

SCHEME OF WORK
SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
CLASS: JSS 3 TERM: 1ST

WEEK 1 GENERAL TOPIC: THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

2: The coming of the Holy Spirit Acts 2:1-13

3: Peter's first speech Acts 2:14

WEEK 2 GENERAL TOPIC FELLOWSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

1: Togetherness in the early church Acts 2:41-47

2: Fraud in the early church Acts 5:1-14

3: Murmuring in the early church Acts 6:17

4: Equitable distribution Acts 6:1-7

WEEK 3 GENERAL TOPIC PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

1: The healing of the cripple at the beautiful gate

2: Arrest of Peter and John Acts 4:1-31

3: Arrest and Martyrdom of Stephen Acts 6:78, 8:1-6

4: Persecution of the early church by Saul Acts 8:1-3, 9 / Paul's early life and education Acts 22:1-5, 26-30

WEEK 4 GENERAL TOPIC PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH CONTINUES

1: Martyrdom of James Acts 12:1-25

2: Arrest of Peter by Herod and his miraculous release

3: Persecution of Christians in the church and communities

WEEK 5 GENERAL TOPIC: THE MINISTRY OF PETER

1: Peter and Simon the magician Acts 8-14-23

2: Healing miracles of Peter at Lydda

3: Raising of Dorcas from the dead Acts 9-26-42

4: Peter converts Cornelius Acts 10:1-48 / Peter defends his action in Cornelius house

WEEK 6 GENERAL TOPIC: PAUL'S MINISTRY OUTSIDE PALESTINE

Period 1: The Roman Empire

Period 2: The condition favorable for the spread of the gospel in the Roman Empire

WEEK 7 GENERAL TOPIC: PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

1: The beginning of the church in Antioch Acts 12:1-3

2: Sending forth Barnabas and Paul and missionaries

3: Towns visited: Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Lystra, Derbe

4: Jerusalem council Acts 15:1-35 / Conflicts in the society

WEEK 8 GENERAL TOPIC: PAUL'S SECOND AND THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

1: Second missionary journey of Paul at Philippi Acts 15:36-16:1-34

2: Paul at Athens Acts 17:1-30

3: Pauls at Ephesus Acts 19:1-4

WEEK 9 GENERAL TOPIC: MINISTRY OF PETER CONTINUES

1: Peter converts Cornelius

2: Peter defends his action in Cornelius house

3: revision.

WEEK 10 GENERAL TOPIC: REVISION

1: Revision

2: Examination

TOPIC 1: THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ACTS 1: 3-5, JN 14: 15-28

Definition: Holy Spirit is a divine personality who has a definite function to perform in the world. It can also be seen as the 3rd personality in the blessed trinity or one among the three head of God (God the father, God the son and God the Holy spirit).

The Holy spirit came to dwell in the believers and to abide in the church of Christ. Its functions are as follows; To encourage, Strengthen, Comfort, direct, regenerate, and convince the believers to be able to preach the messages of salvation with courage and boldness.

It is important for us to know that after the resurrection of Christ, He made several appearances to the disciples within a period of 40 days. During this period, he gave them the Great Commission to carry this mission to the whole world beginning from Jerusalem.

However before His ascension, he instructed the disciples to remain in Jerusalem for the promise of the father (Holy spirit) or (Paraclete). He went on to say that the Holy spirit would be their Counsellor and Comforter and would teach them all things. Jesus also reminded them that John baptized them with water but they would be baptized by the Holy spirit in few days time.

Significance;

1. God's promise meant that He is always aware of all our needs both physically, spiritually, and academically.
2. He wants us to identify the needs of others before making promises.

b) The Coming of the Holy Spirit Acts 2: 1-13

The feast of Pentecost was a festival of the Jews. They celebrate it on the fiftieth day after the Passover feast.

The purpose of the celebration was to thank God for a successful agricultural year and ask for God's blessings for the New Year.

It was on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. It took place on the tenth day after Christ's ascension into heaven. That day, the apostles gathered in the upper room where they had their last supper. They were afraid to come out because of the fear of the Jews so they remained in

the upper room praying and worshipping God. As they were there, a sudden sound like flames and tongues of fire came and rested on the heads of each of the apostles. Immediately, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in tongues. Their hearts were filled with joy because of the Holy Spirit they received. They became bold, courageous and fearless. They began to spread the gospel from place to place. When the people saw how the apostles were speaking in different languages with courage and boldness, they thought that they were drunk.

