number of times and I have been the same way. Sometimes I guess my wife has stirred me up about something, and I have come into the elder meeting with an agenda. A lot of times when people talk in leadership, you have to just sit back and wait for the rest of the story to come in, because a lot of the time it is their wife that is pushing them in a particular way.

When that happens, you just say, "Time out. Let us all calm down so we can make decisions calmly," because the worst thing you can do is start making decisions when you are in the heat of emotion. That is just something I thought about when I looked at this verse.

Here you go down to Acts 13:51, and you see the apostles response to all this:

"But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium" (Acts 13:51).

What is this business about shaking the dust off your feet? That is a practice that Jesus used, and it is a practice that Jesus taught His disciples to use. Let me give you a few Scriptures on this:

In the gospel of Matthew, when the kingdom was being offered, Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows:

"Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet" (Matthew 10:14).

"Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them" (Mark 6:11).

"And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust from your feet as a testimony against them" (Luke 9:5).

Arnold Fruchtenbaum comments on this verse as follows:

"The apostolic response is given in verse 51: 'But they shook off the dust of their feet against them.' This action was a visible, physical, symbolic measure marking a complete break of fellowship and renunciation with a person or community. It was also what Yeshua [Jewish name for Jesus, coming from the name Joshua] had commanded His disciples to do (Mt. 10:14; Mk. 6:11; Lk. 9:5). The procedure was to take the sandals off the feet, and the dust was shaken towards the group or place being

renounced as a symbolic token. Then the apostles went to Iconium, the next city to be evangelized."¹

I did wear Crocs tonight, and I could do a show and tell for you. I just forgot the dust. I will do the best I can. Hold your nose. Here is the dust. I am shaking the dust off my feet. Then I put my Croc back on, and I move on to the next city. That is what this symbolized.

One of the things I want you to know is that the apostles were not afraid to break fellowship with people that rejected the message. You notice the apostles did not do this: they did not try to meet in the middle somewhere, "Can't we work this out?" The big term today is the Third Way: "If you guys believe this, and we believe this, there has to be a middle ground somewhere." I call it the mushy middle, or middle ground mania—there is like a third way.

Postmodernism is the intellectual climate we are in now, and have been in for a number of decades. In fact, when I was going through school, this mentality was everywhere. It was always: Truth is not over here; truth is not over there; it is where the two camps agree on something and that becomes the new truth or the third way.

This is where this whole idea of interfaith dialogue comes from. When I was coming of age as a Christian, the guy that was pushing interfaith dialogue was a guy named Chuck Colson, who I had a lot of respect for with his work in prison ministries and things like that. But towards the end of his life, again married to a Roman Catholic. I am seeing a pattern here. Who you sleep with will tell a lot about a person's theology.

He came up with ECT—Evangelicals and Catholics Together. It was a document that was signed, and some of the leading luminaries in evangelicalism signed it. It is this idea that we are not going to evangelize each other's sheepfolds. They called themselves co-belligerents in Christ, meaning, "Let us come together to fight some other enemy out there, like atheism, abortion, communism, secular humanism."

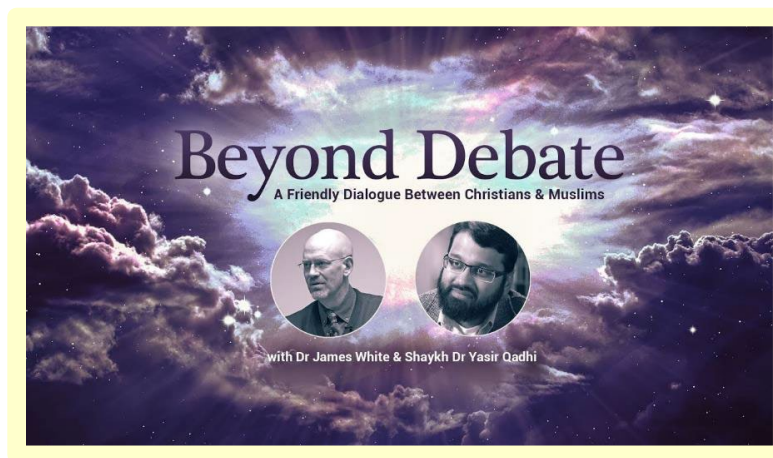
I am in favor of fighting all those things. It is just the way they did it, where you come together as one and you pretend like the differences between Catholics and Protestants are really not that big of a deal. When Chuck Colson died, the guy that took the mantle of that whole thing was a guy named Rick Warren.

