

Acts of the Apostles
Luke, the beloved physician
Discussion Session 1
Chapters 1-5
Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible (pgs. 1865-1877)

Outline:

- I. Home missions (Acts 1-12)
The witness to the Jews in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria.
Outstanding leader—Peter.
Important city—Jerusalem.
- II. Foreign missions (acts 13-28)
The witness to the Gentiles, to the “uttermost parts!”
Outstanding leader—Paul.
Important cities—Antioch, Ephesus, and Rome.

Things to do:

1. Read all of the Book of Acts.
2. Answer the questions and fill out the outline. Use your own words. Do not quote unless the questions asks for that.
3. Be able to locate on the map, the places mentioned in Acts 1-12.
4. Draw Paul’s first and second journeys on the map, and Paul’s third and fourth on the maps provided.
5. Memorize Acts 1:8, 4:12, 16:31 (Optional)
6. Make a report on the life of at least one great missionary.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

As we begin our study of the Acts of the Apostles and the History of the Church, we ask that you open our minds, hearts, and ears to the message that you are sharing with us. Thank You for this momentous truth, that Christ has never ceased to work and to teach from the moment that He was born in Bethlehem as the eternal Son of God, clothed in a Body that God had prepared for Him. Thank You that I am part of His Body, the Church. Use each of us, we pray, to Your praise and glory. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Discussion Questions:

Home Missions—Acts 1-12

ACTS 1

1. For how many days after the resurrection was Jesus seen on Earth? (1:3)
_____40_____
2. Why were the disciples not to depart from Jerusalem? (1:4-5)
_____They were to wait for the gift from the father_____
3. In what order are the places mentioned to which the disciples were to go as witnesses?
_____Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, _____
4. What did the two men in white say about Jesus' returning to earth again?
_____Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking to the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you in to heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven._____
5. About how many altogether were in the upper room? (1:15)
_____120_____
6. Who was chosen to take Judas' place? _____Matthias_____

ACTS 2

1. On what day did the Holy Spirit come? _____
2. What three outward things happened to show that the Holy Spirit had come? (2:2-4) _____Blowing of a Violent Wind, they were able to speak in tongues, and the tongues separated and sat on their shoulders, and each of them was filled with the Holy Spirit._____
3. Why did those in Jerusalem marvel? (2:7-8) _____Because those who were speaking were all Galileans, but were understood by all in their own vernacular._____
4. Who stood up to explain what had happened? _____Peter stood and spoke._____
5. What connection did Christ (whom these Jews crucified) have with the strange happenings among the believers in Jerusalem at Pentecost? (2:32-36) _____God had raised Jesus to life, with all of them as witnesses, brought him to the right hand of God and received Him, and Promised to send the Holy Spirit on the apostles._____

6. What words did Peter have for those who were sorry they had crucified Jesus? (2:37-40) _____ **Repent and be Baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the Holy Spirit.** _____
7. As the result of Peter's sermon how many people became believers?
_____ **about 3000** _____

ACTS 3

1. Who asked for alms (money) at the gate called Beautiful of the Temple?
_____ **a lame beggar** _____
2. How long had the man been lame? (3:2, 4:22) _____ **since he was born** _____
3. What did Peter say to him? _____ **Silver and gold I do not have, but but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazereth, walk.** _____
4. How did Peter explain the lame man's being healed? (3:12-16)
_____ **¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.** _____

ACTS 4

1. What did the Sadducees do to Peter and John when they heard them giving the resurrected Jesus the glory for the healing of the lame man? (4:1-3) _____ **They were greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people, they arrested them until the next day.** _____
2. How many believed after hearing this second sermon of Peter's? (4:4)
_____ **Many who heard the message believed, about 5000** _____

3. In the morning what did the Sanhedrin ask them? (4:7) _____ They asked them “By what power or what name did you do this?”

4. What did Peter, who was filled with the Holy Ghost/Spirit, reply? (4:10) _____ “then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit said to them “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame, and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is “the stone which the builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.” _____

5. What other wonderful statements about the name of Jesus did Peter make? (4:12) _____¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

What did the Sanhedrin command these apostles not to do? _____.

¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! ²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

After this experience what is the main thing for which the Christian company pray? (4:23-31) _____ The Believers Pray

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they

said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord

and against his anointed one. ^{[a],[b]}

²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

6. What did Barnabas do? (4:36-37)

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

7. Why do you think the Christians shares their possessions? _____ They shared with the poor as Jesus had commanded, for they had more than they needed to live, so it was commanded that they should sell everything that they had (in excess) and give the proceeds to the poor. (Give in charity, or as a charity fund.) _____

8. How is this alike or different from communism today? _____ Just as communist leaders control group charity funds, or the money of the a country, the Judean leaders of ancient Judean circles would distribute group charity funds as they saw fit.

ACTS 5

1. What evil thing did Ananias and Sapphira do? _____ Instead giving all the money that they made off the land that they sold, they took a portion of the money for themselves. _____
2. What was their punishment? _____ Death – It states that he fell down and died. (5:5) _____
3. What effect did this have on the church? (5:11) _____ Great fear seized the entire church and all who heard about these events. It put a fear of God in them for stealing or taking what does not belong to your being is considered a heinous crime in the church. _____
4. What is said of the growth of the early church? (5:14) _____ The church after that grew more and more and more people started believing in Jesus, the church, and Christ. _____
5. What power had the apostles been given? (5:12-16) _____ They were given the power to heal in the same way that Jesus healed people. _____
6. What did the Sadducees do to the apostles? _____ They arrested them again (all of them) and put them in public jail. _____
7. When the council met the next morning why could the guards not bring the apostles from the prison? _____ An Angel of the Lord came in and released them in the night. _____
8. Where were the apostles found fearlessly preaching? _____ They were back in the Temple Courts preaching the Good News of Jesus. _____
9. When reminded that the council had commended them not to preach about Jesus what did the apostles say? (5:29) _____ Peter replied: We Must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging Him on the cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” _____
10. What argument did Gamaliel use that kept the Sanhedrin from slaying the apostles? (5:36-39, especially 38-39) _____³⁶ Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the

census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.³⁸ Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.” _____

Because bad things tend to happen to those who went against them. _____

- ii. How did the apostles feel about their imprisonment and beating? (5:40-42) _____⁴⁰ His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.⁴² Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that holy apostles and prophets of old, were moved by God to write both the Old and New Testaments, and that they were used to lay the sure foundation upon which my faith is secure. Thank You that Jesus is the Rock of my salvation, the Cornerstone of my faith, and the Anchor of my soul. I praise You that Your Holy Spirit guided holy men of God into all truth, as the gospel was revealed to them which was penned as Scripture for our learning. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

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Chapter 1

In the beginning of Acts, Luke is writing to Theophilus and telling him about Jesus and how after he was crucified and then was resurrected, he then spent the next forty days appearing to the disciples and spoke of the Kingdom of God. In some instances, he was breaking bread with them again also.

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for my gift my father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In vs. 4, Luke mentions: “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.’ ” This occasion may have been the day of ascension but since this is not specifically stated, it may have been during any other day in the forty-day period. The fact that the command was given during a meal suggests that the group was in a house in the city and not on the Mount of Olives. The Gospel clarifies that Jesus led His disciples out of the city to the mountain prior to His ascension. We read: “When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.”¹¹

During this meal, Jesus commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit: “the gift my Father promised.” This promise is found in the Old Testament prophecy of Joel: “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”¹² Peter’s quotation of these verses in his sermon on the day of Pentecost confirms that this is the promise Jesus refers to here.

It is important for us to understand how the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and His ministry in this present dispensation is all tied together with Old Testament prophecy. We know very little about the life Jesus lived as a human being. We seldom realize that, living on earth, within the framework of human limitations, He had to grow and learn as we all do. The baby that was born in Bethlehem had to learn to walk, to speak, to think and understand. Jesus may have received some help from His mother who must have told Him the circumstances of the annunciation of His birth, and the supernatural events that surrounded His coming. But the main source of His understanding, and probably also of His vocation as the Messiah, must have been the Old Testament Scriptures. That was the knowledge He searched for as a twelve-year-old boy while He stayed behind in the temple. Luke records this event: “After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ‘Why were you searching for me?’ he asked. ‘Didn’t you know I had to be in my father’s house?’ ”¹³ One of the key passages that completed the blueprint of God’s plan for His life was probably David’s words in the Psalm Forty: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you

have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, 'Here I am, I have come--it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.'¹⁴ Or as the Septuagint translates it, as we find it quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am--it is written about me in the scroll--I have come to do your will, O God.'