Peter's Speech

On hearing this, Peter stood up among them and said that it was too early to get drunk and that it was only the effect of the Holy Spirit in the apostles which was to fulfill the Old testament prophecy in Joel 2: 28-30.

It should be noted that because of the boldness which Peter had, he went on to explain that Jesus whom they crucified was raised by God and was at the right hand of God. Therefore, the holy spirit was sent from heaven by Jesus to the apostles and the effect of it was what people witnessed on Pentecost day.

After Peter's address, many people repented and asked Peter what they could do to be saved. Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. Immediately, three thousand people repented and were baptized which made them to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

SIGNIFICANCE / EFFECTS OF THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE APOSTLES:

1. The coming of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles courage, boldness to preach the word of God.
2. It converted many souls to Christ.
3. It shows that God is reliable, dependable and keeps to His promises.

TOPIC : FELLOWSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH) **TOGETHERNESS IN THE EARLY CHURCH** **(ACTS 2:41-47)**

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles marked the establishment of the church. At the time Jesus was to ascend into heaven, apostles were one hundred and twenty (120) in number. After Peter's speech on Pentecost day, the number rose to three thousand (3,000) and the number rose to (5,000) at Peter's speech in connection with the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate. All the members above came together and established their own Christian community. The organization became difficult because of large groups and for the fact that they came from different homes with different behavior but the common faith they had in God united them.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY CHRISTIANS

1. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship.
2. They had everything in common.
3. They celebrated the last supper together.
4. They sold all their possessions and brought the proceeds to the apostles' feet for common use.
5. They sold all their possessions and brought the proceeds to the apostles' feet for common use.
6. They prayed and worshipped God together.
7. They distributed food and clothing to every member according to their needs.

The communal life lived by the early Christians had great effect on the non-Christians. This is because many repented and joined the church... so it is expected for every Christian today to play his role effectively for the love, unity and progress of the Christian community, as the early Christians did.

b) Fraud in the Early Church (Acts 5:1-11)

Living a communal life requires sharing of possessions together. For example, Barnabas which means "son of Encouragement" sold his piece of land and brought the proceed or money to the apostles' feet for the use of all.

Ananias and his wife Saphira sold their own but brought only a part of the money to the Church.

Peter being filled with the holy spirit asked them why they lied to God. Hearing those words, Ananias fell down and died. Shortly after that incident, Saphira came in without knowing what happened to Ananias. Peter asked her whether they sold the land for the amount of money they brought to the Church and she said Yes. Peter cursed her and she fell down and died. This caused great fear to come upon the church and all the people that heard the news.

Ananias and Saphira wanted to deceive man not God who knows the heart of men.

Since the church was established by God and controlled by the holy spirit, members should live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit by being honest and sincere in all we do.

MURMURING IN THE EARLY CHURCH AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION **- ACTS 6:1-2, 6:1-7**

As the number of Christians increased, several problems came up in the early church. One of the problems was that the Hellenists murmured against the Jews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of food. This problem shook the church which made the apostles to meet in order to find solution to their problem. They said that it would not be possible for them to supervise the sharing of food and preach the Gospel at the same time so they suggested that the church should appoint men of repute, full of the holy spirit and wisdom to take charge of sharing the food. The church accepted the suggestion and seven men were selected namely Stephen, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, Philip and Nicolas from Antioch who was a convert of Jerusalem. The apostles prayed and laid hands on them. Stephen was the first to be selected and he suffered the first martyrdom.

QUALITIES OF A DEACON

A deacon is not a minister in the church but helps the minister to administer church affairs. They are expected to possess these qualities:

1. He must be full of faith and the holy spirit.
2. He must be respectful and sincere.
3. He must not seek for dishonest gains.
4. He must have one wife and take good care of his family.

OPPOSITION TO THE GOSPEL

a) HEALING OF THE CRIPPLE AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

Peter and John were prayer warriors who normally went to the temple for prayer at noon (3 o'clock). One day they went to the temple for prayer and on reaching the beautiful gate, they met a lay man who was crippled from birth.

As soon as he saw Peter and John he raised his hands begging and expecting money. Peter said to him, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Peter then raised the man up and the man began to walk, leaping, jumping and praising God.

This action marveled the other worshippers in the temple or church and they praised God too seeing the miracle about three thousand people repented.