If you watch Laura Ingraham's show on Fox, she has a guy on there all the time who is there for comic relief. He is funny to watch. He is a writer. His name is Raymond Arroyo. Have you ever watched him? He is a very smiley, likable guy. You can go onto YouTube and watch his interview with Rick Warren on EWTN, which is a Roman Catholic network. Rick Warren is saying exactly the same stuff that Colson said: "We have to come together. You guys pray to the Saints; we do not. But that is not that big of a deal. Here are things we agree on."

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 301.

The truth of the matter is, the more you try to mix the two, it is like mixing oil and water. You cannot mix a system where people are praying to Mary versus praying to Jesus. You cannot mix two systems together, where one group says, "Mary is perpetual virgin and sinless," and the other group says, "No, Mary was a sinner, beloved of God, but a sinner just like the rest of us." You cannot mix two things together, where one group is saying, "We are saved by works," and another group is saying, "We are saved by faith alone."

Very sadly, in my lifetime, what I have seen, as have you, is this whole mindset of "Evangelicals and Catholics together" has now moved into Islam. Chrislam is what it is called. There is James White and Yasir Qadhi.



This would be about 2017, 2018 somewhere. Do you know who Yasir Qadhi is? These big, Islamic enclaves they are building in Plano, that is Yasir Qadhi building that stuff. As much as our governor says that we are not going to have Sharia law in Texas, there he is building a Sharia compliant neighborhood with Sharia compliant schools—an Islamic enclave. It is a neighborhood only of Muslims. These are popping up all over the United States.

This goes back, before all that enclave stuff started, there is Yasir Qadhi in a church with James White, who supposedly is a conservative Protestant evangelical Christian doing something, "beyond debate." James White is really good at debating, but they wanted to have a group where it is beyond debate. What is beyond debate between Islam, represented by Yasir Qadhi and Protestant Christianity embraced by James White? It is beyond debate because they are trying to find a middle ground between the two. After all, we are both common Abrahamic faiths, right? That was the mindset, which is a lie.

Muslims put the child of promise through Ishmael; the Bible puts the child of promise through Isaac. Muslims believe that when Jesus died on the cross that it really was not Jesus it was Judas pretending to be Jesus; we believe that Jesus, God's only Son, died on the cross.

When you talk to Muslims they say, "We believe in Jesus. We believe in the Second Coming," but the devil is in the details. They say that when Jesus comes back, He is going to be the henchman, or under-keeper of the Islamic deity. That is not what we believe. We believe when Jesus comes back, He is not going to be under anybody, and He is not coming back to Damascus or any place like that. He is coming back to Jerusalem to rule and reign. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

There is no commonality between Islam and Christianity, any more than there is commonality between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Yet here is James White with Yasir Qadhi, in a church, allowing this interfaith dialogue to occur.

As you watch the video, there is Yasir Qadhi in a church in front of God's assembled saints, spouting one heresy after another, right down to the fact that Jesus did not die on the cross. There is James White sitting, a very capable debater, sitting there like a potted plant and not cross-examining Yasir Qadhi or pushing back at all. There it is happening, not at a Starbucks, not at a hotel ballroom, but in a church in front of God's people.

It is interesting how quiet James White has been about Yasir Qadhi. Now he is the guy building these enclaves in Plano and so forth. I do not know what to say about that other than that it is a massive upgrade for the Evangelicals and Catholics Together. That was the good old days when we used to deal with Evangelicals and Catholics Together and that heresy. Now this whole thing is version 2.0, where it is Evangelicals and Muslims Together.

The same arguments are used. "We have to come together and fight humanism. We have to come together and fight atheism. Whatever differences exist between us, let us just water them down. We are both allegedly common Abrahamic faiths." That is a lie. you cannot mix God's Word with Islam any more than you can mix God's Word with Roman Catholicism. Anybody that applies any intellect to this will see it just like that. Yet that is the mindset of the time period that we are living in.

The apostles did nothing like that. They took the sandal with the dust on it and shook it in the face of the Christ rejectors and left. This is a practice that we would call ecclesiastical separation, where you separate from people that reject the truth. When we taught our ecclesiology series here, I gave you the biblical basis for ecclesiastical separation. Here are all of the New Testament verses that talk about it:

What to Separate From?