Jesus' human mind grasped the significance of the Old Testament as the design for his own life and ministry, so His understanding of the need for the baptism with the Holy Spirit originated in the Old Testament prophecy. This allowed him to speak of this prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit to his disciples even before his death and resurrection. Through Jesus' study of the Old Testament, he was able to impart some of this knowledge also to John the Baptist.

When Jesus spoke of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, he was talking to the disciples, he was describing to them a way of seeing things, that they have never seen thus far. The coming of the Holy Spirit means that we can see and understand Jesus in a better and more real way. Much different from those who experienced Him in the flesh.

Paul writes "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. We as humans reflect God's glory as we are created in his likeness and image. However, some of our actions and intentions have a tendency stray away from this glory because of our own freewill to do as we see fit, which is not always the plan that go has for us.

In 1:6 the disciples ask him: "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom of Israel?" Jesus answers: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

This question we see in this instance as Jesus is revealing himself to the disciples, and coming to them, is frowned upon, and looked at as unintelligible and self-centered.

It is nigh to impossible to determine whether the disciples had in mind the destruction of the opposition against the Messiah or the establishment of His kingdom. They had sufficient Old Testament prophecy to fall back on to suppose that their Lord would rule in this earth in some way or another. There was, first of all, Jacob's prophecy: "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his."²⁵ And Isaiah had prophesied about Jerusalem: "I will restore your judges as in days of old, your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City."²⁶ The angel had told Daniel in his vision: "Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him."²⁷ But they must also have been familiar with Jesus' good confession before Pontius Pilate:²⁸ "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."²⁹ It seems logical to assume that the apostles, as children of their time, had foremost in mind the expulsion of the Roman presence from the land of Israel and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel.

They were also familiar with Jesus' prophetic utterances regarding the destruction of the temple and His second coming to earth. He had told them: "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." They had asked Him: "When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" And He had answered: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."³⁰ It doesn't appear that their question at that time is identical to the one they ask here. Neither is Jesus' answer. The two conversations probably took place on the same spot on the Mount of Olives, but they were separated by the dramatic events of Jesus' death and resurrection. Having witnessed the destruction of the Kingdom of Death, the disciples drew the conclusion that the overthrow of the Roman Empire was a trifle.

When He said: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father,"³¹ He spoke from within the framework of the limitations of His humanity. Only after His resurrection could He proclaim: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to

me.”³² From that moment on, Jesus was no longer a restricted human mortal but a Man to whom had been returned all the divine attributes of the Son. We read, therefore, on this day of His ascension to heaven not that He says that He doesn’t know but that it is not for His disciples “to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.” He also does not correct that disciples’ “misconception” that the kingdom of Israel ought to be restored. His answer actually seems to confirm that such a restoration would be in order. In the annunciation of His birth, the angel had said to Mary: “The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.”³³ That throne is still vacant today. Awaiting the fulfillment of that prophecy, another momentous promise would be fulfilled, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost is considered to be Jesus’ birthday.

The disciples had not asked whether Jesus would restore the kingdom of Israel but to Israel. In other words, the kingdom had not disappeared but it did no longer belong to Israel as a nation. When God called Israel out of Egypt, He said to them: “If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”³⁴ Except for short periods in Israel’s history, when David and some other pious kings led the theocracy, this never fully became a reality. God’s kingdom had not vanished but Israel was no longer its steward.

In 1:11 the disciples are told that this same Jesus that was taken from them, would return the same way that he was taken from earth.

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

the apostles returned from the Mount of Olives, then went upstairs to the place they were staying. Present among them were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alpheus, Simon the zealot, Judas son of James, they all were frequently together to pray, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers.

Peter spoke among them saying that prophecy had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago regarding Judas who guided those who arrested Jesus.

Judas was essentially killed for his betrayal. 1:18 He received payment for his betrayal, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. Everyone heard about this and they named the field Akeldama, or Field of Blood.

Peter then says:

“it is written in the Book of Psalms: May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,” and “May another take his place of leadership.”

Peter continues in the same vein by quoting two of David’s other psalms. The first quotation is from Psalm Sixty-Nine: “May their place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in their tents,”⁷⁰ and the second from Psalm One Hundred Nine: “May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership.”⁷¹ The first quotation is probably a reference to the piece of land that was bought with the money Judas had received for his betrayal.

This reference was inserted for clarification. The field was not something Judas purchased, but it was purchased with his money, which was considered blood money.