ARREST OF PETER AND JOHN ACTS 3:11-26 (4:1-31)

The early disciples were greatly opposed during their evangelical movements. The disciples were persecuted, tortured, dehumanized, threatened, imprisoned and sometimes killed because of jealousy and hatred by the people. Fortunately, the more they were persecuted, the more the Gospel spread and the more the believers increased in number.

When Peter and John healed the lame man at the beautiful gate, people were marveled so they came to Peter in a place called Solomon's Colonnade. Seeing the crowd, Peter started preaching the Gospel to them. He told the people that the healing was from Jesus whom God glorified. He reminded them how they tortured Jesus, chose Barabbas to be released and condemned Jesus who was righteous to be killed. He said that this Jesus whom they killed was raised by God from death to deliver them from their sins.

Shortly before they finished preaching to the people, the priest, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came and arrested them because they were preaching about Jesus and his resurrection. They were jailed the next day when they were brought before the Sanhedrin which included Annas, the high priest Caiaphas, John, Alexander and members of the priestly family that questioned Peter and John by saying, "By what power or name did you do this?" Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter replied that it was in the name of Jesus of Nazareth whom they crucified and God raised from the dead.

In his speech, Peter referred to Jesus as the very stone which the builders rejected but which had become the cornerstone. This means that it is only through the name of Jesus Christ that every salvation is found. As the people listened to Peter and John speaking with boldness, they wondered because they were uneducated common men but however, they realized that they had always accompanied Jesus. Later, they sought reasons to punish them but they could not because they witnessed all the great miracles they performed. So they warned them not to preach about Jesus again. Peter asked them whether it is right in God's sight to obey man rather than God. He told the people that nothing can stop the apostles from speaking about Jesus.

After some threats, they were set free. They went and informed their friends what happened and they prayed to God to guide and protect them from the enemies of Jesus. They also prayed for boldness to preach the Gospel and power to perform the Gospel and power miracle.

As a result of their prayer, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and preached the Gospel with boldness. This made the number of converts to rise to five thousand.

ARREST AND MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN ACT 6:8-17 / ACTS 7-8

Stephen was the leader of the seven deacons that were chosen to take charge of the daily distribution of food. He was filled with faith, grace and power and also performed great signs and wonders before the people. He was known as the greatest evangelist of the early church.

At that time, the people that belonged to the 'Synagogue of Freedmen' made trouble with him but they failed because he was full of wisdom. So they invited some people to accuse Stephen of saying evil things against Moses and God. They also accused Stephen of saying that Jesus would destroy the temple and change the law of Moses. Due to these accusations, Stephen was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin for trial. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gave them the history of the Jews starting from Abraham to their stay in Egypt and also how they came back to Canaan. He said that these events shows God's love and care for his people. Stephen boldly referred to the people as stiff necked, uncircumcised in the heart and ear and who always refused the gift of the holy spirit. He reminded them how their father persecuted the prophet who

prophesied the coming of the righteous on whom they killed. He also accused them of refusing to keep the law of the ten commandment.

This accusation angered them but still looked for a stronger reason to punish him. An opportunity came when Stephen gazed into heaven and said "Behold, I see the heaven open and the son of man standing at the right hand of God." This statement angered them and they referred to the statement as the highest blasphemy... so they immediately rushed upon Stephen and dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death. As they were stoning him, he prayed to God for their forgiveness for they did not know what they were doing. Saul who later became Paul, bore witness to Stephen's death, for he gave approval to it, kept the clothes of those who stoned Stephen and watched them stone him to death.

PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH BY SAUL 8:1–30

Saul was the greatest enemy of the early church. He was a Pharisee and a teacher of the Jewish law. His reason for opposing Christianity was because he saw it as a threat to his religion which was Judaism. He was the person who took charge of the people that stoned Stephen. There was also general Persecution of the church in Jerusalem which was led by Saul. Saul killed the disciples in order to end their mission. Still not satisfied, he entered from one church to another dragging people out and put them in prison.

More so, he went to the high priest and asked for letters with which he will enter the synagogue at Damascus to get worshippers, so that he would send them to Jerusalem. It was on his way to achieve the evil mission that the Lord called him and eventually, he was converted to Christianity.

PAUL'S EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION ACTS 22: 1-6, 26 – 30

Paul was formerly known as Saul. He was a Jewish man who was born at Tarsus in Cilicia. He was a Pharisee and his religion was Judaism which he defended so much. He was a tent maker (leather worker). He was a lawyer and his teacher was Gamaliel. He was a Roman citizen, an honour he inherited from his father which protected him from unrighteous treatment.

