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Bible Study, March 17, 2021 – HAPPY ST. PATRICK DAY!

Dear Friends,

As you might recall during our last class we tried to see how Saint Luke attempts to answer the question: “How is it that the Non–Jews – the Gentiles – could claim the heritage of Israel?” or in other words: “How is it that Jesus Christ inherits King David’s Throne and His Message – the GOOD NEWS – the GOSPEL moves from Jerusalem (from Jewish converts) to the NATIONS – to the WHOLE WORLD?”

Tonight, I would like to invite you to study several STAGES of the DEVELOPMENT of the EARLY CHURCH

- first in JERUSALEM, and then,
- as the APOSTLES were blessed and strengthened by the HOLY SPIRIT, they launched a MISSION BEYOND JERUSALEM – even after PERSECUTION (for example – St. Stephen, the DEACON).

- The NARRATIVE about Stephen, the DEACON – Chapters 6 to 8.

- Please, see the additional chart – Type – Typology COMPARISON between Christ Jesus and Stephen

- Before Luke’s narrative INTRODUCES Saul (then Saint Paul) to the reader, let’s take a look at the story of Philip and the Ethiopian – HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT assists with NON – JEWISH conversion – let’s read Acts 8:26-40.

- Saul's **CONVERSION**
 - **INSTANT** – not requiring any additional **PREPARATION** (catechesis, mystagogy – interpretation of the **MYSTERY**, etc.) – just forceful **INTERVENTION** of the Holy Spirit.
 - **ONGOING** – requiring a long **PROCESS OF FORMATION** – to be an **EFFECTIVE** (that is, person of integrity, trustworthy, fluent in the Scripture and the **MESSAGE** of **CHRIST JESUS** – that is Christ's **GOOD NEWS** – **EUANGELION**, etc.) and **RELAIABLE MISSIONARY**.

- **FROM SAUL to PAUL; Acts 13:4-42**

- **WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT SAUL – PAUL?** Please see additional charts with **PAUL's LIFETIME**

- **Acts 15 – The Council of Jerusalem: Theological and PRACTICAL** answers to the question: must **GENTILE** (non – Jewish) converts become Jews first in order to believe in and follow Jesus Christ? Please, see the additional material about important Councils of the Church through history.