It is obvious that the group that had followed Jesus from the moment of His baptism was much larger than the circle of the twelve apostles. It is also clear that each of those who had seen the risen Lord would automatically be a witness of His resurrection. The purpose of the election, therefore, was not to have an extra witness but to appoint a new member to the inner circle of twelve to serve as a legislative body of the church to be born a few days hence. This being the significance of this election, the question of whether Matthias or Paul ultimately replaced Judas becomes irrelevant. Regardless of Paul’s invaluable contribution to the growth of the church, he never played a role in the legal functioning of the council that was ready to present the Kingdom of Heaven to the people of Israel after Pentecost.

They choose a man who has been with them from the start. Someone who was also witness to the death and resurrection. They took nominations, prayed “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over the apostolic ministry which Judas left to go where he belongs.”

To make their decisions they cast lots which is very similar to an auction.

Chapter 2

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

In this chapter the Holy Spirit descends on the apostles just as Jesus promised. The Peter stands up and preaches about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. AS a result, 3000 people join the church.

It is important to note that the Feast of Weeks begins fifty days after the Feast of the First Fruits, a feast initiated by an Israelite priest symbolically waving a sheaf of grain before the people. Seven weeks and one day later, the people brought two loaves of bread, both baked with fine flour and oil, along with seven lambs, one ram, one bull, and on goat, The Israelites sacrificed a goat for the sin of the people and two lambs for peace. Th priest would then raise the two loaves and wave them over the sacrifices before they were burnt. Finally, after celebrating their harvest, the people gathered the leftover portions of their harvest and distributed them to the poor, Following the sacrifices, the people of Israel had a service of worship, and for the rest of the day, they did not work. This feast remained important to the Israelites well into the time of Jesus and is called by its Greek name, Pentecost, by Tobit, 2 Maccabees, Josephus, and Philo.

In verse 36 at the seminal moment of Peter’s sermon, he says that God made Jesus “both Lord and Christ.” People commonly assume that Christ is merely Jesus’ surname. The Greed word Χριστός (Christ), however, has the sense “Messiah.” Also, the Greek word κύριος (lord) is an important word in the Bible. In the Old Testament, the name God is Yahweh, the “Divine Name,” but in Hebrew did not originally have vowels, so this name was represented by four consonants as “YHWH.” The Jews revered God and feared that they might misuse His name. So whenever they read the Scriptures an came across the “Divine Name,” they would instead read the Hebrew word *Adonai*, which has the sense “lord.” When Greek speakers translated the Old Testament, they decided to keep the sense of *Adonai* and use the Greek word for lord (κύριος) to render Yahweh. So by calling Jesus “Lord” and “Messiah,” Peter identifies Jesus with Yahweh, the one true God.

In verses 42-47, Luke summarizes the response of the people in Jerusalem to Peter’s sermon. This section transitions the story from Peter’s sermon at Pentecost to the miracle at the Beautiful Gate. The transitions in the plot of Acts put the story together and provide clues for how the story ought to be read.

For instance, this summary shows that Peter's sermon is successful and many people in Jerusalem accept it, which creates a new community. The creation of a new community becomes a significant theme in the book of Acts.

Chapter 3

Peter Heals a Lame Beggar, and Speaks to Onlookers

Peter and John go up to the Temple and heal a lame beggar. In response to the miracle, the Jewish people are amazed by the apostles. Peter tells the crowd his power comes from Jesus and preaches the gospel of Jesus to them.

Throughout Acts, Luke intentionally connects the lives of Jesus, Peter, and Paul. He wants his readers to recognize that the apostles are a genuine extension of the ministry of Jesus. For instance, Paul also heals a man who has been crippled since his birth in Acts 14:8-10; that man also springs to his feet after the miracle just like the man in Chapter 3. Both miracles echo Jesus, who also made the lame walk (Luke 7:22).

Acts 14:8-10

In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

Luke 7:22

²² So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy^[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

The Beautiful Gate might be another name for the Nicanor Gate. About this gate, Josephus said, "There was one gate that was without the holy house, which was of Corinthian brass, and greatly excelled those that were only covered over with silver and gold." If this description is accurate, then Peter performs this miracle at the entrance of the inner court in the women's courtyard.

Chapter 4

Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin, The Believers Pray, The Believers Share their Possessions

Peter and John are arrested by the Elders of Israel and interrogated. They respond to the interrogation and threats by preaching the gospel of Jesus and His resurrection. Ultimately, the leaders must let them go, and the apostles report back to the other Christians, who respond to the news with great unity, Luke ends the chapter describing how the unity of the Church results in people sharing all their possessions.