PAUL'S CONVERSION ACTS 9:1–19

After the death of Stephen, Paul started campaigning for the persecution of the disciples. He went to the high priest and got an authority letter with which to enter the synagogue at Damascus to bound Christians to Jerusalem. It was on his way to Damascus to carry out this evil act that a light flashed from heaven and struck him to the ground. A voice said to him "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me" Saul inquired to know who was speaking to him. The voice replied that he was Jesus whom Saul was persecuting.

The voice told him to enter the city where he will be directed on what to do. As Saul stood up, he could not see so he was led to Damascus by hand. He remained there for three days with neither sight, food nor water.

In Damascus, a disciple called Ananias saw in a vision where God instructed him to go to street called Straight that there he should ask of Saul of Tarsus and lay hand on him to regain his sight. Ananias complained of Saul's persecution of christians but God told him to go and do what he asked him to do. Ananias went and laid his hand on Saul and he regained his sight. He also baptized him after which Saul joined other disciples in Damascus to preach the gospel.

MORAL LESSONS

1. We should not challenge God's work.
2. God reveals Himself to whoever he wants
3. We should always obey God's instruction.

REACTION OF THE JEWS TO PAUL'S CONVERSION ACTS 9:20-30

After the conversion, Paul stayed a few days in Damascus. Later, he started preaching about Jesus in the Synagogue. Many who heard him could not believe their ears. They were amazed and doubted because they knew Paul before as the greatest enemy of the Gospel. They knew him as a persecutor and murderer of the followers of Christ and they knew that he came to Damascus with the intentions of arresting and bounding Christians to Jerusalem and to be killed.

However, the more they doubted the reality of Paul's preaching the more his preaching became powerful. He preached that Jesus is the Messiah and saviour of the world. At this point, the Jews in Damascus could no longer tolerate him they planned to kill him. Daily, they watched the gates of the city to arrest and kill Paul. However, Paul was saved by the fellow Christians in Damascus who took him out of the city gate at night by lowering him in a basket over the city wall.

From Damascus, Paul travelled to Jerusalem. The apostles in Jerusalem rejected him because they were afraid of him but Barnabas explained how Paul converted him after the incident in Damascus. The apostles became happy with Paul's conversion and welcomed him into their midst. His former friends were not happy with Paul of the changes in him. So they planned to kill him but the apostles sent him to Caesarea from Caesarea, he went to his home town Tarsus.

d) Why do people reject new ideas?

- a. Sometimes they are afraid of the un-known. They may be afraid of the outcome of the idea.
- b. Due to their religious or traditional belief.
- c. Due to the influence of the past experience or behaviour.
- d. Due to the hatred of the person that brought the idea.
- e. Due to the person's interest.

MARTYRDOM OF JAMES (ACTS 12:1-3)

King Herod Agrippa was among the people that greatly opposed the Gospel and killed the disciples of Christ. It was in the course of the persecution that he killed James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John. When he realized that the killing of James pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter during the days of the unleavened bread. If not because of the feast, Herod could have killed him. So he shifted the execution till after the feast.

TOPIC: THE MINISTRY OF PETER

a. Peter and Simon the Magician (Acts 8:14-42)

Peter was the person that made the mission to the Gentiles to become possible. He did not only support and authorized the missionary works of Philip at Samaria but toured the Gentile cities to support the missionary work of the apostles.

As a result of the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem, Christians fled to areas outside Jerusalem. Philip who was one of the seven deacons fled Samaria and preached the gospel to the people there. As a result of his preaching many people received miracles of healing and many were converted. One of the converts was a man called Simon the Magician.

When the apostles heard of the good work of Philip in Samaria, they sent Peter and John by laying hand on them so as to receive the holy spirit. When a man called Simon the magician who was one of the converts saw what happened, he tried to bribe the apostles to give him the power to impart the holy spirit in the people. Peter became angry and condemned Simon by telling him that it is not possible to buy the gift of God with money. Peter told him to repent and ask God for forgiveness.