1. False doctrine – 1 Tim. 4:16; Titus 1:9
2. Divisive persons – Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:9-11
3. Immorality – 1 Cor. 5:9-11; Eph. 5:11
4. General disobedience to Scripture – 2 Thess. 3:6, 14



The most prominent is 2 John 1:7-11. John is the love apostle, but just because you are loving does not mean you are open to everything, certain of nothing. John was not that way. John was a loving man—dubbed the "Love Apostle"—but he was a man of discernment, and it does not take long to see it. In his second epistle, John writes:

"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what you have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching..." (2 John 1:7-10).

Correct doctrine, correct understanding of Christ, which Roman Catholics do not have, and which Muslims do not have.

"Do not receive him into your house..." (2 John 1:10).

Where did the early church meet? Houses, house churches—they met "house to house" (Acts 2:46). You do not have chapels and cathedrals and stained glass windows in the first century. You have these little house churches spread all over the Mediterranean Greco-Roman world. When he says, *"Do not bring them into your house,"* he is saying, "Do not give them a place of prominence in your church. Do not let them set up their literature at the door."

The Muslims have come here and tried to do that. It was eerie when they did it, because they developed a gift bag that looks just like our Sugar Land Bible Church gift bags, but you open it and it did not have in it the copy of the Scriptures that we give out; it had the Quran. I remember Pastor Jim walked into one of our elder meetings and he said, "Gentlemen, we have been infiltrated." He took this gift bag that looked just like our gift bags and dumped it out. What pops out there is the Quran. We were sitting there looking at it, stunned. They have really thought this through. That takes a little mental effort, does it not, to come up with a gift bag that looks just like your church's gift bag?

If someone does not come with proper doctrine, you do not let them teach Sunday School. You do not let them set up their literature. You do not give them the pulpit. You do not bring them up in front of the church under the guise of interfaith dialogue, and try to find middle ground. You separate.

If a Jehovah's Witness comes to your door, it is not saying leave them out there on the porch on Sunday. You can be hospitable; you can bring them into your house; but that is not dealing with that issue. I bring them into the house to evangelize them, and once they figure that out, they cannot wait to get out of the house.

There are two of them. The one talking is the trainee; that is who you aim your questions at. You do not have to even get a full conversion. All you have to do is disrupt their thinking a little bit. Give them something to think about that the Holy Spirit can use to bother them and convict them about the rest of the week, the rest of the month, the rest of the year.

I try to take the conversation with the Jehovah's Witnesses to this: has Jesus always existed or not? They think Jesus was a created being. We do not believe that. We think He has eternally existed. You could take him to this point: How are you saved? By faith alone or by faith plus works? But you aim your questions at the person talking, and then you just pray during the week that the Lord would bother them with what you have said to them.

Once they see me doing that, they usually do not want to talk to me. I say, "You can talk to my wife." When they see my wife, who is a foot shorter than me, they are always relieved. I am thinking to myself, "You do not even know what you are getting yourself into here," because she knows the Jehovah's Witness doctrine backwards and forwards. I am a lightweight compared to her. Once that happens, somehow we get taken off their list and we do not get to see them again. They are coming. You have a mission field coming right to your house. It is unbelievable.

It is not saying to leave them out on the porch. What it is saying is, "Do not let them into your church by giving them a place of influence."

"...and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds" (2 John 1:10-11).

If you give him a platform—you give him money to promote their work; you let them teach Sunday School—you are promoting Satan. "Do not do that," is what John says. This is a love apostle speaking here. Those are the things to separate from: false doctrine, divisive persons, immorality, general disobedience to Scripture.

This is a biblical practice. This is how the church stays practically pure in an unholy age. It has to practice biblical separation. It is the opposite of what Rick Warren, James White, Yasir Qadhi, and Chuck Colson are all trying to promote, which is ecumenism—the urge to merge. "Nobody has the truth, so truth must be in the middle somewhere."

We will call it the Third Way. The area where two opposites that converge in agreement, like in geometry, your Venn diagrams. You have two circles and where they overlap, that overlap becomes the new truth or the Third Way.