Notice that Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit in verse 8. Peter fulfills Jesus' prophecy in Luke 12:11-12 for the first time.

Verse 11 is a complicated verse to take in, this is because it incorporates several biblical texts. In this verse Peter quotes Psalm 118:22. Jesus also quotes this text in Luke 20:17 (and Matthew and Mark) at the end of the parable of the wicked tenants. The parable of the wicked tenants is based on a parable in Isaiah 5:1-7. In Isaiah 5, God carefully builds a vineyard, taking every precaution to produce good fruit. But ultimately, it does not yield good fruit, and the wicked trample it. Isaiah interprets the Parable and says that the vineyard represents Israel, and the bad fruit represents the people's failure to trust God. Jesus recognizing that his listeners know Isaiah 5, recasts this parable in Luke 20 and says that God made a vineyard (Israel) and gave it to the tenants (the religious leaders of Israel), but when God sent His servants (the prophets) to reap the fruit (good works) from the vineyard, they were treated shamefully. So, God sends His Son (Jesus), but the tenants (religious leaders) kill Him. When Jesus interprets His parable, He quotes Psalm 118:22, the same verse quoted in Acts 4:11. Psalm 118:22 comes from a section in the Psalm that celebrates Israel's journey from Exodus to Mount Zion in the end times. In this verse the Psalmist points out that this journey to deliverance will be led by a person, whom the builders will reject (The Stone that the builders will reject, will be called the corner stone. 4:8)

In Daniel 2:45, the prophet picks up on the language of the stone and says the stone will be the King of a Kingdom that will last forever. So back in Luke 20 at the end of the parable of the wicked tenants, Jesus quotes this exact Psalm to declare that HE is the stone, the one who will be king forever, and the one rejected by the tenants (religious leaders).

Peter declares in Acts 4:11 that by God's resurrection of Jesus, the stone rejected by the builders will become the King of the Zion in the end times. These Scriptures resonated with Peter, as he declares Christ the living stone, rejected by men but chosen and precious with God (Peter 2:7).

When Peter gathers with the believers in verses 25-26, he quotes Psalm 2. In this Psalm is a lament of David in which the nations (the Gentiles) oppose the God of Israel and His Anointed One, Jesus Christ. Peter also quotes this Psalm but identifies the "nations" with Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel. Luke begins in the book of Acts by showing us that not all of Israel is true Israel (Romans 9:6). The true Israel consists of all those who follow Christ, while all others are identified with the raging nations, and even some Israelites.

Chapter 5

Ananias and Sapphira, The Apostles Heal Many, The Apostles Persecuted

Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead for lying to God. Then, Peter and John are arrested again but released in the night by an angel. The rulers of Israel are enraged that Peter and John are once again preaching about Christ, but a Pharisee name Gamaliel talks them out of pursuing Peter and John.

The story of Ananias and Sapphira should be contrasted with the final two verses of Chapter 4. The accounts show two responses to the growth of the Church. Barnabas, when he receives the call of the apostles, sells a field that belonged to him and gives everything to the Church. Luke makes sure to point out that Barnabas was from Cyprus, which means he was most likely wealthy and was giving up wealth in order to follow Christ. Ananias and Sapphira, on the other hand, sell their property, but withhold some of the price for themselves.

The transition we see in Acts 5:12-16 is very similar to Acts 2:42-47, but with one significant difference. Both of these instances show transitions in the story of Acts and communicate that many people began following Jesus in Jerusalem. In Chapter 5, however, we hear mention of how some people from towns outside of Jerusalem are healed. These transitions should remind us of our first

chapter, where Jesus said that they apostles would go from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. This is where the first step was recorded.

There is a distinct similarity between Acts 5:18-20, 12:6-11, and 16:26-30. In these verses we see parallelism in the book of Acts, which highlights continuity in the themes of suffering and the apostles.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that holy apostles and prophets of old, were moved by God to write both the Old and New Testaments, and that they were used to lay the sure foundation upon which my faith is secure. Thank You that Jesus is the Rock of my salvation, the Cornerstone of my faith, and the Anchor of my soul. I praise You that Your Holy Spirit guided holy men of God into all truth, as the gospel was revealed to them which was penned as Scripture for our learning. In Jesus' name, AMEN.