Simon then realized his mistake and pleaded with Peter to pray to God to remove his curse on him. After this incidence, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem and preached the Gospel in the Samaritan villages. From Samaria, Peter entered Lydda to preach the gospel. At Lydda, he met a man called Aeneas who had been paralysed for eight years. Peter had pity on him and said, 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you, rise and make your bed'. Aeneas became well again and stood on his feet. This miracle marvelled the people of Lydda

and Sharon and they repented and became Christians. Peter stayed with them for one year.

b. **Raising of Dorcas From Death Acts 9:36-43**

When Peter was at Lydda, Dorcas or Tabitha a kind, generous and faithful woman fell ill and died. The people sent two disciples to call Peter to come to Joppa without delay. Immediately he arrived Joppa, he was taken to the upper room where the corpse of Dorcas laid. Peter sent the people out and prayed over Tabitha (Dorcas) and her life was restored. This miracle made many people in Joppa to repent and become Christians.

THE CHURCH IN CAESAREA.

a. **Peter Converts Cornelius Act 10 1-48**

At Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius. He was a Centurion of the Italian Cohort. He was a Gentile, devoted and feared God together with his entire household. He gave alms freely to people and always prayed to God.

One day at about 3.00 o'clock in the afternoon, he saw an angel of God clearly in a vision who told him that God had heard his prayers and seen his kindness. The angel instructed him to send some men to Joppa to call Peter. Then Peter was with Simon a tanner. On the next day, Cornelius sent two of his servants and one soldier to get Peter. Peter was praying on the roof of the house. As he was praying, he became hungry and slept off. In that sleep, he had a strange dream three times where the heaven opened and something like a sheet settled to the ground. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of air. The types that the Jewish law do not allow the Jews to eat which are called unclean. Then a voice commanded him saying "Rise, Peter, kill and eat". Peter answered; "No Lord, I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean". Again, Peter heard the voice warning him not to regard or call anything that God has made unclean.

As he was thinking about this vision, God instructed him to go down that three men from Joppa came to see him. God told him to follow them immediately because he sent them. Peter left immediately and met them. After listening to their reasons for looking for him, he asked them to pass a night with him.

The next day, he went to Caesarea with the visitors and some fellow christians. Cornelius met and saluted him by kneeling down but Peter said to him 'Stand up, I myself also is a man'. When Peter entered Cornelius house, he saw his

family, neighbours and friends of Cornelius waiting for him. Peter then inquired to know why Cornelius invited him.

Cornelius narrated how an angel instructed him to send for Peter. Peter confessed that he had realized that God does not discriminate between the Jews and Gentiles (foreigners) that it is those who worship him sincerely that enjoy his favour despite where the person is from.

Peter then preached to them about the prophecy, birth, life and death of Jesus Christ. As a result of his preaching, the holy spirit descended on the people and they began to speak in tongues. This marvelled the Jews that came with Peter. Peter became convinced that God's desire was for Cornelius and his people to repent and become Christians. He baptized them and Cornelius and his people became the founders of the Church in Caesarea.

Peter Defends His Action in Cornelius House.

When Cornelius became converted, the brethren in Judea heard it and criticized Peter, asking why he ate with uncircumcised Gentiles in Caesarea. Peter narrated his dream to them. The instruction of the angel of God not to call anybody created by God unclean. How he preached to Cornelius and his people and they repented. After his explanation, the brethren in Judea became silent and praised God for giving the Gentiles the opportunity to gain salvation.

PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH CONTINUES. ARREST OF PETER AND HIS DIVINE RELEASE FROM PRISON (ACTS 12:1-24)

When Herod saw that the killing of James pleased the Jews, he seized Peter and imprisoned him. He kept Peter under a strong guard waiting to kill him after the Passover. The Christians prayed for Peter's release. That night as Peter was sleeping in chains between two soldiers on guard, the angel of God woke him up and commanded him to follow him; his chains fell off and Peter followed the angel.

Despite many guards, they passed freely until they came to the main street. It was then that the angel disappeared and he realized that it was real. He hurried to Mary's house, the mother of John. When he knocked at the door, Rhoda the house girl recognized his voice but did not open the door. Instead she ran back and announced Peter's presence to the apostles who were praying but they did not believe her. They thought that she was mad. When Peter knocked again, they opened the door and he entered motioning for silence. He

then narrated all that happened to him and that the angel of God released him from prison. The next day, there was a big problem because of Peter's escape. So Herod tried the guards and killed them for negligence of duty.

Death of Herod (Acts 12:20-23)

Herod was in charge of Galilee and the people of Tyre and Sidon depended on Galilee for supply of food which was later stopped because of disagreement. Through the help of Blastus, the King's Chamberlain, the delegates from Tyre and Sidon were able to fix a date for peace talk with the King.