That is the outworking of postmodernity. The apostles, if they had ever heard that belief system, would have just laughed it right off, because these are people that shook the dust off their feet. "You guys do not want to trust Jesus? Fine. We will go find some people that do." They did not merge with anybody.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones is probably one of James White's heroes because Martyn Lloyd-Jones was Calvinistic all the way, but he had an amazing thing to say about this mindset of interfaith dialogue. You can find this in his book, "Knowing the Times." As James White was pushing all this stuff with Yasir Qadhi, I was always thinking, "Has James White ever read one of the great heroes of Calvinism, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones?"

"To regard a church, or a council of churches, as a forum in which fundamental matters can be debated and discussed, or as an opportunity for witness-bearing, is sheer confusion and muddled thinking. There is to be no discussion about 'the foundation,' as we have seen. If men do not accept that, they are not brethren and we can have no dialogue with them. We are to preach to such and evangelize them. Discussion takes place among the brethren who share the same life and subscribe to the same essential truths. It is right and good that brethren should discuss together matters which are not essential to salvation and about which there is, and always has been, and always will be, legitimate differences of opinion. We can do no better at that point than to quote the old adage, 'In things essential, unity, in things indifferent liberty, in all things charity.'

"Before there can be any real discussion and dialogue and exchange there must be agreement concerning primary and fundamental matters. Without the acceptance of certain axioms and propositions in geometry, for example, it is idle to attempt to solve any problem. If certain people refuse to accept the axioms, and are constantly querying and disputing them, clearly there is no point of contact between them and those who do accept them. It is precisely the same in the realm of the church. Those who question and query, let alone deny, the great cardinal truths that have been accepted through the centuries do not belong to the church, and to regard them as brethren is to betray the truth. As we have already reminded ourselves, the apostle Paul tells us clearly what our attitude to them should be: 'A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject' (Tit. 3:10).

"They are to be regarded as unbelievers and need to be called to repentance and acceptance of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. To give the impression that they are Christians with whom other Christians disagree about certain matters is to confuse the genuine seeker and enquirer who

is outside. But such is the position prevailing today. It is based upon a failure to understand the nature of the New Testament church which is 'the pillar and ground of the truth' (1 Tim. 3:15). In the same way it is a sheer waste of time to discuss or debate the implications of Christianity with people who are not agreed as to what Christianity is. Failure to recognize this constitutes the very essence of the modern confusion."²

Would you discuss geometry with people that do not accept the principles of geometry? To have any discussion about anything there has to be a core agreement on basic beliefs. How do you have interfaith dialogue with people that reject Christ? The apostle says, "You do not. Let us move on." If we are going to have interfaith dialogue with Christ rejectors, we are confusing what the purpose of the church is. It is not going to do anything but confuse authentic seekers.

There is no excuse for bringing into a church people that do not accept the basics of Christianity. It is a waste of everybody's time. You would never do that in the area of mathematics. Why in the world would you do that in the area of theology? Yet, as John says, this is what is prevailing today. I think he made that statement in 2001, this actually goes back earlier into the 1960s and 1970s that people were starting to do this. Shake the dust off your feet and move on.

"...and [they] went to Iconium" (Acts 13:51). Why does Luke keep mentioning all of these geographical places? These are some of the unique characteristics in Luke's gospel. One of the things he emphasizes are places and names. Why does he keep doing that? Because he is trying to document for Theophilus the birth and the growth of the church.

One of the ways to record the birth and growth of the church is to track the church numerically, as it is growing numbers wise; to track the progress of the church ethnically, as more and more Gentiles and non-Jews are getting saved. Then he wants to track the birth and the growth of the church geographically from Jerusalem to Rome. That is why he keeps mentioning these places of geography. The Book of Acts is almost like GPS or Google Maps. You can Google Map some of these places, and there they are still in existence today, many of them.

Acts 13:52 is the impact on the church in Pisidian Antioch as all of this is happening: "*And the disciples were continually filled with joy...*" Wait a minute. I thought they were persecuted? If they are persecuted, how could they be filled with joy? Doesn't Acts 13:50 say, "And instigated the unbelieving Jews against Paul and Barnabas?"

They are under persecution, yet they are walking in joy. What kind of effect do you think that had on their persecutors? They thought they were raining on the parade, but these

² Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Knowing the Times* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989; reprint, 2001), 161-62.

were people that were filled with the Holy Spirit, which allowed them to experience joy which transcends human difficulty.

Do you remember the fruit of the spirit?

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22).