On that day, the King wore his royal robe and sat on the throne to address the people of Tyre and Sidon. His address impressed the people and they shouted "the voice of God! not of a man". Immediately an angel of God killed him because he did not give God the glory and worms ate his body.

TOPIC: PAUL'S MINISTRY OUTSIDE PALESTINE

Roman Empire

As we earlier know that the great commission in which Jesus Christ gave the disciples after the resurrection was to spread the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the apostles took challenge and succeeded in fulfilling the great commission in the Roman Empire under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Roman Empire was established by Caesar Augustus who serves as the first Emperor in 3 BC. The empire consisted of some conquered territories or provinces; such as Asia, North Africa, Africa and parts of Europe. As stated above, the favorable condition that facilitated the spread of the Gospel in the Roman Empire are as follows;

1) The Roman Peace (Pax Romana)

Caesar Augustus for forty-five years. He was considered a wise and good ruler because before he became an emperor in Rome, there was no peace, there were civil wars, bad government with corrupt officials besides the above there were highway robbers and pirates (sea robbers) upon all the wars and uncertainties of life. Caesar Augustus was able to restore peace and order which lasted for about twenty years and is referred to as PAX ROMANA which means Roman peace.

2) **Good Systems of Administration**

For the sake of peace and order, Caesar Augustus set up a new form of government with himself as Head of State. He had the important part and ran the government himself. As the head of army, chief magistrate and chief priest of the empire, he checked the efficiency of his co-workers for modified action.

Paul met some of Caesar's co-workers such as the Governors, procurators or proconsuls during his ministry or missionary journey and was tried before them e.g., He was tried before Felix, Festus, Agrippa and Gallio. Paul received justice from heads. If Caesar Augustus had not established his good system of administration, Paul would have not been treated fairly nor would he have succeeded in the spread of the Gospel.

3) **Roman Citizenship**

Caesar in his time made a large number of people citizens just to make them feel proud and to take part in his government and to ensure success to the idea in which Caesar made to encourage the qualified leaders to work efficiently e.g., Paul before Felix was tried that a citizen enjoyed certain privilege such as;

- i. They could not be beaten when arrested.
- ii. They could appeal to the Emperor if he was not getting a fair trial
- iii. He would not be imprisoned without trial neither can he be filled privileges and helped him in the sincere running of the spread of the Gospel, when he and his companions were arrested and beaten without trial in Philippi.

Paul protested in Jerusalem how he complained that he was a Roman citizen and that he was set not set free. The privilege of being a Roman also saved him when he was before Felix and Agrippa.

4) **Large and efficient Army**

Augustus established a large and efficient army who maintained peace in the Roman Empire and built forts and routes at important places. The forts were controlled by twenty five legions of soldiers and each constituted about six thousand soldiers with a large and efficient army.

There was peace and security in the high ways and sea so that people could travel safely on horseback and by ship across the Mediterranean sea. The

above achievements enabled Paul and his companions have their missionary journey and in the Roman empire

5) **Social Amenities**

Caesar Augustus improved the living conditions of the people. New houses were built, good roads, schools, water and drainage systems, theatres were also supplied to the people.

The provision of good roads enabled the apostles to travel far and wide to reach so many people within the Empire with for the gospel message without much difficulties. In fact, communication was not difficult for the apostle because of the peace that existed in the empire during that time.

6) **Religious Tolerance**

The Roman government did not interfere with the custom and religions of the conquered people in the empire. Everybody was allowed to practice their religion or worship their Greek gods such as Zeus, Hermes, Venus and Artemis. Some worshipped their Persian gods such as Mithras and practiced divination. The religious tolerance aided the spread of Christianity in the Roman empire.

TOPIC: PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Two years after the conversion of Paul, Barnabas brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch in Syria to work in the church there. It was at Antioch that the name Christian was first used. This is because when the apostles frequently used the name of Christ and the new converts spoke often of Christ, the people of Antioch called them 'Christians' or followers of Christ.

As Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, a prophet called Agabus came there and prophesied by the holy spirit that there would be a famine all over the world. The famine occurred during the reign of emperor Claudius.

Due to this famine, a fund raising activity was organized by the Christians in Antioch. The money just they raised was sent to the other Christians in Jerusalem and Judea through Paul and Barnabas.

After Paul and Barnabas came back from their relief mission, some prophets and teachers in the church namely, Barnabas, Paul, Saul, Manaen, Simeon and Lucius were praying and fasting on a certain day in the church at Antioch when the Holy spirit instructed them by saying: Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them. So they laid hand on them and sent them off. With the guidance of the Holy spirit, they left for the missionary journey. The places they visited are as follows.

1. Paul in Paphos

After receiving the blessings of the church at Antioch, they passed through Seleucia, Cyprus and came to Salamis where John Mark joined them. From there, they came to Paphos where they met a magician, a Jewish false prophet called Bar-Jesus or Elymas. He was with the pro-consul Sergius Paulus who invited Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to him. Elymas opposed the preaching which angered Paul and Barnabas. Filled with the Holy spirit, Paul said to Elymas, "You enemy of all righteousness, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?" Then Paul cursed him and he became blind. This incidence marvelled the proconsul and he became converted to Christianity.

2. Paul in Perga at Pamphilia

After the establishment of the church in Paphos, the missionaries came to Perga in Pamphilia to preach the gospel. It was here that John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem.

3. Paul in Antioch in Pisidia

When Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch in Pisidia, they entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Where paul addressed the people. This was Paul's first recorded sermon. He traced the history of the Jews right from the time they were enslaved in Egypt, their deliverance by Moses to the time that Joshua led them to the promised land. He told them how God sent Jesus to save them from their sins but their forefathers killed him. He resurrected on the third day to fulfil the scriptures. He saith that if you believe in Jesus Christ, their sins will be forgiven.

The people pleaded with Paul and Barnabas to come again the next Sabbath day because they liked Paul's message. On their second visit, many people gathered to listen to Paul's sermon but the people were divided in opinion

because the Jews who were against Paul's teaching contradicted his preaching. Some of the people supported Paul while others rejected his message.

Despite the opposition, Paul spoke with boldness which led to the conversion of many people. However, before their mission was completed, the Jews persecuted Paul and Barnabas which made them to escape to Iconium.

Paul at Iconium Acts 14:1-7

At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in the synagogue on a Sabbath day. As a result of their preaching, many people repented which included both Jews and Gentiles. Here, the people persecuted Paul and Barnabas. Due to the fear of being killed if they continued, they fled to Lystra and Derbe.

Paul in Lystra

At Lystra, Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel to the people there, Paul healed a man that was crippled from birth. The man listened to Paul's teaching with faith and interest which made Paul to heal him. Seeing this miracle, the people said "The gods have come down to us in the shape of a man". So they named Barnabas 'Zeus' the father of gods and Paul 'Hermes' the messenger of gods.

After this, the people wanted to offer sacrifice to them but Paul and Barnabas stopped them and made them to know that they were human beings like them. They told the people that they brought good news to them so that they will turn away from idol to the worship of the almighty God who created heaven and earth and everything in it.

When the activities of Paul and Barnabas became known to the Jews in Antioch and Iconium, they came and dragged Paul out and stoned him after which they left him thinking that he was dead. With the help of the disciples, Paul woke up and went to Derbe with Barnabas.

Church in Derbe

At Derbe, Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel and many people were converted. Among the converts was a man called Gaius. From Derbe, they returned to Antioch in Syria. On their way home, they encouraged the converts to remain faithful to God.

The Church Council at Jerusalem

Paul converted many Gentiles to christianity during his first missionary journey but in his absence some Jewish Christians agreed and went from Judea to the converted Gentile christians in Antioch and told them that they cannot be saved until they are circumcised according to the law of Moses.

This was contrary to the teaching of Paul and so, a conflict and controversy arose between the Jewish Christians and the apostles. In order to restore peace and unity in the church, a meeting was held which included Paul, Barnabas, Peter and James who was the president of the meeting.

This meeting was held in the Jerusalem and the purpose was to discuss whether the gentiles should be circumcised according to the law of Moses before they can be saved.

Peter said that even the Jewish descendants were not capable of obeying the law. He therefore narrated his encounter with Cornelius the gentile and that the gentiles received the Holy spirit as the apostles did on the Pentecost day. Peter concluded clearly by supporting the work and action of Paul and Barnabas that believers are saved only through faith in Jesus and not by circumcision or obedience to the law of Moses.

Next to address the Jerusalem Council were Paul and Barnabas who narrated how God called them and sent them on a mission to the Gentiles without imposing the issue of circumcision and obedience to the law of Moses on them.

Then James who chairman of the occasion said that it was not proper to impose the Jewish laws and customs on the Gentiles. He therefore proposed that the Gentiles should avoid idolatry, fornication, animals that are strangled and blood. James suggested that obedience to these laws will make the gentiles to be acceptable to the church without going through the process of circumcision and obedience to the law of Moses.