"You mean I can experience this regardless of circumstances?" That is what God is offering through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Joy is a deep down understanding that God is at work in your life no matter what is happening on the outside, favorable or unfavorable from the human perspective. You can walk in joy if things are going great, and you could walk in joy if things are falling apart, because God will give you that ability as He lives in you through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

How do you spell joy? J-O-Y. J for Jesus, O for others, Y for yourself. Keep them in that order—Jesus first, others second, yourself Third—and you walk in joy. If you take the Y and you bring it up the line there, the word is misspelled. You cannot walk in joy anymore. I will come back to this when I am bothered about something. I say, "Lord, I am not walking in joy." The Lord says, "Look at your priorities. You have got the Y in the wrong place." That is just a little something that has always stuck with me.

You can walk in joy in the middle of trials. *"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials" (James 1:2).* It is something that you can experience regardless of circumstances.

The last thing that is mentioned there is the effect this had on the true church at Pisidian Antioch.

"And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:52).

Why do they have to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit if they already had the Holy Spirit? There is a difference between indwelling and continual refilling. Indwelling takes place the moment you trust Christ as your Savior. The Holy Spirit enters you, and your body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Paul writes in Romans:

"But anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (Romans 8:9).

Jesus Himself said in the Upper Room:

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you" (John 14:16-17).

When did you get that? You got that when you trusted Christ. The moment you trusted Christ, the Holy Spirit came inside of you and took up permanent residence in you forever. Your body is now the temple of the Holy Spirit. If that is true, why do I need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit? The answer is that as a Christian, I can do things to quench the influence the Holy Spirit has in my life, because I still have a sin nature that I can return to at will.

I can quench the spirit (1 Thessalonians 4:19). I can grieve the spirit (Ephesians 4:30). When I do that, I just took the influence that the Holy Spirit has in my life, and I have shrunk it. I have made God into a "you can have the corner office" kind of thing, rather than what He wants which is jurisdiction over my whole life.

When I do that, the Holy Spirit gets jealous. Did you know that the Holy Spirit does not like the corner office?

"Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: 'He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us'?" (James 4:5).

When we go back to the sin nature we do not lose the Spirit, but we just shrunk His influence. He is over in the corner somewhere and He is jealous. He wants everything in your life; He wants everything in my life. I have to confess whatever sin it is that is grieving Him. I have to ask Him (1 John 1:9). I agree with Him that my sin is wrong and I just say, "Take Your rightful place back. Forgive me for relegating You over to the corner and wanting to mastermind my own life my own way." When I do that, now I am being continuously filled with the Holy Spirit.

"Do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be continuously filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

When I confess my sin, which limited the Spirit's influence in my life, the Holy Spirit takes His place back in my life, rather than being relegated over to the corner. That is part of the walk of the Christian where we are continuously filled with the Spirit. I did not get more of the Spirit when I did that, the Spirit got more me.

There is a big difference between being indwelt initially and being continuously filled with the Spirit in the daily walk of the Christian. That is why this church that already had the Spirit had to make sure that they were being continually filled with the Spirit.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4), but then Acts 4:31 says, "...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." So what happened? Did they lose the Spirit between Acts 2 and Acts 4? No. They acted like people act. They went back to the sin

nature, apparently. They shrunk His influence. So they confessed their sin, asked God for help and empowerment, and the Holy Spirit took back to His natural place. It is not a question of had salvation or lost salvation? Had the Spirit or lost the Spirit? It is a fellowship issue— in fellowship, out of fellowship.

My wife and I just had a terrible day in our marriage. We were at loggerheads. When that happened, we were still married positionally, but the moment-by-moment intimacy that I could enjoy with her was diminished. Then the next day comes around, I apologize for what I did. You should apologize at night, by the way, because it says, *"Do not let the sun go down on your anger."* (Ephesians 4:26).

Fellowship is restored. It is the exact same marriage legally, but, boy, the second day went a lot better than the prior day. That is not a married, unmarried situation. That is an in fellowship, out of fellowship, out of fellowship, back into fellowship issue.

That is your walk with the Lord. It is the difference between being indwelt with the Spirit, which is a one-time event at the moment of faith alone in Christ alone, versus being perpetually filled with the Spirit.

The greatest fear I ever have is coming up here and trying to teach you something that is eternal, without being filled with the spirit. If it is one of those things where I have shrunk His influence, what do I really have to give you at the end of the day? Not much. I have to get that issue fixed fellowship-wise through 1 John 1:9, so I can give you something that will stand the test of time.