James suggestions were accepted by the council and were written in a letter to be delivered to the Gentile church in Antioch and were delivered by Judas and Silas. These men accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Antioch where they read the letter to the Christian assembly. The letter apologized to the gentiles for the trouble makers who disturbed the peace and unity of the church in Antioch.

Conflicts in the Society

Conflict is a disagreement or argument between two or more people.

Causes of Conflict

Several factors are responsible for conflicts in our society such as:

1. Misunderstanding
2. Selfishness
3. Breakdown of law and promise
4. Discrimination
5. Denial of human rights
6. Cheating
7. Nepotism
8. Land dispute
9. Misinterpretation of the bible

Solutions

1. Disciplinary actions against the offender
2. Peaceful resolution
3. Love of one another
4. Prayer
5. Impartiality
6. Forgiveness

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Paul at Philippi

After the first missionary journey by Paul and Barnabas, they agreed to visit the Christians in the cities they preached the gospel to determine how they were faring so that if they had any problem, they would help them solve it.

Barnabas desire was for them to go with John Mark but Paul refused and said that John Mark abandoned them in Pamphylia during their first missionary journey and went back to Jerusalem. Due to this reason, both of them disagreed and separated from each other. Paul choose Silas whom he went with while Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus.

Paul and Silas travelled through Syria and Cilicia encouraging the Christians to remain steadfast in their faith. At Lystra, Paul took Timothy and circumcised him before going with him. He did this so as to have a peaceful relationship with the Jews in order to succeed in his mission.

When they came to Galatia and Bithynia, the Holy spirit did not allow them to preach the gospel there.

At Troas, Paul had a vision where a man of Macedonia was asking them to come to Macedonia and help them.

In obedience to the vision, they went to Macedonia where they preached to some women that gathered in a prayer square. Among the converts was a woman called Lydia.

At Philippi, Paul cast out a spirit of divination from a slave girl who earned much money for her owners through soothsaying. Seeing that they could no longer make money through the slave girl activities, they dragged Paul and his companions into the market square before the rulers where they were accused of disturbing the city, speaking and encouraging the people to disobey the laws of the land. The magistrate ordered for their beating after which they were imprisoned. While in prison, Paul and Silas prayed and worshipped God.

A sudden earthquake occurred which made the doors to open and their fetters loosened. Waking up, the jailer wanted to kill himself because the doors were open so he thought Paul and Silas had escaped. Paul stopped him and made him know that they did not escape. The jailer was surprised and asked Paul what he should do to be saved. Paul told him to believe in Jesus Christ. He believed and repented with his entire household and they were baptized.

TOPIC: PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Paul at Athens

Due to the persecution by the unbelieving Jews, Paul ran to Athens. At Athens he saw many idols that angered him greatly. One of the idols had an altar with the words "To an unknown god". Paul therefore told them that the unknown god is the almighty God that made them and everything in it. Some philosophers there argued with him but later asked for his teaching.

Paul urged them to repent, turn to God and worship him so that they will be saved on the judgment day. As a result of his preaching, some of the people repented which included Dionysus and Damaris.

PAUL AT EPHESUS

When Paul came back to Ephesus for the third missionary journey, he tried to find out from the disciples he met there whether they received the Holy spirit but they responded that they have never heard of the holy spirit.

He preached the gospel to them and they repented. He therefore baptized them in the name of Jesus, laid hand on them and impacted the Holy spirit on them which made them to speak in tongues.

..... a silversmith spoke to his colleagues about the effect of Paul's preaching on their business which angered them. This is because, Paul condemned the worship of idols which the silversmiths made for the people. Due to this reason, some of Paul's companions were rough handled and dragged to the theatre by the people. Paul could have been treated as such but luckily, his friends prevented him from entering the theatre. This noise from Ephesus drew the attention of the town clerk who quieted the people and spoke in favour of Paul and his companions. He made the people to know that if the Roman authorities charges them for rioting, the autonomy given to them will be withdrawn. After this, he used his power as the city administrator to dismiss the congregation of the people.

QUESTION

1. Define the Holy Spirit.
2. What did the disciples do when the Holy Spirit descended on them.
3. State two significance of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciple.
4. What was Jesus instruction to the disciples before he ascended into heaven
5. How many people repented as a result of Peters speech on the Pentecost day.
6. Describe the issue that led to the selection of the seven deacon.